

Dianna Booher Interview
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00:00:00 Sabrina Braham: This is womensleadershipsuccess.com Radio. Today we're talking with Dianna Booher. She's the founder and CEO of Booher Research Institute, and she works with organizations to help them communicate clearly and with leaders to expand their influence by a strong executive presence.

She is providing communication programs and coaching to some of the largest Fortune 500 companies and governmental agencies such as IBM, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, ExxonMobil, BP, Chevron, ConocoPhillips and many more, and she's been on many, many national television programs. Welcome, Dianna.

Dianna Booher: It's great to be with you.

00:00:46 Sabrina Braham: Thank you. You were on our show in 2005. We were talking about women having an executive presence then, and over the years, I have recommended many of your books to people. You have 47 books out and this latest one, which is *Communicate Like a Leader: Connecting Strategically to Coach, Inspire, and Get Things Done* is excellent.

One of the things I really like about your writing style is each wonderful thought is three or four pages, which means I can put the book down and pick it up and feel like I'm getting it, getting through it and getting some great ideas while I do it.

Dianna Booher: Thanks, Sabrina. That's great. That's exactly the kind of reader that I know I have out there who just want to read while they're sitting in the doctor's office or waiting for their visit or just have a few minutes because that's the kind of life we all lead right now.

00:01:53 Sabrina Braham: Right, but the nice things about yours is really there isn't any fluff. You really give very, very good suggestions, and I say that because I read maybe five to six different books a month and yours are definitely such a high caliber. Dianna, can you tell us a little bit about your background?

Dianna Booher: Well, it's not exactly glamorous. I was a teacher in high school. I had two toddlers and a husband who's struggling with major depression, in and out of the hospital, who was not able to work, and I figured I was going to be sole support, and I couldn't be that on a teachers' salary.

So a friend said, “What do you like to do?” I said, “Well, I used to like to write back at school. How are you going to make a living with that?” He said, “I didn’t ask you how you were going to make a living at that, I just said what did you like to do, and you can figure that out, then you’ll be fine.”

So I went to the library and checked out, and that was before the days you could just get on the internet and find all this information. I went to the library and checked out about 50 or 60 books on how to write and make a living out of it, what was the process to writing a book and submitting it, getting it published. More than this, as it is today when everybody can self-publish, now I intended to sell it. Sit back and type it out, send it off and wait for the movie to come out, and I did that. There was a little bit more to it than that, but I did it.

It was a fluke that I actually sold the first book, and while I was waiting for the publisher to bring that book out, I got my Master’s degree and what my Master’s thesis was a novel. It’s actually where I started writing business books. I wrote fiction, and I started my business. When the business book came out, Shell Oil saw me on TV doing an author tour and they had me come out and teach the topic of the book and then IBM saw me on TV and again it just started, and that was sort of “you must do it right now to make a living” kind of start. As I said, it wasn’t very glamorous.

00:04:08 Sabrina Braham: Wow, it sounds like you took a really, really challenging situation, and I know a lot of women listening have situations in their families where they are struggling, and you took that and you found a way to have great success.

Dianna Booher: Right, and I didn’t want to spend my life, of course, on the road because I had children when I started out just working in the Houston area and when I moved the business, I had to hire other people because I had more than I could handle, more contracts that I can handle, and when these clients, these clients started sending me here, there and everywhere, then I began to train other people to do what I was doing and then built a business because communication is a topic that you’re not just boring knowing how to communicate, but it’s a skill that you learn, and so I began to train other people how to do it and what the processes were and building a business around it, and 47 books later, I’m still working other topics because communication is just a very, very broad field. There’s written, oral, interpersonal, organizational communication.

Sabrina Braham: Right.

Dianna Booher: It's so very, very broad that I think I guess I could write until I'm in the grave and I would stop writing about communication, and those what I have been doing.

00:05:23 Sabrina Braham: Right. Well, I do coaching in corporations, and I would say that there are so many people that don't have good communication skills that are in management positions, and wow, what a difference it makes with the book you just wrote, just going through that, studying that and beginning to implement those ideas that are in there will make huge improvement in so many people's leadership styles.

Dianna Booher: That's true because I think that leadership is communication. The essence of leadership is communicating. When I was looking for a title for this book, we had at first called it "strategic communication," and then people said, "Well, it sounds boring to me." And I was telling my editor it sounds boring, and so then he said, "Well, how about "communicating as a leader?" I said, "Well, hey, communicate like a leader, that's so broad, yet that is what leadership is, and when we did a survey, by and large, everybody said, "That's it. That's the title. "

So that's when we came up with "communicating like a leader" because you have to innovate, you have to motivate people, you communicate when you coach them, when you're trying to inspire them, when you're trying to develop them, when you stimulate meetings. Everything you do as a leader, communication is involved, and so we went with that very broad topic and then tried to break it down.

People were like, "You can't just publish a book on communications because they're not going to know what it's about." And so I did put it in buckets if you noticed, that you do speak, you like, you negotiate, you develop people, and you lead meetings so I did put it in those six categories or I called them categories of your communication as a leader, but that is the essence of communicating as a leader when you're strategic about it.

Sabrina Braham: Right.

Dianna Booher: If you're a micro manager, and in some of the PR that went out about the book, I said, "This book prevents micro-management because basically if you fail as a leader, most of the time, what the reason people fail as a leader is because they are micro managing, and that's a big no-no. I mean, that's Failure 101.

00:07:47 Sabrina Braham: Well, what does that mean? Can you give us a definition of micro managing?

Dianna Booher: I think that people start managing if they're fearful. If they don't have the right skills, they start managing processes rather than people. They don't trust their people. They see that they haven't developed their people or they just don't trust people can do the job or that they know they don't have the right people, that their people don't have the skills and so they just control the process, and that's micro managing, and it drives people nuts.

Sabrina Braham: Right, right.

Dianna Booher: That's why their people leave, and of course, often as the leader, you wind up doing all this extra work because you're doing your job and you're doing their job, right?

Sabrina Braham: Right.

Dianna Booher: So it's a no win for everybody that's involved.

00:08:34 Sabrina Braham: Absolutely, and one of the things that you said was if a manager is doing that, it means that the company or the manager has not developed proper training in leadership skills, and I realized that could be a whole hour talk right there, but can you just give just a thumbnail of what would that be, what would proper training be for somebody that's micro managing?

Dianna Booher: Well, I think proper training for good skills would be you train them where everything is a sale when you're going to be in leadership, and so you're going to be selling yourself or selling ideas or selling your credibility, so you've got to have persuasion. You've got to know how to brief people, just giving status report. You've got to know how to lead a meeting. I mean, who's in corporate America, but you can't lead a meeting? You've got to know how to sit down and have a one-on-one, face-to-face conversation or a phone conversation. You've got to know how to network, to build relationships, so that you get things done outside the position or hierarchy, so all of those things are the kinds of training that people need.

Now, that might break down further to they have to be able to listen, they have to be able to speak, they have to be able to write, they have to have conflict resolution skills to break each of those down, but the end result is what I was talking about, selling, briefing, meeting, conversing, network, and that's the end results of those basic skills, and so the training might be in a classroom, it might be online. You can carry that training out, but it could even be mentoring or on-the-job training, but the end result needs to show up that way.

00:10:26 Sabrina Braham: Well, I'm just thinking of different people I've worked with in different corporations, and there are people that are getting promoted because they are highly skilled in an area, but they have none of the communications or soft skills.

Dianna Booher: Right. They're brilliant. I hear that all the time. Oh, they're brilliant in their technical skills. I mean, they bring in more business than anybody here in their division, but they can't have a face-to-face conversation when Mr. XYZ walked down the hall.

Sabrina Braham: Right.

Dianna Booher: I hear that all the time when people call us for training.

Sabrina Braham: Right.

Dianna Booher: That's a major problem, and so whatever skill you have, you have to wrap it in communication skills. You can do a brilliant job over on the corner, but if nobody knows about it and don't know about your accomplishments, if you can't articulate what you've done and the value of that to the organization, you're going to get nowhere.

Somebody can have excellent communication skills and not even be so great and even be mediocre in their technical skills, and they'll still get ahead because their showmanship skills are spectacular because they express themselves well in a meeting and they speak well and they schmooze well and they write well and more persuasive, they're going to get much further ahead than the person who has excellent technical skills, and there are studies all over the board that bear that out.

00:12:05 Sabrina Braham: Yeah. I was struck when you said the buckets, and I sent you this list of questions, this isn't one of them, but of the buckets, the different types of communication that you have to do, what would you say is the one that's the most important or a beginning one? In other words, if someone wants to really improve their communication, which one of those is one you would start with?

Dianna Booher: I would start with speaking because that one is the one that you see more often. It doesn't mean that in any given situation, you can't lose or make your career over that. It might be one email that destroyed your career if it was so badly written or one that actually made your career could be one excellent proposal that

brought in \$15 million for your organization and got you a promotion. So it's not always the case, but just generally speaking, if someone is articulate on their feet when they give a presentation, because that happens so routinely, that's the most important. You're given more opportunity.

I was just talking to someone earlier today and she was saying, "My son actually works in a company. It's a very large company." And she said, "He's only been there nine months," and she said, "Every time they meet, 'Would somebody want to go as our representative from our division and you want to go to XYZ conference or meeting or such and such and do the briefing.' 'Oh, I will. Oh, I will.'" She said he's already gotten several promotions and passed over people who have been there much longer because he's an excellent speaker. She said, "I taught him." She's worked for us a year as a trainer in speaking and writing, and she said, "I taught him to write and I taught him to give briefings." And she said he takes every opportunity to get on his feet, and said because he's on his feet and he's always briefing and volunteering for those situations, he just leapfrogs other people, you know?

Sabrina Braham: Beautiful.

Dianna Booher: And other people will frequently pass up those opportunities and say, "Oh, not me, not me. No, don't get me up." And they're doing a detrimental harm to their career.

00:14:24 Sabrina Braham: Right, because what you're saying is the only way you're going to get better at speaking is to get up and start doing it.

Dianna Booher: Right, right, to learn how.

00:14:32 Sabrina Braham: Right. You just have to learn how to do that. So speaking about meetings, this is I think more of a female thing where women are more reticent to speak up in a meeting or I just had one woman texted me and say, "How can I speak up in a meeting because of these really strong personalities." Do you have any suggestions?

Dianna Booher: Oh, it happens.

Sabrina Braham: What?

Dianna Booher: I said that happen so often. It is a gender thing because I think we've, as women, frequently are taught to not interrupt, and Deborah Tannen has done a lot of research on gender communication. I talk about it in some, but not to the extent that she does as I haven't done the research to the extent she does, but yes, I have two good tips here.

One is to set yourself up at the beginning as soon as you open your mouth to hold the floor. For example, if you're in a meeting and you say something like, let's say you're listening to some conversation and you say, "Yes, I do. I have three reasons for thinking that we should lease more space in this building. Let me give you the first one. The first reason is blah, blah, blah." And if somebody interrupts you at this point, you can say, "Excuse me, Bill, just let me finish. I said three reasons. Let me go into the second reason." So you set yourself up for your first statement, "I have three reasons," so as not to get interrupted.

Sabrina Braham: Oh, I love it.

Dianna Booher: You've already set the platform, "I'm going to give you three, so shut your mouth and let me finish."

00:16:08 Sabrina Braham: So that's something you could practice in advance too.

Dianna Booher: Yeah.

Sabrina Braham: You could think about something that might be coming up that you could do that with.

Dianna Booher: Yeah. So let's say you're in the middle of a discussion and you can just say, "Well, let me mention here there are pros and cons for attending that conference as a group. Let me give you the pro first." And as you get into that, if you get interrupted if somebody tries to take it away, you can just say, "Well, excuse me, excuse me, let me finish here. I said there was a pro and a con. I've just gotten to the pro. Let me mention the con here." But you have to say it at the beginning.

00:16:40 Sabrina Braham: Right. I love it. So you previewed it right at the beginning, so if you get interrupted you say, "I still have the con to do or whatever."

Dianna Booher: Yeah.

Sabrina Braham: I love it.

Dianna Booher: Yeah, yes.

00:16:49 Sabrina Braham: That's a great idea.

Dianna Booher: Yeah.

Sabrina Braham: That's a great idea.

Dianna Booher: And then the second idea is you become a facilitator or a guide, particularly this is important if you have a strong personality, then it's great. What happens generally, I've seen this happen so much when we do a presentation or coaching is let's say you're a lower-ranking person in the meeting and you've got a group of six vice-presidents and the CEO in there, and one of them brings up something, a side conversation, and they addressed it to the person across the room, and the person across the room says, "Well, that's right, Connie. Well, yeah, Martha, what do you think?" And Martha said, "I don't know, Joanne." And all of a sudden, these four vice-presidents are going after and many of the lower-ranking persons say, "Well, I don't want to step in here. You know, they've got me off track. I thought he was talking about budget. Now, they're talking about a safety issue," and that the person, you, who's briefing just kind of steps back to the side while these four people are in a discussion.

That's not the way to do it because what happens is they think the meeting was supposed to last an hour and now you're going an hour and a half and they walked out of the hall and they think, "Man, she can't control a meeting. We were an hour and a half late." They never think that they were the reason that they've gotten off track.

So what you want to do is when you see this happening, you want to make sure that you are facilitating. You become the emcee of the meeting, even if you're not contributing ideas. Picture yourself like the – you've been in a conference where there's a panel or four groups or panelists, with four panelists, not groups, but panelists, and there's an emcee, and if one starts to monopolize or they start talking to each other, you'll see the emcee step in and say, "Just a minute, Toby, let me... Tim, go ahead and finish your point there. All right, thank you for doing that. Now, back to you, Stanley, go ahead and finish what you're saying, Stanley. Now, back to you, Toby, what were you going to say? What would be your response in that situation?"

And that emcee steps in. They're not talking over, they're not interrupting, but they start being a traffic director, just like a traffic cop, and so that's what you want to do. That way you would stay in control. It's not that it's a strong personality, but like disruption, like chaos, they want to all be heard and they need a traffic cop. They realize they need a traffic director because you don't want to get out in the street with a car and just drive without traffic signals. And they will let you do it, they will give you the freedom to guide the discussion, they don't want you to totally back out.

That's a mistake because when people send someone to me for a coaching, they will frequently say, "He or she is just really shy. When they get in a group or a meeting, they can't hold their own." And what they're saying is you don't speak up. You're not asserting in a meeting, you just back up and sit down, and that's not good. So become an emcee or facilitator in a discussion, even when people outrank you, and that doesn't mean talk over them, but it means guide the discussion.

00:19:53 Sabrina Braham: Right. So it's a kind of an attitude too, right?

Dianna Booher: Yes.

Sabrina Braham: I mean, you're going in with very – how would you say it – a friendly attitude, but you're just, as a friendly traffic director, saying, "Wait a second, let us let Bill finish his comment or whatever."

Dianna Booher: Yeah, yeah, yeah, and you're just saying, "Bill, Stanley just brought up the idea of such and such. How would that work in your division?"

Sabrina Braham: Beautiful.

Dianna Booher: And then he says something and then you go back to say, "Now, Martha, you mentioned that you tried that before. Have you tried it with less than three people? Can they handle what that thing was? How would that idea work?" So you're just directing traffic back and forth.

Sabrina Braham: Beautiful.

Dianna Booher: And they love having structured discussion.

00:20:39 Sabrina Braham: And I love this idea, Dianna. It's such a beautiful way to start getting more confident and less shy just by being the traffic director.

Dianna Booher: Yeah, yeah.

Sabrina Braham: Beautiful.

Dianna Booher: And then they perceive you as an equal. I mean, it's amazing how they start to look to you for leadership, and that is what you are leading to make, leading the discussion. Even if you don't contribute any original ideas, they start to contribute and lean on you as being one of them, a partner in the discussion.

00:21:14 Sabrina Braham: That is so beautiful. In all these years I've been doing this program, I've never heard anybody say this particular thing before. It's incredible.

Dianna Booher: Thank you.

00:21:24 Sabrina Braham: Now, what strategies can you use to behave and look more confident? And this is something that I keep hearing from women that they want to know how to look more confident, and we've talked about that when I actually interviewed you before, but I wondered if you'd say something about that.

Dianna Booher: Well, I think one of the things that help you be more confident is to actually lead with strategic questions, and I know that you're saying, "Well, how does that make me more confident?" Sometimes people think, "Well, to be confident, I have to talk over people. I have to always have the answers. I have to..."

No, you really don't. You have to ask thought-provoking questions. You will be thought more highly of by asking thought-provoking questions than by giving opinions, and you're asking and making people think about what they're saying. If you're talking about your physical things, the actual physical things that make you feel more confident, that would be what I call the "ready position."

If you've ever played sport or watched somebody play a sport, you know how they stand with their feet. What's under their shoulders? Squared, you square your shoulders, you square your feet, you gesture from the shoulder, not the wrist or the elbow, but you gesture from your shoulder, and that's what makes you look wider. You breathe from your diaphragm, not a shallow breath. All of that physically makes you look and feel more confident.

But the psychological is just as important as that of the physical, and asking the open-ended questions, actually listening to the answers, and probing, once they answer something, then you probe, “Now, how would that work? Why do you think that would work? Are there situations where that wouldn’t work? When would that work?” You’re guiding now to rethink what they said. Maybe their answer was just you thinking, “No. No, that’s not going to work.”

But as you lead them to probe deeper into the answer, you want them to realize that because that’s part of leadership, you want them to realize, “Man, that wasn’t a good answer. That’s not a good option here in this situation.” And then as they answer you, you want to help them separate that from opinion, “Well, that would never work because Ted would never do so and so,” and then you say, “Now, wait a minute, you said Ted would never do it. Is that a fact or opinion? Did he write you an email and say he would not participate and not register for that conference?” And so he’d be like, “Well, I don’t know that for a fact, but I think, you know...” You know?

Sabrina Braham: [Agrees]

Dianna Booher: So you’re helping them separate facts from opinion, and then if they go, “No, that’s a fact.” “Well, could you send me that article? I’d like to take a look at it. Could you send me some data on that? Could you send me a link to that?”

Sabrina Braham: Beautiful.

Dianna Booher: And asking them to check back all of those things. You’re not countering them, but that helps. It builds your confidence because you’re not countering them, you’re not overpowering them, you’re not saying, “That is wrong.” You’re not conflicting, you’re not confrontational, but it helps you help them to thin, but it also helps you to gradually you’re more sure because if they’re able to say, “Yes, I’m sure, and yes, that’s a fact, then yeah, I’ll send you the article,” then okay, nothing was lost. You never lost face. They haven’t lost face. You haven’t been confrontational.

00:25:09 Sabrina Braham: No, and you showed great interest. You’re just curious and you want to get more information. There’s a great article on this, you want to have it. That’s so cool.

Dianna Booher: Right.

Sabrina Braham: That is so cool.

Dianna Booher: Right.

00:25:20 Sabrina Braham: And it's just so much fun with the answers that you're giving and I just love your books and I just wanted to mention that when you read this book, [*Communicate Like a Leader*](#), this is the kind of information that she has in her book, and I don't usually mention that type of thing in the middle of an interview, but this is really, really good stuff.

Hey, Dianna, I get this. I have more than one woman say to me, "Hey, I want to be assertive as a leader, but I don't want to be mean or perceived as being aggressive," or bossy is the term you hear.

Dianna Booher: Yeah.

00:26:06 Sabrina Braham: So how does one do this? How do you assert yourself? What do people say while you're acting aggressive or bossy and you're just wanting to stand up and take a stand?

Dianna Booher: I think it's a mental thing. I think you have to think of what you're going to do and the benefit rather than that negative of what you're not going to do. A lot of times when you feel uncertain and you think, "Well, I should be more assertive, but I don't want to be mean. I don't want to be hostile or want to be confrontational." You'd think, "Well, the reason I'm doing this is..." Or what about to say, "I'm going to focus on what I'm going to do."

In other words, I'm not going to focus on 'I'm not going to that conference. They're trying to get me to go to the conference. I'm not going to think about it. I'm actually going to be staying here working on such and such project because my big focus is on what I am going to do. I'm not focusing on what I'm not going to do.' And there's always a benefit of what you have chosen to do.

00:27:14 Sabrina Braham: Or even that you have good intentions towards the thing you're asking your people to do, there are some good benefits to them by this thing that you're asserting that they need to do.

Dianna Booher: Yes, yes. So if you find out the benefits for doing what you're planning to do, that's also important. Also, I think it's really important to control. You

can almost say anything if you control your tone of voice and your choice of the words. In other words, your action should be assertive, but not necessarily your tone of voice and your words. Keep your tone of voice and words neutral. I think that assertiveness and that feeling of meanness or hostility comes through and that charge is made based on people's wrong word choice and their arrogant tone.

Let me give you an example. Let's say you're unhappy with some customer service or something or a bad service of airliner or dry cleaners or something and they said, "Look, just sit down, we will handle this from this period on. I've got to take this to the manager. Please sit down." And maybe your response is, "No, thank you. I want to stand." Your tone of voice is just neutral, it's just plain, it's not mean, but your action is assertive because you're standing up. They want you to go, get away from the counter, "Ma'am, please go sit down." "No, thank you. I want to stand." It's just a neutral kind of voice. In fact, even a friendly tone of voice, but your action is "I am standing here. You can't help it because hell, I'm going to stand here until you take care of this problem." So be assertive in your actions, but not in your tone of voice and not in your word choice.

00:29:08 Sabrina Braham: Right. I like that, and I find a lot of times smiling after I say something that's helpful.

Dianna Booher: Yeah.

Sabrina Braham: I show them I have good intention towards you, but this is what I need right now.

Dianna Booher: Yeah, yeah.

00:29:23 Sabrina Braham: So people tell me they don't have time to get their work done because they're in so many meetings and you say, "a strategically-structured agenda is to a meeting what a foundation is to a skyscraper." I love this, "a strategically-structured agenda is to a meeting what a foundation is to a skyscraper." What is a strategic structure?

Dianna Booher: Well, it's basically anything. I'm referring here to a foundation of anything. They're a building, but everything has a foundation that they're going to stay in place. Otherwise, it's just rolling all over the place, it's not flexible, and would you believe probably half the agendas, that when we go into corporations and doing meetings, courses and trainings and we introduce the idea of having a functional agenda, people are like, "What agenda? I don't usually have an agenda." And when

they do, what they're calling an agenda, it's just a list of topics, and I say, "Oh, that's an agenda. You just kind of have a list of topics that we're going to cover." And they're saying, "That's an agenda?"

What I try to introduce is what a real agenda should look like and I'm saying, "If you have a solid agenda and it's very well structured and planned, then your meeting is going to go so well you would not believe it."

I'm thinking about a meeting that I had, it was with a large utility company, and so this utility company services two states, Texas and New Mexico. In fact, several states it services. I think it's New Mexico and several states, and we had the top executives coming in and they wanted to develop this big message that's going out in a major bill, and they wanted to develop this big message, and I was supposed to be running this meeting.

I had put together a structured agenda. They had made hotel reservations and their flight. They thought it's going to take two days and they scheduled for a 2-day meeting. We were finished in about 2-1/2 hours. They already had launched on the first day and they said, "We're through?" I said, "Yeah." I said, "This is how we got through." And they said they ordered lunch. It's not even here, it's 11 o'clock. They never get to eat lunch. But that's what a structured agenda will do for you. They were astounded because they're used to just having it...

We're doing a big webinar next week and the client there said, "You know, we just have an assigned meeting over and over and over and over. We're going to have assigned discussions over and over and over." It's because they don't word the topics appropriately. They don't know how to analyze it. They don't have a format for doing it. They don't know what the processes are. Their participants are not knowledgeable on the process. They don't have time limits on the meeting and on different topics, and if you don't have some kind of formal structure, that's the kind of meeting you go through and that's why people walk out going, "Oh man, it's a 4-hour meeting. It's like I can't get anything done."

00:32:32 Sabrina Braham: Right. And you have a great chapter on how to pick good questions for a structured meeting that I really liked, too. So here's another question, how can a leader build confidence themselves in reports, especially when their work or their conclusions are not correct? In other words, they're trying really hard, but they're not quite getting it, but you want to make sure you keep them confident and inspired. Do you have a suggestion on that?

Dianna Booher: Yeah. That's where I would go back to the strategic questions again. That's where your leadership really shines; it's developing your people. In fact, I wrote a blog on that this week

00:33:26 Sabrina Braham: It's okay, but if you give us the link to the blog, people could go look for it.

Dianna Booher: Okay, all right. Back in spring, my July 11th blog is about being overly positive, and when being overly positive leads to a negative, and what I mean by that, a lot of times leaders want to be so positive that anything their direct report suggests, "Oh, that's a great idea. That failure wasn't your fault. We had a lot of new competitors enter the market and the process changed." They idealize that failing was really not all your fault because the product is a little defective. They needed to make some changes in the way they were packaging it.

In other words, they're always making excuses because they want to giving you self-confidence and say, you know. It's going back to the idea of everybody gets a trophy, you know?

Sabrina Braham: Right, right.

Dianna Booher: It's that kind of concept, and so if you're doing that to people, even with great intention of making them feel good, making them feel positive and making them feel confident, you're not helping them for the long run where there's career growth.

I'm not saying positive thinking is not good, but I'm saying if you do it to the wrong degree, then that is not exactly the kind of leadership they need. What you want to do is practice the strategic questions that help them learn how to question their own ideas and evaluate them appropriately by asking again open-ended questions, listening to their answers, probing to help them think through and evaluate their ideas and separating fact from opinion, asking them for check backs, "Would you check back with me before you make X decisions? Or what authority do they have at certain time periods? Can they go ahead and spend this much money? Or is there a precaution you want them to take? Be sure before you take this step. This is something that frequently happens that's going to get you off track so check back with me before this happens. Or here's a danger point, be sure that you don't let this happen. You'll know you're in trouble if this shows up, et cetera."

Those things help give them confidence that they're on the right track, but you're not just micro managing so that you're telling them every step of the way what to do, and that builds confidence.

Sabrina Braham: Right. And also your...

Dianna Booher: You're showing them what success looks like.

00:36:10 Sabrina Braham: Yeah, you're also helping them to understand that making mistakes is part of learning, that it helps you to grow and be the best person you can be in your job.

Dianna Booher: Right. You're telling them, "This is the goal. This is the end result. This is the deliverable. This is what your budget is. This is the resources. This is what you work with. And here are the resources that you have at your disposal. I'm here to help you." But you're not saying, "You must do it this way."

00:36:41 Sabrina Braham: Exactly. Beautiful. So just a couple more questions here, any suggestions on a woman being in a negotiation where she's the only one in the group, and again, the underlying thing is, "Oh-oh, it's all males. and here I am, and how do I speak up?"

Dianna Booher: Well, the other point that I made about speaking up, what she doesn't want to do because it's her failure, is to speak up as one. As a woman, you should not speak out of turn. The whole group, it you should always negotiate, and this is a key negotiating tip, it should always negotiate as one voice.

A key ploy that many years in negotiation is to try to negotiate one on one. These two people say this is a meeting and we'd catch you about the difference and asked about this and that and the other. They try to divide. They play a good combat talk kind of a deal.

You always want to be together and one person speaks for the team. Whether that's you as the female leader of the group or you're one of the party or whatever, but it should be one voice speaking for the entire team.

But here's how you can be the hero, and that is to listen well. We know that women have superior listening skills. That is not a boast, but that is just the fact. There are listening teams and listening scores that will bear that out. It's because women tend to take notes and men fail to take notes. When they speak, for the most part, they just don't take as many notes, they listen for the big picture concept, whereas women listen

for the big picture and the details, and you as a woman might be the only one who has some of that information who has captured it in your notes and remember it.

So when they get to a point of needing some of that information, and it's been a long process in negotiation, three or four meeting in negotiation, and somebody in my team would go like, "Now, I wondering what... You know, we talked about this a couple of weeks ago. What did they say about the four or five years ago they had used this vendor and they got a discount of... what was that?" And you're going to be the only one that remembers, and here's where you're going to shine as a member of that team.

Sabrina Braham: Beautiful.

Dianna Booher: But what will be a mistake is to speak up and say in the middle of the meeting, "Well, let me tell you what, what if we did so and so." Because now, all of a sudden, you have broken the rule that one person speaks for the team.

Sabrina Braham: Beautiful.

Dianna Booher: You'd become the enemy of your team.

Sabrina Braham: Right.

Dianna Booher: Instead you want to be the hero by saying, "Let me call a break here for just a minute," and then you go out in the hall and you say, "Hey, team members, here's the information we need. I've got it. I captured it back in August so and so when we talked last year and here's the information you need." Then you will be the hero because you will be the only one that will listen well enough and capture those notes.

00:39:55 Sabrina Braham: Beautiful, or even if negotiations go more than session, you may have information that is going to help the whole team with the strategy because you were listening so well.

Dianna Booher: Right, right.

Sabrina Braham: Well, that's beautiful.

Dianna Booher: It's because you've listened well and you have a strategy because you've been, "Here's a repeated pattern. I've heard them say this on three different sessions. Here is the pattern that I'm hearing and this is the key goal of theirs," and so you have put the strategy. Whatever it is on this thing, you don't want them to separate you and you start becoming the speaker for some reason because somebody has tempted to become the speaker and speak out because you're the only one that's smart enough to figure this out, but you also have some key information that nobody else had.

00:40:39 Sabrina Braham: Right. Good point. Any final thoughts or suggestions for women listening?

Dianna Booher: I think just one thing to keep in mind, and that is, if you feel that communication is impeding your decisions and your actions, that's a good warning that it has become problematic, not strategic, and you want to stay strategic.

00:41:04 Sabrina Braham: Beautiful. That's just so beautiful. Thank you so much for taking the time to talk to us today. I really, really appreciate it.

Dianna Booher: Sure, Sabrina. I enjoyed it.

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