

GMCP Ep. 053 - Mastery of Flow in Business and in Life with Andrew Roberts

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This is the Grow My Clinic Podcast by Clinic Mastery where we help you deliver amazing client experiences to grow your clinic.

BEN: Welcome to another episode of the [Grow My Clinic](#) podcast. My name is Ben Lynch and today, we are speaking with [Andrew Roberts](#). Andrew is well known as one of Australia's leading business mentors. He is a strategic business specialist. Andrew has gone from running one of the largest business coaching companies in Australia to focusing on specialists and leaders of various industries.

You may well know Andrew as the author of the book ['What The Hell Are You Chasing?'](#)

Andrew believes in balance and encourages the people he works with to stop chasing stuff they don't want, to stop trying to impress people they don't even like, and to live life as a 'fulfillionaire' – someone who is rich in every area of life.

Today, we are exploring the mastery of flow in business and in life. Andrew welcome!

ANDREW: Great to be here Ben. Thanks for that introduction.

BEN: You are very welcome and very deserving. I have drawn a lot of stuff from you over the years Andrew. I really hope today that we will be able to elicit some pearls of wisdom for our listeners. I am interested if we could start with you enlightening us a little bit more on what do you mean by 'flow'? What does that look like? How do we know if we are in it? Then let us explore how we can maybe get in to the state of flow so that perhaps we are more productive in getting better results.

ANDREW: It is a great question. The easiest definition I have got on flow is - we are focusing on business owners here. So for me, a business owner's inflow is when they have got an exciting vision for the future and they have got a huge amount of peace and happiness in the now.

Because I think you can have a big vision for the future but if you are not happy in the moment then there is stress, or if you lack a vision for the future and you are focused in the happiness in the now then you are missing out on we are born to do which is grow. So flow is big vision for the future, really meddled with the peace and the happiness in the now.

BEN: Profound. I want to pick up on there, you mentioned, about that stress if you are not in the now, if you are not experiencing that peace. That is so often the case you have probably heard in time and time. We have the stress and overwhelm of being in business, the things that are just demanding of you. What do you say to someone who is in the moment like that and they are just completely overwhelmed and consumed by it? What is something that they can do to shift out of that?

ANDREW: I will come back a little bit before I answer that because this might give it a bit more context. I remember I rang a former business partner of mine and I was going through this moment of being overwhelmed because I had too much on. He just laughed and he said, "You know, the interesting thing about being in business is it is like a knife edge."

I think all of us play on a knife edge where some weeks you can feel like you have got too much on and that causes stress, and this other weeks when you do not have enough on and that causes as stress. I have really learned this in life because I have sold a company before Ben and I had significant time off and I got stressed from not having a night off.

I think all of this applying that knife edge of following the perfect balance and if you are too much over and you are too overwhelmed, we get [inaudible] if you like that brings us back to the knife edge or even a little bit below, like there is always [inaudible] if you are too busy, you're just not leveraged enough.

So I do think that we are constantly playing a knife edge. I certainly live in and out of being overwhelmed or maybe not enough on but I definitely aim for that balance. And listen to what is going on around me to play that knife edge is close to as what I can as possible.

BEN: For sure. The word there growth that you mentioned and that we're all destined and designed to grow, do you think that part of it that overwhelm or stress is just a normal thing to experienced when you are going through growth?

ANDREW: Look it is interesting. It is taught two times when you are highly stressed in business, when you do not have enough clients, and then when you have got too many. I think it is such a fascinating concept because stress is a choice right? It really is choice. One person can be having an enormous amount of things going on in life and handling that stress better than someone else.

So for me, I think anyone that is going to be going through growth will have to cope some form of stress. Some people definitely know how to handle it better than others. In life, I certainly learned tools that work for me. For example, I mean it is cliché, but exercise and eating well; if I am not doing those things I just do not handle stress very well.

It is so simple but I think that over many years of being in business, we all find what we can do to handle that stress and be able to even handle more of it.

BEN: Absolutely. Then those almost triggers and things that you go back to to maybe reset or you know that when you are top of your game, they are the things that you need to do – eat well, exercise. When you're fallen off the track so to speak, and maybe you are so consumed by the moment, do you find personally, maybe even the people that you have worked with, how do they kind of go back to? Because often your mind is everywhere and you forget those fundamentals of 'when I am my best, these are the things that I am doing day in day out'.

You can get consumed in the moment. So are there any particular practices, rituals, habits, things that you get people to do or maybe even yourself to go back to 'oh yes, eating healthy, exercising' that is what I need to go back to.

ANDREW: Well again, it is a great question. I am huge advocate for walk about. And that is interesting because aboriginals, when they get too much, when it is too much for them, they go walk about.

There is a great lesson that I learned from an aboriginal that was going off on a walkabout. A friend of mine just said 'When will you come back?' And he just turned, looked at him and said, "When I am ready."

They go on walk abouts to figure things out. I feel that we are living in such a crazy fast-paced world. Personally I am a huge advocate for allowing time out where you get to regroup, re-gather, re-tune back in to what is important. I mean I have to do it all time Ben like I am just someone that has to.

I get so caught up in it that I give myself a mission to go on and have a two or three days out in a bush, ideally. Because I think nature brings you back down to your core. I think it is a perfect recharge reset. I describe it, it's like being plugged back into electricity, like nature just regroups me that is where I make the decisions if it is too much and let all that stuff go and become totally out of balance, nature brings me back in the balance.

Then usually, after a couple days there, I'll come back and start again with better disciplines and going in back to those good, old habits.

BEN: So that is kind of the process you go through if you are noticing maybe there is a little bit of overwhelm or stress or things are a little bit out of control. You take yourself out of that environment. Go walk in the bush couple of days. You have spoken about before, deliberately putting in breaks into your year as maybe a bit more of a proactive way to get that space.

Can you just tell us a little bit more about what you believe is a good way for people to get away from it all and reset like you are talking about?

ANDREW: Well, it is such a great question, and I like to reflect on school. Some people listen to this may have loved the school, a lot of people listen to this may have hated school or somewhere in the middle - they loved it and then hated it. Let us look at school for a moment. It's approximately ten years. I do not know about your school but my school was split into four terms.

I was gifted something like, I think it was ten-week or maybe eight to ten-week holidays a year. We started, say, 8:30 in the morning. I would have a morning tea, an afternoon tea - a morning tea, a lunch and an afternoon tea break every day. I still fit it in time to sport in those days, you know, extracurricular activities, and still had time for a bit of [inaudible] and still had time to play.

And in ten years, I learned Math, English. I learned some languages. You go through puberty at school. You learn communication, spelling list and many stuff you achieved in that ten-year period; it is extraordinary, right? When you really think about it, a lot of people [inaudible] about school but it is actually amazing what we actually do learn.

And so it is like well hang on, how is it that we had such a great system through school that gives us so much timeout - holidays, breaks, and balance? All these activities to be balanced yet we throw that whole thing away when we run our businesses. So I am a massive advocate for putting in structure into your year.

It starts with planning two days at the start of a year where you put in, in my opinion, this might sound like an exaggeration, but if business owners are having, in my opinion, six weeks off a year - not four, six. They are doing themselves a disservice in my opinion. Now it does not mean I am right, but I truly believe that all of us can have greater breakthroughs in down time.

If you would go to a gym, actually the muscles do not grow until you are resting. And so holidays is where you get all your growth. So scheduling in those holidays, giving yourself - I mean I have boundaries and rules. On most days, I [inaudible] 3:30 in the afternoon. I could easily work through until six but I have just created boundaries and rules. I do not like to work on weekends. I give myself a mission to maybe work one Saturday a month.

And I give myself permission to work one night a week, light. But you know, there is no rules. It is really up to us as owners to create these boundaries and these rules because if we do not create them - going back to my former life before I write the book 'What The Hell Are You Chasing?'

I wrote that book because I experienced burnout. And back then, it was just too much. It was too chaos. And then I went, "What the hell am I doing all these for?" I mean this is crazy. I am burning through my life so quickly for something that in the future that could not might even exist. It is ridiculous. So I had to make big changes. And so for me, the structuring of planning out the year holidays but t[inaudible] and making sure every three or four months I have time out where I call them [inaudible] days. It is critical.

I will stand on a beach this morning for a couple of hours. I will play golf every week. These are all things that I used to sacrifice, but I now like - rocks into my calendar. And if I started out again and I know what I now know, I will put this stuff in my calendar right from the onset to keep me in balance.

BEN: Yes. And so what you are referring for listeners is putting those important things, the things that really matter to you the rocks you said, leisure, family,

whatever it may be - the big important things into your diary first and then allowing other things to accommodate that.

ANDREW: Bingo. And so I have got if you like four major planning techniques. One of them is where I plan out my year which is two days, and then every 90 days is the day to plan out the quarter. And then it is an hour to plan out my week and then 10 minutes to plan a day out.

And so each of those - I have been planning out my year it is like what are the big holidays I can have this year? If it is planning out the quarter, what are the fun things we can do this quarter? If it is planning out the week, what are the mini things that I can do during the week? I could have a game with golf? Could I catch up with a friend? Could I go out on a date night with my wife? What is it? And in a day, again, is the opportunity to look at on what can I do today to bring me a bit more peace?

Of course, it definitely starts with, in my opinion, having things written down and secondly schedule into a calendar. If it is not scheduled, it will not get done.

BEN: Absolutely, there's a few golden nuggets there. I love the analogy from the top about using school as a way to break down your year and how much you have been able to achieve over your school and career. Often people are trying to do so much in one year but they are in business.

I'm assuming most people are going into business for the long term, and if they can do a little more sustainably with that structure that you are alluding to, I am sure that it will take a lot of stress off almost immediately. If they could have their own deliberate walk about or even having scheduled holidays to reset.

But it is. We have so many people that come back from holiday refreshed, renewed. They are like 'Uh! I have got all this clarity now.' But then when you are in it, you think 'I cannot have a holiday foregoing and have a holiday at all for the crap and nothing will get done'. Then you go on a holiday and 'I should this more often'.

ANDREW: Yeah, I would like to state that one hour of inspired work will be six hours of uninspired work. It is a golden nugget there when you really think about at it and I go, "Well, if I have time on a holiday and I am feeling good, then that work at all achieved after that break will be six times higher than the work that I am trying to achieve when I am exhausted so [inaudible], have more breaks.

BEN: Absolutely. I love that, just let me pick up on it. It is one hour of inspired time is greater than six hours of uninspired time. Is that effectively what you are saying?

ANDREW: Yeah. One hour of inspired work will beat six hours of uninspired work. And we lose inspiration mostly - and people confuse it with passion, they think oh, I'm not passionate anymore. Often, passion dies when we are tired and we are exhausted and we are overwhelmed. You know this as well, Ben. It is the biggest thing we have to face as business owners is burn out.

BEN: For sure. Absolutely. That is a good distinction. I have used this in the past as well. Sometimes you just think you are doing stuff but you are not really getting anything done. You are not really productive. You do not feel like you are in that flow and you could just take a break and find that inspiration. Have that walk about. Clarify things and then come back and be far more inspired, far more productive. Absolute nugget of gold there.

Obviously, we have got this clinic owners tuning in here Andrew. They are obviously dealing with themselves, their own stress, overwhelm, or tasks list or outcome list, whatever they are trying to work on and manage themselves, but they have also got team members. They have also got admin, practitioners who have their own challenges and problems. And in essence they are kind of coaching or mentoring their team.

I am wondering obviously, there is only so much time in a day for them to be able to do everything on their task list. What are some fundamentals of being a good coach, being a good mentor that these clinic owners could take today and apply in engaging with their team?

ANDREW: Okay. I would say the most effective tool that was ever taught to me and I implemented this and it just transformed the way I run my businesses, is every person in the business has an accountability call once a week. Okay. I need to say it again, every person in the business has that accountability call once a week.

I will just use this as an example. So I have got a team member at the moment. She is fantastic, full time. She is the head of support administration. We have our meeting at about twelve o'clock every Monday. It is consistent time, typically runs for thirty minutes, can run up to one hour but let us run with 30 minutes. It is

driven by agenda. She arrives to the meeting with her task list updated and I arrived to the meeting having thought about what I want her to execute during the week.

That particular meeting is an opportunity for us to have a check-in. It is like a coaching call. It is treated just like I would with a client and we have an agenda where we both do a check-in, we review the week, how do we go in a week that has been. We then create what needs to get done this week.

This is a game changer. If I am prepared and she is prepared and she arrives with her task list and I arrive with what I think needs to get done then I can actually effectively double her up during that way. Just from checking in and helping her clarify her priorities. It is not micromanaging. It is something magical about having someone else helping you prioritize what you should be doing. It is just there is a goal in it.

If I have you for example Ben looking in my way, you would be able to help me. So I can really help her focus on what she needs to get caught up on and then we finish off, if there are any issues, identify, discuss, and solve any key issues. And I walk away with the page on what she is going to do. She walks away with the page that what she is going to do.

And really, what this boils down to is there is accountability. I believe everyone in the team needs accountability but secondly there is a check-in. There is communication every week, right? So if there is an issue, I can pick it up. I can tell - we can all tell it if there is an issue going on in someone's life. You can just tell. You get a vibe. And so I can - black and white. "Look, there is something that is going on, Adele. What's up?"

That for me - that meeting is just so powerful and so really, it comes back to in order to, in my opinion, run on an amazing team, it needs frequency of communication. And if you are having issues with the team, you are probably not having enough frequent communication. So we have a team meeting as well that goes to 30 minutes but I have that session with her and she then goes on as the same session individually with the other team members.

That for me that is a game changer and keeps the team on board, motivated, and excited. And a great leader of every business needs to be the visionary and constantly enrolling and inspiring the team with the vision. Team members need motivation, they need to check-in, and they really do. And I think if you know what I

mean to check-in with the team members weekly, you can sustain it for a while but you will not be getting anywhere near that hundred percent potential out of them that you could be getting.

BEN: Absolutely, so structured and frequent communication are very key in the engagement of team members. What about then Andrew in terms of what you speak about the vision perhaps of the business that we will be reiterating and refocusing the towards. How do you go about maybe creating a vision or pathway for a team member in terms of their role and their progression as part of that vision, part of that mission that you are on?

And either looking at do you set goals for team members in the year? Personally, how do you go about that from the week to week if we are checking in regularly? What sort of bigger vision do we have for them, personally?

ANDREW: Yeah, I mean again it is a fantastic question. So when I first induct someone into the company, I think it is a great time actually to understand what their goals are. I have got a very simple template where I allow [inaudible] life goals and it gets people to [inaudible] about what they want to achieve in 10 years, 3 years, or 12 months.

Bearing in mind that there are team members that has come in to my world, and they are not joining my company for me to become their coach to help them achieve all their goals. And I will just put a caveat herem, because in the early days, I was training all the team members in success principles, and really showing them stuff and I ended up finding that I had many team members going out and starting businesses and stuff.

I realized after certain period of time, I do not need to be doing so much of that. That is their responsibility, not mine. So in the flip side of course if I can support this certain achieve their personal goals then I will. But for me, enrolling them into the vision, the purpose of the business - I operate off a two-page strategic planner that maps back 10-year goals to three year goals to 12 month goals to quarterly goals, its got a values on there.

It represents what our core purpose is, and we visit that with the team on a yearly basis and every three months, we all come together and we get clear on 'Why are doing these?' 'What do we want to achieve for the next quarter'. So it's constant reiteration.

Ironically, early this morning, I was having a session with our team and I was going over the vision again with them. And I was actually saying, alright, Phil, what is our ten-year goal? Now I want to drum this to them and 'Right John, what are our top 5 values and why are they important to us?' And because I am the leader of the business, it is up to me to enroll and inspire my team into the vision and so that they can do their best work because we have got a mission [inaudible] at the moment.

It is up to me to really constantly communicate in and drive that in, and that takes an enormous - it is an enormous input of time. But Ben, the most valuable person in the business is the owner. The second most valuable group of people in the business is the team, more valuable than the customer. That is my opinion. Because without the owner, there is no team, without the team, there is no customer. So when you finally get that, you realize I need to invest into training and energetically growing in my team.

You are better off training a team member and they leave, than not training them and they stay.

BEN: Absolutely, that is what I have shared in our group this morning. Very timely.

ANDREW: And so of course you need to invest. You need to go, "Okay, well they are assets, they are people. I am going to schedule a yearly catch up with them. I am going to schedule a quarterly catch-up with them. We set a common goal this morning for us all to move towards. I am going to remind them why we are doing this all the time.

Because those - when they are all driven towards particularly a core purpose of the company, they will increase their ability to go for it.

So our goal at the moment, we want to help 16-year farmers, transform their lives. And it says it is not let us find 60 people and up. Let us help 60 farmers transform their lives. And then, all the work we do is aligned to that and that - you get another 20% motivation out of your team when they are working towards a cause.

BEN: Absolutely, I love that clarity and structure, just getting behind a particular focus and goal that people can engage in the line together and achieve together.

ANDREW: Yeah, and if someone is off, like if someone for whatever reason not performing the capability of the method that they could be, that is when I will drop in there I will go, right, how is your exercise going?' What are you doing when you get home after work? Are you watching TV, or are you learning something new?

That is where I drop in if you like [inaudible] the business coach Andrew, and I will go 'Okay, something is up. Let us clear it'. And then I might send them a little challenge and get them back in the moving their body. And not just for the benefit of me, it is for the benefit of them.

If someone is in a bit of a bad state, I think it is quite easy to bring them back in to a positive state with a bit of mentoring. And often that is also bringing it back to the actual team member taking responsibility to stay alive. So what are they going to do to get things back on track?

BEN: Absolutely. It is a great distinction there about most important person being yourself as the owner. You need to invest to put in to the team. We started the conversation with that overwhelm and stress and if there is too much on your plate that you are not leveraged enough and really, your team is you being able to help more people through the volume and scale of your team.

I think having those regular times off in your day, in your structure, and in your calendar that are purposeful, that are already built in in advance allows you to reset your own juice and fuel. And then also potentially doing a walk about where you get in touch with nature or you get in touch with yourself most importantly if things are coming to your head and really becoming overwhelming.

But if you can do that and provide your team with some structured communication throughout the week, throughout the months and have some goals and objectives that you are all working towards, constantly reinforcing the vision, you start to really get a unit that is working together.

ANDREW: Yes. And probably the last thing I will throw into this, in 19 years of business mentoring, worked with thousands of business owners. You are better off hiring a motivated person and hoping you do not demotivate them because it is impossible hiring a demotivated person and try to motivate them.

So if I had to simplify this, invest the time to hire great people. You will bang your head, and I say this from years and years of being a coach, that some people are

never ever, ever be motivated or changed or they won't be aligned to your values or whatever it is, get them out. And then go and find the people that are. Because building a great team, honestly, is built on how you hire. The skills of hiring right at the beginning and if you do that part right, I reckon you're ninety percent sorted.

BEN: Fantastic. Do it right from the start. Fantastic.

Well, there are so many pearls and practical pieces of wisdom here for people to apply today I reckon. This is something to listen over to twice.

Andrew, thank you so much for sharing your insights today. I really, really appreciate it.

ANDREW: Happy to help and not a problem at all.

BEN: Awesome. Thanks everyone for tuning in to another episode of The Grow My Clinic Podcast by Clinic Mastery. We would really appreciate your honest reviews and ratings on iTunes and to share the love with a friend or a colleague. You can head over to [clinicmastery.com](https://www.clinicmastery.com) for all of the show notes and all of the free resources that we have got there to help you grow your clinic.

Until next time. Have a fantastic day.

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