



#18 | 5 Traits Of An Accountability Partner

Hello, my fellow Chill business trekkers. I'm so appreciative to have you joining me today on this episode of The Chill Business Journey. I know there are many other things you could be doing with your time right now, so thank you for spending it with me!

Now, if you are anything like me, many times you end up in panic mode trying to decide what you want to cover with the original content you create. Whether that is a blog post, a video or a podcast episode. I know I need to have a little more discipline with myself when it comes to this, but I'm definitely giving myself some grace to getting used to all that goes in to creating these weekly podcasts.

This past weekend, my family did our annual participation in Denver's Comic Con. I suppose I should use the proper terminology and call it what it actually is: Denver's Pop Culture Con. My boys are big comic fans, so this is our third year going. However, we splurged a little and got the full 3 day pass (as opposed to a single day pass like the previous years). Bear with me...I promise to tie this all together. So, this past Friday thru Sunday, I was clocking some serious miles on my Apple watch. So much so, that each evening I collapsed in bed as soon as we got home. Side note...I broke my ankle/foot in 2 places just over a month ago. And 2 days before the Pop Culture Con, I was given permission by the doc to stop wearing the stabilization boot. I started physical therapy the day before the conference. Let me tell you...my foot was HURTING each day. And I was walking with a significant limp, which messed up my gait and caused all sorts of problems. But I digress...

THAT all caused me not to record my weekly podcast this past weekend. And that had me panicking last night wondering what in the heck I was going to share in this week's recording. Then a big 'ol light bulb went off for a topic. One of the things that has kept me grounded many times in my life is having accountability partners. I've done it with working out (like I have to have a personal trainer otherwise I just don't do it) and I've definitely done it with my business. Whether it's during an online course, in a business development group or independently with another entrepreneur.

And it is during these crazy out of the ordinary times that life throws at me that my accountability partner has kept me grounded with my eye on the prize. Now, I have mentioned my current accountability partner many times in this podcast. In fact, I actually interviewed her on this podcast earlier this year. She talked all about Making Money with Live Streams. And that "she" is Daphné F Leblanc. I'll be sure to put a link to that interview in the show notes for this episode. Which you can find at chilldigitalmarketing.com/18.

Daphné and I have supported each other for a couple of years now. While we may not be consistent all year long, we are definitely here for each other as we embark on new adventures. Right now we are both working on online courses and membership sites. This allows us to really be in the trenches together on the same topics. But I will get to those items throughout this discussion.

Therefore, this week's episode is about accountability partners. And more specifically, 5 traits to look for in someone that you want to be held accountable to or with. So, let's dive into these 5 traits.

The first one is probably the most important one, and this is: Do you click? I mean, how awkward would it be to have to speak with someone on a weekly or monthly basis that you, well, don't connect with at all. It would probably be unbearable, not to mention very easy to just not call them if you didn't really like talking to them. And what good would that do you to have an accountability partner that you never speak to? Afterall, the whole purpose is to better yourself and your business.

I can tell you, Daphné and I click. We click almost too well. Or should I say, we click almost to the point that it's not healthy haha! We will schedule a 1 hr call to go over what we are working on or what we may be stuck on. And then we blink our eyes and over 2 hours have gone by! One of the reasons that we get along so well is that we are in very similar places in our personal lives. We'll talk about the business side in a minute but clicking with your accountability partner needs to have that personal element too.

Daphné and I are both mothers, and 4 of our children are close in age (that's 2 of mine and 2 of hers). We are both married, so we can relate to each other when talking about our husbands. I'm from the South, she currently lives in a southern state. All of these things come together to make it easy for us to talk to each other and connect – even though most of our conversations are about our businesses.

And our visions and ideals both personally and for our businesses are very similar. The trajectories we want to take our businesses are very similar. Therefore, it makes the discussions we have about strategies, goals, tools and such, all the more exciting to talk about. And when one of us discovers something, the other one is just as interested and excited about it.

Another key point on the personal side of this relationship is that you find an accountability partner that tends to stay in the positive lane of life. You do not want to be surrounding yourself with people that are always Debbie Downers or Negative Nancys. If you surround yourself with positive people, it will help you to stay in the positive lane of life in general as well.

The second trait you want to look for in an accountability partner is: Are your businesses at the same level. Now they don't have to be at the exact same level, but you don't want to have one partner just starting out with zero clients or customers and the other one is like Jeff Bezos and owns Amazon. That would end up being a very one-sided relationship, where the budding entrepreneur will be getting all the benefits of the seasoned Amazon style owner. If it were a relationship like that, it would be more like a mentor/mentee situation.

You want to find someone that is on the same level so you can relate to each other. Whether it's the wins or struggles, you will both have a pretty good idea what the other is experiencing. And in the same vein as surrounding yourself with positive people, you also want to keep your finger on the pulse that there are more wins than struggles for your accountability partner. If you are constantly having to support them during their business struggles, it has the potential to have a negative draw on your business too. And be mindful of where you stand with your business as well. If you feel like you have more losses than wins, maybe what you need is a business coach. Your accountability partner is there to support you in getting the things done that you need to get done.

Daphné and I fill this trait pretty well. While she may be ahead of me in many ways, we are still pretty close in general with the size and operations of our respective businesses. Although I personally think she is a way bigger badass than me...but I'm not going to be sipping the jealousy kool-aid on that topic. I know I'm doing some pretty amazing things too. And the cool thing about an accountability partner is they will remind you how much you are really doing that is amazing. We tend to be our own worst critics!

The third trait you want to look for in an accountability partner is pretty closely related to the previous trait. And it is: are you able to help them and they are able to help you? You definitely do not want to find yourself in a situation where the support is always one sided. If you feel like they are constantly giving you advice to advance your business, and you haven't been contributing very much, then take some time to see how your knowledge can help them in some way. Maybe it's in a technical aspect vs. a business strategy aspect. Or maybe you have a connection in your professional life that can take their business to the next level. So, make that introduction for them. Or maybe they have reached out to you in a moment of struggle and you find you don't have an answer for them. But you can share a related situation, so they don't feel so alone in their struggle.

On the flip side, be sure to pay attention to see if they are reciprocating support to you. It can be draining both for you personally as well as professionally if you are always the giver in the relationship. You are definitely a unicorn if you never need help with your business. Your accountability partner should have enough business acumen to be able to support you as much as you support them. Overall, make sure the person you choose is going to be the type to give as much as they take.

One of the things I love about the communication Daphné and I have is that if something comes up right then and there...we can message each other for support. Although I must admit these moments of crisis are usually because one of us is about to buy something for our business because it's the new shiny thing – thank you AppSumo. And we have to talk the other one off the ledge. Other times it's a pure FOMO situation (that's Fear Of Missing Out). A lot of ledge talks happen when we message each other.

The fourth trait you want to look for in an accountability partner is: Are they on the same intelligence level as you? I know that sounds a bit awkward, so let me try to explain that a little better. Now this example may seem a bit extreme, but I hope it gets the point across. I am a small business owner with a business degree in accounting. I wouldn't categorize myself as

unintelligent. However, an astrophysicist who is insanely intelligent probably would not make a good accountability partner for me when it comes to my business. Their brain is just on another plane all together (and possible another dimension). Now if they are knitting hats in their spare time and I wanted to pick up knitting again, then maybe that would be a good fit haha!

The point here is that you want to work with someone that you will be able to communicate with on the same level. Now what it doesn't mean is that you have to find someone in your same industry. I was in a professional development group and my accountability partner in that group was an architect. Our businesses were in two totally different industries, but they were still at the same stages and we got along really well too. In fact, she and I are still really good friends and get together a couple of times a year to catch up.

I think by now you know that Daphné is not an astrophysicist. So, we do just fine with this trait. I think it is definitely a bonus that we work in the same industry, because we can geek out on all the tools and strategies in digital marketing without losing the other one in our industry lingo.

Now for the final trait and that is: Do they have the bandwidth to meet with you regularly AND respect your time? This one is pretty self-explanatory, but for those that may be confused, let me elaborate. Say you have found someone that meets the 4 previous traits. That is so awesome! You click really well, your businesses are at the same level or stages, you think the relationship will be reciprocal with both parties contributing, and you are on the same intelligence level. And then the ball drops big time. They are constantly cancelling and rescheduling your calls. Then they are cancelling the rescheduled calls. Until eventually you feel like all you hear are fields of crickets.

When you are about to embark on an accountability partnership with another professional, you want to make sure that not only is this something they are dialed in to doing, but they have the time to commit to it. If they can't respect your time enough to at least not bail on you, then you may need to move on and find another partner.

The whole point of an accountability partner is to have someone on your side that will keep you moving forward. If they aren't around to do that, then you definitely are not benefiting from the relationship. You also don't want to pressure or guilt someone else into being your accountability partner or they may end up ghosting you. Not only does that not feel good, but it doesn't help you move your business forward either.

Daphné and I have been supporting each other for a couple of years now. But the accountability part ebbs and flows as our schedules allow for it. As I mentioned before, we are both in a growth spurt and producing some new content we've never had before, so keeping each other on task has really helped us the last few weeks. And we work in such a manner in that we can also take time "off" from the partnership to put more focus on our individual businesses.

However, our messenger app doesn't go more than a couple of days before we are desperately needing help off yet another ledge!

The big takeaway for you today is to know that an accountability partner can really help you not only stay on track with your business and your goals, but also be a support partner to offer advice when decisions need to be made. The 5 main traits you need to consider when vetting an accountability partner are: 1) do you click 2) are your businesses at the same stage or level 3) are there areas you can help each other with 4) are you both on the same intelligence level and 5) do they have the bandwidth and desire to meet regularly.

When you are a small business owner, you may not have a team at your disposal to brainstorm with and bounce ideas around with. Therefore, finding the perfect person to partner with, the sky really is the limit. You are no longer in solitary confinement. You have the freedom to spread your wings and know someone is there to tell whether or not that's a good idea.

Thank you again so much for joining me today and spending this time with me. I know you have choices, and I appreciate you choosing me. Be sure to check out the show notes page at chilldigitalmarketing.com/18 to get the link to the interview I did with Daphné a couple of months ago. See you next time!