

MC Forward Podcast
Season 3, Episode 9
Gina Marrazza
Transcript

[Music]

Mike

Welcome to this episode of MC Forward, a podcast that focuses on Montgomery College individuals who are leading from where they are. I'm your host Dr. Michael Mills. Joining me today is Tykesha Reed, IT Training Coordinator. Tykesha, I appreciate you taking time out to join me, have a conversation about leadership.

Tykesha

Oh, thank you, so much for having me.

Mike

So, when I was doing a little research before recording, I came across a website that... that you have that talks about a couple of organizations that you have found and co-founded focusing on the self-esteem social development mentoring and empowering of young girls and women. Now, tell me a little bit about that. Why is it important to you?

Tykesha

So, it's very important. I consider myself a humanitarian. I am always trying to help others. When the organization, so I have two organizations. Um, one deal with women and one with young girls, and I've just always wanted women and young girls to be their best self. So, I'm passionate about self-esteem. With me growing up being taller than most people, you know, my mom always instilled in me to have high self-esteem, and so I grew up having high self-esteem, but I always had women, children people come up to me and say, do you like your height? I can't believe you wear heels. And there's just so many people that have a stigma with being tall, and to me, it comes from the lack of self-confidence. And so, I decided we need to start with the young generation and build them up. Help them to have high self-esteem, help them to love themselves, help them to make good decisions, and to just be their best self. And as I started working with children, their mothers started to come along and enjoyed some of the mentoring. I did a mother-daughter tea party, and some of these things, they hadn't experienced. And so, I found that there was a lot of women that also need that same, um, the same... I don't know how to put it. They also need that same coaching, that same guiding, and mentoring to help them to continue. In spite of them having good jobs and families, they still needed that... that guidance of how to love yourself, how to invest in your self-care, and how to just be your best self because as women, we're often putting other people in front of ourselves and taking care of family, friends, and... and, you know, working and building our lives, but oftentimes we don't take that time to invest in ourselves. So, that's

kind of how things got started for the women as well as the youth. And it's something that I'm passionate about. I often... I've been doing it probably for about 10 years. I'm catering to different audiences from youth to women, but my work is never ending.

Mike

So, do you do workshops, webinars? Does it take you around the country to do this?

Tykesha

Yes, I do workshops. Um, I facilitate various workshops on personal development. And for women, is personal development, um, talking about leadership as well as loving yourself, investing in yourself. I do vision board workshops. Um, I recently did one for the American Association of Women and Community Colleges. I often do them for PTAs, for colleges, but various, you know, just various workshops, um, budgeting, just leadership, just being, you know, all of those within the personal development room of trying to be your best self, and whether it's your finances, whether it's your education, your job, and in various areas.

Mike

How does this concept of low self-esteem, especially in young girls and women, impact their leadership opportunities and leadership skills?

Tykesha

It impacts because oftentimes from a young girl, you're taught to be a particular way. So, you're... you're taught to not, you know, perhaps not speak up. And so, as women, oftentimes, we do not take those opportunities. I know there's a study that says that men will take the job and learn the skills later, and a lot of times women will not apply for the job because they don't feel that they have the skills. And so, it kind of goes along with that... that confidence that just stepping out and doing what you have to do and figuring it out as you go along. And so, oftentimes, it starts as a young girl. And so, my goal is to help develop young girls, develop women to say, hey, I can do this. I have the confidence. I'm strong. If I don't know it, I'll get there. And so...

Mike

In episodes one and two of this season, I had a conversation with Shinta Hernandez and Nancy Newton, and we... we delved in to this idea of gender inequality when it comes to leadership perception and... and the concept of how young girls on a playground are often identified one way if they're in a... taking a leadership role compared to boys on the playground and how that plays out later on in the workplace and the... the stigma that is attached to that and the terminology that is attached to that, um, you know. How does that play out in your workshops?

Tykesha

Well, I don't dig into that too much, but, um, my philosophy is more along the lines of you can do this, you know. You don't have to be labeled angry. You don't have to be labe--

label bossy, you know. You can have the confidence and still accomplish the goal that you're trying to accomplish. And so, I look at it from a different perspective of just encouraging, motivating, and inspiring them versus focusing on the negative part of what others may look at you if you are confident or if you are straightforward or direct.

Mike

You had mentioned that... that your mom had a big impact on your self-esteem and encouraged you to have high self-esteem. Was there a time when you had low self-esteem?

Tykesha

I honestly cannot remember if... So, I don't remember it because she's always... she just was always, and I don't know if it was because she was tall. I never really asked her if she ever had low self-esteem, but, um, I don't know if it was because she was tall and so she knew, you know, what could come if I didn't have low self... if I didn't have high self-esteem. So, I'm not sure, but I don't recall ever having low self-esteem because from a young girl she always encouraged me and, you know, just taught me to be confident. The other thing is she was a... So, I don't know if you know but I'm... I used to model. Now, I teach modeling. But she was also a model. So, I don't know if her being a model also had an impact on her teaching me to walk with confidence, keep your shoulders back, keep your head up, you know. You're gorgeous. You're beautiful. You're intelligent. You're smart. And so, I don't know. That could have played a role in it as well.

Mike

This... this high level of self-esteem that you have. What kind of leader has it made you?

Tykesha

Well, it's interesting because I'm a very humble person. So, while I have high self-esteem, I'm not boastful and I don't brag. And so, um, when it comes to me being... I'm... A lot of times, I'm not the most outgoing person, but when it comes to leading, if it's something that I'm passionate about, something that I'm interested in, I will take the lead. I will... That self-confidence comes out. In fact, it's so funny because I have people tell me that I am a, quote-unquote, alpha woman, or I have a, um, strong personality. But it's because when I'm leading, that's how I have to be, you know. When I'm running my business, I have to be strong-willed and I have to be confident and I have to be able to lead because otherwise, it won't be successful. But, however, in my personal life, that's not me. It's so funny but, when it's time, it's who I am. But, you know, otherwise, I'm just a really laid-back and chill person.

Mike

I... I think it's often true that we're not the same people at work that we are outside of work. I think, oftentimes, we have to play a role at work, and I... I can speak for myself when, you know. At home, if I... if I acted at home the way I have to act at work at times, it would be disastrous. My, you know...

Tykesha

I agree. [Laughter]

Mike

It would be disastrous. [Laughs] I remember when I... I got my doctorate and, you know, I said to my boys, just one time, call me doctor and they said no, you know. Absolutely not. We'll call you dad. We're not calling you doctor. So, you know, we go in and out of these roles I think depending on their situation, and work is certainly different than... than home life.

Tykesha

I agree with that, yes.

Mike

So, what kind of leader are you? How... how would you label yourself?

Tykesha

So, of course, since I said I'm a human—humanitarian, I would absolutely say that I'm a servant leader, you know. For me, my goal is always to serve. If I am, you know, regardless if it's a committee, if it's a job, if it is, um, I'm hiring employees for my organization, I'm always going to serve because for me, it's about the person itself. I believe wholeheartedly that you get the best from people when you are... when they are fulfilled. So, I always want to know, if I'm on a committee, if I'm hiring someone, what is it that brings you joy? What is it that you like to do? What areas would you like to improve? And those are the things that I believe will help them to be a better person, that will help them to be their best self, and that's going to help them to give their best. And so, when there's a beneficial relationship and people are gaining something from the relationship, then they tend to do better because they're getting something out of it. So, as a servant leader, when you are catering to your people and finding out, you know, what it is that they need and your goal is to make sure that they are good and that they are succeeding in their role and they have the resources that they need, then they're going to produce for you.

Mike

You mentioned that you ask people what... what they need to do to improve and, you know, what... what can improve an organization. When you look introspectively at Tykesha Reed, what do you need to improve on in your leadership journey?

Tykesha

Oh, that's a good question. Uh, as a leader, I will say delegating. That's one of the things that's not my strong area because I know as a leader, you should be able to delegate, but also as a leader, I feel like a lot of things are my responsibility. And so, um, that's one of the things, actually delegating and letting the person do what they need to do

without overshadowing them. And so, just, you know, giving them the task and then following up to see if it's done, and that's it not worrying about if it's done the way I would do it but just allowing them to do it and go through that process. And so, that's one of the areas that I am intentionally working on but it is a weakness for me. So...

Mike

So, let me ask you this. In your workshops, you teach self-esteem and you teach these young girls and women that they can do it, whatever it is. And then, the delegation piece comes in. So, they can do it, but then they have to delegate? How... how... talk about that because it's... it sounds like it's the antithesis of... of one another?

Tykesha

It... it... and I think that's probably why it's a struggle for me because, um, as a leader, I want to be hands-on and everything. And I want to do the things but I know that I can't. And so, you have to know when to take a step back and to allow someone else to do it. Also, there are things that as leaders we're all not good at. And so, instead of me or someone else trying to do a task that they're not good at, why not give it to someone on your team that's good at it? Because one, they're going to enjoy doing it because they're good at it. And two, you're probably not going to do as good of a job as they would because this is something that they agreed at. So, you know, it is a struggle, but at the end of the day, you know, you have to look at your team and look at the skills to see what everyone's has and play on those skills. So, if someone's good in this area, let them do that test. If that's not my strong suit, let someone... let someone else do it. And so, I kind of look at it that way and... and try to encourage myself like, okay, no, you don't have to do this. You don't have to do that. All you need to do is check in and make sure that it's getting done.

Mike

Looking inside ourselves and identifying what we're not good at isn't easy

Tykesha

No.

Mike

For a lot of... a lot of people, they... they struggle with that because we have to come to grips then with our own vulnerabilities. How do you... how do you teach that to the group that you work with?

Tykesha

One of the things is self-reflection and that's... that is, um, ongoing for me. I'm a life learner, and so, I'm always trying to reflect and see what areas I can improve in myself. And so, that's one of the things that I also teach. You know, you have to journal. You have to take time to self-reflect. You have to take time... One of the things that came out when I did my vision boards, when I first started doing vision board parties, was that I

learned that people do not take the time to actually sit down and write their goals. I'm very goal-oriented. So, I don't know, probably from a teenager, I've always done vision boards. My goals always come into fruition, and I'm a very visual person. So, I need something visual and, but what I've learned in doing the workshop over the years is that, and my vision board workshops are normally with women, and what I've learned over the years is that oftentimes we don't take the time to, again, sit still for an hour or more and really write out, you know, what is it that I want to do. What happened to that dream that I had years ago before I had children that I never got to do? Or what happened to, you know, a class that I wanted to take? Or whatever that thing is. What things are... that you wanted to do but didn't actually take the time to do? And while you are reflecting on that, what areas need to be improved? What am I doing that I can do better? And so, that is actually a part of my workshops. The self-reflection and figuring out what you want to do. How can you do it better? How can you be a better person? How can you be your best self? What is going to fulfill you and make you to be your best self?

Mike

What's on your vision board now?

Tykesha

So, of course, my doctorate. [Laughs] That is the number one priority. Um, my doctorate. And then, I'm actually just self-care... self-care because I... I'm a caregiver. I have children. I'm in school. I have a business. I work full-time. And so, you know, just being intentional with my self-care while I teach it. It's still a process for me just, you know, making sure that I'm actually intentional like I intentionally have to schedule self-care and then schedule these things to make sure that I'm able to give the best of myself to everyone else because if I'm tired, I'm worn out, and I'm drained, I can't. So... Those are actually the things that that just, you know, being in better health, working out regularly, and investing in my self-care, and traveling. I love traveling. So, those are the things that, um, are actually on my vision board.

Mike

You'd mention your children. How do you... how do you juggle all that you do with raising a family and then instilling in... in your children this concept of self-esteem?

Tykesha

So, how do... People ask me that all the time. How do you do all that you do? And honestly, I say it's God because I don't know. I honestly do not know. Um, sometimes, I'm just doing a lot and I don't know how I'm able to get it done, but I am. And I believe it's because I'm constantly helping others and... and it's actually my daily prayer that I'm a blessing to others every day. And so, because I'm constantly blessing others in whatever way, I just believe that it just keeps coming back. The energy and time just keeps coming back to me. And so, when it comes to my children, I... I try to keep them involved in my business so that they are hands-on. One, they can see the entrepreneurship but also they can see what it's like to run a business, but they can see

also when I'm gone during a workshop, what am I doing? Like how am I helping others? How am I serving others? And so, I try to keep them involved in whatever I'm doing so that they understand that, um, what I'm doing and why I'm doing it and how it's impacting others.

Mike

Earlier in the conver— go ahead, I'm sorry.

Tykesha

Oh, I was going to say, in terms of the self-esteem part of it, um, just again, you know, I'm... I'm constantly encouraging my children and trying to build them up, and, you know, I just continue to do that along the way.

Mike

As we begin to wrap up, earlier in the conversation, you had mentioned that when you bring individuals into your organization, you often ask them, what brings them joy? What brings you joy?

Tykesha

What brings me joy is helping others. I'm being with family and friends and traveling, those are the three things, my top three things. I get... i get great joy, you know, as I said, my prayer is to bless others. I get great joy out of helping people and sharing information, knowing that they may not receive this information, but also knowing that it can actually change someone's life. And so, that brings me great joy knowing that I'm helping others. I'm... traveling for me, I love traveling, but it's also self-care. And so, that's the time that I take when I travel because people often say, why do you travel so much? It's because it's my self-care. It's how I re-energize myself. How I, um, self-reflect on my quiet times. And... and that's why I do it so often because my life is so busy that I need that quiet time away from everyone to just be able to pour back into myself and replenish myself. And then, of course, my family and friends who I love dearly. I enjoy... I'm... I'm very family oriented, so I'm always doing game nights or gatherings or going out as a family and with my friends. And so those things again also replenishes me, and I'm sure it is joyful for them as well.

Mike

You have such a positive disposition. It has to help you as a leader.

Tykesha

It does. It does. I'm very positive. I believe in positive affirmations. I'm in my office, I have, you know, affirmations around, but yes, I'm a very positive person. And so, um, I just believe that it... it does help in leadership to have someone that's positive. And it helps being a team player as well, you know. If you have someone on your team that's positive and... and is optimistic versus someone that's always negative and find-- seeing the fault and everything, you know. That's not helpful.

Mike

Tykesha, this was fun for me. I learned a lot about you, but I also learned a lot about this aspect of self-esteem. So, thanks for taking time out to... to talk to me about it.

Tykesha

Thank you for having me, Dr. Mills. I appreciate your offer.

Mike

If you know someone who you think would be a great fit for this podcast, have them reach out to me at michael.mills@montgomerycollege.edu. Meanwhile, keep moving MC Forward.

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