

PERCEPTIONS MATTER

EP #42

“Do I need a life coach?” You’re listening to Episode 42, with Rhiannon Bush

Welcome to the Do I need a life coach? Podcast. We’re here to discuss the ins-and outs- of the life coaching industry and give you tools to use, to see for yourself. I’m your host, Rhiannon Bush. Mother, management consultant and a passionate, certified life coach.

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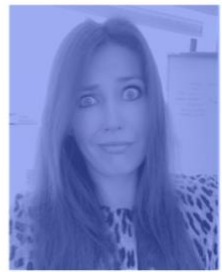
It’s a clever thing to do, to understand the difference between how something really is, and the perception of that thing. For example, you can be behaving one way thinking you’re doing a really, really awesome thing, but in actual fact how it’s perceived is something entirely different. That may not be the outcome you want. An example of this is once somebody close to me said “I feel like a charity case“. And I wasn’t close enough to this person to say it, but their behaviour is why people treated them that way. They behaved like a charity case. Abusing relationships, taking advantage... And whether they realised it or not, whether they did it on purpose or not, there was still a huge lack of perception around how their behaviours were being received.

If I’d chosen to have the conversation and actually call that out, it would’ve resulted in one of two things. I have no doubt that regardless of whatever outcome eventuated that it would’ve been very poorly received. It would’ve been a very hurtful thing to say, even with the best of intentions, which is probably why I didn’t say it, because the hurt I would’ve inflicted by being honest, would’ve been too much. And would that honesty and pain have made a difference? I don’t think so. And I think that’s a bigger reason why I didn’t say anything.

The results after the pain and confrontation had been processed would’ve been these. The first is that the feedback would’ve been taken on board and this person would’ve looked into themselves and done some reflecting and said “yes, that’s true, I can feel when I am being manipulative and taking advantage” and then the behaviour would’ve changed from there. That person would begin to hold themselves accountable more often, and would have made changes that would’ve, I think, had a really significant impact on their life for the better. They would’ve been harder on themselves because holding yourself accountable, is sometimes hard, but it result in you treating yourself better, which means you treat other people better, and then they treat you better too. It’s cyclical.

Alternatively, the feedback would’ve been painful and confrontational, and they would have looked inwards and said to themselves “damn, she’s caught





me out”, and the behaviour wouldn’t change. In which case it’s an identity trait, and that person doesn’t want to change, which means they are happy behaving that way and treating others that same way, which would be extremely disappointing. Actually, now I’ve said that, maybe the reason I didn’t call out was because I didn’t want that second option to be the result.

We can all do things to hold ourselves more accountable and start by treating ourselves better and with more love. It’s really great to understand your power and how this feeds back into quantum. If you hold yourself to a high standard, in the way you treat yourself, and the way you treat those around you, the world will respond to you in that same way. And based on the example I’ve just given and things that were happening, I believe that to be 100% true. Because from the outside looking in, things were happening to that person that were out of their control, but were really unfortunate. That person called it “bad luck”... but I don’t understand how someone can have so much bad luck. It was to a point where I didn’t want them around, because I didn’t want anything to do with that “bad luck“ and it was having an impact on me.

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I remember walking up a mountain in Canberra, let's be honest it was more like a hill than a mountain, with an incredibly intelligent woman that I used to work with. Her name was Megan Divett and she was talking to me about how she'd met someone who she obviously felt a lot of respect for, and she was saying that this person had an ability to understand themselves, while also understanding how they were perceived by others and the outside world. And to her, the ability to bridge that gap was quite significant. And I have to agree.

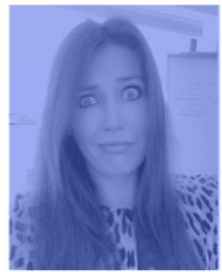
To understand how you think, feel, and act, and know that you can be intentional because people around you will perceive it as you intend it, is a real art form. And that's where I think sales people, really swift awesome sales people and also some coaches that can be incredibly influential like Tony Robbins, Derren Brown, it's incredible.

I think the way you can start understanding how you are perceived versus how you feel can be done by simply asking yourself a few questions.

The first question is “am I acting with integrity?” and if we define integrity, it's about having wholeness. As in, a part of you isn't jeopardised or compromised by doing, feeling or thinking something. Integrity being your whole self.

So if you're taking responsibility for your actions, and they are within integrity, does the outcome really matter? Because if we are talking about what's doing right by ourselves, then that's the first question. The unfortunate and dark side of this is that if your intentions are to negatively impact others, like the Unabomber, unfortunately your behaviours may still be within your own integrity, even if they negatively impact others. But I





inherently believe people are good and want good things, have good intentions. I think the Unabomber is an anomaly, not the norm and in that instance, how you're perceived probably doesn't matter too much to you. Because you place your own self more highly than those around you. And that also has validity. Because you need to care about you, you need to love you, and you need to treat yourself as worthy. Because if you don't treat yourself as worthy then others won't either. And I especially think this is true in relationships. Where I've seen a power imbalance in relationships is where one person thinks they are more worthy than their counterpart. And I don't believe that ends very well in those relationships, ever.

Another question you can ask yourself is “are your words and actions aligned?” Years ago, I was being told “you're valuable”, “you're doing so much”, “we all feel you're doing great work”. But the words didn't align with the actions. The actions weren't there to back up the statements that were being made verbally and that opens up a much more interesting discussion around my own needs, and how I feel valued, versus the perception of how they think I need to feel valued.

So I'll be honest, I am fairly significance driven. I do need a pat on the back every now and again. I do like to hear people say “Rhiannon you're doing great work”. Where this was derailed, was that over time with these particular people, what I believe happened was that their perception is “Rhiannon's doing great work, she's pretty independent, she's satisfied with what she's doing”. And they are getting on with what they need to get on with. What I am saying and feeling, is I've made significant contributions and done amazing pieces of work, that are then publicly not being recognised.

And I knew at the time, that there were more significant people in the business – bigger status, higher titles, etc. on these projects, but I still felt quite offended that behind the scenes it's all love and praise, but publicly facing there's no acknowledgement at all. So my inner 7 year old was having a huge tantrum, and my 31 year-old-self knew that my inner 7 year old wouldn't be appeased in this situation, but also what my 7 year old is telling me may have had a little bit of validity as well.

So let me summarise. There's what you know and what you see. What I knew was that the work I was doing was valued. That I was contributing, that the people I was doing this work for were happy with the work, and that I was doing good things. What I felt the perception was, based on the way they communicated to those around me at the time, meant I was not even worth talking about or mentioning, even when I had done significant work on specific projects that were actively being talking about and celebrated.

And what compounded that perception, was that people who were newer, or lower in the corporate hierarchy than me (I hate saying that but it exists and everyone in corporate knows this), they were getting more recognition and acknowledgement by simply being given a platform in a public forum, when I wasn't.





As somebody who consults, I can put that hat on and go it doesn't matter. However, as an employee, it matters. How people like to be treated and how people feel valued, matters. And that piece of work by People and Culture or HR, or Directors, shouldn't be left up to how people perceive others need to be valued. It actively needs to be asked.

So I want you to think about a time when you haven't felt recognised, or you haven't felt understood, or valued, or you've felt misunderstood or misinterpreted. Go back to that time and really start to look inward and identify how it feels. Now come back out and look only at the facts. Not feelings, but facts.

If we're talking about the situation I've just spoken about for instance... Fact I was doing good work. How do I know? Because others told me that I was doing good work. So it can become a fact based on that? It's not just my opinion that I'm doing good work. Fact, the people that matter valued me. How do I know? Because the people who were telling me that I was valued were the important people. And by important, I mean the C-Suite and the ones that paid me. Fact, did others in the organisation know or understand the work that I did? No. Because those important people didn't tell them. Fact. Did I contribute significantly to projects that were spoken about publicly. Yes. Was I mentioned. No. Does that really matter. Probably not. So, am I dealing with an emotional inner 7 year old throwing a tantrum about getting attention? Yes.

And now I've gone down that path, I can make a much more informed decision about how to act on it, if I need to. If it mattered that the rest of the organisation needed to understand what I do, and the value I add, would this matter? Yes. Then it's about working out in what circumstance that would need to matter, and taking action to align that perception with fact.

Let's go to the example at the top of the podcast, where I was talking about the person who feels that they treated like a charity case. Do they think that they are behaving as if they are a charity case? No. But, the fact that they said they feel like a charity case hasn't caused them to do some inner searching as to why. They haven't gotten curious and ask themselves what it is that's making others treat them that way. Which may come from a place of not caring, in which case they won't change. But if they don't like the fact that they are being made to feel like a charity case, then that question needs to be asked, and the behaviour needs to be addressed.

So let me clarify two things. The first is gaining a better perspective is about enhancing awareness. Where there is a perception gap, there is a lack of awareness. And that awareness may be yours, or that maybe others. Your job, is to evaluate whether that perception is impacting you enough in the way of discomfort or recognition or whatever it might be, to do something about it. Close that gap. And, if you do choose to do something about it, what will you do and how will you keep your emotions in check while you do it?





You need to have strategies and one of the strategies you can use is to deal (and stay) in fact. And then not only fact, but having a look at the impact it creates. The impact beyond you.

The second is that you need to identify the interpretation and the questions you're asking yourself. So if you're feeling a particular way, why are you feeling that way? And what do you want to do about it? Often you need to get curious because there is a lack of complete understanding.

I always come back to words and actions. Do people do an act in a way that they say they're going to. For instance, last night Damon and I were watching Survivor 44 and a player said to another player "I will play my idol for you". For those who don't watch survivor, an idol means you're safe and you can only play it once. So it's a big power play in the game of survivor. I love survivor by the way. That's my Friday night treat with Damien. We love it.

So this player was about to be voted out and this other player said "I'm going to play my idol for you". Now those discussions happened that day, but I personally didn't think for one minute that that player would play their idol for anyone. But they did. They did what they said they were going to do. And in a game of survivor it's pretty important to manage the perception other people have of you. People need to believe that your intentions and integrity are one way and then sometimes unfortunately you have to go against your own integrity and your own intentions to win. And in survivor 43, Cody was voted out by his best mate and I thought his best mate was going to win it to be completely honest because this guy was amazing at the social game, but not so good at fire starting which was a problem and actually what got him voted out at the end. But when Cody was voted out, it was by Jesse who he felt safe with. Jesse managed the perception of himself to Cody really, really well and then played it. So you can't be manipulative (in both a good way or bad way) unless you can manage other people's perceptions.

But if you choose to live in a place where the perception others have of you is impacting you negatively then you need to do some inner work. Find your self worth, find your self-love and from that place, start educating people on how to treat you better. If you are setting up the perception others have of you based on how you want them to perceive you, and you're manipulating that, then you know exactly how to do it and you need to be careful - lies take work.

I prefer to be perceived in alignment with how I truly am. Mainly because I'm lazy 😊 I'm very much a heart on sleeve person, and you can often feel how I feel before I say anything. I'm high energy like that and for me to hide that requires immense energy, as well as remembering the lies or half-truths I've spun for myself. To me, it takes too much work so I don't choose to live my life like that. I would rather be who I am, and accept that, and have others accept that, which means the people I have alignment with those around me - on values, on energy, and I do feel like that way I attract truth into my life. Opposed to living in a world where I'm trying to be someone I'm not, or





trying to look like someone I'm not, and attracting people to me who are doing the same thing and therefore are not.

So.. I want to spend my time with people who help me become what I want to become truthfully, as in a successful business owner, a really great coach, a growing and evolving human being, a great mum, I want to know what it is I'm working with and that how I'm growing is authentic. If people are altering their personas to manage the perception others have of them, I can't work with that. There's little to no truth in that. And that's OK if it aligns with you, your values, how you want to live. It's your choice. But I can't for one second imagine that that's a happy, empowered and therefore powerful position.

Stay true to you! See you next week!

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I you've found this podcast valuable, please take a minute to write a quick review about what you've found most beneficial for you, so other people can benefit from your insights, and listen in too. I would LOVE that!

Also, if there are any topics you'd like me to cover specifically about life coaching or the life coaching industry, visit rhiannonbush.com to contact me. Thanks for joining and I'll see you in the next episode of Do I Need A Life Coach?!

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