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Marty, your background is so unique. You went from a clinical psychologist turned business leader and now executive coach. So can you tell us a bit about your journey and what inspired you to write Blindspotting?

Sure. Lauren. It's great to be with you today. So thank you. Yeah, it, it was not a planned journey. I think, like many of us, you kind of look back and you realized there was a fork in the road and you took it. So I, trained as a clinical psychologist, and I thought, that's what I was going to do.

And sit in my office and open the door every 50 minutes to a new patient. And I did that for about ten years or so. But I became I became intrigued with the, kind of the business of health care. And actually, this is a partial answer to, one of the chapters in my book, which is about identity.

My identity was as a clinical psychologist treating patients. And I really wasn't thinking about the fact that I really had been an entrepreneur on and off different times in my life, and it just wasn't part of my identity. But, I drifted over that direction and ended up starting a health care business. And eventually, closed my private practice.

And then we sold the health care business, and, I wasn't quite sure what to do next, but I looked for an opportunity basically to, integrate both my being a clinical psychologist and the business. And so I became a a leadership coach. And in terms of what inspired me to write the book when I was a leadership coach, especially my, clinical psychologist friends and others would be like, what do you really do?

I mean, what is that? And I had long answers, and after a while, I figured out that really what I was doing was helping people with greater self-awareness. And as I thought more about that, that's really was the genesis, for the book. So in the book, you define a blind spot as what we don't know about ourselves that holds us back as leaders.

Why are blind so blind spots so hard to see and even harder to admit? I mean, I know you mentioned that there's about six of these. Yeah, I think it's, just an error in the system and the way our brains work and the way we are that, you know, we develop, successful ways of, negotiating situations and people and, and problems and, and that narrows our kind of ability to respond in other kinds of ways.

And we are successful probably 90% of the time. And so we don't really recognize when problems are showing up. And we tend to think that, you know, we can't solve the problem.

It's not about us. It's about the problems too hard or it's somebody else or or the situation or whatever it is. So it isn't the natural thing to begin to think about.

Hey, maybe my blind spot is that I could be reacting and behaving in a different kind of way. So, to kind of get a handle on that, I, have identified, as you mentioned, six blind spot areas and probably about 60 blind spots spread over those six areas. So there's the six areas are identity, motive behavior, traits, emotions and intellect.

Yet both sound like they would have a lot more blind spots in each area. Just like I know whenever we talk about things like behavior, like, well, that's a can of worms that do your point, it's very hard for us to hit it. Something where like it's hard to change behavior. That's why there's a gazillion books on this.

And even when you read it and you know what to do, it's still hard to do. So I imagine blind spots are sort of like when we think of that in our personal life. It's also that in work, right? Yeah, absolutely. And it does often require, getting outside yourself or actually other people who are can observe us in a more kind of objective way to help us kind of see where, you know, where we just can't see because it's our normal way of responding.

Yeah, absolutely. I want to start with identity, which you briefly touched on. What's an identity blind spot and how does it quietly hold people back from maybe promotions or leadership recognition, anything that, you know, in regards to career development and growth? Sure. And each of the, each of the, as we talk about these, each the blind spots kind of show up in different ways.

The identity blind spot tends to show up. Our identities are kind of the nametag we wear. Kind of. You know, when you describe yourself, it's, who you say you are at a cocktail party or, any other, you know, meeting somebody for coffee. So, the blind spot in identity shows up when we move to a different role, or we want to move to a different role, and we're still holding on to the identity of our previous role.

Maybe just one quick example. So I was engaged by a H.R. Leader who, was a VP of HR, the head of the HR department, but she wanted to be a corporate officer. She wanted to be the chief people officer. And she was being told by the CEO and and others that she wasn't strategic. And so she really engaged me, like, am I strategic or not?

And that's a whole nother can of worms about what is strategic thinking. But, I, I asked her, you know, tell me about yourself. And her identity was as the doer, getting things done. She was amazing at being able to handle multiple projects, execution. And so she was really, quite frankly, an order taker, you know, like, we want this done.

Okay, I'll get it done. And she ran off and got it done. And what they were thinking about the CEO and senior team for, you know, an executive corporate officer is a strategic person who asks why and starts to be a thought partner and a thought leader. And before you go, I

mean, he she didn't need to abandon the fact that she was good at executing, but she needed to expand her identity, that that wasn't her first thing.

And so we worked on that. And she did get the role promotion in about, 4 to 6 months. Amazing. I, I relate to that a lot. We actually just had an episode on I'll put it in the show notes for anybody who has been. It's called, what to do when you're told you're not strategic enough.

Because I do think this is something that people are told often, especially when they're thinking about growth in leadership. Okay. I think I think just asking why and what questions or a good start to kind of being a strategic thinker. Yeah. And I think, I mean, I really resonate to like, they're an order taker. I'm very much a doer.

And executer like the minute we start talking about doing something, I'm like, okay, I'm already thinking on the 10,000ft level versus still people are at that 30,000ft view. And, it is very much something. I see people who are strategic or just people who are like, they pause and then they act. And I'm very much like, I act right away.

And it to your earlier point about like mindfulness and sort of like watching your behavior, it does take like conscious thinking to be like, okay, your your knee jerk reactions go do this thing. But really you need to ask questions and understand the deeper why. And ultimately, if you end up having to execute on it, understand the deeper why.

That's helpful. Right? But yeah. So I, I relate a lot to you, you know, and when you do that, you broadcast to others what your brand is. My brand is a doer. I mean, that's just, you know, you go there and so that's the brand that you end up having. And. Yeah. So it's just like change in a corporate brand.

You got to change your personal brand. Yeah. And you know, it's funny because I think that brand, the do our brand is really great up to a certain level. And then I hear this a lot where it's like whatever served you earlier in your career doesn't necessarily serve you later in your career when you are getting to those executive levels.

So it is I, you know, for anybody who's struggled with it, it's like, well, that's a good sign, I think, because it means that you're you have to relearn a new way. Yeah. I want to talk about, motive is another one of the six that you have. So how can misalignment between our true motives and our job role quietly derail success?

I would imagine that, you know, if you're not motivated in what you're doing, that's that's going to be tough. Yeah. I mean, the motive is really probably the hardest blindspot to get Ahold of because this is the, engine in the system, if you will. This is why we do things. This is what drives us. And we always have multiple motives.

But if sometimes we're really not aware of the motives other people do, right? I mean, when people say, oh, he's only doing it for the money or it's only doing it to be in the spotlight. So, I mean, those are people saying that's what they're seen as somebody's motive. And if the person's not aware of that and isn't, you know, then obviously, you know, their their motive is misaligned with, you know, the, the, job or misaligned with their team or whatever it is. So getting a handle on what your motives are and being really clear about it and being strategic about it, and, and really struggling with that kind of it's always hard to balance motives. You know, should I be, you know, pushing for a promotion right now or should I be quietly, you know, supporting the team or whatever the different motives are?

So that so a misalignment with the motives is when you really get focused on a single motive and it starts to take over, and you your clue to that usually is an emotional response. Because when motives are blocked, we feel frustration. So when when you're feeling an intense emotion, usually a frustration. That's a question to say.

Why am I so fresh air right now? What is really driving me? So an example of that, like let's say your motive is money. You're like, I'm working because I want to pay my bills. And if I don't make \$100,000 or more, like I am not motivated to do this job or do a good job here. So how would that look?

It's like, okay, I'm motivated by money. I asked for a raise and they give it to me and I feel frustrated. Or I'm trying to see this in like an actual example. Yeah, I guess I mean, you know, so, you know, you do want to ask, like, really, what are my motives? I mean, maybe the mode, maybe the money motive, as you really think about it, wasn't pushing you, so it was pushing you, but it really wasn't your true motive.

Maybe as you think about it broadly, you know, I really love the mission of the company or all these people I work with are really great. And it may mean a recalculation of, I'm going to have to struggle with my, money motive, not being met. But these other motives do get mad at this job. And so I want to really focus on those.

If I keep focusing on the money all the time, I'm just going to be frustrated. Or maybe it means I need to switch jobs. This money motive really is number one for me, and I'm going to be frustrated all the time if it isn't being met. And I really need to, you know, do something about that.

So it's a real kind of a deep reassessment and audit of what what your motives are. Yeah, that makes sense. I was a recruiter before, and we used to always ask people when we get to the job offer stage, like what are your top three things that you want to have in your next job? And I think there's a lot of ways to read into that, but it's almost like, what is your motivation for taking this job?

Is it because the mission, you know, we would want to talk that more up? Is that money we would want to talk more about like the whole compensation package. So to your point, I think understanding your motives also makes it easier for people on the other side of you to help you get what you need. If that's it, you know, if they can.

Yeah, yeah. Great point. Great point about just being open about it all and vulnerable and sharing. So you talk about traits becoming well super strengths turn supernovas. Can you give us an example of when leaning too hard on a strength becomes actually a liability. Yeah I mean this is probably the easiest motive to or easiest, blind spot to get Ahold of. You know, in every leadership book talks about what are the leadership traits. And traits are not unit dimensionally good. You know, you can think about some traits that you're really great at. You're really, decisive or you're really organized, and all you have to do is put the word, the modifier telo in front of it.

What happens when you're too organized? What happens when you're too confident? You know, and that's often what our partners and spouses and friends and colleagues tell us about about us. And so knowing when those, strengths tip over into becoming problems really is, is the key to kind of being aware of this blind spot, you know, just to get a maybe a real quick example, I was working with the, entrepreneur, CEO leader, started a company, and he definitely was very confident, very decisive, really curious, kind of open to new ideas.

And so his team really loved him until they didn't. And by that I mean he, and people had a couple people had left and that's why he brought me in to try to help and take a look at this. They described him as arrogant. And really what was going on was that confidence, and curiosity about, you know, trying to figure something out.

At some point he figured that he had all the answers and he just didn't need to talk to anybody anymore. And the discussion was over, and he became dismissive towards people, not intentionally, but it just was obvious. And I couldn't tell him, you know, you're arrogant, that it wasn't something that he would ever really identify as, but I could help him see that when he stopped asking questions, he became very, dismissive of his team and that the tweak and the change would be was to be aware of that and then to be able to say, you know what?

I need to think about this a little bit more. I'm almost ready to make a decision. How about we talk about it again, you know, next Tuesday at our meeting or whatever? And certainly as he got to do that, he found out he found out that he didn't have all the answers. Sometimes there was more information that came in.

And he was generally very he really wanted his team to like him. And so the change was something that he was able to do. Yeah. I would say for me it's moving to quick, like getting

things done with urgency is really good unless you're moving too quick. And it's like, well, you did this thing before it was ready, or this thing went out and it had an air or something like that.

It's like urgency is good, but sometimes you can be too quick on something. Yeah. So kind of the the check for you would be how do you pump the brakes a little bit on your urgency. Well, you know, what would give you a little clue to say, wait a minute. Let me slow down just a minute. You know, right now.

Yeah, exactly. Okay, I want to talk about an emotional blind spot. So you kind of mentioned earlier that they're really tricky, especially for high performing professionals. What's where what's one way that someone can tell that their emotions are managing them versus like, I'm in charge of my emotions. Yeah. You know, the that is the goal here. I mean, there's a number of things in the emotional area for blind spots, but it is about being more strategic and decisive about, how you use your, your emotions.

Actually, I find more executives, certainly more male executives who feel like emotions are just a problem in the workplace and in the more, you know, if everybody had no emotion, then everything would be just so much better. I, I've worked with a lot of engineers who really look at the world that way. And I found myself saying to them, you know what? Emotions are just data. Yeah, there's a data hold. Data set. You're not paying attention to. So, you know, why don't you bring that data set in and pay attention to it? And if you can begin to be comfortable with your with your emotions and, identify what you're feeling, then it allows you to use them strategically. You know, the, the, the quiet leader who, is calm all the time but is feeling some frustration, you know, if they would actually pound their, pound the table in front of them, everybody's going to take notice and it's going to be like, whoa, you know, I better pay attention to this.

And that would be like a strategic decision to let your emotions show a little bit, maybe in a way that's a little beyond what your normal ability is. So that that's, the the emotional blind spot is a comfort level with emotions. Is sophistication with it and then ability to show them, you know, you know, in a way that is authentic and also strategic.

Yeah. Because I think having like an emotional reaction or emotions in general is very normal and healthy. And like there's that book *The Body Keeps Score* and it's sort of like, look, if you never feel anything, it's going to come out some other way. So I think it's healthy to have an emotion. I think the big thing is like, what do you do after you have the emotion? You know, if you're really frustrated, do you just like vent about it to everybody who will listen for the next three years of your life? Or is it like, here's the action I'm going to take and how I'm going to move on and be less pressure, or maybe make it so that whatever this thing is that happened, I don't do it again in the future.

It doesn't happen again in the future, you know, and, and our most everybody reads our emotions nonverbals speak way louder than any words. So even if you're, you know, trying to control that emotion of frustration, it's showing in some way. So I my usual advice is advertise rather than conceal. Talk about it. You know, obviously in a way, like you said, that's constructive and moves most things on.

And you'll find that, you know, that's, as you said earlier, as you share with other people, you know, other people can help you problem solve. Yeah, absolutely. You have, a chapter, called intellect. And you write that being smart is never enough. Why do so many smart leaders still fail? I think this is so true.

I see this all the time. Like the smartest person in the room is not necessarily the, quote, most successful. Yeah. And as a psychologist to my, my discipline is, guilt guilty, fetishizing IQ in the hierarchy of the better. And I do that in coaching and, and you probably saw this when your executive recovery and people would just talk about how smart somebody was. I always hated the term wicked smart. I don't know what that actually really means, but but, you know, it is so and I really I certainly I talk in the chapter about four different kinds of intelligence and, I don't, you know, it was almost more of a thought experiment in that chapter, but really, there are different kinds of intelligence.

There's that IQ, which I call horsepower, just that ability to crunch a lot of data and remember a lot of things. And, you know, that's associated with academic performance, their speed of processing. Some people are just so quick on their feet, you know, versus somebody that might be super smart and has to take a while to, you know, come back with the answer.

There are people that are just unbelievably creative and just see the connections that are not obvious. And that's a very different kind of intelligence. And then I the fourth area I talk about is kind of street smarts, business acumen. That's just reading a lot of data. I always think of those people as kind of head on a pivot.

They're just paying attention to everything. And yeah, I, I've met maybe 1 or 2 leaders that kind of have the higher high in all of those. Most of us are high in some and not in others. And so, my advice is to get the team to get think about those different kinds of intelligence and construct a team where you've got all of that and you have a respect for all those different ideas, and that's that's where the team is going to come up with a way better answer than any one individual.

It's interesting. I thought you might also talk about someone who's like, really good at influencing or the people like, they're so charming, like their intelligence is like, is that they have this ability to read people really well and recognize, like, I can influence this, the

direction of this room based on kind of like that intelligence, but someone else is going to crunch the numbers, that kind of thing.

Yeah, I actually I put that part in my behavior chapter. I've talked okay, behaviors, the complex behaviors, communication influence and prioritization. And I totally agree with you. I talk about nine different types of influence techniques. And you're right. And the really successful leaders are very and I think this is also true of politicians, people that are in the public.

They really have a sensitivity to what's the right tool out of my toolbox of influence to use. Is it, you know, do it for the team. Is it do it for me. Is it the analytical, you know, argument is whatever it is and figuring out kind of how to use different ways of influence. Yeah. Yeah, absolutely.

I see this all the time at work too. It's like the people who I'm like, wow, you just got this thing connected to this thing way faster than if we had done a whole data analysis about it because you like, quote, sold it. You influence them to, to be like, yep, we're on board with that. So I'm always very impressed with that skill set.

Okay. Obviously behavior seems like the most obvious blind spot to fix, but it's also usually the one most ignored. Why is that? Is it because it's the hardest, or is it because we are always told to change our behavior and. Yeah, and well, I think so. All these different, all these other place, the behaviors, what everybody sees is what we see.

Right. These other blind spot areas that we just talked about or a little more hidden. But they all show up in your behavior. So my, the direction of the book is figure out these other blind spots first because they and then it does mean you're going to change some behavior like a couple these examples I've given, but it's it's changing those in service of a blind spot. That's at another level, you know, your traits or your emotions or something. But in the behavioral chapter, I talk about, as I said, communication influence and, prioritization. I think the prioritization one is an interesting one. To your point about kind of what we're not aware of, there was a article written by, the CEO of Procter and Gamble about ten years ago, and he talked about what can only the CEO do.

And it was just kind of an eye opening, article for me. Adding that word only and thinking about it is the role. And this is true of any role that you have. There are some things that only you in that role can do, because that is what that role is for. And if you're not prioritizing that, if you're doing what you're really good at or what you like to do or what other people tell you to do or what the meeting's about, then you're not really thinking about what only you can do in your role.

And this is where, you know, time management comes in and being able to do it. So just I talk about five things a CEO can only do. CEO can only choose their senior team. I mean, if

they're letting HR do that or somebody else, then they're not doing what only they can do. They only can really make the major strategic decisions about where the company is going. And really on those, they can set the priorities for the the year and making sure the resources are aligned along those and people don't drift from those priorities. They're the, champion of the culture. I mean, the way they behave, the way they talk, they need to own that culture all the time and be thinking about it. And finally, they own certain relationships. That's also true of other, roles. And being really clear on only you in that role is who people want to talk to. And what are those key relationships that you need to own and you need to manage and and if you're doing those five things, then you can do everything else that you may want to do, but you better make sure you're checking the box and all of those. Yeah, I'm kind of curious what these blind spots. Maybe this isn't massive, but is there any way to, like, avoid having these? Is it like, look, self-awareness is step one, and while you can't avoid them, you can make them less of a blind spot. Or I think this is just how this is the the operating system we all have as humans.

I mean, we, we, our pattern, we pattern recognition people. And when we recognize patterns and we start to to, you know, focus on those and we exclude other kinds of information. So it is about being self-aware. It isn't about being perfect. It is about not being judgmental about our blind spots. It's they just are. And let's just figure it out. It's those strengths or strengths. And, you know, you don't need to apologize for them. You just need to figure out when you're tipping over and and using it too much. So, I mean, in the book, you know, I have a number of exercises people can do to try to get self-awareness. We have a, blind spot in test blind spot income where you can take a quick test to try to figure out where your blind spots are.

And, you know, we're all very busy, so pick one at a time and just kind of begin to make these small tweaks that are going to help, you know, minimize the effect of your blind spots. Yeah, that's how I was going to ask. Next is like, how do you I mean, there's obviously a potential for a lot of them.

So it's like, how do you narrow down what to start with? It sounds like taking this test is like a really good first place, a mixed in with the book. Like they work together. Yeah. I think about where to start. Yes. And where to start is either where you are already identifying your frustrated or where other, you know, 360 feedback is a great place, you know, what are people telling you?

One of the insights that started my book is when I did three 60s, I, you know, we tended to look at what are the strengths and what are the opportunities. And you think of those as two separate, buckets. Well, really they they're the flip side of the same thing. And as I started to realize that, you know, some of those strengths and, were the other side were the opportunities and you could hear that through 360 feedback.

That, you know, will help people give an idea of kind of where to start. As a first step. Yeah. I feel like, you know, you have a blind spot that's kind of derailing or a success if you are having any of these things and not and this isn't a bad thing, is your do your point. We're all humans.

This is just like part of our operating system. And so, this is just another tool to put in your toolkit, which is, always very helpful. They have a wide variety of those. So, Marty, any parting words, like last things you would tell someone who's maybe feeling like I've got I know I have a blind spot, like I recognize this.

I mean, the book is about self-awareness, and I think, you know, there's lots of really great leadership books. I mean, you and I could read the same book on how to lead a good team meeting, and we could each take away the same five key takeaways. But we do them differently because we have different personalities, different approaches. And so understanding yourself is going to just make you so much more strategic and decisive and, about how you really apply all these, you know, lessons you can learn in leadership. So, you know, I think, you know, just just kind of developing a, a habit pattern of becoming self more and more self-aware. Yeah. Well, we are really big on this show about proactive career development. So this definitely fits into that bucket. Marty, tell people where they can find your book, learn more about you, follow your work, all the things.

We'll put it, in the show notes as well. Thank you very much. So the book is coming out from Harvard Business Review, HBR press. July 29th. And so buy it wherever you buy your books. And, you can also find me on Martin dubin.com and the best place to find all this information about the book and everything [is @blindspotting.com](https://is@blindspotting.com).

Amazing. We'll put all of that in the show notes, as well as the Blindspotting test that you mentioned. Thank you so much for, sharing with us today. Great. Thanks for the conversation, I loved it.