

[00:00:30] Patrick: Alright, a super short episode this week, episode 116. Welcome to the show. The Navy has a mantra, a saying that they use. It's accredited to them and it goes, slow is smooth and smooth is fast.

Slow is smooth and smooth is fast. Now this is a hard one for me because I'm all about speed. And people who know me know I just always want to move. I want to do it. Let's do it. We've made the decision. Let's go. I'm a high d on the disc, uh, metric. And I just, my son, in fact, recently pointed out to, to me and, and his mom that I tend to do everything fast. I run downstairs, I move my hands around. If I'm, it doesn't matter if I'm doing dishes or playing the guitar or walking. I just tend to do everything fast. And it's not that I'm particularly in a hurry. I think I just have developed this mindset or this, I don't know, this muscle memory that just moves fast on things.

I read fast, sometimes faster than I should.

I work fast. I might procrastinate, but when I get on it, I move fast. And it's been, I think for me, an asset. I think it's helped me in my life. I think it's gotten me where I am.

But I often pause and just question, did it, though? Has it? What if I had, what if I had slowed down a little bit more, absorbed some learning a little bit better early on, maybe even made some different life choices. I make decisions fast.

Some of that, you know, we joke about it as if it's a male female thing. I mean, my wife and I can go looking for a new car. And now the first one I like, I'm like, that's good. I like this one, let's get this one. And she's like, well, we haven't even seen them all. I'm like, well, we don't need to. It's 04:00 let's go. It's gonna take us a while to do the paperwork. Let's just get this one.

And I just tend to, I just tend to move that way. And I've made a lot of big life decisions that way. So I. You know, I do wonder if I'd slowed down a little bit, would I have made some different decisions? How would those have turned out? For the most part, I think my speed has been an asset. I remember my first performance appraisal as a CEO, worked for a board in Virginia, and my board chair completed the performance appraisal, and it had in there. Patrick's greatest strength is his impatience. He has moved things along in this organization that we've been talking about for 20 years, and now they're done.

Patrick's greatest weakness is his impatience, because he sometimes can get pushy and want to have his way, and he's stubborn about things. So I think, for the most part, my impatience and my speed, like I said, have served me well. But there are times have been times when it didn't. I worked for a board where my speed was not an asset. It was absolute liability, because I moved more quickly than my board was prepared to move on particular things. And so I broke the Marty Linsky definition of leadership. Disappointing your own people at a rate they can absorb. I surpassed that absorption rate. So I'm pausing on this episode this week, and again, it's a really short one. I just kind of wanted to share this thought that's been running in my head a lot last couple of weeks of slow down, slow down. Um, there. I've told this story to a few people who know me well. I was, uh. I don't know, must have been maybe 16 or 17, and we lived out in north Lewes, northwest Louisiana, out in the country. And I'm coming home late one night, and. And I'm driving. And I'm driving way too fast, as 16 and 17 year old boys tend to do. And I'm on one of these two lane highways with the yellow line in the middle that's really curvy. On my way home, and I'm. I'm taking the curves. I'm having fun. It's late. Late at night. It's pitch black. There's no lights out there.

And this voice just said, slow down.

And I don't know. It was. It was weird. I've heard people tell these stories. Oh. A voice spoke to me. I don't. Look. Was it God? Was it my. Was it my conscience? Was it, like, was it a ghost? I don't know. I wouldn't say the voice was audible, but it. But the words were clear in my head. Slow down. And so, you know, I slowed it down a little bit, and I kind of, you know, took the weight off my right foot a little bit, but I'm still moving at a pretty good pace. And this voice tells me, again, slow down.

And I listened. I remember this vividly. I remember literally looking around in the car going where's this coming from? Why, why am I feeling this? Why am I feeling like I need to slow down?

And finally this, this voice said, you are not listening though. You. I'm. When I say slow down, I mean slow down. Slow way down. So I'm just thinking, I'm laughing at this point, going, where is this coming from? I am playing tricks in my own head.

I go around a curve to the left. A really steep curve. Wasn't a hairpin, but it was one that I couldn't have taken, you know, much faster than probably 15 miles an hour. And as I go around in the road are about a dozen head of cattle just wandering the road right in the curve. I pulled the car over and I just bawled. I just, I became so emotional about this thinking, man, where was that voice coming from? Because I absolutely would have been killed just now if I had been going the pace that I was going before I started listening to this, this inner voice.

And it just slowed down. That was it. And so a number of times in my life I've thought, you know, I probably should hear that voice every once in a while. Well, I heard it again this a couple of weeks ago during a practicum, a leadership coaching practicum that I am in. I am taking a certification in systemic team coaching which is led by doctor Peter Hawkins. And if you want to know who this guy is, just look him up, you'll see the real deal. I mean this, this guy is so.

Well, he's slow and calm and calming and smooth.

And in one of his lessons he talks about slowing down and it just really hit me. So I, I go to another course I'm taking, this life coaching course I'm taking and this guy, he's got an entire module on it. Slow down.

And I'm listening to this going, okay, let me hear what this is about. And of course he's talking about an actual coaching session that when you're in a coaching session, slow down. You don't have to get straight to the results immediately. Mister high D, mister impatient. Slow down. Take your time. Ask the questions. Let the questions sit. Let silence come. If that's what is required for the coachee to pull out of their own heads the answers to these questions.

And as I got to thinking about it, I started to drift in my thoughts about slowing down. And when I kind of came back into paying attention to the lesson, he was talking about selling. Selling your coaching. If you're in a coaching business and trying to get people to engage you and pay for you to coach them. And again, he was saying, slow down. Stop selling. Just talk to people. Just have a relationship. Just find out where they are, find out what it is they want help with. Do a little coaching with them, even. Even though they may not even be realizing what's happening. Let them experience it. Slow down. The. The selling will come.

You don't have to sell people if you just show them that you care about them, that you have a relationship, that you're capable of coaching them in this moment. And so then I just. I stopped the lesson, and I got out my little journal, and I started writing about this slowing down, and the phrase came to me, slow is smooth. Smooth is fast. It's a Navy Seal mantra. And when they explain it, at least one Navy seal that I have heard explain it is that when you start training, you

don't just immediately hand you a rifle and say, okay, now take it apart, put it back together in 30 seconds. Go. You take. You have to learn it first. So the first thing is. Yeah, slow down. We'll get to that. We'll get to that part. Don't. Don't get ahead of the steps. Let's. We're going to teach you the steps.

Once you get it down smoothly, then it automatically starts speeding up because it's smooth, and it's smooth because you've created muscle memory to where it's almost natural. It's. It's automatic.

And so slowing down is what enables you then to speed up. And like I said, it's a hard one for me because I. To me, fast is fast. The first time I heard slow is smooth, and smooth is fast, I looked at whoever said it to me like they had just, you know, fallen off a truck, because.

No, no, no. Slow is slow, and fast is fast, but it's really not true. And I'm learning it more and more as my business grows, as I engage more people in coaching, as I just, you know, progress through life. At this particular stage, you do tend to just go, all right, maybe. Maybe I just need to slow down. So I want to. Here's what I want to do on the. On the podcast episode here today for you is I want you to think about something you're working on, something that frustrates you.

Maybe think about how you get up and go to work in the morning. If you're like me. You bounce out of bed, you immediately turn on the call and you're hitting it. You're getting, you're getting the computer up, you're returning emails. I mean, within. Within just a very few minutes, I'm in full gear and I'm trying to slow that down. But I want you to think about just, just whatever comes to mind right now is a situation. You're facing a challenge, a big body of work that you're facing, a leader that you're trying to develop. And there's either conflict or just lack of speed for you. And I just want you to pause and just picture. Don't even slow down. Just picture what it would be to slow down.

Just think about how that even feels and sounds in your head.

I'm just allowing the pause there for a minute. I know this is a podcast, so you can't pause for long, but just think about that a minute. What does it feel like to just take that situation and just take a deep breath and just slow down?

Now, I could do an entire episode on how to speed up and why it's important to go fast. In fact, next week's YouTube episode is about moving more quickly to get new leaders fully integrated into their new role. So we're going to talk about speed on a video episode next week.

But there are times when speed must be measured, like when you're going around a curve.

So what is the curve? You're going around in your business, in your organization, in your relationships, where you just need to. This is a curve. It's. It's okay to slow down. In fact, it's imperative that you slow down or you're gonna go off the edge.

You've seen it. It's probably happened to you in life. You've gone off the edge because you just didn't slow down.

Slow down while you speed up for your team. So I'm coaching some people right now that are such assertive leaders. They are. I can relate to them because they operate like I do.

Do the next thing. Let's go. Do it. Do it. More, more, more. Change, change, change. Their change agents, they're fast, they want to move. They see the vision, and once they see the vision, they're on it.

And that's all fine unless you pass that absorption rate. And when your team is there, and particularly when your team is growing and you have a large numbers of people in your organization, they might need you to slow down just a little bit so that you can speed up again.

And so then I got to thinking about this, this analogy, I don't know, you can decide whether or not it works, but my brain was just going all over the place on slowing down, because here my, I'm having cognitive dissonance, you know, I'm going, this just really is not, I can't, it doesn't commute for me.

So I'm thinking, well, you know, when you're flying in a jet airplane and you're sitting in a chair going 600 miles an hour, it doesn't feel like it, it really, it feels like you're sitting still. Unless there's turbulence, you don't feel the speed, but you're going, you know, I don't, I think it's around five or 600 miles an hour at, you know, whatever height, 30,000ft. But you don't feel that.

And I got to thinking, I wonder how leaders in their organizations could fly the jet. How can we at least make it to where our team members don't feel how fast we might actually be going? What would that take? What kind of mindset would I have to create, number one among my team? And number two, how do I execute on things that quickly in a way that the team doesn't feel like we're about to fall off the merry go round? There's another analogy. The earth. The earth is actually spinning very quickly, but we don't feel it. We go outside and everything is standing still. We're not, we don't feel, you know, the breeze is not to. The wind is not about to knock us over.

It would seem that way, though, because that's how a merry ground, a merry go round works. If we're on a merry go round, we go too fast, someone pushes it too fast, we fall off. The centrifugal force.

Centrifugal or centripetal? I never know which one is which. I think it's centrifugal force. Some force throws us off the merry go round, and that's how some of us are running our organizations. We just keep grabbing the bars on the merry go round and just throw it, just like swinging it as hard as we can in the playground to, you know, because fast is fun.

But then when the, you know, when the little kid falls off, we feel bad.

How do we, how do we make our organizations feel like the earth where we really are cruising, but it doesn't constantly feel like we're cruising. You don't have people so frustrated and so afraid and so not caught up and so chaotic and out of balance that they can't perform at the highest levels, which slows everything down for you. And then you become frustrated. How do we do that?

I'm going to leave you with that question.

My hope is that today, maybe even after you have completed this episode and heard the outro music, you just turn it off and pause and close your eyes and go, what do I need to slow down on?

There might be something you need to speed up on, but right now just think about the things you need to slow down.

It's not going to kill you if you slow down. Just take a breath. Slow is smooth, smooth is fast. Get your bearings. Help your team feel the smooth.

And then as a team, they will be ready to move fast. As one unit, not as well. Four of us are

really caught up and running 90 to nothing, but three of us are struggling because we never really fully developed such and such and yet we're supposed to be executing on it. I hear this all the time from teams. We need to slow down and catch up to our growth.

I'm just going to leave you with that question. What do you need to slow down on? How would you do it? How can you create an environment, a culture and cultural environment in your organization that is moving fast but doesn't feel like it's too fast for your team?

I struggled so much with the phrase if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

And I, the first time I heard that, I just thought, that is, sorry, but I reject the premise of that because I can go fast together, can't I?

And I can go far alone, can't I? I mean, is that you telling me that's impossible?

Do you know, the more you think about it and the more you experience whether or not that statement is completely absolute, it's pretty close. It actually does make sense. We don't do things fully by ourselves. Even as a solopreneur, I don't, you know, I don't. I have stakeholders. I have, I don't go as fast as I want to go if my clients aren't ready to go, if my other stakeholders, my team, the market.

So we really don't go alone fully. You certainly aren't. If you're running an organization, you are not going it alone.

So slow down. Focus on getting smooth. Focus on going far. The speed will come and I don't know, I guess that's just about all I got to say about that. I hope that your week is going well and if you're in the throes of it and you're just feeling the heat and feeling the stress. Hey, just slow down. Slow is smooth. Smooth is fast. We'll see you here next time. Lead on.