



## Learning to Trust Your Instincts

Hector feels pressured to set aside his creativity to dedicate his energy to business operations, but running his company this way feels soul-crushing. Stevon shares strategies for gaining back our confidence and reconnecting with our true selves.

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Stevon Lewis:

What's up everybody. Welcome to How to Talk to High Achievers About Anything. I'm Stevon Lewis, a licensed psychotherapist. Today, we welcome Hector. Hector is a talented and creative product designer. He started his own business several years ago, making and selling something that I really love, high-end bikes. Hector convinced himself that to run a successful business he would need to become a "business man." But as soon as he immersed himself in what he thought a businessman should do and work, he began to feel like he was losing an important part of himself in the process. Let's get into it.

Hector:

My name is Hector Rodriguez. I work in bicycles. I work in creative consulting and other product development work. You can find me doing bike stuff at Franco Bikes, and you can find the design and creative studio side at Data Studio. I live here in California with my two daughters and my wife. I always knew I wanted to do something. This idea of building something of my own was just really strong. When I graduated school and ended up starting my career, working at design firms, and then the entire time I was already coming up with ideas and trying to partner with different people and all types of things. So I'm again, product designer, creative side. So I knew I was missing the business side.

My cousin, which is a little bit older than I am, we were at a family gathering and I knew he was a business man. He was really good at sales, business, that kind of world. I kind of told him a little bit this is where I'm at, I just left my job. One thing led to another and all of a sudden by the end of that cookout that we were at, we're like, "Oh yeah, we should do something together." And so that's how it started, it was actually a family thing. At first, it was pretty fun because it was like, "I enjoy doing these types of things." But as time went on, it wasn't life and death, but it felt like business life and death, or the stakes got higher, I guess you could say. Now we have employees and everybody needs to get paid and all the business things start kicking in. It's no longer just the creative kind of fun side.

Hector: And I didn't really have many people around us that had been down that path in the early stages. I thought I had to just be more of a business person. Nobody ever told me that. I can't remember a single person ever telling me that, I just thought that's what you needed to do. Let's say finances. I studied it. I read books. I talked to people. I did it. We raised capital. We did all these things. But that's not what I want to do, first of all, that's not what I ever set out when I started this whole thing and say, "You know what I want to do? I want to raise capital. That's exciting. And do books and payroll taxes." That was not my goal.

I wanted to just make things. But somewhere along the line, I got caught up in that current and then eventually that's all I was doing, like running customer service groups and running a sales thing and sales plans and everything except for pretty much what I was good at and what I wanted to do and what gave me energy. Basically, what I did is I let that creative side slip or I pushed that side down so that I could become a better business type of person. All of a sudden I realized that I'm just not excited to get up in the morning. There was a phase where I started feeling like I have to go do this and I have to show up. And that feeling of being "trapped" led to what eventually I found out was anxiety, which I did not even know was a thing. As a Mexican-American, raised in that culture, son of immigrants, mental health isn't even discussed. You just work and just don't complain, and that kind of mentality.

Eventually it did just kind of get to the point where I'm like, "All right, well this is not working out at all. Something has to change." A lot of it was coming from me trying to play a role that wasn't naturally me. That was kind of the first big moment. All right, well now I know that this is what I need to do and I could feel it. I could feel that I need to make a switch and I need to go back to my, I just call it my roots, where this all started. What needed to happen first is I needed to get my confidence back. That is what I would say got crushed along the way because, again hard for me to say these things, but I'm getting better at it, but I was a pretty good design person, above average I would say. But you get beat down enough in things you don't know, and then all of a sudden, you think you're just not good.

And so I did some projects for some other folks, for some other companies, then I remembered, "Oh, this is how it feels to do stuff or for somebody to appreciate it." Because when you run a business, it's a thankless type of thing. Nobody's like, "Thanks for payroll." So some of these little projects I did started giving me some of that confidence back. I'm really good at this and that's why I'm here. Just like they're good at business, they're not good at what you do, so you're good at what you do, that's what you need to be to focused on.

Hector: Once I could see it again, then I was able to make decisions without fear or as much fear. I could say, "Okay, well here's, what's going to happen then, and what's going to happen is that I'm going to have to figure out a way to separate myself out from the day-to-day operations of this business." If I look into the future, it is much more clear for me and it's just more like a feeling. I feel like it's right.

Lewis: Hector, thank you for sharing what you're going through.

Listening to Hector, it became really clear very quickly that he had a clear vision for himself as a creator. It's when he started to distance himself away from that position that he started to experience, I guess, some distress or dissatisfaction with what he was doing in life. Most of the people I work with tend to have a vision that they are working towards and it's the fact that they don't have a model or a blueprint to follow that sometimes impacts that or distances them or kind of, I guess, takes them off course from what they would do normally to accomplish that dream.

So there's this pressure that if you are going to be successful, you can't be successful kind of on your own terms. We are often pressured or, this sounds bad maybe, coerced into a box or into looking like everyone else. Sometimes it's kind of stated, based on the spaces that we inhabit, and sometimes it comes internally. It serves to tell us that us moving forward in life the way we want to or have been isn't okay because it's different from the way others have done it in the past. And that's interesting to me because that's kind of counter to what innovation is. Innovation is about doing something that really hasn't been done before or doing something that has been done before in a very new and unique and different way. And we should embrace that.

It's hard as an individual when you aren't supported or you aren't encouraged to be that way. So for the Hector's of the world, I am going to say something that's probably going to sound really simple, but I think is profound and hopefully they will too. You being in charge and getting to a place of creating something amazing and big and something that other people buy into and doing it the way you kind of naturally gravitated to doing, that is what gives you license to further lean into yourself.

You don't have to change and do it the way Stevon did it just because that's the way Stevon and James and John and all those guys have done it. Hector's way is for Hector and that's the level of kind of leaning into self and a radical acceptance of self that I want people to get to, that I am okay doing it the way I do it because my way was for me.

Lewis:

The part of Hector's story that I like is the fact that he got to this place of understanding that he's got to be himself. And so part of that was getting away from the businessman persona and getting back to the artist or creative or designer persona that was him to begin with. Sometimes when we distance ourselves from who we are naturally, our perception of who we are becomes negatively impacted or skewed.

Part of his growth is really around him coming to terms with who he is and doing things to get back to that. And I really enjoyed how he talked or spoke about this idea that he's got to get back to the things that he enjoyed. And some of that was done to kind of recalibrate his perception of self, to get him back to a place of understanding who he is. That hadn't disappeared, he didn't really change, but he kind of forgot who he was. And I think that what happened for him is that outside looking in people are amazed at the fact of what he's created and what he's accomplishing and he did not connect with that at all.

When that happens, when we become disconnected from our true selves, it's important for people to recognize that they are neglecting something, that they're neglecting their own needs, and if your talent is art and this is how you give to others, then you need to focus on what it takes for you to be good in that way. So if you've got to do this unpleasant stuff, this stuff that you aren't really enthusiastic about, then you've got to balance that with doing things that you really love. Sometimes we don't get to only do the things we like. That's just the way of the world. That's the universe. I'd be lying to people to say you get to only do what you want in life. Maybe for some people, but not for the most of us, right?

So if that's the case then, you've got to be really intentional about finding ways to do the things you like. And that can't be, "I'll do it after I finish the unpleasant stuff." It's, "In order for me to do the unpleasant stuff, I've got to do the things that I like." It has to be that purposeful and that intentional. The reason I say it's important to do the part of attending to your own needs before or concurrently, and it can't be after, is because you will send a message to your brain that your needs come secondary. And when you start to do that, what you do is you start to put parts of you that are important for you on the back burner for other things that are not helping you grow and be better.

You don't show up as your true self and I think that is a very unhealthy way for someone to approach success or giving unto the world or unto others. This sounds so neat and nice and easy when someone says, "Just attend to your own needs." What if I don't know what my needs are? What if like Hector, I am only aware of the fact that something feels amiss? I'm always amazed, I guess, when people, so when they show up to work with me, they are looking for answers and they've convinced themselves that I have the answers. And the interesting thing to

me is that I'm looking at them and I'm like, "You already know what you need. I just need to show you that you know."

Lewis: What I do is I ask questions and people can ask those questions of themselves. You recognize when something is amiss and it doesn't feel right. Conversely, when are you feeling like things are correct? When are you feeling kind of most at ease or that this is the way I'm supposed to be doing things? I feel connected. I feel like I'm at peace. There's your answer there. Those are the things I would say, or activities that you need to engage in more.

You aren't thinking about anything. You are just existing and being. You are regenerating. You are recalibrating. You are growing. This is what feeds your soul. I don't have the answer for what that is. I can't tell you today that, "Hey, you need to go home and do 20 pushups and then draw on your book for 30 minutes and then eat some green leafy vegetables and you'll be fine." It's, "Hey, you weren't always misaligned. What happened? When were you in alignment? Okay, those things you were doing because you were already good, you weren't broken, let's start doing those things again."

If there's one takeaway from Hector's story that I will kind of echo and continue to echo is the idea of trusting yourself regardless of what advice you get from others, what you hear from professionals and experts, however many coaches you hire or business people you get, at the end of the day, you are going to have to live with the consequences of those decisions. They won't. And so you got to have a level of trust in yourself to know that you will be able to make the decision that's appropriate for you because that's the one that really is going to matter in the end.

And that's a wrap. Thank you so much for listening to How to Talk to High Achievers about Anything. We have really big plans for our show and we want you to be a part of it. We want to hear about your successes and challenges, your sacrifices, the ways you've celebrated and what's ahead as you grow. Send our producer, Virginia, an email and we'll get your story on the show. She's at [virginia@lwcstudios.com](mailto:virginia@lwcstudios.com). How to Talk to High Achievers about Anything is an original production of LWC Studios. Virginia Lora is the show's producer. Kojin Tashiro is our mixer. Juleyka Lantigua is the creator and executive producer. I'm Stevon Lewis. On Twitter and Instagram, we're @talktoachievers. Bye, everybody.

#### **CITATION:**

Lewis, Stevon, host. "Learning to Trust Your Instincts" *How to Talk to [High Achievers] about Anything*, LWC Studios., May 30, 2022. [Talktohighachievers.com](http://Talktohighachievers.com)

Produced by:



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