

1 INSIGHT

with RICH LITVIN



Episode 9: “The dark side of your gifts...”

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Rich: Welcome to 1 Insight. My name is Rich Litvin. I grew up in London, and I now live in LA. And this is a podcast for extraordinary top performers. You see, I've coached some of the most successful and talented people on the planet. I see what most people cannot see, and I dare to say what most people wouldn't dare to say. And what I know about success is that on the other side of it, it can actually be lonely. You can feel like more of an impostor the more successful you become. And when you're the most interesting person in the room, you're actually in the wrong room. I coach around insight. Life looks one way. Something happens. The world looks different, and your entire world changes. It can happen in an instant. This podcast is called One Insight because a single insight can change everything.

I have a practice of not really listening to the first thing a client says they want when they walk in the room, and that really served today because Margaux began by saying she wanted to prioritize her actions, and could I help her with that? What it turned out that I really needed to do was to give her a sense of the power and impact that she has when clients walk in a room with her. She's an extraordinary woman, and you will hear me take her through a tool that you can use to speak yourself powerfully into the world. Enjoy.

Hi, Margaux.

Margaux: Hey, Rich.

Rich: Hey. Thanks for coming on today. What would make this a really special conversation for you?

Margaux: I think what would make it really special is if I came out of here having a clearer view of how to prioritize my actions in the coming weeks, I'd say.

Rich: Well, as a coach, I have a practice. Since coaching is something you know about, I can take you behind the scenes. I have a practice of ... If I'm really honest, I would say pretty much ignoring the first thing a client says.

Margaux: Yeah.

Rich: And that's not really ... I'm being a bit tongue in cheek. But what I mean is I want to go deeper and deeper and deeper because that's where we find out where the real juice lies. So, if you prioritized your actions and we found out this amazing way for you to do that, to what end?

Margaux: Yeah. When I said that, I knew that this wasn't the real thing, but I had to say it to go one step deeper. So, one step deeper is actually ... So, I'm building my own activity right now, which is based on a coaching posture. I don't like calling it coaching because it's been ... It's such a widely used term now. I have to find another word for it. But anyway, so I'm building my own activity to accompany people in redefining what their purpose of their role in their organization is, and then to help them learn to navigate through complexity and uncertainty, which is increasing in our world today. And to do that, I leverage a toolbox that I've gathered across the years, which includes some coaching skills, some strategy skills. I was a strategic consultant before. And also the major part of it is leveraging fundamental principles, laws of nature. It's tied to biomimicry, which is a discipline that's looks into nature and how can we get inspiration from nature to change the way that we act and that we think. So, that's just the context.

What I'm struggling with these days is ... I meet a lot of people. I make a lot of great connections around this, but I'm struggling to identify who I really want to work with. So, the kind of "Hell yes" clients that I'd like to have. And so my real question for myself is, how do I pinpoint this a bit better so that I can have maybe a sharper way to make these connections and actually start working with some clients? I'm about to sign my first contract, but I need more of these, or I'd like more of these.

Rich: Beautiful. I love it. So, I love everything you've talked about. This ability to navigate complexity and uncertainty, absolutely skills we need more and more. These are what I call robot-proof skills.

Margaux: Yeah, exactly.

Rich: There's something really fascinating about this. For the leaders that you're working with, you've got this track record and background of doing this work. And so, this is great. What I hear right now is you have a filter around demographics. And what's much more powerful than when you have a filter around a psychographic?

Margaux: Yeah.

Rich: So, demographics coaches will say, "I work with men in their forties. I work with women in transition. I work with leaders of businesses that are around a million dollars to scale to five million." They pick a demographic. And, almost always, I know they're not really attached to that demographic because if someone from outside that demographic came along, but they really loved that person, they wouldn't care.

Margaux: Sure.

Rich: Because what they actually are looking for is to filter around mindset. That's what I call a psychographic. So, I can help you with this. I think it could be really fun. So, let's play. First of all, I want you to tell me ... And you've got to put humility to one side for this one.

Margaux: Yep.

Rich: What are three of your biggest professional accomplishments? And what I'm looking for is a headline. So, sometimes our biggest accomplishment, "I'm proud of being a dad. I'm proud of how I handled being fired. I'm proud of how I handle being in relationship with a powerful woman." [inaudible 00:06:13] headlines I lead with out in the world. And I'm looking for a headline you'd with out in the world. So, give me three, but let's start with the first one. What's a ... And as tight as you can, not too many words for this one. But what's a headline for something you've accomplished?

Margaux: Professionally, or in my life in general?

Rich: Professionally we're doing for this.

Margaux: I was one of the youngest in my previous group to be sent out as an expat across the group. It was a 22,000 employee group.

Rich: And why do you think they picked you out of 22,000 people, as young as you were, to go out and live overseas?

Margaux: Because I had demonstrated the ability to start something from scratch and develop it across the group before that.

Rich: Okay. That's great. And because you sent me some notes before this conversation began, what I know is you were just 27 then. You were very young, and you went off. You set off to go and work in China.

Margaux: Yep.

Rich: Beautiful. Okay. Give me headline number two.

Margaux: Headline number two would be .. Well, what happened after that is I was put in charge of a ... I was in charge of the market strategy worldwide for one of the group's businesses based in China, but worldwide. So yeah, that's another accomplishment. Although, I didn't stay in that job, but-

Rich: No, no, it doesn't matter. You were put in charge of the worldwide market strategy for this group. What was the budget, the revenue? Again, give me a headline that goes with that.

Margaux: The revenue was a half a billion, so 500 million euros.

Rich: Right. And I love it. I'm smiling right now because the problem with what I call zone of genius, those things that we do so well and especially if they're in our past and we've transitioned into a new career, it kind of feels like, "Well, it's what I did in the past," or, "Doesn't everybody do this?"

Margaux: Right.

Rich: You were in charge of the worldwide marketing strategy where there was a half a billion dollar revenue as part of that responsibility. That's amazing. And it was so far in our past, we tend to forget this stuff. So, that's a great headline number two. That's what I'm looking for, right? This is where the juice lies. We're looking for the kinds of things that have people say, "Wow," or, "How did you do that?" Or. Even better, when they go, "Wow. How did you do that?"

Margaux: Right.

Rich: Give me a headline number three.

Margaux: Headline number three, I'll actually change from what I had written in the note, is letting all of that go to build my own activities, something I really want to do for myself and for others, which is tied to my previous experience, but which is quite new actually. So, I went into a different direction.

Rich: And this is what I would call consulting, right? You had your own consultancy, is that correct?

Margaux: No, so that's what I'm doing right now. So, I don't know what to call it, if it's a consultancy, a coaching. I still need to find a word.

Rich: You know what? I get it. The problem with coaching is that the barrier to entry is so low that everyone and their mother calls themselves a coach. And so it's not got a great reputation.

Margaux: Right.

Rich: The barrier for success is very, very high. So if you play a high level game, you can have an amazing career. But sometimes it's useful to let go of that word, coaching. So, my sense for you is saying, "I have a consultancy firm," is ... There's something in there because you've been doing consulting your your whole career. So, a consultancy firm, there's something in that, an international consultancy firm. International [inaudible 00:00:10:08], so you are.

Tell me ... Give me something from that. Tell me about one of your clients that you're really proud of.

Margaux: I'm actually about to sign my first contract in the way that I really want to sell my activities. So, I've done some coaching before. I've tested my approach, but in a test, in kind of a pilot mode. And now I've just decided I'd stop saying it's a pilot, and I'm actually going to sell it. So, I'm about to sign that first contract. And the characteristics of that client, which is definitely a hell yes, is ... So, it's one guy. It's an individual who works-

Rich: Hold on that. Don't tell me about him yet.

Margaux: Okay.

Rich: Tell me about a success you've had as a consultant either working for an organization or on your own, even if it's the work you're calling a, the project, the pro bono work. The success as one the people who you were consulting with.

Margaux: Do you want me to tell you about the success or about the person?

Rich: No, the success. "Before they worked with me, here was the situation," bottom lines.

Margaux: I'll take an example which is relevant to what I do now because it's going to be for our conversation, I think. I'm coaching this lady. She is a coach, and she's far more experienced than I am as a coach. So, that's a challenge, but it's exciting. And for the first time, recently ... We're not that far into our relationship. I think it was the four fourth session that we've done together. And she came in with an objective, which was, "You need to help me. I need some help to get myself to write a book or to final finalize a book." And actually for me, that wasn't the real topic, so it kind of took her deeper and deeper. And fourth session was a moment where she had this kind of moment, like this real insight around, "Wow, this is actually not what it's about. It's about this, which is a much bigger topic that's tied to a much bigger vision." And to me that was a success because that's what I strive to take my clients to is this expanding, not only their

thinking, but also their vision, in breadth, but also in time. Yeah. I don't know if you have enough.

Rich: Is the vision that she had at the end of that relevant?

Margaux: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. It's her vision for her professional life.

Rich: For us in this moment, tell me more about that vision. Can you, again, capture it in a sentence, no more.

Margaux: She came in with, "I need help to write this book." And her vision is actually, "I want to develop my professional path in a way that I become more open to the world." So, she lives in Denmark and she works in Danish, but she wants to become more open and start making relationships at an international level, and expanding her activities as well because she thrives on diversity of activity.

Rich: Okay, great. That's enough context I need for that one. That's helpful. Okay, great. Okay. Thank you for that. Pause on that for a second. Tell me, what are your three biggest gifts? The things that you do so naturally and effortlessly that some people acknowledge you for them and sometimes you're like, "I didn't really do anything," but actually your gift is in there.

Margaux: Hmm. I make links with topics that seem unrelated really easily, like effortless, effortlessly. That's one thing. I think I have a good intuition, so I can ... I get people, not all the time obviously, but I can get behind the words and more into the meaning of what they really want to say or what's behind it. And I'll just go and dig that, dig into that and ask questions around that. That's the second one.

And the third one, I'd say, is I build good rapport. Is that a word, rapport?

Rich: Yep.

Margaux: I easily connect with people.

Rich: So, the one you haven't said is around navigating complexity and uncertainty.

Margaux: Ah, it's tied to the first one for me, making links effortlessly. And so, it's a game for me.

Rich: Yeah. That's the interesting thing about the zone of genius. It's that thing we do effortlessly. It's a game for you, but it's really important that I see where this link is. I'm doing exactly what you do for others. I'm looking for the links that we can't do for ourselves, right?

What's the dark side of each of these gifts? So, I'm a visionary leader, which is great. I inspire people. People want to follow me. People want to learn from me. My team are enthused to work with me. But the dark side of being a visionary leader is I end up ... I

frustrate my team because they want to work on the mission I've just given them, but now I'm thinking about the mission five years down the road. It's overwhelming. Every gift we have has a dark side. What's the gift of your ability to make these links?

Margaux: The dark side that to that, I think is to lose people, and people including myself sometimes. Because I thrive on that freedom in general, but freedom also of thinking. And sometimes I'm confronted or I have relationships with people that are not that way. They need to compartment. They need to box things. They need structure. They need process. So, I guess I can ... The dark side would be to lose these people.

Rich: Great. That's helpful. What's the dark side of having this great intuition you have where you get people. You can understand and get behind their words. What's the dark side of that?

Margaux: Being wrong, I think. Because intuition is something that needs to be worked, and sometimes you're right; sometimes you're wrong. So, I get there's a risk of being wrong sometimes. And so, taking people further, but in the wrong direction. Did that make sense?

Rich: It does. Is it that, "Sometimes I trust my intuition too much, and I don't pause to check in and validate it"?

Margaux: Okay. I want to change my answer now because I think I got the essence. To me, the dark side of the intuition is taking people where they don't want to be taken. So, my intuition will tell me something, and I know there's something there, but sometimes I might need to say no because it's not the right time, or it's not the right maturity level, or whatever. So, I think the risk is taking people into stuff that is not right for them to talk about.

Rich: So, you have the intuitive hit, but then you have to slow down and check in. Is this the right time. Is this the right moment before I tell them what the intuition ... The intuition might be spot on, but you've got to bring people along with you.

Margaux: Yeah, exactly.

Rich: Great, great. And this gift you have around navigating complexity and uncertainty relates to the making links and so on, the game you have. What's the dark side to that ability there?

Margaux: That's a good question. I'm not sure. I'm not sure. I'm drawing a blank on that question. I guess, to me, and me with myself, I can't see any dark side. Maybe with others ... It's kind of back to that. I might have a level of comfort around complexity and uncertainty that's greater than people that I'll interact with, so how do I maintain my third gift, which is building rapport, with that gap in being at ease or not being at ease with the context that we're in of complexity and uncertainty?

Rich: Nice.

Margaux: And I also like to kind of uncover and see what's beneath all the little rocks where people might actually not want or might be uncomfortable with that. So, yeah, that might be the dark side is I'll uncover too much of the complexity and of the uncertainty that other people might be afraid of actually seeing all of this.

Rich: I love it. That's great. That's great. What's the one thing you've struggled with the most, really, all of your life, Margaux?

Margaux: I haven't struggled that much. The one thing I struggled with the most, and it's pretty recent. It's since three years, is the connection between the body and the mind.

Rich: Say more.

Margaux: I tend to ... Until three years ago, I thought that my body was just there as kind of an envelope of everything. And I realized that actually it has ... My mind isn't myself on its own, so I just don't have like a mind on legs, and I need also to take into account all the non-mind related aspects of my life. I don't know if ... That might sound really strange, but-

Rich: No, I totally get it. I totally get it. I get it, partly because some of that is me and because I work with a lot of really high performing. So, what I'm hearing is when you're super sharp, extremely bright and intellectual, you can live in this world up here in your head, and you're divorced from all the energy and possibilities, information and insights that lie within your body.

Margaux: Right.

Rich: You're so much more powerful when you have access to all of that. And you've spent much of your life divorced from that. And now there's a new path for you. I've sensed the excitement in you.

Margaux: Yeah.

Rich: Okay, great. Great, great, great. Let me play. I want to speak you into the room. I want to tell ... If we get off this conversation and someone says, "Well, who did you just spend time with?" I want to tell them who you are. And then we'll see how this lands for you.

Margaux: Okay.

Rich: I'm pausing because I have to channel this. [crosstalk 00:21:41] What most people know about Margo is that from a really young age, her potential was seen. She was the youngest person in an organization of 22,000 people who was chosen to be sent to China because she has this ability to start things across, from scratch and run them across the entire group. Her possibility and potential was seen back then. Later in her

career, she was in charge of worldwide marketing strategy for an organization with a half a billion dollar revenue. Later still, she built her own international consultancy firm. Her clients are often people who are actually far more experienced than her, and yet what she does is expand their thinking and their vision beyond where they could possibly go on their own, despite their years of experience.

What most people don't know about Margaux is ... They understand. They see her as super sharp, extremely bright and an intellectual. They don't know that for most of her life, she didn't have a connection with the wisdom inside of her, the ability to connect the mind to the body and the deeper intuition and the gut wisdom that's inside. She's beginning to have access to now in a way that allows her power and impact to really be exponential. You see, Margaux has got a gift of being able to navigate complexity and uncertainty and helping leaders and organizations do the same. These are skills and abilities that are complex, but can be taught, and will be needed more and more as time goes on. Margaux has an ability to make links where other people don't see them. It's what's known as high level complex pattern recognition, and it's a powerful gift. She has amazing intuition. She gets people, and she's able to get behind their words and even build rapport with people, deeply.

There are some challenges that go with those gifts though. One of the challenges of being able to make those links and have this high level complex pattern recognition is that she can lose people when she is comfortable with this freedom of thinking, and some people want structure and process. And that's what often happens in an organization, where leaders can lose their people. And you have to know as a leader when it's important to be in freedom of thinking and when it's important to be in structure and process. The gift of this good intuition and getting people and knowing how to get behind their words is that you can take people on a journey, but you have to be careful that you bring them along with you. Sometimes people aren't ready to be taken. And you have to know how and when to speak what the mission is in a way that will bring them along and not overwhelm them or scare them.

One of the gifts of Margaux's level of comfort with complexity and uncertainty is that she can look under the rocks and see the challenges that most people don't see. And the problem is that in some organizations, they're not ready to look under the rocks that Margaux uncovers. She isn't for everyone. But if you and your organization have a big vision already to expand your thinking, want and need to navigate complexity and uncertainty, you want Margaux on your team because she will help you bring your clients, your customers, your team, and even your board of directors on board for the sake of this bigger mission.

Okay. How was that? I had to channel. How was that?

Margaux: It's a great pitch. It's a perfect pitch for [inaudible 00:26:41], for my business.

Rich: Yeah. And it's not so much a pitch. I wasn't ... I'm not a marketer. I'm not a copywriter. I was drawing you out, Margaux. I had to listen to what you do, right? I had to listen to

you so deeply, to hear behind the words, "Where are your gifts? Where are the struggles?" And here's the secret that I know, is that your dream clients look like the person who looks like you in the mirror at nights. Your dream clients are you. So, when you can speak this, particularly things like the dark side of the gifts that they have, they're going to go, "Oh my God, I thought nobody knew this about me."

Margaux: Yeah. That's interesting.

Rich: So, your job once this podcast comes out is to transcribe that and start practicing speaking that into the world. This is who you are. This is what you do. You will hone it over time.

Margaux: Yeah. It feels good.

Rich: Yeah. It feels good in your body. I can see that. You're moving in a way you weren't moving before. This is the gift that you have, of being able to trust your body. This is an insight moment. And sometimes an insight ... We have this idea and we go, "I see things." But sometimes an insight lands in your body. And if we were coaching without this being a podcast, I'd have let that silence just sit until you were ready. For the sake of time, it's not so fun to sit and listen to lots of silence, but I could feel it. I know enough, and I know I trust you enough that you get it, that you're there. This is it because this is you. And you speak in the sense of the world. This describes the mindsets of your dream clients. And your job is, counter-intuitively, your job is to polarize people. Your job is to turn people into zeros and tens. You say everything that I just said in your way, some people are going to go, "What is she talking about? What does that mean?" Great. They're zeros. They're not your people. But the ones who go, "Oh my gosh," they're your people, zeroes and tens.

Margaux: Yeah. That makes sense. And now I understand. I mean, what you said is ... I've had this revelation few days ago. I've been trying to write a presentation of what I do, and it's just not ... I mean, I have it now, but I'm like, "Yeah, but it's never going to be a fit for everyone, even just in terms of understanding." So, I have to find another way than just write stuff and-

Rich: So, let me tell you a secret. Nobody cares what you do. They know, "I'm here. I want to be there." If they get ... Because they understand who you are, that you can help them. If they get, because they hear stories of your clients, they know that you can help them. If they get, because you've put your thought leadership out into the world and shared stories and ideas in the past, or if they get, because they've had an experience with you, that they can go from here to there, they will say, "I want to work with you." They'll send you a check.

Margaux: Yeah.

Rich: Nobody cares. They don't care if you do ontological coaching, deep coaching. They don't care if you're certified by the ICF. They don't care about any of that. They don't care if

you sprinkle fairy dust on them. They just want to know, "Can you help me?" And if they get a felt experience of, "Yes, she can," they will send you the check. Don't try and do a presentation about how you do what you do. It's too complex. People will not understand it. Your job is to say, "Let me give you an experience."

Margaux: Yeah.

Rich: In fact, if you are ... I got invited to an event full of coaches recently. They told me I had 20 minutes on stage. I said, "Well, actually I'd love to be at this event. I love this community, but I'm going to say no. What I want is an hour on the stage where I can coach people, one after the other after the other." And they said, "Sorry, we can't do that. Everyone's got 20 minutes." And I said, "Well, I'll feel bad that I'll miss out, but I'm going to say no." And they came back to me. And they said, "Okay, Rich. Actually, we're going to give you this. We'll give you an hour." And I served people powerfully. One at a time, I coached them. And that's what I do. I give an experience of what I do. And people witnessing get to go, "Ah, I want some of that." Or they go, "Well, he's not from me," zeros and tens. Don't any longer try and explain how you do what you do. If you are teaching people to navigate complexity and uncertainty, you cannot put that into words. It's too complex, so don't try.

Here's a tool I'll give you, an executive preview.

Margaux: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Rich: Look, I could come and talk to your senior team about what I do, but it won't serve you. I can tell you about stories about other people I've worked with, but how's that going to serve you? You're not them. Instead, what I would like to give you as an executive preview. I will come and sit down with your two most senior leaders, and I will spend two hours in a room with them, and they will experience what I do. Normally, that's a \$10,000 charge, but once a month I have a spot to do pro bono work with a company that inspires me. If you would like that spot, you can have the one that's available in the next month or the month after. It's an executive preview. And at the end of that, you will leave with a bunch of tools to help you do exactly what you need to do. If you want to hire me, we'll talk. If you don't, you will leave with the tools that you need to navigate all the complexity, uncertainty that you're facing in the year ahead. Give them an experience, Margaux.

Margaux: Yep. Yep. That makes sense. That's what I'd like to do as well. So, it's a good thing.

Rich: Yeah. You'll love it. They'll love it. And we're here. From this place, you don't ... Where we began, I'll take you right back to the beginning where you want it to prioritize your actions. No need to prioritize your actions from here, you're just know what to do.

Margaux: Yep.

Rich: Thanks for trusting me, Margaux.

Margaux: Thank you, rich. It was great discussion.

Rich: Yeah. You're an extraordinary woman. Go out and share that, but not by talking about it. Give people an experience of what you do.

Margaux: Yeah.

Rich: For most of human history, it wasn't called coaching. It was called leadership, and it's what I love to do, to coach people, to lead people and to mess with people's thinking. If you'd like more of this, or if you'd like to learn more about our community of extraordinary top performers, go to RichLitvin.com/1Insight.