

Bold(h)er

Be Seen and Be Heard

Lisa Bragg:

In this episode of Bold(h)er, I'm going to be bold and switch up the cast a little. Instead of having a guest, I'm going to talk about being bold and some of the barriers that can stand in our way of being seen, heard, and sharing our unique value with the world.

Hi, I'm Lisa Bragg, and this is Bold(h)er, stories of and for women who stand out, brought to you by BMO for Women. I just love that line, stories of, and for women who stand out, because we truly have women who are amazing in a range of ways on the show. If you're a regular listener to the show, you know that I always ask three questions at the end of the show, and it's the second question that we're going to focus on today. It's when do you wish you were bolder?

So let me ask you that question. When do you wish you were bolder? Some of our guests have said they're always bold and I believe it. They go beyond the usual limits on their thoughts and actions all the time. They usually laugh after they say, "I'm always bold." As you know that's going against the flow, and that's part of their success that they laugh after it because they know that it's not as common. And I always went unpack that because that just sounds to me amazing that they're always bold. They have the ability to take risks, be confident, and courageous, and with that, often get ahead. Now there are some risks to that.

So, I fall into the camp who wishes to be bolder, to put my hand up, to wave it high, just do it and not care about the critics. And it's often the social norms that keep us back or a scarcity mindset. And other times, well, it's me, it's you. We hold ourselves back. I've been studying and learning about this now for years and looking at what the bold amongst us do. So on today's show, we'll look at a few ways we're held back due to modesty or social constructs, such as the crab bucket mentality, and we'll talk about the gatekeepers and we'll look at how some of us play small and don't reach our limits because of the good girl syndrome.

So, a few ideas on being bolder and breaking out of that thinking that holds us and others back from being seen, being heard, and feeling truly visible and sharing what we have to offer with the world. So many amazing women need to be seen and heard, and we're living in a time where many of us want or need to be bolder. Being a hidden gem isn't going to give you those opportunities you want. So this episode may be directly for you or it may be for someone you lead or you know.

Let's start with crab bucket, as I'm sure you're wondering what that's about. The crab bucket mentality as it's called, or crab mentality, is if you ever see live crabs in a bucket, you'll see there's no lid. There's no need for a lid. The crabs will stay where they are. It's amazing because one can easily make it to freedom. If one tries to make a break for it, the other crabs will grab hold of it, even tearing off limbs. It's oddly fascinating that you can see the crabs, they're so close to escape, but then they stay in the bucket.

So often we stay in our own buckets too when we want to leave or feel the pressure to not leave the bucket or not let others leave too. It's short-sighted and selfish. While we're not tearing limbs off of

each other, we also suffer from loss aversion. It's described as if I can't have it, neither can you. Dr. Swart from MIT Sloan and author of Neuroscience for Leadership writes, "Humans will reduce the self-confidence of a colleague who achieves success beyond the others out of spite, envy, or resentment." And he says, "So, if we see a crab escaping, I guess which is like someone getting a promotion, that makes us think that we are not favored or we are not successful and it stimulates this fear of change. As the other crab makes us feel our own shame, fear, disgust, sadness, and even anger."

A lot out of a pocket of crabs, right? So, humans do this too. In social teams, maybe at work, maybe you know this from your family. It might be in a form of who do you think you are? Our brains are wired to avoid loss twice as much as we desire reward. So, we don't want to lose you, so we're going to bring you down instead of saying that you can go on and do amazing things and bring us along with you. So that's also a scarcity mindset that if someone gets some of the pie, that there won't be pie for us, even though if someone goes on to do bold and awesome things, there actually may be more opportunities for the rest of us.

Let's move to gatekeepers. These are the people who used to make most of the decisions on who got picked. In the past few years with technology, we've seen a real shift on the role of the gatekeeper. They've been disrupted. We so quickly forget that it was just 2006 when we started to put up our own cat videos online, and I was still working in TV news back then and I was a videographer, so that's a person who not only interviewed you as a reporter, but also shot the camera.

So, I was on assignment about politics in a small town in Ontario, Canada, and a teenage boy and his friends wanted me to put them on camera, but the story didn't fit with politics. So we just chatted and the boy told me that he had all of these videos on YouTube and that he was going to meet some producers in LA and he listed off a whole bunch of names, and most of them, I didn't know then. And he's saying this to me on the street and I was floored by his talent and his charisma.

So, I went back to the station and said, "Look, we need to do a story on this person and YouTube and how things are changing because this kid from Stratford has this huge opportunity that he pretty much put out there himself." And he was just 13 or 15 years old at the time. The assignment editor, essentially my boss, who was the gatekeeper of stories and what went to air, looked at me and rolled his eyes and with such disdain said, "YouTube, that will never take off. No, that's not a story at all"

Obviously, Justin Bieber found his own way in without my story, but that was a pinnacle moment for me. I realized that there was about to be a shift in gate keeping that this kid was putting his videos out into the world to be found by audiences directly, and they found him and a new wave of producers found him too. And that the gatekeepers, the traditional gatekeepers, were missing opportunities.

So I left TV news almost right after to start my own media and marketing company. Bestselling author and marketer, Seth Godin talks about the traditional gatekeepers in a lot of his work and he says, "There are fewer people than ever to say no to your project, your idea, your song. If you want to put it out there, go ahead." He also says, "On the other hand, that means there are fewer people who can say yes. That's now your job to do." So that's the bold part.

"If you work in an organization, the underlying rule is simple. People are not afraid of failure," he says. "They're afraid of blame." He implores us to avoid looking in the mirror and saying no. More challenging, practice looking in the mirror and saying yes. Say yes to yourself, pick yourself, put it out

there. Put it out there now. There are different gatekeepers that will appear again eventually as these systems change and flow.

And yes, there are algorithms that are steering audiences, but we're still in this disrupted time where you can be seen and heard for relatively little cost. You can be bold and pick yourself and tell the world how you are here to serve them. You can choose to be bold and find an audience. You can choose to tell the world how you serve and put your messages out there. And as a viewer or a consumer of content, you choose with your attention what is successful, and that's bold too.

In what you do, you can choose to help a woman who is ahead of you, behind you, or halfway around the world to get ahead, because there is life outside of the crab bucket and the gatekeepers, the old rules, are starting to fall away for now. The gatekeepers and the crab bucket mentality, those are mostly external. Those are society's barriers to being bold, but some of us, we have our own bigger barriers to being seen and heard and sharing our value with the world, or things we have to work on alongside of all of that.

So, we might be hiding, hidden gems tucked out of the spotlight. And like me, it might be because at a very young age you were taught and rewarded for being a good girl. There's good girl syndrome. So you might relate to this, put your head down, do good work, I'll say it for you, you do awesome work, and someone will eventually notice you. But that's not how it works, is it?

When I give talks and workshops, I often talk about Courtney Cox, the actor from friends, and that show has had a massive resurgence so I know many of you in the audience will know who I'm talking about. So I showed the video of her dancing with singer Bruce Springsteen in the video for Dancing in the Dark, and it was a hit song from 1984. And he plucks this young fan, Courtney Cox, out of the audience to dance on stage with him. And it was long believed that Courtney was simply in the right place, the right time.

Wow, lucky her. That's an amazing way to launch an acting career, just dancing in the audience. But the truth is Courtney wasn't plucked, she was planted. Once again, crushing our dreams that someone will find you, that hidden gem, amongst the sea of other people, dancing in the dark. It might have jump started her career because of the exposure level, but she was putting herself out there for opportunities and not letting them just come to her. She wasn't head down waiting for someone to pick her, she was actively out there telling people to pick her, showing up, being bold to say she is the one. You might be waiting. You might have been waiting longer than you want to admit as opportunities slip by you as you wait for someone to pick you. We have to pick ourselves first.

When do you wish you were bolder? That's the question from the very beginning and you're likely already bold if you're listening to this podcast, but now take it up a notch or help someone else to do so. It's realizing there's success for all outside of the crab bucket mentality. The gatekeepers are changing, they're standing down. There's time to explore the opportunities that come with the ability to access audiences. Be seen and heard, and there's some of our old inner stories we tell ourselves, so challenge your inner good girl to make those bolder moves and to pick yourself. It is bold to put yourself in the spotlight and the spotlight is whatever you want it to be. But when you're there, when you've arrived, invite the others. Invite the others to join you.

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new guest. If you liked this, or any episode, please rate and review. The more five star ratings, the more chance others will find the show. Thanks to our team at MediaFace. See you soon.