

Learning to Manage Your Lifestyle as a Busy Business Owner with Ben Herbert

Frances Barrett: [00:00:00] Hi, welcome back to The Social Brain Podcast and i'm joined by the fantabulous Ben Herbert nice to see you Ben. How are you doing?

Ben Herbert: I'm good. Thank you. How about yourself?

Frances Barrett: Yeah, i'm all good thank you. All good. Happy to see you and thank you so much for joining and agreeing to come and be interviewed by me for The Social Brain Podcast. If you want to start by just telling everybody what it is that you do, how you help people, that sort of stuff, so people can really get to know you a little bit better.

Ben Herbert: Yeah, for sure. So my name's Ben Herbert. I'm an online health and fitness coach, working specifically with business owners, helping them to get in the shape of their life, double their energy so they can create the impact they want within their life and within their business. Amazing. It's as short and sweet as that.

Frances Barrett: I love that. Just like in one sentence. You didn't even have to take a breath halfway through. That's really, really cool. How long have you been doing it for?

Ben Herbert: I've been coaching for nine and a half years. Okay. And I've been specifically working with business owners for the past three and a half.

Frances Barrett: Oh, amazing. What [00:01:00] made you decide to niche down into just business owners?

Ben Herbert: I went through my own journey of opening my own business nine and a half years ago and got myself into a terrible situation of four stone heavier completely burnt out, lacking time, lacking energy, stress through my eyeballs. And I was like, hang on, like you need to sort yourself out because at the end of the day, like as a business owner, you need to lead from the front.

Otherwise you're not going to be able to lead others very well. And we've all got customers and clients. And so I sorted myself out, got myself back to where I needed to be and attracted more business owners through doing what I was doing, which was strange because I was just telling my story and sharing what I was getting up to whilst running the business.

And ended up, yeah, just having clients on the gym floor, of just all business owners chatting to them and actually realizing that the things I was doing whilst it was helpful, there was a bigger way I could actually impact these clients and how they could actually then [00:02:00] go away and impact their their business so then I moved it to fully online and yeah, here we are today.

Frances Barrett: Yeah, I mean what what was kind of the the the turning point that made you feel like you had to address it because obviously I feel like being a business owner, we always talk about how tired we are How we quit the nine to five to work 24/7 all of that sort of stuff, right? So what was the point that made you think? Oh my god, i've actually got to address this my health, my, my fitness, I have to, you know, work, work a little bit more effectively with me personally.

What was the turning point for you?

Ben Herbert: So from a vain perspective to start with, I'd always been in pretty good shape and then look at myself in the mirror thinking, who even is this person? Like what on earth has gone on? And like a lot of the time, it's very easy to blame your business, right? Ah, business is so busy.

Don't want to sound like an idiot, but what did you expect? [00:03:00] Yeah, it's gonna be business busy. It's gonna be stressful. Like you are managing a business a different ball game to being employed afraid to say, and I was bit like one from a vain standpoint of I'm not looking too good and I don't like how I'm looking and also just how I was waking up every day like trying to drag myself out of bed like hammering the coffees of like Oh my Lord, like you're not going to make it through today. You're so tired. And when you're like that and you're low on energy, it adds more stress without even thinking about it because you're trying to get yourself out of this position. You're almost trying to, the only way I can say it was like, put a different, put a different face on because you're trying to deal with clients, but yet you're so low on energy.

And then you're thinking, I shouldn't be feeling like this. I should be leading better. Like, yeah, I want to have a business operating the way I want to be operating. I see a business as an extension of you, right. So. If you're in a good

spot, you're operating really well. There's a high chance everything in that business is going to be operating [00:04:00] nicely.

But if you're lacking energy, well, you're gonna be making a lot of mistakes in your business because the focus is going to be off. And I was making sloppy mistakes in my business. I was, I'll be completely honest about that. This, I'm a very honest person.

Frances Barrett: It's good to be authentic. Absolutely. Authenticity is welcome here.

Ben Herbert: I was making mistakes in business, but it was coming from a, the personal standards side of things. It wasn't like the business brain. It was a, my brain that it just wasn't operating where it needs to be. And I was like, this just simply isn't good enough. Yeah. And just made the decision, right? Let's let's attack this.

I'm a very simple person. I work in simple ways. So something we speak to our clients about a lot is like: you want to get from A to B in the most simplest way, because you run a business. Hmm, for sure. And that is very overwhelming in itself.

Frances Barrett: And it's about kind of really. you know, especially when you are working, like your brand is your name, right? You are the face of your brand and you, you, you don't want to always be hiding behind that mask of, I'm so energetic, when really you are [00:05:00] feeling absolutely rubbish and you'd rather be in bed, sleeping.

Ben Herbert: 100%, 100%, 100%. And I, if you look on a scale of sort of like one to 10, 10 being energy, one being someone pick me up, I'm on the floor.

I'd say majority of the time before I improve myself, I was on the lower end of the scale. And it was just hard, it was just hard work. And it's like, it doesn't need to feel that hard, because business is hard as it is anyway.

Frances Barrett: Yeah, and you want to feel like, I think, like since COVID and stuff, we're all really valuing life a little bit better and being out there, and and seizing the opportunities and stuff like that, right?

We are, we are I'm trying to think of the right word proactive with our opportunities and we want to make sure that we're making the right impression and that we are represented in the right way. So yeah, I think, I think, you know,

really checking in with yourself and saying, Hey, this isn't this ain't me is quite important.

And so what were the first steps like when you. When, and I don't want to keep bringing you back there because [00:06:00] you're not there anymore and that's amazing. But when you look back on that time, what were the kind of the first steps that you really took with addressing your, your health?

Ben Herbert: I work in analogies, right? And I'll use karate belt, for example. I've never done karate, by the way, so I don't know why I ever use this analogy, but somehow it works.

Frances Barrett: Okay. I'll stick with you. I'll stick with you for this.

Ben Herbert: In order to get from one belt to another, right, you have to learn certain skills.

And then you get graded on it, I believe. And then you earn the right to go on to that next level. And that's how I work with our clients. It's like, what do you currently need to get really good at? Let's focus on that before we start focusing on other stuff. So very much about me. It was away from the business stuff.

It was like actually let's look at what's causing you to seek to be way off, well energy. Well, where does energy come from quality sleep actually having some boundaries in place actually looking at your nutrition, right? Improving my nutrition my energy improved. Improved boundaries, [00:07:00] energy improved. Yeah energy you're already winning on then you can start adding in the training sessions I was all i was training anyway, but it was, to be honest, I was half arsing it, where it's like, now this is my time, I enjoy this, I'm going to do it.

And it was very much like, okay, what does that now consist of in terms of training? I was training, trying to train five, six days a week. Running a business, I'll be honest with you, like, unless you've got everything systemized and I didn't have at the time, it's going to be really hard to be consistent at that because you're going to get pulled from pillar to post.

So I went down to like three to four sessions, 40 minutes long. That is the focus. That is the only focus. You do not look at your phone. You do not talk business. You do not think business is a training session. So it's very much like train, eat well and get out for frequent fresh air like go walking. Yeah It doesn't have to be long could be like two walks a day, but something that actually fits into your

calendar. But it's very much around where I went wrong [00:08:00] and where I see a lot of business owners go wrong is that the lifestyle management they have in place is misbalanced so that they don't see training. They don't see movement. They don't see nutrition as an investment to themselves. When in reality it's like that all gives you energy and energy is earned. And what do you need for business? Shit tonne of energy.

Frances Barrett: Absolutely. Yeah, absolutely. So, but there's, there's something that I kind of wanted to touch on then as well, because obviously when, and we've talked about trading in the nine to five and into the 24 seven how do you realistically establish those boundaries and then stick to them because I know I'm guilty of it. I'll be like, right, I've got a PT that I see two to three times a week. I'm not three to four. I'm two to three.

And that's fine. That's good for me. But sometimes it is just hard to fit in that time, especially when I suppose, especially at the beginning of your business when you are just saying yes to all of the opportunities that you have available to you. And you haven't [00:09:00] quite learned how to say no to the ones that don't quite align.

So have you got any kind of tips with regards to establishing boundaries and making sure that you get it done for the better phrase? But yeah, have you got any tips around that?

Ben Herbert: Yeah, for sure. So first port of call is like, normalize it. It's okay not to stick to a boundary. Okay. Like, you're gonna have much, like, it instantly removes that sort of pressure off yourself, right?

There are gonna be times where things overrun. There are gonna be times where you'd be like, you know what, I'm way too tired to go for that walk. I've like, I've had a really busy day or I've been way too tired to go and train. Okay, cool. Can you move it into the next day? Like, yeah. But I'd also look at like from before the week even starts is that actually structure out your weeks.

First port calls, like what is success this week for you? What is the requirement in business? What is the actual things that are going to take up your time? You, you basically want to get your big rock. Which I call a big rock is like your main task of the week and within your business this for you It might be record [00:10:00] six podcasts across the week, right?

Yeah, it's gonna take a lot of time energy and attention, right? So what then has to happen around those in order for you to be effective within that podcast?

Well, you need to get gonna have energy you're gonna need to be focused and you need gonna need to feel pretty good because you're gonna be on camera, right?

Frances Barrett: Yeah, and put your makeup on and not be in my pajamas.

Ben Herbert: Yeah, absolutely. I wasn't gonna mention that part so it's like, once you've got your big rock it's like, what, well, what, what's going to allow you to be best in those moments. And it always will come back to you as the person, yeah. Your energy, how you feel, how you look.

First of all, I say 100 percent like structure week, understand like what success is, because if you don't know, like what success is, your expectations are going to be up through the roof. Cause you're such a high achiever in what you do. So you be like, Oh, I should be doing this with myself.

And it's like, Well, should you? Should you really? Yeah. Have you got the skills? Have you got [00:11:00] everything laid out? Because if you have, amazing, you can do it. Then you're gonna be high achieving in that week. Where if you've not actually got any structure or any understanding of what's gonna move the needle forwards that week, and you're just trying to wing things, then reality sat down here, expectations way up through the roof, and there's a misalignment, and now you're getting yourself into the frustration of I can't get anything right.

I can't do it. I can't be consistent. I'm on it, I'm off it. It just doesn't stick. When in reality, we need to get clear of like, what success and like, what the actual expectations of yourself and you instantly remove that pressure that overwhelm and you, you instantly remove limited beliefs because it's like, well, this is what we're going to do this week next week's not the same.

So next week's gonna be slightly different, but that's what it's going to consist of.

Frances Barrett: Yeah, I love that. I love the fact that boundaries always, in my mind, is something that's really, really strict and not flexible. But the way that you've kind of phrased it is that I like that it's a little bit [00:12:00] Bendy and it can, it can, it can move around as and when you need it to, because there are all these pressures that we put on ourselves.

Like I, I suffer with imposter syndrome quite a lot in my business. And I think that that is added pressure that I'm putting on myself, like the things that are out

there and Everything that's out there is telling me that I'm really good at my job and I don't really need to suffer with imposter syndrome.

But it is the added pressure that we put on ourselves as the business owner that really They're all the stories we tell ourselves, right? But then we said earlier that employed life is so different from

Ben Herbert: And where do those stories come from?

Frances Barrett: Yeah, I know. Where do they come from? This isn't going to turn into therapy.

Ben Herbert: The expectation that you have of yourself. Yeah. Of being such a high achiever. I'm this person. I've left my 9 to 5. I've now got this business. This business is absolutely flying. I'm so good at what I do. I'm reading stuff. I'm hearing stuff from people that I'm so good at what I do. All it does is feed your ego, right?

Yes, it does. And then you, I'm not saying you do it, but I'm saying like as [00:13:00] a, as a whole, as a whole, like as business owners, we then have this belief that we're good at what we do, which by the way, that's good. That's meant to happen. But also it's like, you then neglect certain other areas because you just think, Oh, I'm good at it.

It comes easy. It'll be fine. It's like, it goes straight back to the basics. What's, what's the, what's the main focus for this week? What does it look like? What does, you know, how many date nights are you going on? How many times you got to pick the kids up from school? Are the children okay? Are they unwell?

You know, how many meetings have you got? Networking, how much have you got? Okay, let's actually look at this. Hmm. And what's the actual expectation of where you need to be?

Frances Barrett: Yeah, I love that. Honestly, that's

Ben Herbert: Because then I personally believe that imposter syndrome comes into play because it's like, well, I'm not doing a good enough job and this and this and this.

Well, oh. What's the week say? Like for me Wednesdays are a really heavy day and I used to struggle with it. Here's an insight of I used to get so [00:14:00] frustrated with myself that I wouldn't get my business tasks done on a

Wednesday Even though I go out I've got three networking events that I go to early morning lunchtime and evening and then I need to coach in between all those and Then I'm trying to pile up my other tasks on that And I'm a bit like, well, you're not doing a good enough job.

Like, why are you not hitting these targets? And then I actually looked at him and be like, you're just being an idiot. Like, there's way too much to do there. Let's just focus on the three things. And that's all I do on Wednesday.

Frances Barrett: Yeah. And that's actually, I've had a really similar realization as well. So on Tuesday, it's my networking day.

So mine, I don't do early morning, but I do kind of mid morning and it takes couple of hours. And then also I take my son swimming on a Tuesday afternoon and there's me thinking, Oh yeah, well I've got an hour between networking and then mummying and then nothing gets done. And I'm like, why is nothing getting done?

But actually it's because there's physically not enough time, you know, it's just, it is just hard to fit everything in. The fact that I have to do [00:15:00] my sometimes I have to work on Tuesday evenings and that's fine. That's my choice, it's my decision. Or it just rolls over into Wednesday, which is actually an admin day.

It, it, it's kind of about allocating that time to make sure that it works best with my business as well. So yeah, it's, it's, it's just, it is just about finding a way, isn't it? It's about finding a way and really prioritizing what matters to you. And actually for all of us, not business owner or not business owner, our health is that's obviously the most important thing anyway, so it's something that we should be prioritizing.

When it comes to, and obviously we've talked about sleep and nutrition and, and, and stuff like that, like I, I kind of wanted to ask your opinion in terms of like allocation or, or, or time or, cause I know that they, and I don't know if you're, you're the expert. I have no idea. I know that there used to be this thing that was like 80 percent food, 20 percent training. And obviously you started with, even though you were training at the time, cause that's also your job. You said that you started with food [00:16:00] first. How important is it that we start with our nutrition and our sleep first before adding in the time intensive training sessions?

Ben Herbert: I think they're all important to one another. They all deliver a similar thing. If you look at nutrition, like if you're trying to drop weight, you're gonna have to go into a calorie deficit. However you want that calorie deficit to work is up to you, right? You can do it many ways. That's a different conversation for different days.

It will be a bit like a whole hour. But again, it's however you want your nutrition to look for you. Yeah. In order to get to your goals, then it's going to have to be tailored to that training. On the other hand, that's where you're going to build the strength, the muscle. And when I say like muscle, some women might freak out and they don't need to freak out because you have lower testosterone than men. Right. So that's why men tend to, and I'm not saying we all do tend to have more muscle than women. Right. And that's why it will build quicker. The importance of training is building strength. [00:17:00] Building muscle. That's where that sort of like tone definition body comes from. If you're trying to drop body fat, well, you're going to need to go into the gym as well because that's where you're going to get that amazing look.

But then the sleep, if the sleep's not there, your hunger hormones are going to be jumping up and down like crazy. So therefore your nutrition won't stick and then you won't get your nutrition in your training in. So all three of them are as important as one another. And that is why throughout this, what we've been speaking about so far is like managing your lifestyle and getting clear on what success really looks like to you and having that expectation set in the right place is going to allow your training, your nutrition your behavior around food to be far greater. So therefore you get that consistency with which will essentially fast track your result.

Frances Barrett: Oh, amazing. I love that. And again, I'm not an expert, but I remember when I was younger and in the gym I used to take things like pre workout and stuff like that. What I just saw your face then, what [00:18:00] are your thoughts on supplements? Is it that, you know obviously, and again, I'm assuming, natural food is going to be the best fuel for your body when you are going to these training sessions. Just some insight into, do we really need the supplements? Pre workout, does it work? That sort of, that sort of stuff.

Ben Herbert: Yeah, for sure. So, pre workout, you know, it's just straight up caffeine, right?

Technically, we won't go into science a bit, but it's heavy hitting caffeine. What does that scream out if, if you need it?

Frances Barrett: That you're knackered.

Ben Herbert: Absolutely, right. So what do you really need to manage to start with?

Frances Barrett: Sleep. I'm getting the hang of this. I'm getting it.

Ben Herbert: Sleep and nutrition, right? So there's no point taking that pre workout because if you're going into a training session and you're tired and you're trying to have pre workout, all you're doing is bringing yourself back to baseline.

Yeah, the benefit of pre workout is it's meant to give you that extra bump. Yeah, and that extra buzz. Well, if you're just going back to baseline because you're so knackered where it [00:19:00] hasn't, it hasn't actually been effective.

Absolutely. Cause you're just going in there like, okay, just like normal, where if you go into gym or a training session, whatever it is, with a good amount of energy in your baseline anyway, and then you take that pre workout, not saying you need to, not saying you should, I don't take it, but it will then actually give you that added benefit because it gives you that extra push.

Where if you're already knackered and you're trying to bring yourself back up to baseline, it doesn't actually do a job, but supplementation is incredibly important. I would say. Okay. Electrolytes, but finding the right electrolytes are incredibly important. So like electrolytes have got like a lot of sodium in salt.

A lot of people think salt is bad for the diet, eating deep fried food, right? There's been packed of oils and salts. Yeah, for sure. But if you're drinking like a salty flavored water drink, that's all natural. It's going to be really beneficial for like brain function. Vitamin levels because it's packed full of vitamins.

And [00:20:00] also hydration and it does help with recovery if you're looking at like getting extra protein in for example. Yeah, look at like the sources of protein shakes. Yeah, because they are beneficial again. If you run a business, it's gonna be really hard to be constantly getting food in sometimes having a protein shake is absolutely fine on the go like for example, my networking is on a wednesday morning and they always bring up bring out oily fry ups I know, I like a fry up by the way, me too, but I know full well how it's going to leave me feeling.

It's going to leave me flat on the floor in terms of energy in the afternoon, and it's going to make me feel bloated. The inflammation you get from it, it's going

to just make you feel a bit groggy, right? So what I'll do is I'll have two bits of fruit. And I'll have a protein shake whilst I'm driving. Hopefully the police don't hear that, but yeah. But I'll have that after my networking because I know that's [00:21:00] far greater for me than that fry up. So I can control how it's going to leave me feeling.

Frances Barrett: Do you have the cheeky fry up every so often though?

Ben Herbert: Yeah, of course. It's not like I'm a complete robot and I just have that. I'll have the cheeky fry up.

Frances Barrett: Yeah, damn right. And like, obviously going to all these networking events anyway, they are, they're not necessarily like, great food are they? They're kind of like easy to get out there sort of food and yeah, you've got to kind of watch what you're eating there because I guess, especially when you do three in a day, when you, when you're doing three in a day and you're just presented like all of this food, how do you stick to it that way?

Ben Herbert: So I have, obviously there's breaks in between those. And lucky enough, the lunchtime and the evening one is local to me because the morning one's a little further away. So I'll just eat at home, lunch and dinner. Yeah, and the morning. I've basically just told you my morning strategy. [00:22:00] Yeah for sure But don't get wrong there are times where I look at it, but oh there's a pastry there and I love an almond croissant and be like Oh my god, like I you know what I can fit that into today's nutrition.

I'll have it but majority of the time It's like how do you want to feel how do you want to look and how do you want to be performing? And if the majority of your nutrition can be from great sources You And how I look at it is like, if you don't want to track your nutrition, if you don't know, sort of, what to do with your nutrition currently, look at your plate and ask yourself, does it scream high quality, or does it scream, like, just fast food continuously?

If the biggest, bigger of the, of the sort of like the scale in terms of like a percentage, screen high quality, you're doing a pretty good job. Yeah. And then you just need to tailor it in terms of like volume and stuff like that.

Frances Barrett: Yeah. Well, that was going to be my question about kind of tracking. But I mean, if, if that, if that works as a basic for people to start with and it's quite visual, isn't it?

So it's [00:23:00] quite easy to see all the beige versus colorful plate.

Ben Herbert: Yeah, absolutely. I think a lot of people give like red sandwiches, all that sort of stuff, like croissants, bad names, or like they're damaging it, but it's not, it's just the volume you consume at, right. You can have the sandwiches and networking.

You can have the fry up, you can have. Insert whatever, right? Yeah. Yeah, but it's what does the majority of not just your day But your month actually look like in terms of nutrition because that's going to give you a result at the end of day I don't want to sound too savage but you're either going to be in good shape Whatever that looks like to the person or you're not going to be in the shape you want. Yeah, yeah. And it's not just because of a couple of days It's from a month, two months, three months.

Frances Barrett: Yeah, for sure. Yeah. And it's, it is that repeating behavior as well, isn't it? And it's just making sure that you, you prioritize that and how it looks on in, in your life, in your, in your busy business life.

Ben Herbert: Absolutely. And it's, I [00:24:00] had a comment made to me the other day and it was actually really interesting lady that just joined, she's like, I'm such a high performer in business.

I feel like I should be doing this with my health and it's bit like, but you only know what you know. Old keys don't unlock new doors, right? For sure. And it's like, there was nothing around her nutrition. She's a mad networker, right? Yeah. She didn't know how to navigate her nutrition out on the road.

Because she's up and down the road from networking to networking, right? Some things, in certain parts of the day, she'd track her food. And then we say to her, outside of that, just look at your plate and think, does this actually serve me or not? Does it scream health or does it not? Because you're not going to be able to track everything, right?

A lot of people get hung up on like, oh, I can't track my nutrition. Yes. It doesn't matter. Like, tracking your nutrition is great for lots of reasons, but there's also other ways to do it. Like, does it actually look like quality food? How do I feel from it? And it's just repeated lessons and it's a lot of people will like hit the I won't [00:25:00] swear the the f button with their nutrition and with their health.

Yeah in a matter of weeks, right? Yeah. But what we need to look at is like it's about accumulation. All you're doing, it doesn't matter if you've had a good week or a bad week in nutrition, all you're looking for is the data. Did it work?

Did it not work? A bit like business, right? Yes. Yeah. If it did, what went well and what allowed it to work?

And if it didn't, what didn't, right? And all you're doing is accumulating data. So therefore you can then go and replicate that data or adjust the data going into the following week. And all you're looking to do is collect data across a 30 day period. I call it accumulation, and guess what, once you've got bundles of information on that, you're now more aware with your nutrition, you're mostly on the right track, and you're mostly feeling a whole lot better, where someone, let's say another person's doing the same thing, but just keeps stopping and starting, they're never accumulating data, so always will remain in the same spot.

Frances Barrett: Yeah. [00:26:00] Yeah, I love that. No, that's really so, so interesting. Honestly, I reckon we, we are going to have to book in another session and actually have a massive talk about everything else. Honestly, I could talk to you all day. But thank you so much for joining me. Where can people find you? Where, where can people learn more about you?

Where can people get in touch with you?

Ben Herbert: So Facebook it's Ben Herbert, Instagram it's underscore Ben Herbert, and on LinkedIn it's Ben Herbert.

Frances Barrett: No way! So simple. Is that your name?

Ben Herbert: No way. I reckon so. All of the information will be in the show notes for you, just click through if that's even easier for you than typing in Ben Herbert.

But thank you so much for joining me today Ben, it's been really, really interesting and I will invite you in for another one so we can really chat, dive even deeper into this. But thank you so, so much for joining me.

Thank you for having me on.

Frances Barrett: Thank you.