

Announcer (3s):

Welcome to the Maximize Business Value Podcast. This podcast is brought to you by Mastery Partners, where our mission is to equip business owners to maximize business value so they can transition their business on their terms. Our mission was born from the lessons we've learned from over 100 business transactions, which fuels our desire to share our experiences and wisdom so you can succeed. Now, here's your host CEO of Mastery Partners, Tom Bronson.

Tom Bronson (35s):

Hi, this is Tom Bronson and welcome to Maximize Business Value for podcast for business owners who are passionate about building long-term sustainable value in your business. This episode is part of our series with speakers from the upcoming Business Transitions Summit. The B t s, as we call it, is our event on May 2nd, 2023 for business owners to learn how to maximize value of their business and begin preparing their business for their ideal transition. Now, the sad fact is that 83% of attempted transition transitions never reach the finish line.

Tom Bronson (1m 17s):

So most businesses don't know what they need to do to prepare their business for transition. And by the way, you couple that with the fact that a hundred percent of every business on the planet will eventually transition is almost a formula for disaster. So wouldn't it be a great opportunity for you to come on May 2nd and participate in the Business Transitions Summit and learn more about how to transition your business on your terms? Registration is now open@businesstransitionssummit.com. That's transitions with an s business transitionssummit.com. In this episode, I'd like to welcome our guest back to Maximize Business Value Ali Nasser, a number one Amazon bestselling author, a passionate entrepreneur, communicator, and life enthusiast.

Tom Bronson (2m 11s):

Now, you might recognize this episode's content from October last year where Ali and I spoke about his book The Business Owner's Dilemma. Well, Ali will be one of the keynote speakers at the Business Transition Summit on the topic of the business owner's dilemma. So here is part of that interview from last October to what Your appetite about what you are going to see at the Business Transitions Summit. I am very excited to welcome our guest, Ali Nasser, welcome to Maximize Business Value.

Ali Nasser (2m 48s):

Tom, thank you so much. It's a lovely introduction. I appreciate, appreciate being on the show.

Tom Bronson (2m 54s):

I'll tell you I was, it was, you know, I was sort of fan girlish when you and I were side by side at, at the, at the Exit Planning Institute and, and you know, I kept hoping that people who were rushing over to get your book might come over and get a copy of mine too, but

Ali Nasser (3m 12s):

I'm sure they

Tom Bronson (3m 12s):

Did. You, you ran out very quickly. That's very popular book. So, so I want to hear your story. Tell us a little bit about your background and why you became a certified exit planning advisor.

Ali Nasser (3m 23s):

Yeah, so the, the specifics to CPA was just enhancing, enhancing the outcome for business owners. You know, when you're in the world of helping guide and advise entrepreneurs anytime, you know, they're dealing with a major challenge or dilemma and, and the exit dilemma is one of the major ones that they deal with, you kinda latch onto how do I help in the best way? And I, I always am a believer and get to the right community of people that want to be a hero to the same entrepreneur that you do and start collaborating and sharing ideas. So that led me into working with the Exit Planning Institute and the moment I got hooked up with our community, it was, this is a like-minded group of people that really wanna help change the outcome for business owners in a positive, meaningful way.

Ali Nasser (4m 8s):

So that was my, my reason for getting involved and it's, it's been a fun journey.

Tom Bronson (4m 12s):

Awesome. What I'm glad that, that you started down that path. So what was the inspiration for the book? The Owner's dilemma?

Ali Nasser (4m 20s):

Yeah, so the business owner's dilemma, the journey of it started about 10 years ago. And Tom, I had some of the most life-changing experiences in this period of time and it had completely changed the trajectory of my work. So I'll, I'll make a a long story really shortest to how I got started in the business. I got into the wealth services industry by accident, didn't like the conflicts of interests and product focus and, you know, sales side of the business, but I loved helping and guiding people. And I almost left the business when I first started almost 20 years ago. But instead, the entrepreneur in me kicked in and said, why not create the business I wish existed and created guidance and advice-based program for entrepreneurs with their life's wealth.

Ali Nasser (5m 4s):

Fast forward 10 years, I had these experiences that changed my life and, and led me to write the book to business owners dilemma. So over a period of about two years, I had numerous engagements of business owners that had sold their companies. The num exit numbers were 20 million, a hundred million, 500 million at the largest, you know, big sizable exits, you know, where people would have total financial independence.

And what I noticed, the commonality, not just a one-off, but the commonality with these business owners is they were suffering, they were suffering with the life after they were suffering and struggling with the financial and life dilemmas that came as a result of their exit.

Ali Nasser (5m 45s):

They were struggling with their identity. Many of them struggled with their mental health and what's next and what, what's, where am I going from here? And many of them struggled with their personal relationships. And at a point when I thought, you've hit the summit of the mountain, right? You've, you've reached the top, you've had the 500 million exit, a hundred million exit. Instead I'm watching people with complete financial independence that are unable to enjoy the success that they had earned. And it crushed me cuz I, I was like, one day I want to be like you. I'd love to, to hit the point where my business has been so successful, we hit our purpose, we hit our outcome and we monetized, but I don't wanna be in the position that you're in.

Ali Nasser (6m 25s):

And it breaks my heart to watch this. So I started as a, as a coach and a guide and an advisor to them started to analyze like, what are the patterns that led to this? What are the commonalities, what's going on? And I realized the, the value of the work that I was doing, the consultative work that I was doing for entrepreneurs, and through this process, the analogy that came to mind, it's a mountain climbing analogy, is that if I ask you, Tom, what's the goal of climbing a mountain?

Tom Bronson (6m 50s):

Well, to get to the peak, right?

Ali Nasser (6m 52s):

To get to the top right. That's what most people will say the goal is. Now, this may sound silly, but in, in reality the true goal of climbing a mountain is to get to the top and to get back down safely. You can celebrate and enjoy the success. Right? And the interesting thing about mountain climbing statistics is 80% of the accidents that happen when mountain climbing, they don't happen on the way up. They happen on the way down,

Tom Bronson (7m 17s):

Really.

Ali Nasser (7m 19s):

And it's because we're so focused on reaching our perceived goal, which is to get to the peak that we don't think about what happens after we reach the peak. And at that point the air is thin, we're extremely exhausted, and we're not at the end, we're at the halfway point. We've now gotta figure out how to get back down. And, and this reminded me a very, a very similar analogy connected with the business owners I was working with. They weren't at the exit at the end, they were actually at the halfway point and they weren't

prepared for what came next. And this is what led to the challenges, the struggles, the dilemmas, the, the, the problems that they were facing. And from those experiences and the work that I did with those business owners to help them on their journey, I said, I want to share this message and the other dilemmas I've seen with entrepreneurs and share it with the entire business owner community.

Ali Nasser (8m 9s):

What's the best way to do that? And I wrote the book, the Business Owner's Dilemma, and that was the way to democratize the thought process, my system, the framework. And I took the entire wealth integration system for entrepreneurs and the dilemmas and put it all in the book, the business owners dilemma.

Tom Bronson (8m 25s):

Wow. That's that's an amazing story. The so many business owners really think that, that that exit point is the end. And, and I haven't really, that's a great analogy to think of it as you're really kinda only halfway because so many stumble and just like the 80% of of accidents that happen on the way back down the mountain, I think it's probably at least that much or more for business owners when they're coming back down the other side to celebrate. I, in, in my own book, I tell a story about my father, which was really one of the passions that I have for being in this business and, and helping business owners achieve a, a nice result.

Tom Bronson (9m 14s):

Yeah, my dad had a great exit when he was 55 years old and he died three years later and, and my brother and I had a long conversation about this just the other day. Yeah. So he was my age. So I mean, boy, that kind of brings it home for you, doesn't it? Yeah, my dad died and so that was a long time ago, 22 years ago. And, and my brother and I had a long conversation about it the other day where he had finally come to the realization my brother did that dad, the official cause of death was cancer. But that's not why dad died. Dad died because he no longer had a sense of purpose, you know, and that, and, and, and I share that passion with you to try and, and figure out how to help business owners think about that because that's one of the first questions we ask and I'm sure it is for you as well.

Tom Bronson (10m 9s):

Business owner calls, he's all excited, ready to exit his business. And I always ask, well, what's next? What are you, what are you gonna do after that? Right. Right. So, and and because it causes them to start thinking about that. So I I love that analogy. So is that fair that that, that what you just described to it, is that the purpose and the mission of the book? Or or is it even deeper than that?

Ali Nasser (10m 29s):

Well, I think a huge part of the book is, is exit strategy, but they're three major dilemmas that entrepreneurs face and we, it's really addressing all three dilemmas and then the surrounding decisions. So it's a holistic entrepreneurial journey that's addressed within the book with the business growth and exit planning being, I'm gonna call it a third of the equation.

Tom Bronson (10m 51s):

Well, so let's, let's talk about this. You, you brought those up, the three dilemmas. I love that in the book. And you, you really describe everything very succinctly. What are the three dilemmas business owners will face?

Ali Nasser (11m 4s):

Sure. So the, the first dilemma I called a reinvestment dilemma, it's, I've been successful with my company, I've made great profits. What do I do with the profits? Do I reinvest it back in the company? Do I start a new company? Do I buy real estate, invest in the stock market and private equity bonds, cash? Nowadays people are talking about crypto, you know, where do I take my capital and, and reinvest in the most effective way? That's, that's the first of the three dilemmas. The second dilemma is the legacy dilemma. It's a little bit deeper of a question, what is it all for? All of this wealth that I'm building, perhaps more wealth than I'll ever need, is this, for me, my lifestyle is this for my children?

Ali Nasser (11m 45s):

Is this for charity? Is it for fun? Is it for ego? Will the wealth that I have built, will it be a source of empowerment for my children or a source of entitlement for my children? These are all different aspects of the legacy dilemma. And then the third dilemma is the exit dilemma, which is, should I scale this company further? Should I sell it or do I leave it to my son or daughter? Do I sell it to my executive management team? If I sell my company, will I now have freedom of purpose or will I have just sold my life's purpose? And these are all different aspects of the exit dilemma. So what I've experienced working with, with business owners in, in a, in a consulting advisory capacity for just about 20 years, is that about 90% of the mental real estate when it comes to planning their life's work tends to revolve around one of these three dilemmas in some way, shape, or form.

Ali Nasser (12m 37s):

Most other questions all connect to these three core underlying dilemmas. And and that's really taking up a lot of mental chatter for entrepreneurs. They're constantly thinking about it. And the reason it's so hard to bring it together and address it is this isn't just a, a business or financial decision, it's a wealth decision and a life decision. And when you combine emotions with financial decisions, there's a lot of complexity.

Tom Bronson (13m 4s):

Oh boy, yes.

Ali Nasser (13m 5s):

I mean it's, we're so emotionally connected to our businesses, it's not a financial asset. It's much more than that. And that's why it's so unique for, for, for business owners.

Tom Bronson (13m 15s):

Took me a long time to realize that, you know, our, our listeners know that I've done a hundred transactions in my career. I've, wow, I've been an, a serial entrepreneur and only in the last several years have, have converted to helping other business owners kind of achieve the same success that I have. And, but it took me a long time to realize that my businesses weren't my baby. And that came from a, a, one of my mentors. I had the, I had the gift of having so many great mentors through my life, but one of my mentors said, look Tom, it's an asset. It's an asset to enable you to provide for your family and to enable you to exit someday.

Tom Bronson (13m 57s):

So treat it like that. It's not a family, but so many business owners, their life revolves around their business. Right.

Ali Nasser (14m 6s):

And that's the norm.

Tom Bronson (14m 7s):

A and that's, and that is so tough. And when you talk about like the legacy, you know, dilemma, you know, that legacy to me sometimes goes to, to family, right? But it's not necessarily just family. You can exit the business, sell it to somebody else, and it's, it's your personal legacy. But so many times now, the next generation's just not interested in the business. And business owners fool themselves sometimes into, well, I've built this up and I'm leaving it to my children, but the children don't want the business. And, and as soon as that passion is gone from the business, the value of the business declines rapidly. I've had to have that really very difficult conversation with business owners to, to express to them that the best outcome if they really want to provide for their family, is to think about selling that business with third party.

Tom Bronson (14m 58s):

Cuz the children don't wanna run that business. Right? And so, so yeah, these are, these are three great things that, that spur business owners to think a little bit deeper, which is really what we want to do, right? Right. We're not here to solve problems. What we're here to do is ask a lot of questions and, and start those conversations, right? Because I can't tell you what, what you, your legacy should look like. I can't tell you. I now you can certainly help with the reinvestment side because that's what you do for a living, right? But, but all I can do is ask you those hard questions. And I think that that's why a lot of entrepreneurs don't work on their exit strategy early enough because they really don't know what questions to ask and they need to find books like this and, and people like you and I to, to challenge them with asking those questions.

Tom Bronson (15m 56s):

Do you find that, when you talk about these three dilemmas with business owners, is it hard to get them to open up and talk about those things?

Ali Nasser (16m 6s):

It's, it can be challenging at times, I think, so I speak to CEO groups almost on a, almost on a weekly basis, like A Y P O or Vistage or eeo, something like that. And when I talk about the three dilemmas, usually I'm gonna call it two-thirds of the group or like, oh, I'm dealing with that and I'm dealing with this part of that. But it's very surface level for, for the majority. And then there's a few that are really dealing with some deep questions around what's, what's really happening, what's really my path here? And I think the more like, just as you said, the more questions you ask them, the brain can't ignore a question. So when I ask, when I ask a business owner, what's your end goal for the company? And many of them, I, I don't know, I haven't defined that yet.

Ali Nasser (16m 47s):

Well, let's, let's talk about it for a few minutes. Let's think about it. What is your end goal for the company? And, and how are you gonna take this awesome business asset that you've built and how are you gonna translate it to personal success or personal wealth? And I'll share a little more here. It's I'll, I'll, I'll talk about three different paths. I'm like, you can, you can have sale, you can have succession, or you can have savings. So sale is, is you're gonna sell this to a buyer. The buyer could be external like a private equity firm or a strategic buyer, or it could be internal where you sell it to your, your management team or your, your, your, something of that nature. You could succeed the company, you know, have the succession to your son or daughter and it could be some form of a sale in that as well.

Ali Nasser (17m 27s):

You, and you could, you could monetize through savings where there's many business owners I meet, they've got a healthy, wonderful earning stream, they love their company, they're making \$5 million of profit from their business. And you build a plan to extract cash from the company over time. And you build, I have some comp business owners who have never exited and they have 50 million of, of liquid separate from the business net worth. But they don't wanna exit cuz they love their company and they enjoy it every day. Well, there's no reason to sell your company for a monetary benefit if your purpose is to run that business. So what I, what I encourage you as the owner to think about is what is your end goal for the company and what is your plan to monetize the value of the company?

Ali Nasser (18m 10s):

It doesn't mean you have to sell cuz there are other ways to monetize, but think about that. And usually that type of question gets people going and, and letting them know you don't have to commit to the outcome forever. You can change your mind. It really helps as well. So I think to, to your point, the more questions you ask them in the right way, the more it wakes up their brain and then they build their own sense of urgency around what they want to focus on.

Tom Bronson (18m 33s):

Yeah. We do what we, what we tell our clients or ask our clients to do is paint a clear picture and what we want. We want their exit. What does it look like? You know, how are they, what, what's, how do they need to

monetize it? What do they, what type of a transaction are they thinking about? Because if they can paint a vivid picture in their own mind, then we can help them achieve that goal, right? And so, so I like that one last business question. Our, you know, our, our podcast is all about maximizing business value. And so from your perspective, what is the one most important thing business owners should do to build value in their business?

Ali Nasser (19m 17s):

The one most important thing business owners can do to build value in their business. So it's focusing on their unique competitive advantage. And every business owner has a superpower, I'm gonna call it that just to, to, to make it really easy to understand. Some people call it flow, some call it unique skills or unique abilities. Some people call it your gifts, your flow. But there's something that you can do as a business owner, as an entrepreneur that is your superpower. And if you were to go head-to-head with anyone in the world, that would be, if you were gonna go ahead with anyone in the world and you had to compete at something, what's that thing you would compete at? If you're Tony Robbins, it might be motivating and inspiring.

Ali Nasser (19m 58s):

If it's Bill Clinton, it might be diplomacy. If it's, if it's Donald Trump, it might be telling things in a blunt way. Whatever, whatever it is. That's your, your unique ability superpower. How can you leverage that to create a unique and unfair competitive advantage in your business and utilize that to, to, to where your company is a market leader in that particular way where a strategic buyer or a private equity buyer is gonna go, that's a skill, that's an ability that we need and that's gonna help maximize the value of your company because you're focusing on your unique strengths and talents versus just saying, oh, what, what do we want to compete with in the marketplace?

Ali Nasser (20m 38s):

And let's use that driver focus on where you have an unfair competitive advantage. I think that's the most powerful thing you can do.

Tom Bronson (20m 44s):

I love that. And so many business owners don't really go through the, the, the process to really understand what their superpower is. If you ask a hundred entrepreneurs, what is your superpower? Many of them wouldn't be able to answer that question. And, and I love that. That's, that by the way, is the first time I've heard that answer on this. Oh wow. So I love that. I, I, that's, like I said, I can just talk to you. Thank all today. Thank so, but I also can't let you off the hook. You play this far and our and our listeners know what's coming next cuz I always ask the same question and that is, what personality trait has gotten you into the most trouble through the years?

Ali Nasser (21m 32s):

Just one.

Tom Bronson (21m 34s):

Just one. It's an only an hour long program. Come on.

Ali Nasser (21m 38s):

Yeah. Yeah. I could spend all day on that one. So I have this, it, it kind of connects to my superpower in a way, but I have this thing where I can simplify complexity in my head. And when I take on a new initiative or a new idea, I can come up with the first 80% of the strategy in a very short period of time. It might be 10 minutes, it might be an hour, it might be a little whiteboarding session where I can come up with this new initiative and I can lay out 80% of the plan, the idea, the flow in a very short period of time. So I'm like, Hey, I got the first 80% and I'll bring it to my team or whoever it is and going, let's get this, let's get this going.

Ali Nasser (22m 19s):

And my, I become incredibly impatient because I'm like, here's the first 80%. And what I've realized over the years is that the last 20% takes 99% of the time. And, and I've always looked at it before as like, well, why aren't we getting this done sooner? How come this has got that? Why can't we just do A, B and C? And when I work on the last 20%, instead of having others work on it, I realize like, wow, this, this takes a lot more than expected. And over the years it has gotten me into so much trouble because I am underestimating the lifting that takes place to get something to the finish line.

Tom Bronson (22m 56s):

You know, I would recommend if you haven't done this before, Ali, is build a house because just like what exactly what you just described. It all looks like it, man, that went up in a hurry. We're gonna be moving in. No, it's all the finishes and

Ali Nasser (23m 14s):

You got it. You got it. And we see the same thing with planning for, with business owners. I can come up with the, the 80% whiteboard strategy in a few hours. Getting it to the finish line might take us a year or two. I mean it's, yeah, yeah. The house analogy is great. You're totally right. I'm still working on some things in mind.

Tom Bronson (23m 33s):

Yeah, I, I met with a, i I kicked off a new project with a client yesterday and, and he's got some challenges in his business and we're trying to help him basically with some turnaround stuff. And I, and I said, look, I'm not a miracle worker. You know, I I'm not walking in here to give you magic bullets. We're gonna start with the basics and work our way forward and, and, and if we're not making progress, then we'll call it quits because there's no sense in, in going down. So that's a, that's a whole different challenge, right? For a business owner. It is, it does take time right. To do those things. And I'm with, I'm like you, I I have a little bit of

impatience. I've, I've been, I've been told that I'm impatient.

Tom Bronson (24m 15s):

I don't believe. So how can our viewers and listeners get in touch with you

Ali Nasser (24m 21s):

The easiest way and, and I offer this on, on, on my podcast, but just email me ali@alinasser.com. Simple as that. I, I do get emails from podcasts, but hey, I just heard the email. I just dropped you a note. Anything, if you wanna give feedback, ask a question. Just connect ali@alinasser.com and then of course the website there is just alinasser.com and I'd love to, love to connect. LinkedIn is also always great and you know, if you check out the book, but keep it easy.

Tom Bronson (24m 49s):

Ali, thank you for being our guest today. This was a wonderful conversation,

Ali Nasser (24m 54s):

Tom. I'm, I'm humbled and grateful to be on the show and I've loved every minute of the conversation. Thank you.

Tom Bronson (24m 60s):

Well, I hope you enjoyed this repurposing of the interview that we did with Ali Nasser last year and plan to come to the Business Transition Summit so that you can learn live from this amazing entrepreneur. You can find Ali_nasser@alinasser.com, that's a [l i n A s s e r . c o m](http://alinasser.com) or on LinkedIn. And of course, you can always reach out to me and I will be happy to make a warm introduction. This is the Maximized Business Value podcast where we give practical advice to business owners on how to build long-term sustainable value in your business. Be sure to tune in each week and follow us wherever you found this podcast.

Tom Bronson (25m 44s):

So until next time, I'm Tom Bronson minding you to register today for the Business Transitions summit@businesstransitionssummit.com, so that you can learn how to maximize business value.

1 (26m 4s):

Thank

Announcer (26m 4s):

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partners.com. Check it out.

Tom Bronson (26m 39s):

That was perfect. I wouldn't make any changes on that.