



Recorded Message: The Hennessy Report, from Keystone Partners. A free-flowing conversation with leaders in the HR community talking about themselves, the industry, and their work. Brought to you in cooperation with NEHRA, the Northeast Human Resources Association.

Dave Hennessy: Welcome to the Hennessy Report. I'm Dave Hennessy, and I'm very happy to be launching the fifth episode of the podcast. And we appreciate everyone staying with us for the compelling stories from all of our great guests as we refine our skills in podcast production.

Integrity is synonymous with our guest today, Marilyn Hausammann, who's the head of HR at Harvard University. I've known Marilyn for a very long time, and recently, I had a chance to sit down with her again and talk about her career. She's been quite purposeful about building a deep HR career across several different industries. And while being so strategic about her career, she also gives a lot of advice about how to maintain balance in life. Marilyn brings up Helen Drinan's name as an important mentor to her. And Helen happens to be our very next guest on the podcast. She's the president of Simmons College, so look forward to that podcast being released, episode six, before the holidays. And I bring you Marilyn Hausammann.

Well, hello Marilyn. It's great to be here at Harvard University.

Marilyn Hausammann: Thank you very much, David. It's my pleasure to be with you. Good to see you.

Dave: Same here. We met, early 2000s. I think it was 2001. You were head of HR at corporate BCG, and I was a newbie at Keystone Partners, not knowing much. And you were so good to me, Marilyn. It actually aided by confidence a little bit, because I'm like, "Well, if Marilyn Hausammann, the head of HR at BCG, is still talking to me after meeting me a couple times, maybe I'm doing something all right. I can make it in this HR consulting business." So thank you for that.

Marilyn: Oh. Thank you for saying those things, that's very kind. Thank you.

Dave: And you really have that reputation of being somebody that treats everyone with equal respect. You're calm under pressure. I've talked to lots of people about you over the years, and we all agree that you have very high integrity. And you have done really well in your career, and you treat people so well that you work with.

So I thought it'd be great for our listeners on this podcast just to learn a little bit about, your background and things that influenced you to make you who you are today.

Marilyn: Well, I would be inclined to say the things that made me who I am are the things that make all of us who we are. Certainly I had wonderful teachers. I had a wonderful role model in my dad. And so ways of behaving were expected. Most people have sort of rules of the road in their family. Let's not say "shut up" here or whatever, and I took those things to heart. I remember even when my dad was terminally ill, he said to me at one point, "You know, you and your sister listened." So I think that's true. We did. We listened. I did go to parochial school for all of my education, except one, I got a master's,



and I think that made a difference as well. It's the golden rule: do unto others. So no real mystery in terms of what made me who I am.

Dave: Yeah. Well, you mentioned your dad. What was your dad like? What was some of the things that he instilled in you?

Marilyn: So my dad was a person who was a foreman in a construction company. Work mattered very much to him. He raised my sister and I when our mother died when he was just a young man. He was only 35 years old. He loved us deeply. He made sure that we were taken care of. He did not go to college. He actually had left high school. He became a person in the army during the Second World War. He was stationed in the Pacific theater, so things like duty and service mattered a lot to him. He always used to say to my sister and to me, "Make sure that you stay in school. Make your living by your brains and not your brawn." And we took that to heart, too.

Dave: He didn't want you to go to the same direction he did, right?

Marilyn: He did not. He did not. And I suppose that's true of all of us. We want our children to be better off than we are.

Dave: Right. Well, in some ways, you have gone in his direction, as you mentioned.

Did you pursue this field of human resources? You worked in many industries in HR...

Marilyn: I did.

Dave: ...but how did you need up in this arena?

Marilyn: Yeah. So I didn't really pursue human resources right out of college. I knew that I would work when I graduated from college, but I didn't know what I would do. And I actually worked at a bank holding company when I graduated from college, and I took a job in the audit department of all things. By the way, I had an undergraduate degree in liberal arts. And the reason I did that was because I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I did think to myself, if I were in the audit department, I would get to see all of the operations of this particular company, which was true. The various companies that it held and the various department and so on. And I would get to do research. Loved that. I would get to do analysis. Loved that. I would get to report writing. Loved that. Remember, I was a liberal arts person. And I also liked influencing managers when I did reports and so on. I didn't like, in those days, the ticking-and-tying. It was green analysis...

Dave: The detail...

Marilyn: Yeah, the green analysis pads and paper and counting collateral and all that sort of business. And there was a person in the human resources department, it was a small company, I think we had 700 people, who had a job, I don't know if this has ever happened to you, had a job that I thought, "That looks like a great job," some sort of a job that I was interested in. And when she left that job, I applied



for it and got it. And that was the beginning of my human resources career. Over the years, I had a chance to leave human resources, to do other jobs, either in the line or in marketing and so forth, and each time I declined doing that. A little on the theory that when you're in the line at the banks, don't change lines.

And so I didn't. And truthfully, I've never looked back. And again, as I said, I made affirmative decisions to make a career out of human resources.

Dave: Yeah, and what was it early on? You said you looked at her job and you said, "I'm interested in taking that job" when she left. What was it about that job?

Marilyn: Yeah, so at one point in my life, when I was thinking about what I wanted to do, I actually thought that I might want to be a therapist. Again, in terms of serving people, helping people and so on. But as I thought about it, it didn't have anything real about it. At the end of the day, I wasn't producing something. And I thought human resources was a sort of a marriage of something that was kind of invisible, the helping piece or influencing piece, but also visible. That in other words, people were working and they had a job and I made sure that they were paid appropriately and that they were treated appropriately and developed, etc. And so, to me, it was sort of a perfect marriage between, again, I'll just use the word the 'visible' and the 'invisible', or the 'theoretical' and the 'concrete'.

Dave: Right. To get results. Tangible results. Excellent.

Marilyn: Exactly, exactly. Yeah, so that you know that, at the end of the day, that you were there. See some evidence of that.

Dave: Right. And you worked in different industries after you...

Marilyn: I did.

Dave: Soon after that, you must have joined Prime Computer...

Marilyn: I did.

Dave: ...which was a very hot company when you were there. I remember hearing all about that. And you worked in different industries. Are there commonalities with all the different industries you've worked in. You're at higher ed, obviously, you're at higher ed right now. You work in strategic consulting, financial services, Thomson, and so maybe a little bit about what you saw in those different arenas.

Marilyn: Yeah. Well, I left financial services after about 8 years. Now, I did return to it as you just pointed out, but I was worried about being pigeonholed. I was just afraid that if I didn't leave, remember I had started working out or took my first full-time job when I graduated from college, if I didn't leave, I would be stuck as a financial services person.

Dave: Boy, that was smart, to change careers early.



Marilyn: Just lucky.

Dave: Well, it sounds like you were thinking about it.

Marilyn: I was. I was thinking about it, but I was...

Dave: At that point, people would stay with careers for a long time, right? So that was smart of you, to early in your career to say, "Okay, I want different experiences."

Marilyn: I did. I wanted different experiences. And I had the theory then, I have the theory now, that human resources is like, I don't know, being a finance person, a CFO or whatever, we can do this kind of work in various industries. People are people. So at the end of the day, the stories might change a little bit, the context might change a little bit, but the issues are very similar. And I think part of the job of a human resources person is to keep your eyes open and discern what is wanted and needed in the particular industry or the particular organization that you work in. But it's not like going from, I don't know, being a tax specialist to a marketing person.

Dave: Right. Right. It's like being in finance, could be like being a financier in a lot of different industries.

Marilyn: Exactly. Yeah. Exactly.

Dave: HR, similar.

Marilyn: Same idea. Same idea.

Dave: Differences you've seen in the different industries?

Marilyn: Let's see. Yes. So, I was thinking about this the other day. When I was first trained in human resources, it was as I said, a small company. It wasn't wealthy. We had to be cautious about how we were spending money, and so we did a lot of work ourselves, and let me just give you a small example. If we were going to be recruiting for a particular position, we did our very best to actually recruit, go out, look for people, call people, cold call, all that sort of business. We weren't going to spend money on an agency unless we had to, let's say.

And then when I went to an investment firm, time was money and so because it was wealthy, it was fine. So what mattered is getting the job filled immediately. So sort of the tempo and sort of the constraints of the organizations have varied. So there've been rich ones, there've been poor ones, there've been ones that speed matters, there's been ones that say, "Be thoughtful about this." So that's an example of...

And then, of course, the other thing I would say is that the businesses were all different. So certainly some commonality, but not entirely between, let's say, banking and investment. Again, the content associated with the work itself was similar across all those places I worked.



Dave: And you've worked in very male-dominated industries, maybe till recently. I don't know if you'd count Harvard that way. I don't think so. But what about that? And how were you successful in those male-dominated industries? What are the challenges and how did you overcome them?

Marilyn: So when I think about...So I've had a number of people who were men, as my bosses, so one of my first human resources boss was a man. So I certainly worked with and for men. It wasn't unusual for me to be one or two of the females in a senior role, although fairness dictates I'm in the human resources role, where there are a lot of us who are in human resources. You know, honestly...

Dave: That's true. It's probably 70, 80%. Right?

Marilyn: Something like that. So I'd like to tell you that I really thought it was a big challenge to be working with men. I didn't. I thought that was sort of the way of the world or the lay of the land. And so my job and everybody else's job is to figure out how do you make it work in this environment with these particular colleagues, right? And then I did have occasions where I...So for example, at Thomson, the person who was the head of IT, which is an unusual job, was a women. So certainly we developed a particular partnership and so on, along with the CFO. So you look for those places that you can be collegial. And I would also say that's one of the criteria that you think about when you're taking a job. Are these people that I want to spend my time with? Right?

Dave: Right. How did you get to the highest levels of HR? Because working in smaller companies, taking over the HR department is a little different than when you're a head of HR at BCG or Thomson. So how did you get to the top of this function?

Marilyn: Yeah, you know, it's interesting...

Dave: Not easy.

Marilyn: Yeah. I would say that's true. And I'd like to tell you that while I knew I wanted to be in human resources and I was happy to stay in it and so forth, I didn't say to myself, "I can't wait to be the VP of HR." I didn't say that to myself.

Dave: It wasn't a goal?

Marilyn: It wasn't. Although, I would tell you, when I was in graduate school, I actually did take a course called Executive Development, and one of the things you have to ask yourself is, "Do you want to be an executive?" And I remember answering that question, writing a paper about, that I did. But the first chance that I had to be in a top job was at what was then Bank of New England-South, before Bank of New England failed. Again, don't go where I go. And I wasn't sure I would take the job when it was offered to me. I was in a job. And I remember I had a conversation with the person who had been the head of HR at Prime, just as sort of a former mentor person that I liked and trusted, and I called them and I told them what I just said to you. And he basically said to me, "Lean into the wind and take the job". So, again going back to what my dad said, I listened.



Dave: So "take advice" is your big message here. All right.

Marilyn: I took the advice.

Dave: And take a chance, too.

Marilyn: Take a chance. And I remember, I still say this. I say this to candidates now. What's the worst that can happen? If you don't like it, you'll do something else. Right?

Dave: Right. Right. Get up to the plate, right?

Marilyn: Exactly. So that's how I sort of got the first job. And then, I think once you sort of begin to break those barriers, if you will, the jobs that you next apply for would be similar in nature, right?

Dave: Right. Because now you're at that level.

Marilyn: Exactly. Yeah. Exactly yeah. That's the story, and I'm sticking to it.

Dave: I want to ask you, just because I met you when you were at BCG...I mean, I think BCG and McKinsey and Bane, I think those are types of organizations that people wonder what it's like inside. I mean, they're advising all types of organizations on what their strategy's going to be, and they hire the best and brightest. And here you are, leading the HR function there. What was it like inside BCG in that world?

Marilyn: So, I would say when I was at BCG, and I'm sure my colleagues who are still there today would say, BCG is a wonderful company. It has an outstanding culture.

Dave: I think they get rated top places to work.

Marilyn: They do. They do.

Dave: Year after year. Very high up on the Fortune 500.

Marilyn: Very high. They do. I had wonderful colleagues, you're right, there's a lot of brains at BCG. Sidebar, that actually helped me, as did my Thomson experience, get a mental model for working here. But it is...

Dave: I'm sure Harvard liked that background, of course, when you were recruited here.

Marilyn: Yeah. I think that's right. Recruit from similar kinds of places. By the way, I'm not one of those places. I'm not a Harvard person or a Yale person or a...

Dave: Well, I almost went to Harvard. I don't know if I told you this.



Marilyn: No, you didn't.

Dave: Because it was just, though, that I didn't have the grades and the SAT scores, or the extracurricular activities, but besides that...

Marilyn: You could of come.

Dave: I was coming here.

Marilyn: I love it.

Dave: So, I just want it to go on record.

Marilyn: All right. It's good to know. That's good to know.

Dave: But continue.

Marilyn: So, what else can I say about it? It was a great company to work for. I had great colleagues. One of the things that is interesting about BCG is that you could walk down the hallway and there wouldn't be a lot of people, because the business isn't there. The business is outside, just like you're here with me today, outside of where you are.

Dave: Right.

Marilyn: So that's interesting.

Dave: Right. They're making money when they're at the client's. Right.

Marilyn: At the client's. Exactly. The other thing that I would say that was really interesting too, is because it is such a far flung organization, we could do a lot of work remotely, and it had the technology to support that. Because some organizations are still figuring that out today. So, that was fun and interesting. It's sort of remarkable that you can do business at, I don't know, 9 o'clock at night in your house, and you're talking to Asia, who's just at work the next day.

Dave: Right. Very global company. Sure.

Marilyn: Very global company. That was terrific. And on the topic of global company, I had the opportunity to go to some wonderful places in the world, just because it is so far flung. Very serious about its people. Very serious about the people practices. And again, as we've already said, sort of led by smart people who took that really, really seriously.

Dave: They took the human resources part of it very seriously?

Marilyn: They did. Very seriously. Very serious.



Dave: So a great place to practice your craft.

Marilyn: Great place to work. Absolutely.

Dave: We're going to talk about Harvard a little bit, but I want to go into HR and this is the moment where we have the NEHRA question of the podcast. And I know you're a former board member of NEHRA, so I'm happy to ask this. And I know you participate. We just saw each other down at the conference last month here on the very end of October, now. So the NEHRA question is, what advice would you give to an up-and-coming, somebody that's in the HR field and wants to advance in it, what would your advice be?

Marilyn: Okay, so let's just start where you just ended. So certainly places like NEHRA do offer all kinds of opportunities for people to learn their craft, or to hone the skills that they have. I would say, also that, you know I say this to candidates sometimes. Opportunity doesn't knock when you want it to knock, and there are people who don't hear the knock. There are people who hear the knock and don't walk through the door. There are people who hear the knock and walk through the door. And so I think it's...

Dave: I think you want people to be the third one.

Marilyn: I do. I want people to be the third one. And again, back to what I said a minute ago, what's the worst that can happen?

Dave: You could take another job, right? At your field...

Marilyn: Take another job.

Dave: If not, you get a learning experience.

Marilyn: Exactly. And take a little bit of a chance. We've been talking about this. I don't even know when this thought came from. I remember when I was first in my first human resources job, I'm 23, the executive committee had come back from a, you know, we would've called it a retreat today, and God knows what I was thinking. I wrote a letter to the president, hearing what they had to say about what happened while they were away. And I'm thinking to myself, I don't know where I sort of got the nerve to...

Dave: What did you write?

Marilyn: Well, I talked to them about just make sure that you're not like all surrounded by the rosy glow of spending a few days on the Cape. I think they were on the Cape. Make sure that this sort of gets translated to the place that we work.

Dave: Yeah. And what kind of reaction did you get?



Marilyn: I honestly don't remember. Let me say it this way, I still worked there. So it wasn't as if...I don't remember. But part of it is a little around take a chance and let your voice be heard. If you are in human resources, part of what we get to do is sort of create the organization. Whether that's about recruiting the people who walk through your door, walk through the door of your company or if that's about development or sort of, again, how people are paid, treated, etc. and sort of look for opportunities. I guess that might be why I went down the path of the letter I wrote to the president. But look for those opportunities where you can influence. Look for those opportunities where you can expand your skill, whether that's a special project, or volunteering for a committee. Helen Drinan was one of my early human resources bosses, now the president of Simmons College. And I remember she taught-

Dave: Sure. She's going to be on this podcast.

Marilyn: Is she?

Dave: Yes.

Marilyn: She's a...

Dave: I'm very excited to interview her.

Marilyn: She's a wonderful, wonderful woman.

Dave: And so many great HR leaders have worked for her...

Marilyn: Absolutely.

Dave: ...that are practicing in Boston. And elsewhere, I assumed too. But especially here.

Marilyn: Right. And one of the things I remember Helen talking about is the power of 'yes'. The power of 'yes'. Just say yes, right?

Dave: Yep. Right.

Marilyn: The power of 'yes'. Yeah.

Dave: How about, so a little bit different question, but similar ...

Marilyn: All right.

Dave: If you could give a letter of career advice, if you could write a letter to your 30-year-old self, what would you write for advice?

Marilyn: Dear Marilyn...



Dave: That's a good start. I was expecting you might start that way.

Marilyn: So let me think back. Okay, so when I'm 30, I...

Dave: Well, it doesn't have to be exactly 30. It's just kind of pulling out a...

Marilyn: Well, you said 30. I'm back at 30.

Dave: All right. All right. You don't have to take me literally, Marilyn.

Marilyn: I took you literally.

So, I just finished graduate school when I was 30. I had just gotten a master's in business administration. My grandmother died. My husband, whom I met at the company that I started with, left. So you see the moment I had. You know there was...

Dave: He left you or he left the company?

Marilyn: He left the company. He stayed with me.

Dave: I know. I'm just joking.

Marilyn: He left the company. And so it was a moment where I could do something else. And I actually did. I got another job then. And in that moment of all those transitions, I got another job. And I took a job which was in organizational planning and development because it was project based, and the projects had a beginning, middle, and end, because I was thinking, at some point, I'm going to have a child. And I liked the idea of beginning, middle, and end. So, I would say to myself something along the line of, "One day at a time. You don't have to get it all in. You actually will be able to find a way to have a whole life. To be a parent and a professional and a wife and a home owner and a person who was in your community and so on." And I would tell myself not to be so anxious about that. Because for sure, I really felt...I want to say the pressure. You know how you feel that in your stomach, if you will? It all works out. So to be kind to yourself. Something around that. Something around that.

Dave: Good advice to yourself.

Marilyn: Yeah.

Dave: And others.

Maybe we'll shift to Harvard now, since we're here.

Marilyn: Okay. Yep.



Dave: So, practicing HR at Harvard. How's it different than in the corporate world? Because this is different. This is not-for-profit. You've got a lot of brain power here. How's it different here?

Marilyn: Well, let me tell you how it's the same. So I mentioned a minute ago that my BCG experience and also my Thomson experience gave me a mental model of working here, and let me say what I meant. So BCG is a large, far-flung organization. The people who ran the offices were kind of like mini-presidents, mini-presidents, often they called 'office administrators'. It had multiple cultures literally and figuratively.

Dave: Depending on which site or country or...right.

Marilyn: Right. Exactly. Yeah. Exactly. It had a priestly caste they called 'partners'. When I was at Thomson, the entrepreneurs were there. These were the people who had founded the business, made the business what it was, at one point had been the payroll clerk and the head of marketing, all the way to being the president and owner of their organization. Another priestly caste. Multiple cultures. Each of them were decentralized. Autonomy was almost a theology, and consensus ruled. So BCG's a partnership. Multiple businesses at Thomson. Consensus ruled. And so when I came here, I wasn't really surprised to see, sort of in quotations, "multiple divisions," the schools. Sort of the faculty.

Dave: The decentralization. Yep.

Marilyn: The decentralization. The important of consensus. So, those kinds of things, and again remember, I've said I think we can do this work in any industry. Those kinds of things really helped me think a little bit about what...

Dave: It was familiar.

Marilyn: It was familiar to me. Gave me the lay of the land. Gave me the lay of the land.

So, you're right. It is a nonprofit. This is the first nonprofit that I have worked for. It's a blessing that we don't have the quarterly pressures that corporate America does. It can also be something that sort of slows down immediacy, because we don't need to make the quarter, if you will. So that's one of the things that I think is different.

Dave: Right. Those constant finish lines that show up in the corporate world are somewhat helpful at times, is what you're saying. Yeah.

Marilyn: Yes, yes, yes. I am saying that. We are also, the picture that comes to mind, is we're in a fishbowl. So, Harvard news is above the fold.

Dave: Yes.

Marilyn: In a way that...



Dave: Not just here.

Marilyn: No.

Dave: It's an international news story when Harvard makes news.

Marilyn: Right. Right. I think that's right. And even though premiere companies like Boston Consulting Group are premiere, the same kind of visibility...

Dave: Yeah, they're so much more private, right?

Marilyn: It's true. Yeah. It is. It's true. So I think that's one of the things that is different, working here. And something that I think we all need to be alert to.

Dave: You have an opportunity, I would image, to tap in...I mean, at Harvard, you have the smartest people in almost every discipline of management and leadership and finance and sociology and economics, are you able to use some of that brain power that's here as the educators, the thought leaders, the researches, in your work? In the HR work?

Marilyn: Yeah, we are. So, two things come easily to mind. So, we actually have something that's called the University Benefits Committee that is advisory to our provost. And so, for example, our healthcare policy experts are members of that. It's actually chaired by a healthcare policy expert. And as you might imagine, as we face the challenges that all large employers do on healthcare and the cost and the kinds of things that are happening in the marketplace and new innovations and so forth, it's a wonderful example of having people who have dedicated their lives to this particular topic, who know things that the average person doesn't know. So, for example, the amount of, let's call it medical waste in the system, which has cost associated with what we're all dealing with.

Dave: The insurance in between...yeah. All that stuff. Yeah.

Marilyn: All that. We do have an executive leadership program that we put in place. I don't know, maybe two or three years ago. I've lost track. Maybe even a little longer. Which is a multi-month program where people are first identified in all of the schools and units, through a talent identification process, and then actually, among other things, get to go to lectures that are provided by our Harvard faculty. As you might expect, people just love that, to be on the other side of the teacher's desk if you will.

Dave: Right. Going back to what we were talking about, finance and accounting in the private sector. It doesn't mean that at Harvard you don't have those financial pressures, even though you have the large endowment, the very large endowment, you have taken a very proactive stance in making sure that your students are more diverse, and I think I heard it's over 50% at this point. And to encourage that and to reach those goals, you do a lot of discounting on tuition. I don't know if it's called "discounting." I don't know what you call it.



Marilyn: Financial aid. Financial aid.

Dave: Financial aid. Right. Of course. How did I not know that, Marilyn? My son's 12, so I certainly will...

Marilyn: You're thinking about this.

Dave: ...I might know about that later.

Can you talk a little bit about the financial pressures, because of all of this?

Marilyn: Sure. Yeah. So in no particular order, yes. We do have a large endowment. Much of our endowment is restricted. In other words, the person who gives the gift has it earmarked to be used for this particular thing. So that's thought one. Our industry, just like financial services is an industry, higher education as an industry is affected by financial pressures in terms of all of the sources of revenue. So, tuition is an example of that. When I went to college, it was 10% of my father's income. And so if you think of a typical private school without financial aid, 50 or 60 thousand dollars, most people don't earn 500 or \$600,000 dollars, just as an example. Funding from the government is under pressure. Philanthropy is under pressure and so forth. So yes, you are right. We do have the experience of financial pressures in our industry and here at Harvard.

And to your point, we have made a very strong and indelible and lasting commitment to financial aid. We think that, you mentioned the diversity of the students, we think that access to education is life-changing, and if we carry that to the logical conclusion, it's societal and world changing. So we want to make sure that these kids who may not have the financial wherewithal to attend Harvard, we can make it as easy as possible for them to do so. Does that make sense?

Dave: Sure. Yeah. We talked a little bit before about the decentralization, but you also have a concept here that I've heard about called One HARVARD.

Marilyn: Yes.

Dave: How do you reconcile this decentralized approach with what you're trying to do with One HARVARD and...

Marilyn: I think you look for, what is that old saying? Consistency is...what's that about the hobgoblin, the small minds, or something like that. But I think you look at those places where consistency and standardization make sense and where it doesn't. Right, again, having come from decentralized organization, there's a lot to be said for decentralizations, where innovation and creativity, and by the way, being close to the work really matters. And just to use the analogy of corporate industry, our industry, we're in different kinds of businesses. The medical school isn't the business school isn't the law school, right? Let alone the design school, the divinity school, or the ed school, and so on. Education school. So we look for the places that it matters to be similar. We make ways, we identify ways to collaborate, so that we're not re-inventing the wheel between you and me. So certainly, if you've done something that can be leveraged elsewhere, we look for those opportunities.



In the human resources world, we have a very closely-knit network of human resources deans and directors who get together on a at least a monthly basis if not more across the university and look for ways that...Actually, every year we agree what are the three, four, five priorities we're going to take as a whole...

Dave: And is that part, specifically, of this One HARVARD concept? Or is it not necessarily part of it?

Marilyn: Well, I see it very much as related to the One HARVARD concept. So we say to ourselves, "What are the things that we need to put the full weight and heft of all the human resources people behind us" as an example of One HARVARD. I have sort of a simple analogy when I think about this. So, if you live in a family, which I know you do, and I do, so if there's three or four or five of us in our family, we're not the same, but we're still...We all have our own identities, but we're still part of something bigger than ourselves as individuals. I use the little picture of the hand. There's one hand and five fingers, and the little one is different than the pointer, right? But you're still part of one whole. And so that's how I conceptualize this. Can it be ambiguous? Sure. Can it be a little complex and confusing? Sure. On the other hand, it just does seem like a higher order to find ways to be represented as this whole. Right? That's how I think about it.

Dave: Yeah. That's good.

All right. Now we're going to ask some silly stuff.

Marilyn: Oh! I'm ready!

Dave: So do you have a secret life hack and can you share that with us?

Marilyn: Well, since I don't know what a 'life hack' is, no. What's a 'life hack'?

Dave: Oh, like a little trick that gets you through and makes life more efficient or easier or more enjoyable. Is there any little tricks that you do to help get through?

Marilyn: Well, you know, so I've dedicated a lot of my time and energy and my identity to work, and I really do believe that. And sometimes I think it might be actually to excess, in terms of how important work has been in my career. But there is a little part of me in the back of my mind that reminds me, it's not exhaustive of who I am or what my life is. That I have a family. I have people who love me. I have friends. I have a church. I have a community. I have lots of things that are little oases that I can go to. So, that's something that comes to mind.

I would also say, early in my career, reluctantly I might add, I looked for those places that could help me, whether that was somebody who could help take care of the children, or somebody who could clean the house if I couldn't. And so to the extent that I could find some sort of a support...By the way, let me assure you, I couldn't afford that at the time, but it was cheaper than a psychiatrist, [laughter], so that's something that comes to mind, too.



Dave: So you made some sacrifices there.

Marilyn: I made some sacrifices.

Dave: To hold it all together.

Marilyn: To hold it all together.

Dave: Right, right.

Marilyn: Right.

Dave: That's good.

Marilyn: Yeah.

Dave: Maybe this is part of the same question, but what gives you energy?

Marilyn: Other people. I'm an extrovert. Debate, ideas, brainstorming, being in a group of people and doing our very best work, trying really hard to solve a problem and do our very best work. Those are the kinds of things in work that give me energy.

Dave: And favorite movie?

Marilyn: Well, you know, it's interesting. I'm one of those people that, so certainly I have seen a lot of movies, but they don't stay in my head. So I can't name...I'm more of a book person.

Dave: Oh, okay. We'll switch to book, then.

Marilyn: All right, let's switch it.

Dave: What's your favorite book? Or one of your favorite books? We won't hold you to it.

Marilyn: You won't hold me to it. Okay, that's good...So I am, having been as I said a liberal arts major, I tend towards novels. I tend towards historical novels. If I tried to do a little more subset even associated with that, of late, I've been reading historical novels associated with artists. I just finished one called *The Last Painting of Sara de Vos*. So, apparently, in the 1600s, there were a couple of women who were, this is historically true, who were admitted to the Guild of Saint Luke, which you needed to be in The Netherlands to be acknowledged as an artist. So, that was an interesting story.

Dave: Way ahead of their time.

Marilyn: Way ahead. Way ahead of their time.



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Dave: I imagine it was not common...

Marilyn: Not common.

Dave: ...for women to be admitted.

Marilyn: Not common. And you're not surprised to hear that for some of these women, for centuries, their work was attributed to a man. Or, in some cases, their father, who might have also been a painter. Yesterday I bought, this isn't a...

Dave: Oh, would you recommend that book, by the way?

Marilyn: I would recommend that book.

Dave: Okay.

Marilyn: I would recommend that book.

Yesterday, it's not a novel, but along the similar line, there's a biography, a biography about Leonardo da Vinci. So I bought that, too.

Dave: So art.

Marilyn: Art. And then I...

Dave: Novels.

Marilyn: Novels.

Dave: Art history. Interesting.

Marilyn: Yep. Yep. And sometimes I have an author, because along with...By the way, the last thing I needed is another book, but I bought two yesterday. The da Vinci one, and then the latest book by, I think it's the latest, by Alice Hoffman. She's the person who wrote *The Dovekeepers* a long time ago. So I like her. I think this is called *The Rules of Magic*.

Dave: Great.

Marilyn: Yeah. I'm a reader.

Dave: Yes. It sounds like it. It sounds like you're a voracious reader.

Well, thank you so much, Marilyn, for being on the podcast. This has been really fun.



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Marilyn: My pleasure. Thank you very much, David.

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