

WHEN THEY JUST WON'T LISTEN

With Rhiannon Bush



INTRO

“Do I need a life coach?” You’re listening to Episode 7, 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.



Well hello my friends, how are you? I am currently sitting in my dad's office and it's pouring with rain and I have two loads of washing on the clothesline currently getting soaked and I just can't bring myself to go out in the rain and get them all.

I've had a really busy morning filming for Liquid Learning's IQON, a really exciting opportunity, I love doing that stuff, where I got to discuss two-way communication. Which will hopefully help businesses and business leaders really maximise their ability to communicate and upskill their communication to create better culture and great psychological safety. So that That's been my morning. Absolutely fun, absolutely awesome and I will have to go and get the washing in very very soon and hang it up inside, all over again, which I find highly inefficient. But anyway there we go.



Today I want to talk to you about the way we see the world, the way you see the world because one of the biggest things that I find and breaks down communication, where we get defensive and our barriers come up, For the way that we struggle to communicate is actually when we can't see the other persons point of you and even more than that when we're not willing to listen.

I remember having a few girlfriends who, after I'd given birth to my two beautiful children, I'd done hypnobirthing which has another name, calm birthing, I believe the two are very similar, I was absolutely petrified of doing that, and I remember saying to myself, no I really need to just be loaded up with all the drugs, give me all the drugs. That's how I'm going to do it and then I went and did Hypnobirthing and I really change my mind and I thought no actually I want to listen to my body and I want to take this opportunity to really drop in and do this thing.



You know do this as naturally as I can and while I really wanted to remain open to “well if I need to take pain medication then I will and I’ll ask for it and I’m very open to that” and then when I was actually in labour, I realised how attached to my birthing plan I had become.

Please understand that however you choose and want to give birth is entirely up to you - your body your baby. It’s entirely your choice and I don’t have any stigmas associated with doing it whichever way you want to, this was just my personal preference, this is how I wanted to go through that process and for my first birth I was not able to do it completely naturally and for my second I’m really fortunate in the way that I was. So. However it works, it works. I don’t think you really get a say at the end of the day, I don’t think as much as I wanted to control all of that, but the reason I want to discuss it was because I had some girlfriends who were really rolling their eyes at me, to the point where I didn’t feel like I could even talk about Hypnobirthing. I couldn’t even discuss it, I couldn’t even bring it up without feeling like I was being judged or shut down and that really wasn’t a pleasant experience, and it never is.



I've also had situations in working environments where I've been shut down and put in a corner and it wasn't until my last boss, Graham, who actually really empowered me and valued my opinion. He reassured me that I have an opinion worth expressing and that I'm not silly or weak and other ways that I have felt in the past when other people spoken to me in a way that felt like it shut me down.

A lot of that has to do with the corporate hierarchy in terms of my position and until I was a bit older and in a more experienced role and paid accordingly did I really feel like I stepped into that power where I could express an opinion and not care so much about the fallout or how it looked when I was able to voice an opinion, which was a really really empowering process and I guess one many many people go through.



Today I really want to talk about when people aren't willing to listen but also the way that you view the world and why that creates such a disconnect. So my ideal outcome from the podcast is really for you to take away some pointers on how to educate people in how to communicate with you better, to have some courage around speaking up and speaking your truth a little bit more, and not caring so much about what other people think, and just to check in with yourself. Calibrate how you're feeling about the way you're communicating and how empowered you are to speak out with your truth, and why that maybe.

Something I've experienced a lot is when people don't agree with you but won't even hear you out so it's not like they won't even listen to you but they actively will shut you down. This happens when they are super fearful of your opinions being different to theirs, to the point where they don't even want to hear what you have to say. So it's a really really awkward thing to do and as I've gotten older I have more actively chosen to disengage with that type of behaviour instead of actively trying to prove a point.



And I don't know whether I am happy about that or not, it's something that I consider quite a bit but I do find when I actively try to turn someone's opinion around that blatantly will not listen, it exhausts me and I do stop and question "well what's the point of this? Why am I even bothering to engage?"

I really don't have a problem with arguing, I quite enjoy debating and arguing but I also enjoy hearing things from different people's perspectives and points of view whereas I know other people, especially ones I've experienced in the past who have shut me down, I remember particular work environment where I had a superior who just wouldn't give me the time of day. We were either talking about work or nothing and anything that I did say I could almost feel their eyes roll, even if visibly I couldn't see it. They just didn't care for me or my opinions about a lot of things and it didn't fare well to engage me for productivity and staffing, so it wasn't a smart move on their part as they were trying to really get the most out of me from a professional perspective as they could but in saying that it was their way and I conformed in that role for a long as I could until I could find a better opportunity and one where I felt a little bit more energetically centred and able to perform at a level that I wanted to but I was also more enthralled in the role because I felt like I was a good cultural fit and really that's what it comes down to.



When we grow up we are indoctrinated from very very young age on our values and our beliefs and the way we see the world and that is a lot to do with our parents. Unfortunately or fortunately we are very much sponges when we're children so we watch our parents and that's who we take most of our lessons from. It actually, I don't think, comes down to us being told things. It's not like a school scenario where you're sitting in a classroom and they teach you. Instead, you learn it through observation and then through modelling.

So we see the example that is set for us by our parents and we tend to follow in those footsteps until we grow up and our pre-frontal cortex is developed enough to help us make our own decisions and start to break away from the mould that we grew up in originally. So our pre-frontal cortex in our brain, again I'll do more on neuroscience in future podcasts because it is very much an acquired taste for some people. I love it but not everyone does.



Our pre-frontal Cortex which is our adult brain, our parent brain, in our our head, we've got our pre-frontal cortex which is part of our neo-cortex We've got our cerebellum which is our animal brain, part of our fight or flight response and is very much about "I 'm going to do as least amount as possible to conserve energy for emergencies" and is very simplistic in its functioning, then our pre-frontal cortex doesn't develop until about 25, until which time we are somewhat operating at the discretion of our conditioning and the way that we were raised.

So the beauty about getting into your late 20s is that you can start to identify things that you want, things that you don't want and you get to start to really step into who you are in the world and how you want to live your life and the legacy you want to leave and all of that kind of thing, and you really get to start to operate independently which is really fun and really exciting.

During our younger years, all of those filters that we take information in through is through our senses. And we all know about those - our site, our hearing, taste, smell and touch and we've also got another one which is called our audio digital functioning which is the language of business so it's very much about logic, analysis, pros, cons, our sensibility around information and processing information.

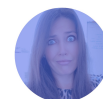


Kinesthetic is obviously how we touch and feel things, and our visual elements, so when we go to classrooms, adult education, even in physical classrooms for kids you will see very visual cues. You will see very kinesthetic cues, hearing in terms of audio, music, sounds. Not so much of the taste and the smell cues, unless you are a chef or you are going to be sommelier or a perfume person – they're very specific kinds of sensory intakes where we are going to become a chef for our taste and use gustatorial modalities.

And then we've got our olfactory, which is our sense of smell. But, basically the moral of the story is that we take in all this information through all of our senses, and then we learn to process it. When we learn to process that information, we then learn how we prefer to express ourselves and express information.

So you'll see me go into a shop and I will literally touch everything. I don't love online shopping because I like to feel the fabrics before I even look at buying them, let alone trying them on. My partner is a real foodie and absolutely loves to experiment with flavours in the kitchen. I love to eat good food, but I'm not really very cheffy.

Other people are visual. You can look at someone who's visual and they are usually dressed immaculately, head to toe. They look sensational. So basically we all process information in different ways and then as we grow, we learn. As we express it, we find as we get older that that's how we learn best.



So for me, I love audio books. I will always listen to a book over reading a book. When I read a book, I tend to fall asleep, but when I am listening to it, if I really enjoy it, I will typically then buy the physical book as well. So I've got the audio and then I've got the physical, and then I'll use the physical to actually mark-up things to reference back to.

The audio book is what I listen to and I can remember by where I am (physically) at the time. I listen to something and learn something, and it just means that I can retain that information a lot better. Why this is important is because when we process information, we process it differently, even very differently from our siblings.



I don't know if you've got siblings but when you experience an event together, you may remember that shared event very, very differently to how your sibling remembers it. For instance, I remember when I was 16 years old, I was in my school uniform and I was walking down the hallway to my bedroom after dinner, and it was just a typical school night. And I remember my brother walked out of his room and I just said something like "oh hey, how's it going?" and I remember for about an hour, we stood in that hallway and we talked, and it was an absolute pivotal shift in our relationship. It changed everything for me because he actually opened up about some things that were going on for him that I had no idea about.

And I remember that conversation being a huge catalyst for change for the two of us. We were always very close, but we did fight a lot and that was a lot of my fault. And while I remember that event very, very clearly, if you asked him, he would probably recall it differently.



I don't know if you've ever all been sitting around the table with your family or your friends and you've remembered an event, you've told a story about it, and then another person who was there just turns around and goes "that's not how it happened, what are you talking about?" And you have a big argument because you are sure you are right and they are sure they are right and nothing works. It's like you just don't know how those wires got so crossed.

So our memories are a completely separate thing to the way we intake and then express information and communicate. But our memories are fascinating in the way that they will piece together information, even if it's not true. Again, total side note for a later podcast, but the way we interpret information and the way that we see the world that's developed from a really, really young age and has everything to do with the way that we can stand and listen to somebody else express their opinions without getting defensive. And by seeing that it's actually just a different point of view, it enables us to remain open and to remain curious about what they may be experiencing or how they came to that opinion.

When we understand how we form our own opinions, when we don't understand how our opinions are formed, how our values and our beliefs have come to exist within us, it's really easy to be black and white about things.



I remember in high school I was very black and white. I was very pro capital punishment and my world didn't come in shades of grey. It was right or it was wrong, and I was very much a rule follower. And what I then didn't account for and I couldn't understand was this sort of subtle game playing that happens in every environment that you're in and so to me, fair was fair and unfair was unfair, and it kept me very, very stagnant.

Until I learnt about modelling in my imprint phase and about my prefrontal cortex, I didn't understand how our opinions and values and beliefs are formed from a very, very young age and while we have every ability to change them, until we know that that's how they've formed in ourselves, and until we can address which ones ours are, it's really hard to understand or work towards changing them if we choose to.

So if you are conversing with someone who is very black and white and keeps shutting you down, typically it's because they haven't really stopped to consider that there are multiple opinions or a different approach. And even if it's a disrespectful way of communicating because they're not even willing to listen, sometimes you're just not going to be able to change somebody else. You've only got control over you. If they don't want to change, they're not going to.

Where this is a problem in the workplace is if you have to work for somebody like that and you have to report into somebody who's not willing to listen. If they're not willing to even consider your opinion, then how do you start to break that down to communicate in an effective way?



Firstly, if they are like that, my guess is that they are going to be very tasks-and-outcomes focused. They want the work done. They don't really want to know the opinions, the emotions, the process around it, they just want the result. So give them the result, then try to get to know them better and differently through other means - through commonality, through bonding over after-work drinks. Try to foster a relationship. If this person triggers you and you find yourself getting very frustrated because you feel shut down and you're unable to express yourself, appreciate that. Remember that this is the way that they see the world. It has nothing to do with you personally or how you see the world. It is just them exerting their power and actually isn't a reflection on how they feel about you or think about you and your opinions.

So in a workplace setting, when it comes to communicating with somebody like this, it's really important to understand and appreciate that it takes courage, especially if you've shut down on a few different occasions, and extra-especially if that's happened publicly, it's important to understand that feeling nervous to express your opinion is absolutely normal when that's the response that you've been receiving.



It is absolutely on them, especially if they're your superior, to create a safe environment, one where people feel okay to express themselves and take risks, and to foster a sense of engagement. So if they are not doing that, understand that firstly, it takes courage. Secondly, then it becomes about whether expressing yourself the next time is actually worth it. Whether it's worthwhile. So if you are going to muster up that courage to engage and say something that puts you at risk of being shut down, is it worth your while to do so?

If the answer's yes, then I do recommend planning ahead of time what it is that you want to say, which is hard because sometimes you're in a meeting and then you have this brain baby, and you're like "Oh, I need to express that". That's me, by the way. I often have these moments of being like "that's a really good idea!" and then I say it, and then sometimes+ in the past it hasn't fared very well. So understanding that when or if you speak, especially to somebody that's maybe going to shut you down, to have a bit of pre-thought ahead of the idea.



There's a TED Talk by Luvvie Ajayi Jones. I'm not sure if I've pronounced her last name correctly, but it's a really quick TED talk. It's absolutely awesome and she's very much about speaking the truth and being that domino to have those really confronting and courageous conversations. And one of the things that she gives, is herself three points as a sense check, and I do recommend following the same guidelines, especially when dealing with somebody who's a little bit difficult or a little bit resistant to anything that you have to say.

The first is, do you mean it? So when you go to say something, you work up that courage and you're like, “no, I need to say this and I'm going to”, firstly, do you mean it? Secondly, can you defend it? If push comes to shove, if you get any comeback from it, can you defend what it is that you've just said? And the third thing that Dr. Luvvie recommends is did you say it with love?

Here's the thing about dealing with somebody who is difficult to communicate with. You can't control them, you can't change them, and you shouldn't invest your energy in trying to. All you can do is you, and the best thing you can try to do is learn not to take it personally if you get any pushback, but to express yourself anyway. It will be a really wonderful lesson in expressing yourself in a meaningful and very articulate way, and also really having your own back to mean it, defend it, and say it with love, which means you are going to be speaking your truth in accordance with your values and in a way that you would be happy to be spoken to as well.



Take the lessons that not everybody will communicate with you in a way that you want to be communicated with. I learned this lesson hard and fast in a sales role that I had. I had requested somebody be brought on. I had hired her and I was training her, and she would come at me with all sorts of questions intermittently. And I didn't appreciate being interrupted in my day. I prefer to have a bank of questions and then sit down, dedicate really quality time to answering all of those questions, getting the clarity, and then doing what needs to be done. In my inexperience at that stage of my career, I didn't have the foresight to communicate that effectively, and it made it a really, really hard environment for her.

It taught me some really great lessons about the way I communicate and about the way that I like to work. So what I'm saying is take the lessons. Take it as a challenge and take it in a lesson of detachment from it being a personal attack. This person's behaviour has nothing to do with you. You haven't done anything to offend them, and if you have, it wouldn't probably take much anyway, so remember: Do you mean it? Can you defend it? Did you say it with love? And at the very end of all of it, at the end of your work day, are you proud of the way that you held your head up and the way that you communicated? And would you do it again if you could relive that exact moment or day? Would you do it the same way?



They are really, really great questions to ask yourself. And if there are lessons, write them down, make a note, and then try again the following opportunity or the next day. Depending on how much you need to liaise with this person, the worst thing that you can do is let it get to you. The worst thing you can do is make it personal. Because it's not. They can't control you. You can't control them, so you've got to be true to you, and you've got to be happy and satisfied and proud of the way that you conduct yourself while still communicating effectively enough to perform in your role.

Any questions, please reach out on my website because I'm really interested in helping anyone experiencing this. I have been there, I have experienced it. To be fair, I've probably also caused it and it took a lot of work for me to recognize that and to work to overcome that. So I'm really, really interested in any questions or anything anybody would like some help with. Please feel free to reach out and until then, just imagine what it is that you would change if you could within the realm of your control. It's got to be within things that you can control. I'm going to go and get my washing in. I will see you next week. Have a great one. Buy for now.



OUTRO

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If 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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