

47. Randi Deckard on advocating for yourself, the danger of assumptions, the many benefits of working cross-functionally, breaking down silos and helping others shine.

Michelle: From Bosstrack, it's Her HypeSquad, a show about amazing women who've made incredible strides as leaders in their industry. They're here to support you and your leadership growth to encourage you and hype you up as part of your hype squad. Squad. Hi, everyone. This is Michelle Harris back to bring you another episode of Her HypeSquad with Bosstrack. This week.

I sat down with Randi Deckard, a senior VP of client engagement. We talk about advocating for yourself, the danger of assumptions, the many benefits of working cross functionally breaking down silos and helping others shine. We cover so much ground in this conversation. But before we jump into our discussion, I'd like to share a little bit more info about Randi.

Randi Deckard has over 20 years of commercial healthcare industry experience with [00:01:00] a focus on driving revenue growth with a customer obsessed approach. She has experience driving revenue and profitability. In the life sciences, technology, and financial services sectors of health care. Randi has transformed her clinical scientists data driven experiments into go to market playbooks that drive profitable, sustainable growth.

She's a master of revenue architecture, a serial learner, and a proud mama of two fur babies, Appollo and Luna. If you enjoy my conversation with Randi, be sure to subscribe to our channel and help more people find us by sharing this episode with others, or by leaving a review, or subscribe to our weekly newsletter filled with things we found that we're excited about and were inspired by, along with valuable leadership advice to watch, listen to or read.

It's a little bit of joy for your inbox each Monday. You can subscribe at www.thebosstrack.com forward slash weekly joy. Now, without further delay, [00:02:00] here's my conversation with Randi Deckard. Hi, Randi. I'm so excited to have you here. Thank you for joining us on Her HypeSquad with Bosstrack.

Randi Deckard: I am super stoked to be with you, Michelle.

Michelle: Yeah, I'm really looking forward to our conversation. I know we've got a lot of topics to cover. So I'm really looking forward to diving in, but I'd love to start by you giving a little bit of, or telling the audience a little bit about yourself so they can hear in your own words.

Randi Deckard: Sure. So I always like to start off, you know, who I am. So I'm a, I'm a daughter, I'm a mother, I'm a wife and, friend, crazy dog mama times two as a result of being an empty nester.

And of course a leader. , I'm a serial learner and, um, You know, that has served me well because I, from the time I've graduated from university, invested in myself. And I think that's one of the things that, contributes to my success. I'm [00:03:00] extremely creative and that bleeds into my professional life.

I'm a quilter. Fuse glass artists and, I silversmith jewelry. In fact, I used to run my own business, Dallas Designing Diva, but that creative, aspect allows my mind to rest. And it actually makes me, better at my job because there's something about just being able to rest and be creative.

And then some of the things that I've brought to, my role, which As crazy as it sounds, in quilting we talk about progress. not perfection. And, in a quilt, you have like this really tiny space and all you can see is all the mistakes you made. And you just want to pull your hair out. But then when you stand back and look at the whole quilt, you can't see it.

Right. And so I share that analogy with my team all the time. And just so they get it that progress, not perfection. That's something that I had to learn [00:04:00] along the way. Along the way. And then of course, clinical scientist to revenue growth leader, been in health care for way too many years. I'm not going to say that number in public.

You can go look at my LinkedIn and figure it out.

Michelle: Well, I love it. And, so your two dogs, what kind of dogs do you have?

Randi Deckard: So they are not an official breed, but it's Rottico. So it's a mix between Rottweiler and Cane Corso or Cane Corso, tomato, tomato. So they're not small dogs. They're 100 plus pound litter mates.

And excuse me, crazy dog mama. I don't know if this will show up, but I actually had a photo shoot done with them. I love that. Crazy dog mama. This is what happens when you're an empty nester. They get dressed up at Halloween, the whole nine yards. So. [00:05:00]

Michelle: Yeah, and I guess I have to apologize to your kids for asking about the dogs and not the kids.

Randi Deckard: It's okay. But my kid, my son, my son, especially, he's like, Oh, yeah, I see how it is now. Because, you know, dogs are expensive. If you want to You know, do, do things and, um, yeah, but yeah, so he's like, I see how it is because like I said, just different, different season in our lives and they're spoiled rotten.

So, yeah,

Michelle: I love it. I love it. So we are empty nesters and we also no longer have pets. So I, I don't know what that says about about us. But

Randi Deckard: It's kind of funny, like we all go through different seasons, seasons in life, so right now, um, you know, we are enjoying, I would say some travel, but for us, our travel is, we go out to East Texas and, rent, rent a cabin and cause we're looking at land and take the dogs and that's our idea of, of a good time, right?

That's, we've done lots of international travel and I [00:06:00] love to travel, but we do stuff more locally because Dogs are just part of our family, so we know how to stay at a hotel or whatever, like they, they love road tripping, they see us pulling out the cooler and they're right by the front door.

They know that we're somewhere. I love it.

Michelle: Oh,

I love that. Well, I'd love to, just dig in if you're ready to talk about, leadership. I, I think what it would be helpful to start out with is if we talk about, I, If you can recall back to when you yourself transitioned from individual contributor to your leadership role, how did you navigate that shift?

And what were some of the unexpected challenges you faced when you moved into your first role?

Randi Deckard: Yeah, so this is kind of interesting thing for me because I'm, I've always been super organized and as a result, a natural leader, when I was younger and I [00:07:00] babysat, I had, we basically had a babysitting club when I was McDonald's.

I was crew chief in university. I worked part time in, in, a lab in my actual first role. official role outside of, university. I actually took a supervisor role, right out of university because I had experience. And so I think the biggest thing for me is that regardless of what your title is being, being a natural leader or someone that people look to you for, um, for, for advice and mentoring and coaching and being the person that you would want to see in a leader.

And I think I struggled the most in a leadership role or a leadership role or individual contributor to leadership role when I transitioned from clinical science to commercial. So I was in, um, in order to step out from, clinical science into a [00:08:00] commercial role, I took an individual contributor role and I was in that role for a year as an account manager and they're like, Hey, if you can do this well, can you teach a team to do this?

And I was like. Sure, I can do that. And my biggest learnings was like, number one, don't assume. I think people make business too complex. And so part of my science training was always to simplify things and put things in layman's terms, um, or the power of three, you know, cause I was trying to communicate something.

Cause we'd be like, Pitching pitching people for money for research. Right. So that was that was my role. And one of the biggest things for me is that I didn't understand how people would make things way complicated. And I was like, you know, so slowing down and being thoughtful and how I communicated and making sure they understood our objectives and communicating.

[00:09:00] And, and like I said, being thoughtful and not making those assumptions as a leader that everyone thought the way that I did, because I realized that not everyone thinks the way that I do. And one of my superpowers is taking very complex things, distilling them, whether it's business processes or, or ideas.

That's one of my superpowers. Thank you. My superpowers, and I just didn't realize what's a superpower because that's how I am. So that was one of my biggest challenges was slowing down and making sure my people were with me and understood. And, communication is always a challenge. You know, I don't care what's where you are in an organization.

And one of the things that. I have learned over time and gotten much, much better at is that everyone learns differently. So giving, giving information in different ways. Some people like to learn, by listening, some people learn by doing, some people listen by reading or they need to repeat, [00:10:00] um, role play, all these different things, right?

So I, you know, as part of that communication, that's one thing that made me a better leader is really, being empathetic and listening to the team and, and realizing all the different, avenues that I could teach, coach, mentor, our frameworks, processes, and then also coach them as we move forward.

And so that was kind of my biggest learning going from that individual contributor commercial role to a leader was. I can't just say one thing because it's all kind of tied, tied together. But the biggest thing was the communication and the assumptions.

Michelle: Yeah. I'd like to talk about assumptions because that's something that we dig into in our cohort program that we have.

Can you think of, and it doesn't have to be back then, but even, even today, I mean, we fall into the trap. We all fall into the trap of making assumptions. Could you talk about a specific time or [00:11:00] example When you felt like you made an assumption about something and like how that turned out for you.

Randi Deckard: Sure. So, I think one of the, you know, even though I said the lessons about assumption and communicating, even in the, in the past, year, I'm a boomerang employee. So I'd left the company came back, but I was in a different role. I was actually over a service line reimbursement, strategy.

And I was in this position where I knew a lot about the organization because I'd worked there for almost five years, but in a new area, and, so there's a lot of things I knew about it, but I had made some, assumptions of what I thought. So instead of utilizing my ramp time in really Um, investigating some of, some of, some of the things that you would normally do in a net new role.

I, I dove in and so I cost myself some rework, you know, because I, I hadn't done that. Now, it was nothing [00:12:00] detrimental to the business and in some ways I was able to speed things along because I had prior knowledge. But in other ways, it did hurt me because I didn't really take the time to dig in and, whenever you're in a new role, you only ramp once take advantage of that time.

Your first 30 days should always be that listening tour really, between the product, the people, everything just really listening and absorbing. Right. And, I didn't use those first 30 days as well as I should have. And I fully admit it. And like I said, I had to do a bit of rework.

Yeah, it wasn't, I don't think it was obvious to, super obvious to anyone else because there were other things that I took off running, but if I self reflect and be honest with myself. Those that that is definitely something that I won't make that mistake again.

Michelle: Yeah, I, I like that you brought up the 30 day period because there is a ramping up period and [00:13:00] often I mean, realistically, it's actually more than 30 days, but absolutely.

Yeah, I was listening to a podcast and the, the guest was talking about at their company. They actually have a very formal 30 day program where during that 30 days, you're not even doing your job. You're going through all the policies, you're practicing, some of the techniques that they use in the company and getting familiar and comfortable with their methods of communication.

And, It's great to hear that a company actually has a formalized program and because I know a lot of companies don't do that and you come in and you're like, you're diving right into work and not given that opportunity at all.

Randi Deckard: Yeah. And I think it's really important, especially if you're, looking for a role that, you ask about what is onboarding look like and, and have a scorecard, and.

You know, typically your 1st, 30 days really should be like that listening tour [00:14:00] where. You're not actively necessarily contributing to the company in the role that you were hired for and then, and then, the next 30 should, okay, um, this is what I've learned, what are the gaps or opportunities that I see.

Socializing some of those and then, the next month can be about, well, of the things that are important and align with company objectives, what are we going to focus on? And that's where you can, start thinking about how you're going to execute and integrating and, obviously I'm not saying that, everything in your role by 90 days, but I think you can get alignment on, um, On the big rocks that need to be need to be moved, regardless of the position.

And there can be alignment, but everyone has a perspective, right? And. And, one of the great things about me leaving [00:15:00] and coming back is that, I

got exposed to some different tech, different ways of thinking for product development, because I was on a global team. And so those things, when I came back, really invigorate, helped me invigorate in our organization because I had this fresh.

Fresh way of a fresh way of thinking. Right. And so, you know, I also think like every, every employee should be given that opportunity to kind of go through that. And it should be part of your scorecard or onboarding, um, potential onboarding discussion. So you can be the best employee possible. Right. People are shortcutting you on that.

I mean, that's, it's hard to be successful if you're not given that time to really learn and be thoughtful.

Michelle: Yeah, I totally agree. I mean, I, I'm looking back to when I would move companies Mm-Hmm. , I think I was given about a week , and while, while I was still waiting for my [00:16:00] laptop to be delivered, you know, that was my opportunity to go around and meet with all the key people that I needed to meet with.

And then it's like, here you go. But I mean, I, it, I think the type of companies I worked for kind of lended to that. But I think, it, it. It takes a lot. I think it's very inefficient and you're not able to be as productive. I know it seems like you're giving somebody time that you're not, they're not producing anything.

But at the same time, the longer that moves out, the longer I think it takes for them to be productive in their position.

Randi Deckard: There's, there's something about, in order to go fast, you have to go slow. It's about. Having that time to be really thoughtful and do some deep, deep work and deep reflection of, what you've seen, what you've heard, what you know about the market, maybe what customers have said, and then tying it all together, depending, like, once again, on your role.

And, and obviously, I'm just [00:17:00] gonna, the caveat, anyone listening, if you're in a startup situation, I know that that can be fast and furious, but even there are things in a startup situation, if you don't take time to do certain things and create foundations, it, it actually does slow you down. So, um, and that just comes through, through experience, being able to have those, those types of conversations.

And I always look at, when I'm looking at an organization or going into a new role or considering a new role, I'm interviewing them just as much as they're interviewing me. And, there are plenty of scorecards out there, but if I can give a shout out to Amy Volas's, scorecard, I've used, used that in the past and, and that has really helped me get clear on.

You know what I'm looking for my negotiables non negotiables and gives you a better sense and you can be more objective about culture and not get [00:18:00] caught up in shiny things that are maybe being offered because I think sometimes, um, maybe we're not always asking. The great questions, there's nothing worse than, oh, thinking you're going to have 90 days to ramp.

And then you get there. And like you said, you have a week.

Michelle: And can, can you repeat that was Amy Volas?

Randi Deckard: Amy Volas. So A M Y M N V O L A S. So, she runs, she runs Avenue Talent Partners. And so she helps founders hire their first sales. She also runs Better Together and helps people get hired, but she has a scorecard and, companies can use it, but you can also use it personally for looking for a role as well.

I'm sure there are others out there, but I'm always like, why reinvent the wheel? You just kind of customize it.

Michelle: Yeah, I love that. And I'll make sure we add that to the show notes. And I know we kind of went off on a little tangent there.

Randi Deckard: We all need resources. I know. I'm sorry. But we all need resources, right?

You just never [00:19:00] know. It might help someone.

Michelle: Oh, exactly. No, I love providing value and resources, so I, appreciate us going down that path. I know you, you broached the conversation about, or you talked about communication and I want to move the conversation a little bit into, we're talking about, people that might be in their leadership position, not for a very long time, new in that position, not maybe feeling very confident in their position, but I think it's so important for people to advocate for themselves.

And I know, I've gotten the feedback or the questions like how, how do I advocate for myself? How do I talk about my strengths or my accomplishments, without sounding like I'm, being arrogant or boastful or, being too much Do you have any, any guidance for people that are in that situation asking that question?

Randi Deckard: Yeah. So, you know, [00:20:00] one of the, one of the things, especially when you're, newer, newer to leadership, um, it, it obviously is important to advocate for yourself. And there's, I think there are a number of things is you always have to consider, timing, is it a good idea to do it in, in a room where tensions are high?

Probably not, right? Timing, timing, timing can play, you know, a big part of it, but, I would say it also depends on your relationship with your, with your boss and, and the culture. And this is part of what I say, just reading, reading the room, not necessarily that you're in a meeting, but reading the room and knowing, understanding the best way to approach.

So I've been at organizations, as a newer leader and. Not knowing or not knowing people as well, I know what some of my strengths are [00:21:00] and having conversations first off one on one with my boss. , in the past, these are the strengths that have helped me do X, Y, Z. And, I, these things also align with our objectives.

And you said that this is important for you as you're managing. This is something I can help you with. Are there things that, you can take off your plate and I can take for you? So this is one way that I've advocated. Managed up, but also highlighted one of my strengths is that I've kind of allied with my boss, like, let me help, let me help.

Right. And, and has been very effective. And then I, ultimately want my boss, even if I'm not in the room to advocate for me, because they've seen what I can do. And then. I have always had roles where cross functional collaboration is, is critical and [00:22:00] almost every role that I've had since I've been in commercial, there isn't a part of the business that I haven't touched.

And so once again, going out and talking to other, not just leaders, but everyone in the organization looking for things that help the organization and the goals and, and, and, and finding ways not to like highlight the problem. You know, here's a solution. Can I help on this? And one of the ways that you can also grow is by, like I said, stretching yourself a little.

Hey, I see this. Here's a potential solution. Is there any way I could be a part of that, like to help, and then I can grow and learn more about the business and be more productive and efficient as an employee. And for the most part, those conversations are, are, are, are welcome. [00:23:00] And sometimes I think people also maybe get stuck in their head a little bit.

Whether it's imposter syndrome, I'm not sure, I don't want to speak up, ask people that you trust, what would you say some of my strengths are, and then think about how those. Strengths could help the business and, keep those front and center. And so when you're having those conversations, that's something you can go back to.

Right. And I think everyone, sometimes. It's, it's hard to see some of those things in your, in your, in yourself. And so sometimes asking others can help you get started if you're not sure where you're, where your strengths are. And sometimes, you know, something that might be, , not really you thought about as a strength can actually be a superpower for you.

Right. So, don't be afraid to bring your authentic self. If that's one thing that I could tell my younger self is, to, it's okay to be you and bring [00:24:00] your, bring your authentic, authentic self. And I think people respond to that. Respond to that and see that you're genuine and you're really trying to move the business forward and you're, you're, looking for opportunities to, help.

And that goes a long way, especially if you're bringing solutions, not just raising, raising problems. So you can advocate for yourself by trying to help and move things forward.

Michelle: Yeah, there's so much from what you just said. I totally agree. Authenticity. I mean, you need to build trust with your team and those you work with.

And that's one of the best ways to gain that trust. But I love, I appreciate what you said about reaching out to cross functional teams when you're advocating for yourself because I mean, I, I talk about that all the time. I talk quite extensively about building your own personal board of advisors and I [00:25:00] know that's a separate topic, but you can't really rely on your own boss to advocate for you at a higher level.

I mean, you want them to, of course, but you have to reach outside of your little your bubble with your leader and show other people in the organization who you are and what you can do and what your strengths are as well. I don't do you

have any, maybe guidance on, I guess we talked about cross functionally, have you seen a situation where somebody has tried to reach out to somebody that is maybe a higher level executive to develop a relationship to, not necessarily for mentorship, but to give them a sense for who you are so they can maybe be your advocate in the company?

Randi Deckard: Interestingly enough, like my, like that first individual contributor role commercially that I mentioned, so because of my cross functional role, like I, I sat with a lot of, [00:26:00] frontline leaders and my boss sat with next, but I got invited to other team meetings because of my cross functional role and in those meetings there were, like I said, other executives there and because of.

I was vocal, respectfully, had good ideas and, and shared solutions, not just problems and highlighted things, , even though I was on the commercial, commercial side, like the, the sales account management side operations was like, Hey, would you like to come over here? Because. You have a lot of great ideas and people really, you, you not only have these ideas, but you brought ways that we could execute them.

And so wherever you can, I think it is important if you can get in those, get in those meetings or get [00:27:00] introductions. And even if you're just going to your peers that are cross functional. And thinking about how your role and asking, like, how are you impacted by what our department does, or what are other things, impacting impacting you?

Because if you can talk about the business in a 360 way, like I said, at Act like you act like you're a leader, even though you may not have that in your title. And that's what a leader leader does. Right? Is they think you think large, you think larger. And I'm not saying step out of your role.

But what I'm saying is when you are in those situations, you know, the way you talk does make a difference. Right? Yeah. And the only way you can do that is if you have a better understanding. And the greatest way is by talking to your peers and asking how they're impacted by X or what about this? And Hey, well, have you [00:28:00] guys tried this?

Well, yeah, we tried this, but it didn't work for X, Y, Z. And you would be amazed or what I have found and I'm amazed by, maybe you aren't amazed by, but I am amazed by sometimes The silos and departments not talking to each other, in this manner and because they're so focused on their departments. Or business units, goals, and there's, they maybe have caused undue friction,

different things, but if you can break those down and have, have some of that, cross functional and holistic view where, where you're talking about those things, it's, it's amazing some of the changes that can happen and then it, it makes an impact on everyone, not just morale, but it's like, oh, You know, people understand what I do and people care about how I'm being [00:29:00] impacted.

And, I think that's one of the, one of the things that, I love about the roles that I've had is that I've always had these cross functional roles where, I'm touching operations, sales, marketing, customer success, product development, finance, and, I talked to all these different people and I can see these patterns.

And so for me, it just makes sense. Like, Hey, dah, dah, dah, dah. And they're like, Oh, that's really great. But, like I said, you, you, you, you can even ask people at your peer level. You don't have to go up and because those are the people who are doing the work. Right. And oftentimes they have great ideas and it's like, you know, you can create some allies and say, Hey, what do you think about.

If we, if we did this, and then sometimes like I've co presented, like, Hey, we have this idea. We want to co present, like bring people along. Right. And then some people don't want to do that. Some people like I suck at presentation. I don't like doing that. I will definitely want to [00:30:00] participate, but that's not my forte.

So once again, working together on strengths and weaknesses as part of that, once again, kind of helps you. When you do have those conversations, well, we discussed and, we have this idea and, here are some solutions that we came up with. And, there's, there's nothing like having that synergy in an organization.

And, and that can have a wonderful ripple effect on, on the culture and, and really, . Even though I add, you want to advocate for yourself, you don't ever want to step up, step over someone, right. Or step on someone. So that's why I just really like to, to, um, make sure that we're always lifting other people up because that, that in effect, is a way to propel our success quicker.

If we're doing that, that will be recognized. Stepping over, stepping over on someone is not the way to do it.

Michelle: Oh, definitely. Definitely. And, yeah, it doesn't go unseen, it's right.[00:31:00] Thank you for bringing up the silos, because it is so true. Unfortunately, most, well, I guess I don't know about most, but I would say

many organizations do have those silos and can, can create that like a toxic environment.

But I feel that so often I think we can step into that environment and feel like, okay, well, this is just the way it is. Unfortunately, it's something we have to deal with, but it's really our responsibility as leaders to step out. And, like you said, I mean, even if it's as little as a talk to me about what you do, so I understand how we impact each other, or, developing partnerships where you're actually helping each other.

I mean, it's, it would be great if from the top down, they said, this is what we're going to do to fix these silos. But at the same time, I mean, we have a responsibility and we can break down those silos at, at the leadership level. level [00:32:00] or, at any level, really, it doesn't need to, it doesn't have to exist.

And I'm not saying it, it isn't challenging because, sometimes there is an us versus them, mentality, but, it's, it's always something I think people should be trying.

Randi Deckard: Right. And it's, it's also about being human and always, and always. tRying to add value to the relationships that you have in the organization.

And sometimes it's not always business. I've had success because, I'm an, empathetic person, high, high EQ and, whether it's been, someone in the organization has a philanthropic cause where, hey, we need volunteers to do, X, Y, Z, some of the times when those things come up, it's a great opportunity to, get out of the office with others that maybe aren't in your normal, day to day, get to know them better, um, on a different, on a different level [00:33:00] and build a little bit of a stronger, relationship.

And Yes, so whether it's a committee or something like that, I guess. I guess what I'm saying is, just look for ways, even if it's not maybe necessarily typical, but obviously be genuine and authentic. And like I said, just always think about how you can, have an impact on a relationship and how you can deepen that relationship.

And sometimes when those types of opportunities present themselves, it's, it's a really great way, to get to know the person better offsite.

So.

Michelle: Yeah. And even taking a step to say, well, maybe once a month or once a quarter, we as a group at this level of management should get together on a zoom call and just share what we're doing and what we're working on or do a happy hour.

I know that that can be a little iffy, but, just even something like that, that there's no intentional. objective but just to say, we're going to make this space.

[00:34:00] I mean, that is, I feel like that's just a easy, passive way to start those conversations.

Randi Deckard: Right. And, and listening, listening to people like, you know, you know, if someone has a particular interest or whatever, like I said, showing you care.

And like I said, there's different ways to get different people to open up and trust. And obviously active listening is a, is a critical skill. , there's a, there's a saying, there's a reason why we have two ears and one mouth, right? So, but really listening to people, and really hearing what they say.

And. Not necessarily always having inward thoughts. And what I mean by that is like, how can, how is this going to help me? It's like, how can I help the other person? And good things will come if you have that outward, outward mentality and you really do actively listen, listen to people. You will find, opportunities that, you can, [00:35:00] use your strengths in at some point, right?

But it's not always about you, if that makes sense. So it's not kind of a, a tricky thing. Yeah, but you just, like I said, really need to listen to people.

Michelle: Yeah. So true in life and in business.

Randi Deckard: Yes. Yes, yes.

Michelle: And we touched a little bit on office politics, or can you maybe talk to us about an environment that you're in, maybe not the environment you're currently in but where there was a bit of.

We talked a little bit about silos, but, office politics were toxic or maybe not so toxic that you had to navigate.

Randi Deckard: So, um, I was at an organization where, you know, I, I loved my boss. She was a amazing leader. Um, and A new, female leader came in and

at the time [00:36:00] everyone's like, I know what her title says, but what does she actually do?

Like no one really understood and there wasn't really, company didn't really describe her or anything. And about a month later, I get called into my boss's office and she's like, um, I just want to give you a heads up that you may be reporting to. this person in the next 60 days. And I was like, what?

Why? Why are they taking the team away? Like I had this very visceral reaction because, not only had our team underneath her Supervision been super successful. I was like, why are we being, why are we being moved? It makes no sense when, I get fixing something if it's broken, but this isn't broken.

And we're like, we're rolling. And I was very resistant. I was like, [00:37:00] not happy. And she's like, I knew I could tell she wasn't happy either. But she's like, I don't think I can, I don't think I can win this one. And ultimately I went from a boss who I loved to a female boss who was very toxic and who.

did not like anyone who shone brighter than she did. So that was really, really hard going from, a leader who, cheered you on, you're doing great, you're, man, you make me look so good. It makes, makes my job easier. I don't have to, to, always this constant rub. And when you have a leader like that, honestly, listeners are probably aren't gonna like my response.

At the time, I dug in because I was like, I am really good at my job and, and no one is going to You know, she [00:38:00] is not going to dim my light. And I was fortunate enough that I'd been at the company long enough. I had, a lot of allies and, people knew who I was and, what I was doing. So even though there were times that she tried to undermine me.

publicly, I had many people come to me saying this is not right. Unfortunately, HR wasn't very helpful, but I was like determined, to the detriment of my mental health, to be honest. And so I eventually did, did leave the organization because the company was being bought out. and I think I stayed too long.

And the reason I share that is that you can't always be successful and sometimes the best thing that you can do is in advocating for yourself and navigating office politics. Sometimes it's the best thing for you to do is leave. And, you know, I know that may be a hard message for some people to hear, but sometimes that's what you have [00:39:00] to do.

And at the time I was the primary breadwinner. So, I couldn't just quit. My, my husband had been in an accident and so I was the primary breadwinner. So that was, that was hard too. That's a lot of pressure, right? And I guess I just want to highlight the fact sometimes it's not all rosy and you really need to take, take a hard look.

I probably stayed too long from my mental health, but I also dug in because I'm a little bit stubborn and I had really, I really enjoyed what I do, what I did. I loved my team. And I didn't want, I was the buffer between my team. So as a leader, I was like, I don't want my team, like, I will take it on the chin every day for them because we were killing it.

But when I left, I heard from team members just saying, I had no idea what you dealt with and like, I can't believe you didn't leave sooner. So I was like, yeah, that was a lesson learned. Not. A positive one, but sometimes, that's what we deal [00:40:00] with in life. It's, it's not all, all, all rosy.

And I would like to say, if I could go back, what would I have done differently? I would have exited earlier. I would have had a better, better plan B once I realized that, I, I was working for someone who was that toxic, and HR wasn't helpful. I just, I would have had a better plan B.

Michelle: I appreciate you sharing that because, I'm talking about leadership every day and training and development.

And, we feel like we have to provide an answer for everything like this as well. This is what you do in this situation. And, oh, don't worry. Like, this is how you get past that. I don't have all the answers. Yeah, no. And I mean, there are instances and you just, that's the answer.

Unfortunately, there's no way to make it better. It's no, you have to remove yourself from that environment and put yourself in one that you'll thrive And so I appreciate your honesty and [00:41:00] sharing. Yeah

Randi Deckard: Yeah, and I gotta tell my kids, you know life isn't always fair The only thing that we can control is how we choose to respond And, like I said, I, I fought for my team, but, ultimately as an individual at some point you, you have to decide what is, what is your non negotiables.

And like I said, depending on your scenario, like I said, I was the primary breadwinner, so I probably should have started looking sooner, but I, I really didn't want my team to be impacted. And I cared so much about them because

we built so much. Yeah. So I would say. To anyone listening, make sure you have a diverse network and that you're, you're, you're, even if you're happy in your role, you should always be open and, and, and look or not looking, but, staying on top of what's out there and being open because you just never know what situation can [00:42:00] change.

Like I was in a role, loved, love my role, love my boss. In 60 days, it just, Fire.

Michelle: Yeah. Yeah, 100 percent agree. And the thing is, you talked about, everything was great. And, we were succeeding, and we were hitting targets, but you never know what is happening at that higher level, because Just the relationships between those people, somebody might not like working like the CEO might not like working with the COO, something about how they approach something rubs them the wrong way.

So they're going to bring somebody new and it doesn't mean that they weren't successful. I mean, unfortunately, they don't. They're not necessarily thinking about it for the success of the company. It's more about their relationship. So there's really no answer sometimes that you're going to be able to see.

And I've seen that happen so, so much so often.

Randi Deckard: Right. And as a leader, that's one of the things that we do, like [00:43:00] when you go to a new role and, hiring is always a critical part for you, you want to have people that you trust or know. Right. And so sometimes that's, you're right. It's not. Based on someone's performance or whatever, it's because you trust and you know their, their work, etc.

And so that's why you bring people on. Yeah.

Michelle: Yeah. One of the things that you did bring up, was about team and going back to balancing your ability to advocate for yourself, but then also advocating for your team. So one of the things you don't want to do is take all the credit for something.

But at the same time, you want people to know that, wasn't just your team. It was all of you, but you want your team to shine. So how do you recommend people balancing that?

Randi Deckard: So I always think about my audience, right? So when I'm in all employees or town halls, as an example, [00:44:00] I am cheering, cheering the team.

I'm not making it about me. And wherever I can tie. Because I'm over sales, marketing, customer success, wherever I can tie where other parts of the organization have helped us, whether it's product operations, whatever the case, we, we won or we kept an account, because we collaborated internally.

And this was the impact. Right. And, um, so in those situations, very team focused. And, in our team meetings, it's person focused, like cheering on individuals. And then when I'm with my boss or executive leadership, as the, as the leader, I'm still calling out. We've had these successes because of these individuals, but, I'm leading that team.

So that's my opportunity to say, because whether it's mentoring, coaching, whatever, that we've. That's how we've arrived [00:45:00] here. Right. And then there's also things that I do in my job, whether it's because of the strategy we created. So there's higher level things that I can advocate for myself that I've done outside of my team's individual.

So once again, and to me, it's, it's all about your, your audience. And it's, it's, It's not that I don't like to toot my horn, but it's like I said, I'm very cognizant of, of the audience. And I don't think that's hurt me. And, and I think that my team respects me because they know, because leaders have come to them and said, Randi spoke very highly of you, great job.

And, and, my whole Leadership is a privilege. Okay. Number one. And my gift that I want to give back. is growing and mentoring people so they can go and be leaders. And I want them to be the leader [00:46:00] that, does the same thing. And so doing all the right things. And like I said, never stepping over someone, et cetera.

So never take credit for something that I, that I didn't personally do. I don't have all the ideas. I don't have everything figured out. So even if I at the executive level, this was so and so's idea and we're running with it. And this was brilliant, That's okay. But the things that I've done, whether it's, strategy and these different things or partnerships, like, so I can talk about how, how my strengths have impacted the business.

So once again, it just comes down to audience. Yeah. And then I think. Also, a way to advocate for yourself is, by raising your personal brand and I wish that is something that I would have started, earlier, in my career. And, I think that that is another way that you can let people know who you are without saying, these are all my accomplishments because you've built your personal brand.

Michelle: Mm hmm. Totally agree. And well [00:47:00] said. Thank you.

Randi Deckard: Yeah, I just really very much a hand talker.

Michelle: No, no. Yeah, I normally am too. So I'm, I sometimes I'll just say no, hold on to my arms so my arms or my hands aren't Um, We talked a little bit about mentorship.

Do you have a mentor that you can look back or maybe even currently that has helped make a difference in your career?

Randi Deckard: Absolutely. So, the person who gave me a shot, I was, like I said, working in the lab and my, my lab rep took me out for lunch and, and was like, Amy and Domi.

So it's actually two. She's like, Randi have you ever considered coming to the commercial side of health care? Would you consider like an account management role? Because I think you'd be really good at it. And it was a startup in North Texas and. And I love the fact that she took me off site to try and get to know me [00:48:00] first before she pitched me.

And I was like, sure, I'll, I'll, I'll, I'm open. And so she set up, a meeting with her boss, Jessica Landestrade. When Jessica Landestrade met me, she goes, Randi, you can have your pick of jobs here. You could do account management, or you could run the back end, which is like the, the specimen processing and everything else of this, of this commercial startup.

I'm like, no, I said, I want to take an individual contributor role, account management. I've been there, done that. The other thing I said, please, I want something new. And will you give me a chance? Because I have not done this before. She did. And my first year, like I said, I was very successful and they gave me a team and it was really because of Amy seeing something in me.

And then. Her talking to her boss [00:49:00] saying you need to meet Randi and and honestly, those two women are why I have been in the commercial side of health care for the last 15 years So I can't just say one if they kind of tied together Yeah

Michelle: No, I love that and like advocacy can come out from outside of the organization as well.

Not just inside

Randi Deckard: Yes. And, and, and, it was really my, like I said, Amy was my, my lab rep. So she was my, where we would send our reference testing to. And her and I just had a lot of conversations and talked about business and personal, she had kids and one kid was into dancing, one kid was into soccer.

And so we just got to know each other. Right. And, and this is where I'm saying, really listening to people. She really listened to me. And it wasn't about getting more business for me. She got to know me as a person and saw these qualities in me and was like, you know, um, made, made, made an introduction.

And,[00:50:00] the rest is history. 15 years later, here I am, yeah. So it's, it's pretty impressive. And I'm still in touch with both of them. In fact, Jessica and I for my 50th birthday, went to Madonna concert, she called herself, what was it? Madam X. She changed her name in Philly. My 50th birthday before COVID hit.

Yeah.

Michelle: So, wait, Jessica changed her name to Madame X or Madonna did?

Randi Deckard: No, no, no. We went. We went. I'm saying, but Madonna, she was like, she was, she was like her concert, she was Madame X. And I was like, okay.

Michelle: Yeah. I hadn't, I had no

idea.

Randi Deckard: I know. Like I grew up on Madonna. Right. Madame X. But I just, you know, so literally.

Absolutely. That's, she became a personal, a personal friend and, her and then, a few of, a few others, like we said, we met each other in Philly, um, [00:51:00] and went to this amazing concert for my 50th, like, I just, and it's all because of Amy making that introduction, so I think that's pretty special.

Michelle: Yeah, and I know we're coming down to time, so I want to be sensitive. I have just a few rapid fire questions to ask you, and you can be straightforward or, take as much time. But, is there a, Well, actually, we talked about mental health and your, your mental well being.

Is there a routine that you have or a ritual that you'll do every day that helps you maintain your well being?

Randi Deckard: Yeah. So there's there are three things. One, I have to get outside. And this is why I love my dogs, is because there's no excuse, right? So, there's just something about being in, in nature, even if it's 10 15 minutes, and sometimes if I'm having, like, a bad moment, I literally, well, I am, I'm out for a walk, I'll be back 15, and I don't take my phone, I just, just go around the neighborhood.

Two. [00:52:00] I journal. Journaling is the most underrated thing for your mental health. And there's a couple things that I'm, I do intentionally when I journal. One is morning and evening, I always practice gratitude. And some days it's like, I'm thankful that I have a bed. You know, like, it's like nothing like wild and crazy.

It's just, but just practicing gratitude, gratitude. And then, really putting down my thoughts. Sometimes just having that outlet of being, there's something, there's something for me about writing it out. And then sometimes I see patterns and reflections that just. It really truly helps. And then, meditation and, whether you use Spotify or whatever, like there's freebies like just 10 minutes morning and evening, and there's just something about that from a calming perspective.

I'm one of those people and I know myself that I may not show stress. I'm very calm on the outside, but on the inside is raging. And those are two [00:53:00] things that I know. Like really make a big difference. It just kind of centers me.

Michelle: Love it. And is there a song that you'll put on when you need a little confidence or energy boost?

Randi Deckard: Oh yeah, definitely. , I'm not afraid by Eminem. Don't judge me, for, for the, Eminem comment, but yeah, I'm not afraid. I love that song and it's, it's not about what the. Songs about, 'cause it's, it's about addiction, but to me it's about, I'm not afraid. I've, putting yourself out there, not thinking, caring about what other people think.

So it's more the chorus, like, I'm not afraid, I'm, I'm gonna step up and show up every day. Yeah.

Michelle: Yeah. No, I, I love it. And is there a book that you have read, recently or not so recently that you would recommend to the audience?

Randi Deckard: Yes. So the Year of Yes. by Shonda Rhimes. Shonda, for those of you who don't know, Shondaland, Grey's Anatomy and other great, TV series [00:54:00] hits.

She kind of had a revelation. She said no to a lot of things. And her, her, her life was being impacted about what she was, not doing. And so the year of yes is, was, was her journey of saying yes to different things. And how she showed up and how that changed. Changed her, changed her life in so many different ways, from a health perspective, how she engaged with other people, opportunities.

And I actually bought the accompanying journal Year of Yes. And so for 2024, I'm all ready for my Year of Yes. Okay, wow. Yeah, so, i, I love the book. I love the premise behind it. And so I bought the journal and obviously you could start at any time, but just because of the time of year it is, I decided that it's my 2024 [00:55:00] is the year of yes.

Michelle: Well, I wish you the best with that. That's not, and I'm going to take a look at that as well. So Randi, you are officially a part of our audience's hype squad. If you could offer one last piece of advice or inspiration to the women leaders in our audience, what would that be?

Randi Deckard: Start your network early, diversify your network, and you do you, be real with yourself. Check your ego, but, um, you do you everyone's journey is unique. Don't let anyone define what success is for you. If you want to work part time because your kids come first, good for you. If, if you, want to, like I have my eyelashes, if you're an eyelash girl, where your eyelashes, I think the more authentic you are and genuine you are.[00:56:00]

people respond to that. But just realize OPO, I call it other people's opinion, not everyone who's going to get you like you, but so find your tribe, find your community and have your five, your, your, your five people who support you and who cheer for you. You don't need people dragging you down.

You need people who lift you up and are cheering you on and want to see, the best is yet to come for you.

Michelle: Oh, thank you, Randi. I love all of that. And so so true. And such a great way to end our conversation. If anybody wants to reach out to you find you see what you're up to? Is it a can they reach out to you?

Or where?

Randi Deckard: Yeah, on LinkedIn, feel free to hit me up if you actually Hit my connect info. I think it has my personal email or you can message me. But yeah, that's probably the easiest way to find me.

Michelle: Okay. And we will provide that information [00:57:00] in the show notes. So if anybody wants to reach out to Randy, that's where you can find that information.

And, with that, I just want to say thank you so much, Randi, for your time. It's been such a great conversation and I really appreciate what you've shared and so insightful. And I know it's It's provided value to the people listening. So thank you.

Randi Deckard: Thank you so much for having me on.

Michelle: All right.

Well, enjoy the rest of your day and we'll talk soon.

Randi Deckard: Awesome. Thank

you.

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