

Mike Bruno: My name's Mike Bruno. I'm CEO of Contractor Business Solutions and Stone Creek Builders. For the last 25 years I've operated a construction company, and for the last two years I've operated a business consulting company helping contractors. What I wanted to talk about is how Dr. Sabrina Starling helped me really get some clarity, and get me out of a hole in terms of my thinking as it related to my businesses, my employees, my systems, and processes. **Over 25 years in the construction company. I've always educated myself by the School of Hard Knocks approach.** Reading a lot of business books, reading a lot of books on self improvement, and even hired some other business coaches in the past. **I always hit the same roadblock. I always tried to implement things that I learned from reading those books, and reading industry magazines, and it just didn't click.**

About a year ago I reached out to several other people asking if they had a higher level of coaching, or could recommend somebody that could offer a higher level of coaching. Somebody that can really dig into my thought process, and help me just bridge the gap. Because like some other business owners, reading a bunch of business books, and not being able to I guess put them into action frustrated me. I felt like I have the knowledge, I just had a roadblock, and I wasn't sure which way to go.

A colleague recommended Dr. Sabrina Starling about six or seven months ago. This is the fall of 2016. I contacted Sabrina, and explained to her that **I was just hitting these roadblocks within my business and personally, and I needed some help.** I think one of the biggest struggles that I had, like many entrepreneurs, is we internalize a lot of our feelings. We always need to be stronger than everybody else around us. We need to impress people that we're around, and it's hard to find people to communicate those real deep rooted intellectual feelings with. I made the mistake of trying to talk to my wife and other family members about those things that I was feeling, and I expected that they would be able to help me with those problems.

I found that even particularly with my wife, **I would come home and complain about work.** I always wondered, "Why is she sick of me complaining? Why is she tired of hearing me complain?" I think the real reason is that your spouse or loved ones that you're talking to, and complaining about work to, want to solve those problems for you, but they just don't know how. They feel bad for you, and it gets a little emotional, and their frustration, and their feeling of hurt for you doesn't allow them to help you either because they're not ... They don't possess the tools to look at it from an outside perspective.

Sabrina has been very instrumental in breaking down my emotional business state as an entrepreneur, and really helping me break out my problems, and then assisting me with some really deep rooted skills and techniques, or teaching me techniques so I can learn new skills about how to react to things that are coming up in my business. I can say that over the last six months my relationship at home, I should say my relationship with my wife as it pertains to business is completely different. I don't come home and complain about work anymore. **I don't burden her, and it's really, that's really the key**

phrase for me. For years I burdened her with all my crap that I was bringing home to her, which was completely unfair. It wasn't good for me, it wasn't the right thing for me to do as a husband, to bring those problems home to my wife. That's been number one for me, just to relieve that stress of coming home, having an expectation that she's going to listen to all the crap that I'm bringing her, and then having her fix it. Then she's frustrated, and I'm frustrated.

First and foremost, **that's been beyond beneficial just in terms of our relationship.** Additionally, when I ... I don't look at getting home as my outlet to complain. It's definitely changed my ability to spend more time, spend more quality time with my children, and be present with them instead of just looking to race home and start complaining because I can't complain in front of all my employees, I have to of course come home and complain to my family. **That's been a really fantastic life changing thing for me, that's extremely important.**

From a coaching, coach/client perspective, one of the things that has been extremely beneficial to me is Sabrina's approach to helping me solve the problems, or the situations that come up, and situations that I have within the businesses. What I mean by that is I've had other business coaches in the past, and you start off the phone call with, "How are you feeling today? Why are you feeling that way?" And you just kind of do a lot of talking, and then you get off the phone call and you still have the problem.

The resources that Sabrina brings to the table and shares with all of her clients, and people within her groups, is beyond ... You can't even put a price tag on it because there's so many valuable experiences that she has under her belt from just by being a business owner herself, and then being involved with so many other business owners. It's a complete environment of sharing tips, and tools, and books, and resources amongst the entire group. When you're faced with a problem, it's not a ... Just to give you an example. From a business owner perspective, I have a personality of, "Let's just get it done, let's do whatever it takes. If we have to work seven days a week, 24 hours a day, we're just going to push through it, get it done." That forced me into a judger mentality.

Sabrina taught me a lot about the learner path, and the judger path, and some different techniques there. My initial thought process for so many years would be to take something that wasn't getting done by an employee, or subcontractor, or whatever it was, and automatically go down the judger path. Just a path of judgment of, "Why aren't they getting this done? Woe is me, I should have done it myself." I've learned over the course of several months to take a learner approach to it. Where we look at the problem and instead of my mind going down that negative path, I'm now looking at it as, "Well why isn't this person giving me the information that I need? Why isn't this employee doing what I'm asking them to do? What can I do differently to communicate? What questions can I ask that are different?" Or for me, just asking questions, because I would never even ask the questions.

That's one example of me bringing a problem to Sabrina and saying, "I'm having a problem with an employee. This employee is doing X." To me, learning how to completely change ... Or learning a system that changed my mindset that I use now

everyday for all aspects of my life. Which, that's about proactively and positively changing yourself, which brings you to higher levels of performance as a person, both family life, and entrepreneur life. Those are ... That by far is the biggest difference between just the standalone business coach who's going to talk to you for an hour a month or whatever it is, and ask you how you're feeling all day. As opposed to what Dr. Sabrina has to offer. That's one example of many that I've experienced in the six months that I've been working with her.

The other thing that really has changed my life is the increase in clarity that I have. As I mentioned, I've been in my own business for 25 years. Started the business when I was young, so right, wrong, or indifferent, my mindset was clouded, clogged, and manipulated by what I did do, or didn't do over the course of those years. Then the environment around me impacting my thinking even more.

In the last six months learning different higher level tools, techniques, to have a better mindset, and to have a better thought process has given me so much clarity in my businesses, and my life that it's instrumental now every single day to my growth. It doesn't mean by any means that I don't have problems, and I still don't have things that I need to work on. I believe that this is a life long learning process, and I have to continue everyday to learn, and to adapt, and to continue to use all these tools and tips that I'm learning, and these systems. It's also a lot of hard work.

I didn't go into the relationship with Sabrina as a coach thinking that she was going to solve all my problems. I specifically went to her to learn how to solve my own problems. It's been a tremendous amount of work on my part in being completely vulnerable, and open, and listening to what she has taught me, and how she's guided me in different ways. Some of it's hard to hear sometimes because as an entrepreneur, we tend to have a little bit of an ego, and we tend to think we're always doing things the right way. I went into it completely open, wanted to be vulnerable to the process, and just take everything that she was sharing with me in order to get myself to a higher level.

The transformation in the last six months has been more instrumental than anything that I did in the previous 25 years of business. I think when you're a seasoned entrepreneur, and you've made those mistakes, you've had a couple business coaches here and there, you've been part of a couple groups here and there, and you're ready to take it to the next level. The coaching that Dr. Sabrina offers is definitely the way to go in order to get your business, your personal life to another level.