



EP272_Michelle Greene

Lisa Nichols 00:03

Chromosomes, little strands of nucleic acids and proteins are the fundamental genetic instructions that tell us who we are at birth. Most people are born with 46 chromosomes. But each year in the United States, about 6,000 people are born with an extra chromosome, making them a person with Down syndrome.

If you've ever encountered someone with Down syndrome, you know that they are some of the kindest, most joyful people you will ever meet. They truly have something extra. My name is Lisa Nichols and I have spent the last 24 years as both the CEO of Technology Partners in as the mother to Ally. Ally has something extra in every sense of the word.

I have been blessed to be by her side as she impacts everyone she meets through these two important roles is CEO and mother to Ally, I have witnessed countless life lessons that have fundamentally changed the way I look at the world. While you may not have an extra chromosome, every leader has something extra that defines who you are.

Join me as I explore this something extra in leaders from all walks of life and discover how that difference in each of them has made a difference in their companies, their families, their communities and in themselves.

If you'd liked this episode today, please go to Apple podcasts or wherever you listen and leave us a five star rating. I'm excited to have Michelle Greene on the show today. Michelle is Executive Vice President, Chief Information Officer for global technology and business services at Cardinal Health. Well, Michelle Greene, welcome to the Something Extra Podcast.

Michelle Greene 01:53

I'm super excited to be here. Thank you so much, Lisa for the invite.

Lisa Nichols 01:57

Absolutely. Well, I feel like I'm blessed beyond measure to have you as my guest today. You are the CIO of Cardinal Health, which is a Fortune 20 company. We'll talk a little bit about Cardinal Health, but I really want to dig into your leadership journey. But you are an inspiring leader. Michelle, when you and I met, we needed about five hours instead of 30 minutes. And just a more amazing human being. But I have to give a shout out I have to give a shout out to our mutual friend Dan Roberts. Because if it had not been for him, we may not have met but he had told me that Lisa, do you know Michelle Greene? I said, I've not met Michelle Greene. He's like you have to meet Michelle Greene, you are going to love her. And so he was so right. And so thank you so much for making the time to be on the show today.

Michelle Greene 02:50

And I appreciate again the invite and I feel the exact same so for me if Dan says I need to meet someone that I never question it because he has not been wrong yet.

Lisa Nichols 02:59

Apps. Absolutely. Absolutely. So go Dan, we we love you, Dan. Well, I can't wait for our listeners to get to know you. I think you were you born and raised in Georgia?

Michelle Greene 03:11

I was born and raised in Valdosta, Georgia, so it's about three hours south of Atlanta. So I tell people all the time have you driven the Florida you have driven right past my hometown because there's no way for you to get there. If you are driving without going right down, I-75 South.

Lisa Nichols 03:26

That is so funny that you say that because I live in St. Louis, Missouri, but was born and raised in Paducah, Kentucky, and I say the same thing to people. I'm like, if you've ever driven to Florida, there are three exits. And you you did go through Paducah, Kentucky. So that is so funny that you say that too. So tell me a little bit the story about growing up.

But now you're a technology executive today. You've had an illustrious career in technology. Tell me about growing up. Did you think about being a technologist when you were a little girl? I mean, tell me the story.

Michelle Greene 04:01

Yeah. So I will tell you the answer is no, I didn't necessarily think about being a technologist. But I did think about being a business woman. My mom worked in the business world. My mom worked in the retail world. She was very focused from a career perspective. So for me, that's what I saw. That's what I had exposure to. My grandparents owned a grocery store. My grandfather owned an insurance company. My dad owned an insurance company, my adoptive father owned an insurance company. And at the end of the day, you see that many people around you doing business running businesses, and all you can think about is I'll probably do some similar work. So for me, it wasn't necessarily about technology. But I definitely was clear that I was going to do all I could to be a force within the business world.

Lisa Nichols 04:55

I love it. So were you given a briefcase when you were 10?

Michelle Greene 04:59

I was not given a briefcase and it's funny, I always talked about being a businesswoman, my mom thought that I will be a school teacher, because my aunt, one of my favorite aunts, she is a school teacher. And so I would always play teacher and pretend like I was a teacher. But absolutely, that is not my calling, because this girl here still has a lot of work to do at learning patience. And to be a teacher, it takes a lot more of that than I probably have.

Lisa Nichols 05:26

Right? But I'm thinking Michelle, as a leader, you run a really large organization, we'll talk about that. You are a teacher.

Michelle Greene 05:36

I guess, I guess, because say that it's different, though, when you're dealing with adult people versus little people. I think there's just a special type of person that teaches and is a teacher. And I just think that we have to appreciate the teachers every day, because I have friends that are educators, and they love what they do. And we are grateful that they do what they do.

Lisa Nichols 06:00

Amen to that, shout out to the teacher, they are truly preparing the next generation. And it does take a special purpose. It really does take a special person, Michelle, so you went on to get your Bachelor's in Business Administration from Valdosta?

Michelle Greene 06:17

Valdosta State. Yes.

Lisa Nichols 06:19

State in Georgia. And then you did do your masters, you got a master's in information science from Florida State University and then went on into get an executive certificate in international business, which I love in at Wharton, so you've continued to wear education, which, obviously, you're a growth mindset kind of person.

Michelle Greene 06:42

It was just a great opportunity. When I was at Johnson Controls, I was selected to participate in an accelerated Leadership Program, when they did a partnership with Wharton. And that, I mean, that just paid dividends, because it was the exposure, the international travel, the connection with other people across the company that you might not have normally engaged with, we had an opportunity to put together a strategy that was actually executed on from a business standpoint. So it wasn't just doing something in theory, these were real business problems that we were helping the organization solve. Just again, just a great opportunity. And since then, I've stayed connected somewhat with Wharton and I recently spoke to their Chief Technology class, one or two cohorts. So just great opportunities, great connections, and as everybody knows, it's a great institution.

Lisa Nichols 07:37

Absolutely. Well, I'm just thinking, as you're talking about that, Michelle, when you're given those opportunities, as much as you can say yes.

Michelle Greene 07:46

Yes.

Lisa Nichols 07:46

Because I was given the opportunity years ago by MasterCard International, which is one of our great clients, and they sponsor me to go to Tuck. And very similarly, it was a wonderful, wonderful opportunity. And probably maybe if they had not presented that to me, maybe I wouldn't have gone. But I would just say to people, when you have those opportunities, as much as you can say yes to those. And obviously, sometimes you do need to say no learning the power of no is really important, too. But let's talk about this. So career wise, you've had a great career, you work for Sony Ericsson, which I think really took you to Sweden for a while.

Michelle Greene 08:29

I lived in Sweden. And when you were speaking earlier about taking the opportunities, I think this is a perfect example of, I tell that I've shared this story with people before me and my mom, we are super close. So we will talk on the phone in the mornings. Now we do a lot of texting and FaceTime and whatever we need to do. But at the time, I would talk to my mom every morning, and the drive from my house to my office was about seven, eight minutes every morning. We talked on the phone, and I remember getting off the phone with her saying listen, I have got to make the time my leaders name was Des Black. I've got a conversation with my leader this morning. I'm not sure what's happening. He's just back from vacation and said he wants to meet. He wanted to meet to ask me about the opportunity in Sweden. So as soon as he asked, I was like, Of course I will.

And I called my mom back like 30-45 minutes later, and I'm like, Hey, I'm moving to Sweden. And she was like, what? I just spoke to you, like, what happened in that short period? So that was one that I said yes to and I recall people asking me like, What are they going to pay you? How are they going to pay you? I was like, I don't know. But in the end, I'm feel confident and not gonna take any money away from me. So if I'm good with that, then let's just go for it because this is a great opportunity. So the first time I lived in Sweden, I lived in Sweden for about seven, eightish months. And I was only supposed to be there for six and they extended me a little bit and I came back to Raleigh, North Carolina at the time you

And then I was back in Raleigh, maybe about a year and a half close to two years. And I got asked to go back, and I signed up for a year with the option to extend for a year. And I was in Sweden for four years. So again, I felt like the growth opportunity I have for Sweden was bigger than just professional. It was personal. It was very personal for me feel it helped me to become even more independent, more focused, and to just learn myself, it forces you to do a lot of internal work, it forces you to do a lot of self work. When you're living on your own in a foreign country, you just have to figure things out. You can always just pick up a phone and call a girlfriend or pick up a phone and call your mom. You got time difference to deal with. And I don't know, it just it really be it helped me just grow in a great way.

Lisa Nichols 10:52

That is beautiful. That is beautiful. Well, I've got a friend Michelle, you'll laugh. I've got a friend Yonnick Jones, that's a serial entrepreneur. he co-founded a wonderful school here in St. Louis. I love this guy. I tell him, I've been to he did a gala for the schools this year. And so I was blessed to be the keynote speaker for this gala. And I'm telling you, we had so much fun. I tell him Yonnick from now on everywhere I go, all my parties you and your tribe are coming with because you were so much fun. But he tells the story about going to France. And he said really, he didn't know French or anything. But he said, Lisa, he goes, you learn the language very quickly. Because you're like, Okay, what is this at the grocery store? Is this chicken is this? She goes, then you got to learn how to ask a girl out. I mean, it was just so funny. But the learning that you have, it's this wonderful opportunity for personal as well as professional growth. So I love that you said yes to that, Michelle.

Michelle Greene 12:00

Absolutely, absolutely.

Lisa Nichols 12:03

So you went on you were the VP of it for Johnson Controls for about 10 years. You worked for Masco Corporation. Now our listeners may not know that, but think about delta faucets.

Michelle Greene 12:14

Bahr Paint

Lisa Nichols 12:15

Bahr Paint and

Michelle Greene 12:17

Liberty Hardware, Watkins Spas and Hot Tubs. Yes.

Lisa Nichols 12:22

And so I think you were the CIO and VP of IT.

Michelle Greene 12:26

Yes, I was.

Lisa Nichols 12:28

But in 2022, or I guess 2021. You went as the CIO for the pharmaceutical segment of Cardinal Health. And then you were promoted to the overall CIO in August of 2002. What a journey what a journey for a little girl, Michelle, that knew that she wanted to be a business woman, but didn't really have technology on the horizon. Can we start with this though our listeners may not know, Cardinal Health is a Fortune 20 company, but they may not know about Cardinal Health. Can you just start a little bit with given us an overview who is Cardinal Health?

Michelle Greene 13:03

So Cardinal Health is pharmaceutical distribution is that you if you would, the biggest piece of our business, also medical devices and supplies is the other piece. So we have a pharma segment and a medical segment. And when competitors if you think about competitors, it will be McKesson, and ABC, which is now Cencora, so I always have to remember to say the name correctly. But I will tell you, I joined Cardinal in 2021 in February, as the CIO and SVP for the pharma segment. And again, big job, and if you think about pharma, just the segment alone is bigger than a lot of just entire companies. So for me coming and having the opportunity to work at Cardinal as a CIO, for one of their largest divisions was just a huge opportunity.

And then at the time, Victor Crawford was here. And I was having an opportunity then to come and work for a leader of color, which I had not had the opportunity to do. So I had a chance to meet Victor get to know Victor learn a lot from him. And our CEO at the time, Mike Kaufman, we had great conversations. And I will tell you, during the interview process, I had the opportunity to interview with several of the executive leaders. And it was it just felt good to know that people were just as advertised. So you had the conversations, there's a focus around diversity, equity and inclusion. There was a focus around growth, development and presenting opportunities when people that earned opportunities within the company.

So then you fast forward. And at the time, my boss left for another opportunity. And I was asked, Would I be willing to step into this role, which was huge. And I'm always having people ask me what was my aha moment? And for me, the aha moment is number one reaching this level. So just as you said, young black female from Valdosta, Georgia. Hard worker have always stayed focused on strong family connection and a lot of support for my career and the things I want to do. That was overwhelming in itself. But also thinking about the fact now that I'm more than just the Chief Information Officer, I am a leader and have a responsibility for this organization as a whole. So that for me has been the biggest aha moment is that you go from being a leader in a specific space to a leader for the company?

Lisa Nichols 15:31

Yes, a leader for the company that has 50,000 employees. I think you told me you've got about 5000. It FTE is under you. 2000 contractors, Michelle.

Michelle Greene 15:42

Yes.

Lisa Nichols 15:43

That's a really, really big job. What would you say if you had to describe your leadership style? What would you say is your leadership style, and have you seen it evolve over the years,

Michelle Greene 15:55

My leadership style is definitely I'm a servant leader. For me, I say all the time, if people do not want to work with you, they will never want to work for you. So I am very much the person that we will use the title if we need it to get some things done. But for the most part, we are in this together. If I need to make decisions, I do not have a problem making decisions. I don't have a problem, letting people know that this is my decision and my responsibility in a particular instance. But for the most part, I just work very closely with my leadership team. I've got a great leadership team. I have a strong leadership team. And when we're working together, I honestly feel like I can put my team up against just about anybody's team. Because we do have a pretty tight knit squad.

Lisa Nichols 16:39

Mmm hmm. Yeah, that's cool. That I believe, if I recall, because I asked you I said, Michelle, with 5000 FTE 2000 contractors, how many direct reports do you have? How many people do you have helping you? And we kind of I think we kind of talked about that. And I think you said seven? Maybe. Because really, for people that have more than I would say, more than 12 is too much.

Michelle Greene 17:06

And I think they try to gauge you between the six to the nine range is like the ideal case. To your point. I do have some peers and other colleagues that have bigger teams. But I think the six to nine is around the sweet spot for leaders.

Lisa Nichols 17:21

Hmm, yes. So that for anybody out there, that's aspiring. So how important because I know, you'd also had told me that you have a personal board of directors, I think your pastor is on your personal, how important has, your mom is probably on your personal board of directors. But how important has that been for you, personally, professionally, to the success that you've had?

Michelle Greene 17:46

That has been very important because for me, it's not about just surrounding myself with people that will always tell me what I want to hear, I need those people that will be my truth tellers, and people that I can lean into, because they've had certain experiences that can be beneficial to the season that I'm in right now. Or for those people that they just need to kind of shake me up a little bit to say, Michelle, you're not looking at this correctly. Or Michelle, here's another opportunity for you.

And I have to make sure that people understand when you have your own personal board of directors, this doesn't mean that you go to all of them for everything. Things will ebb and flow, there may be conversations I'm having around compensation, or if you're just making a decision to move to another job. Or if you're making a decision about taking an opportunity sitting on a board. Those are things I can take to certain people in my board of directors. But sometimes if I'm honest, I just need somebody to sit and be still with me. I need somebody maybe to pray for me, I need somebody that I need to have a different type of conversation with. And those are the people I can go to. So for me, it's about keeping the circle tight. But at the same time understanding that these are people that understand you, they know you, and they do have your best interest at heart.

Lisa Nichols 19:05

And I think you hit the nail on the head you need people that love you enough to tell you the truth. Yes. And I just that is valuable.

Michelle Greene 19:18

It's about the balance. I do feel so too many times we can get to certain levels. I don't care what it is you name it, whether it's sports, whether it's in the professional world, from a corporate standpoint, no matter what it is, I just feel you have to have those folks around you to help you keep balance. Because when you start getting things out of balance, personally, financially, spiritually, whatever that may look like for you, that's when you start seeing the trouble coming. You've just got to be able to find some level of balance and keep your feet planted firmly on the ground. And then just as a friend text me or she's like, during this holiday season, I just need to be still. And I think we lose value in how important it is and how impactful it is sometimes just to be still.

Lisa Nichols 20:03

Hmm. I love that my, my brain is spinning because I'm just thinking you said ground. And I think it's so important for us to do whatever we need to do to stay grounded. Because Michelle, the thing is when those things get out of balance, how do you show up to the people that you're leading? Not good. You don't show up as your best self, if a spiritual mentor, that I absolutely adore Dr. Richard Blackaby. And I'll never forget years ago, him saying your people, your family, the people that you lead deserve the best version of you.

Michelle Greene 20:47

I like that.

Lisa Nichols 20:48

And you're, and you're cheating them if you are not the best version of you. And I've never forgotten that. But that just remind me that so. So let me ask you this question. And then we'll take a quick break. And we've got a lot more to talk

about. But coming in as this global CIO, what did you focus on? You know, I think about the first 100 days of a president, what did you focus on in your first 90 to 100 days, Michelle, as the global CIO?

Michelle Greene 21:17

So if I'm completely honest, at the same time that I was named, maybe about seven, eight days later, we named a new CEO. So we had a little bit of a shake up within our which was all very public. So as far as we're changing CEOs, we had some additions and some changes on our board, we had some changes within our executive team. So for me, it was about figuring out exactly what were the expectations of my new leader? And what did I need to do? How can I best contribute to our executive team, as well as taking care of what he's hired me to do? So for me, that was probably not even just the first 90 days, we're probably the first 180 days, we were just trying to figure it out. And I remember one day, saying to him, I got a new job, and I got a new boss. So that's just the way I tried to look at it and keep some perspective about it, because there was so much change happening at that time.

Lisa Nichols 22:15

Well, Michelle, we've got so much more to talk about. But we do need to take a quick break. And we'll be right back with Michelle green on this Something Extra podcast.

AD 22:24

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Lisa Nichols 22:54

Welcome back, everyone to the Something Extra podcast with Michelle Greene. So Michelle, what are you focused on for 2024? What are your big initiatives that are going to be on the radar?

Michelle Greene 23:06

Yes. So one big thing for us is talent, talent development. And I want to talk about that first. Because as you know, none of this is happening. Not none of this happens, without our talent and with our people. I know, it can sound cliché to some folks, but the talent development, recruiting, making sure we're engaging with our talent in the right way is going to be so important. The other thing, which is not always so fun, as I'm sure you've heard in the news, everything has happened around all of these cyber incidents and cyber attacks, we are really having to make sure that we're doing everything we can to make sure that we're protecting our assets. And we're keeping Cardinal Health safe.

Because there are just times that a lot of times your worst enemy, if you would, or our biggest threat is right from within our own house, meaning we were moving too fast, we clicked the link, you were moving too fast and you sent an email, it could just be certain things that happened and it comes right from within your own home, that now you've got a breach of some sort security wise. So that's the focus.

And then lastly, if you've ever heard any of our analysts calls or town halls or anything, our CEO tells us so many times that we need to focus on our core, and we need to prioritize. So ruthless prioritization is a big thing for me and my team. As you can imagine, being in the technology, space, everybody wants everything. So the importance of having tight alignment with our business, so that we have a firm seat at the table, and we can have the conversation around, although you want this, this might not make sense right now because of this, or we have clarity around the other eight things that are happening. And so prioritization becomes more important.

Lisa Nichols 24:49

So good. Well, you just answered a bunch of questions for me. I was gonna ask you, because it is sometimes hard for technology to align with what the business objectives are, do you have a process for that prioritization exercise that you're going to have to continually go through Michelle, do you have?

Michelle Greene 25:12

Yes, so I have a leader that's responsible for all of our portfolio management and all of our strategy activities. So with that he has people on his team and leaders that have privileged focus around the pharma segment, or privilege of focus around the medical segment or our corporate segment, so that they can look at the portfolio. And we have things that we call lighthouse projects. So these are the ones that are kind of guiding us for whatever we're doing for this particular fiscal year. When we look at these projects, this is where people have the opportunity to sit down with the leaders in pharma leaders and med leaders at corporate and have the conversation, because sometimes it's as

simple as there's a project happening in pharma, that can also be leveraged by the team and med or vice versa. But you don't always have the conversations happening so that people know what you're working on. So yes, we have a very, a pretty strict process, always opportunities for improvement. But yes, I have a leader that that is what he does. He eats, sleeps and breathes that. So he wakes up thinking about this, and he goes to bed thinking about this.

Lisa Nichols 26:15

Right. So for other CIOs out there, other technology leaders, having someone who's focused on that I think is really important. Then you mentioned cybersecurity. Michelle, I was talking to somebody recently, and you are so right. The biggest enemy sometimes is in no one does this maliciously, but an employee that clicks on a wrong link or opens an email that did so it's so important, isn't it to make sure that the training is there in the drilling is there and I've even talked to a leader recently, that was telling me that they set up purposely they set up exercises?

Michelle Greene 27:00

Yes, they're phishing, they're called phishing exercises. So we do the exact same. And I will tell you, one of the ones that I find is the most fun are the ones that we're doing around our open enrollment period. So people get emails and think, yep, you click on this, you're doing something with your open enrollment. And it was a phishing exercise. So kudos to my team, because they come up with some great exercises. And although this means now, someone clicks on a link, and they get a notice, and maybe they failed a phishing attempt, but we would rather that happening. And now you're a little bit more hypersensitive, just in your day to day activities. Because again, we've got people traveling in and out of the country, we just really, really have to be careful, because all of the most recent attacks that have been in the news have been things that happened because someone did something from when with inside, and it wasn't even a malicious attempt. It's just that we were just moving a little too fast.

Lisa Nichols 27:54

Yeah, good point. So for leaders out there, you got to pay attention, you got to pay attention and make sure that you're securing things. So let me ask you this, because you had mentioned about talent development. And there's certainly an overall shortage of talent, tech talent, but you guys have a program and I'd love for you to tell our listeners more about this. Michelle, you have the program called Digital U, where you're focusing on digital fluency, digital immersion, and digital colleges. Tell us more about this. And what are the skills that you're training for here?

Michelle Greene 28:32

Yes, so a lot of times, it's not even just about acquiring different digital type skills, whether we're looking at certain application training, certain digital tool, training, data and analytics training, all of this training happens in sometimes it's rescaling and upskilling, as well as giving people direct exposure. So that comes in all levels, we'll have people in our Digital U that are new into the workforce, or more seasoned people that have been at Cardinal for years, because we're constantly trying to expand this program, and keep it at the forefront for us.

We do a lot of work. Now, you can imagine now, with all the conversations around artificial intelligence, and generative AI, this is another space that we have an opportunity to put those types of training. So we work very closely with our learning and development team, so that we can make sure that we're keeping things fresh, keeping things interesting, but absolutely got great opportunities with all of our digital activities. And then again, I want to make sure this is across our organization. This isn't something that's just specific for IT leaders. We want to make sure that when you talk about digital fluency and technology fluency, if you will, that we're doing that throughout Cardinal not just within my organization.

Lisa Nichols 29:48

Michelle, I'm just sitting here thinking as you're talking. Wow, there's a lot to think about. There is a CIO, but the operative word here is, you are a leader, you are mobilizing other people, you cannot do everything and you cannot be an expert in everything. I mean, I think the tenant of a good leader is to choose the people on the team that can take on these initiatives, because there's no way,

Michelle Greene 30:19

There's no way. And I will tell you, if you think about it, there's been a long debate around if CIOs or technology leaders should be more technical, or more leadership focused, I think at this level, you need to have a balance, but I think it starts to change. Earlier in my career, it was more about understanding the technology more. So let's use percentages, maybe I'm 70%. Technical, I'm 30% leadership, as you continue to move up in an organization or move out in an organization. I think the net percentage has to change, it becomes more of the 80/20 80% of my time is spent with my organizational effectiveness, talent development, making sure that I'm growing leader succession planning, all of this that we have to do, and the other 20%, is making sure that I'm staying up on the latest technologies, or how can I best support my organization? Because if not, what you will find yourself doing is getting down into the weeds. And when I have to go and have a conversation with the board, or have a conversation with my

CEO or other executives on the team, they have no desire to hear me talking about that level of technology. Yeah, they want to understand from a high level, I understand the business objectives. And we're able to deliver as promised. So I try to tell people, I'm a business leader with a technology focus.

Lisa Nichols 31:46

Yeah, that's such sage, sage wisdom there. Well, Michelle, we had Mark Miller, I don't know if you know, Mark Miller, Mark Miller was a former Vice President of High Performance Leadership for Chick-fil-A, a very iconic brand that I could eat almost every day of my life. Love him. He was on the Something Extra podcast. He came in last year, last year and spoke a couple of times in St. Louis, but his newest book is called *Culture Rules*. And we've already talked a little bit about this, but I would love to hear from you. You know, Mark says either your culture, you have a culture, you have a culture, whether you think you do or not, you have a culture, but it's either going to be the by design, or by default. What is the culture that you are building in your technology organization.

Michelle Greene 32:35

And my culture, I would argue, is by design, and it's by design of for my culture. Number one, we will give one another grace, we will be kind, and we're building up a culture of kindness, and being gracious. Because again, if we are able to allow the person sitting across from me next to me grace, then we will work better together and we will have each other's back. I do my best to remind myself of this on a daily basis. So I also want to remind my team, we will be in our a high performing culture. We are a high performing team, we are raising up leaders because I want people to be able to look and see the people around my leadership table. So if that's what you aspire to do, you're now thinking about ways that you will bring value when that opportunity presents itself not questioning, why do I even have these people around my table?

So it is important for us to lead by example. And I think that's the biggest piece. And we say so much about authentic leadership. We talk about living and leading intentionally. All of those things become very, very important when you're trying to build a culture. Because I tell people, I don't care what you do, no one wants that everyday, get up and just go to work. We would love to do something fun every single day. But we have to go to work sometimes. But at the end of the day, can we make it that you don't dread coming to work that you don't dread working in a job? I want it to be that we enjoy some time, work hard, but we also play hard.

Lisa Nichols 34:11

Yeah. Well, you just you just led me to the perfect segue. So thank you so much. We would be very remiss, Michelle, if we didn't talk about DEI and the B, the belonging, right. We know there are studies out there. Fewer than 28% of women have jobs in tech. And let me just say it for black women, I think it's like 0.7%. So there's just really just astounding and we need to change that. We definitely need to change that. But why don't you tell our listeners a little bit about how you think about DEI and the B and then also because I know you're involved in a lot of organizations, and some of the leaders that are listening might want to get involved in those. So I know you're like, very involved in the ITSMF, that Dan has told me a lot about, you have a Bold ERG within Cardinal Health, there's a lot of things that you're doing. But tell our listeners a little bit about how you think about all of that, Michelle.

Michelle Greene 35:22

So what I will tell you is that I absolutely believe that there's importance around the DEI and the B. I appreciate that I have not heard that. So the belonging becomes quite important, along with being inclusive and equality and the diversity. What I will tell you sometimes is that it makes me sad that we have to place so much emphasis on something that I feel should just boil down to being a decent human being. If we do not place these types of focus or shine a light on these types of things, sometimes they just will not get done. I had a conversation this week with a colleague and I talked about the fact that we have a culture here at Cardinal that is focused, and we're very intentional about our focus around DEI and the B. However, we also recognize that everybody, it's just not possible for everyone to be on the same page, or everyone to be at the same point in their journey.

So for me, I've tried to be open that when people ask me questions are they don't truly don't understand. Let's have a conversation about it. Let's talk about it. Because it is very real. When you talk about my engagement in IT Senior Management Forum, which is ITSMF. It is an organization is specifically focused on Black and African Americans in the IT space. When you talk about our Bold ERG that is our Black and African American Employee Resource Group here at Cardinal Health, and I have the honor of being one of the executive sponsors. All of this is important. But I'm also learning a lot from our other ERGs or from other organizations, I have to be mindful that as a Black and African American leader, I have to have an ear for educating as well as one for understanding. And that's where you have to try to strike the balance, because it is very easy to get angry about some things. I think balancing and managing the frustration that you might feel at times is where it becomes important, because I'm learning some people just you just don't know what you don't know. It depends on how you were raised what you've been exposed to. And I think as

human beings, sometimes we're too quick to put everybody in the same bucket. And everybody just is not coming from the same position. So when people talk about meeting people where they are, I may not always get it right. But I do my best to let that be my starting point.

Lisa Nichols 37:57

That's great. Well, Michelle, my brain, again, is going 90 miles an hour here, but I'm just thinking I just had recently had someone on the podcast, I want to introduce you to that you're going to absolutely love. But he talks a lot about relational intelligence. And that's really what you're talking about the graciousness, the kindness, the seeing that everybody is uniquely made, and that they have a right to be there and to belong. And I mean, that's what you're talking about here and in leading.

Michelle Greene 38:30

Absolutely. And we talked earlier about aha moments and me moving into this role in the big deal. And I've had a conversation. Of course, I have somebody that supports me externally for all of my comms and all of my speaking engagements, etc. And we've had conversations around, maybe it's not always about Michelle, the black female, many times it's Michelle, the CIO, the strong leader, the impactful leader, that happens to be a black female. How do you line that up? Sometimes being the black female is the more important piece, but sometimes it's not. And we want to make sure that people understand, don't let that override the fact that someone is talented, they're skilled, and they got something because they earned it, not just because of the color of their skin or their gender.

And so it's about finding balance in that and being focused on that and not afraid to have the conversation in a respectful manner. And that's where I feel like sometimes people just will not talk will run from the conversation. And I just think it's very important that we continue to have this dialogue and not just having the dialogue when something major happens when there's some major event. Let's not let that be the reason we start having this conversation because this is happening. And there's a level of, you know, kind of pushing things down and sweeping things under the rug many times, and then we just don't talk about it until something kind of blows up in our face. It is very important for us to just have this conversation all of the time.

Lisa Nichols 40:09

Agreed. I love it. I love it. Well, I mean, Michelle, me you never say this about yourself, but I'm gonna say it for you. You are Forbes CIO Next List 2023. You are an Ohio ORBIE finalist, a Michigan ORBIE finalist. And I think I think it's okay to mention this. I know that you just got elected to a board, you're on a lot of different boards, but I'm saying a public board.

Michelle Greene 40:40

Yes. So Warner Enterprises. I was just appointed to their board back in November. And yes, I have some nonprofit work that I do as well. Great opportunity. And for me I look at this is if I go in, I do what I'm supposed to do. It just opens the door for the next person. You know, I've always said I would just want to be in a position and stay in a position that if I mentioned Lisa's name, someone will come and talk to you just on the strength that I said, Lisa, was good. I want it to be that sitting on these boards, because many times that's how it happens. You're sitting on boards, you're getting to know a company, you're getting to know an organization. And then when I say to the CEO, or my fellow board members, here's somebody I think is worthy of sitting on this board, or at least having a conversation, people listen. And that's the reason that I appreciate being in the position that I'm in whether it's successor for a role that I'm in whether it's an old company I used to work for that reaches out, or the board seat that I recently was granted.

Lisa Nichols 41:46

You're just so amazing, Michelle. You're just so amazing. So I have to ask you, you know, I'm looking at your wall right now. And I know you have lots of Dan calls it Michelleisms. He calls it isms, what are the Lisaisms? What are the Michelleisms. But I'm looking at your wall right now? And it says mindset is everything. Can you give me any examples of where it has been the mature mindset? What is your mindset? How do you keep your mindset in check? And then give me examples of where your mindset if you've got an anecdotal story where it is helped you break through barriers.

Michelle Greene 42:30

So I will tell you, for one, when I think about my mindset is limitless. Like, I don't have a ceiling, I don't have a glass ceiling. I don't have a cap. For me, wherever this will take me I'm willing to go. It I mean, there are no no bounds here. No boundaries for me. And my mindset has just always been that either I know something. And I'm very clear about what I know, and what I don't know, and where I can achieve and where I might need a little support. I have not been afraid to ask for that support. But I think the biggest piece for me is conscious decision making. Too many times. I just

feel like we get our self in situations and we're just like, I don't know how I got here. If you think about it, you know exactly how you got here.

So whether it's me, you know, I've always been very open. And I found Lisa, you know this about me. I'm not married, and I don't have any kids. I've made very conscious choices. But it's amazing that many times people will meet you and not having children, they assume that something had to happen that you didn't decide to have children. I made conscious choices because I knew the type of career I had. And I wanted to minimize as much as possible, the compromise and the sacrifice that I may need to make it my home. Someone wants to ask me, Do you think you can have it all? And I believe you can have it all, but you may not have it all at the same time. Amen. I think that's the most important piece is that for me, I put no boundaries on myself. I put no limits on myself. And if I'm asked to do something, I'm strong enough to understand why I'm saying yes. And more importantly, I can understand why I'm saying no.

Lisa Nichols 44:14

That's so good. What about this, you were quoted in an article that I read that said you have learned to use your passion to override your fear. Tell me more about that.

Michelle Greene 44:31

So I am passionate about being a leader.

Lisa Nichols 44:35

You are passionate, Michelle. That is one thing I girl you are not lacking in that category. You are so passionate, not just about your career. You're passionate about life.

Michelle Greene 44:47

I am passionate. Yes, I am passionate about life. And I am very extremely grounded in my faith. And I'm a firm believer that what's meant for me will be for me. So if it's placed before me, and I've got peace around it, then I know that it's time for me to go. And that's where I feel like the fear. Is it real? Do we let things get in our head? Do we convince ourselves that we can't do something? I've turned that into? Why not me? So it's never the wired me. It's the why not me.

In the same token, I try to practice that I feel like you know, we're so quick to want to jump when somebody wants us or somebody wants you to go somewhere, or somebody wants you to do something. I even recall when I was offered this role, I asked the question about anyone else that was considered for the job. And then I wanted someone to be able to articulate to me why you feel that I'm the best fit for this job. Because we are quick to ask when we don't get something. Yeah. But then sometimes we caught up in the hype of it all that we don't ask, why did you choose me? And I feel like asking that question, you have balance, and then you understand if the reason they chose you align with the expectations that you have from them and from the opportunity. So passion over fear every day all day.

Lisa Nichols 46:14

I love it. I love it. Well, Michelle, this is called something extra. What do you believe is that something extra that every leader needs?

Michelle Greene 46:26

The something extra is your ability to be vulnerable, and to grant people grace.

Lisa Nichols 46:33

Beautiful. Thank you, my friend. This has been so much fun, it's gonna be like, one of the most fun things I do all day. And so we need to spend more time with each other. And so we're going to figure out how we can do that. But I just appreciate you so much for taking the time to be on the show.

Michelle Greene 46:52

All right. Thank you so much for having me. And I absolutely agree, 2024 we will figure out how to spend some more time together.

Lisa Nichols 47:00

Absolutely.

Michelle Greene 47:01

All right. Thank you.

Announcer 47:02

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