

Announcer: Bulletproof Radio. A state of high performance.

Dave: You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. Today's guest is Moira Forbes, who's an executive vice president at Forbes Media where she's responsible for programming and branding for all the Forbes events worldwide and a very powerful person in media. She runs Forbes Woman, which is dedicated to successful women in business and leadership, and runs the Forbes Executive Women's Board.

She's here on Bulletproof Radio today to talk about executive leadership and to talk about the mindset of being a high performer. Bulletproof Radio is all about what does it take to perform better as a human being and I go out of my way to interview people who are doing unusual and big things to find out how they think. Then we switch gears and talk with research scientists who just figured out a new pathway to high performance because if you want to be just a geek, that's cool. If you want to be just a leader, that's cool. But if you combine both of those knowledge sets, you get something amazing and I think when we talk with Moira here, you'll hear something amazing.

So Moira, welcome to the show.

Moira: Thank you for having me. I'm excited to be here.

Dave: You are related to your grandfather, Mr. Forbes, who started Forbes in 1917. How did it feel growing up in a family with the Forbes name, a very recognizable name? How did that turn into a career in the family business?

Moira: As you mentioned, Forbes started in 1917. We just celebrated our 100th anniversary last year. It is a different experience when you grow up in a family where your last name is a brand name and you have a very real sense of what that brand represents and the opportunity to be a steward of how to build on it in incredible ways, the opportunities and also sometimes the pressure of that. It was the experience I knew so it seemed very, very normal to be, but it also really shaped, I think, the relationships that I built and how I've navigated my career in terms of feeling this huge sense of responsibility to build on this legacy, but also identify my own voice and my path to doing things that I feel are important and that are authentic to me. But it definitely is unique.

Dave: Did you expect when you were five years old that you were going to grow up and join the family business? Or did you have aspirations to go off and do something else?

Moira: I always like to joke that my family was into child labor in the sense that from a very young age, my father and my grandfather always had us out with clients. They always had us talking to people, engaging and building relationships and really on the front line of our business. So we always knew and always had a really fundamental understanding of the opportunity to be connected to the Forbes brand and the Forbes business.

I, from a very young age, knew that I wanted to do something in business. I loved media and I think my parents thought it was a little bit strange for my seventh birthday, I actually asked for a cash register because I wanted to create stores. I thought, how

amazing is it that you can buy and sell things and find a way to make money to do what you want. Money, at that time, was ... it gave you the freedom to buy what you wanted or to have fun. Little did I recognize that the things that I sold actually my parents paid for. They were things that I culled from my house.

I loved business and I loved bringing people together. I always loved the opportunity to tell stories. You always think when you try and figure out where your passions lie, time and time again, you have to go back to your childhood because usually there's breadcrumbs of what sparked your interest, what you gravitated toward that can really help shape and define what gives you energy and where you're going to find the greatest sense of fulfillment.

Dave: Back in 1917, the first episode of Forbes had on the cover of the magazine, Women in Business, which was kind of unusual for way back in the day there. In fact, that was something that almost wasn't done. This was before women were allowed to vote. Completely different world, it blows my mind. There are people alive today who were alive then. Do you think that your aspirations, your upbringing came about because your grandfather and ostensibly your parents were just more open to the idea of women rising in business? Or did you have to overcome just the inherent stereotypes that oftentimes happen?

I think there have been a lot less today, but you're about my age I'm guessing. When I was a kid, it was still different than it is today. Did you push against things or was this just that your family was always so like women are always going to be in business, so they wrote about it in their first magazine? What's the vibe there?

Moira: It was incredible to look back that in this first issue prominently displayed on the cover was this department that ran throughout the course of Forbes' history. As you said, at a time when women didn't the right to vote. My family and then the writers at Forbes always had an acute understanding of where the interesting dynamics and influencers and people that are going to shape business. And for me personally, I'm one of five girls. So I grew up in a family where my father was in the vast minority. Even our dog was a girl, so he was highly outnumbered. Because the thought of being limited by gender never even crossed our minds because our parents really pushed us to explore the opportunities and passions that we had.

But I always gravitated towards conversations and aspects of history related to women because I thought it was such an interesting lens to explore what was going on in culture and business at the time. It was only really as I began my career and started to navigate as I took on more responsibility, that I got to more fully appreciate it and understand that there are unique experiences, some challenges, as well as some opportunities when you are a woman. It's really only when I got into the working world, and I will say this as well, I have spent over a decade of my career focused on really amplifying conversations around women in business and leadership.

Oftentimes I was somewhat of a liability because people would say, of course that's the woman in the family talking about something that's interesting to her and especially

when we started this platform. So it's extraordinary now to see well over a decade later that these conversations are at the forefront of national dialogue and people are really appreciating the impact and opportunities that women have.

Dave: It's interesting, my chief operating officer is a woman and I'm pretty sure about half my executive team is women. I don't think twice about it when making a hiring decision because you just want to hire the best people. My career in Silicon Valley, I've been in an awful lot of meetings where it's just 10 guys. It seems like those meetings were just always somehow different than when you have a more diverse, just more mixed set of perspectives. I think it affects human behavior. I like to just maintain a good balance in business decisions. But it's still the case that women make on average 69 cents versus what guys get paid.

What do you do at Forbes to address that?

Moira: It's always a big challenge because when you're talking about diversity in the workforce, many times I'll take business leaders who don't have the diversity numbers that they would like and it's not necessarily that they're anti-women or that they don't want to do the right thing or they don't want diverse teams, but oftentimes there are these unconscious biases that filter into our decisions because sometimes we're more comfortable when we're around people who are like us, think like us. It's validating to our own experiences. So that creates almost a self-perpetuating challenge with diversity.

But I think first and foremost, you have to make it a priority not because it's politically correct thing to do or that it's a liability not to have a diverse team, but to your point, when you have people who see things from very different vantage points, you're going to create the best outcomes. You're going to reflect the diversity of your customers. You're also, I always say when you build a team or a business, you never want to have people around you who duplicate what you do. You want them to complement your skillsets to bring different types of thinking. That will have, time and time again, the research has shown, it has bottom line results but you have to make it a priority and sometimes it requires making more of an effort, thinking outside of the box, doing things differently.

But in order to achieve ambitious goals you have to put in the time and you have to invest in areas such as talent that are going to produce the outcomes that you want.

Dave: You talked about unconscious biases and my path as a bio-hacker has, as a business leader, just taught me that almost every time anything happens, we generate a story in our head about it that's based on our unconscious biases. It feels and looks real because it's how you actually interpret the world around you. Using neuroscience, just realize two people can look at the same thing and see something very, very different. And neither of them is necessarily wrong. In fact, the odds are that both of them seeing exactly the same is pretty low.

I want to know how you as a leader in business, how do you know or how do you detect or correct for your own unconscious biases? How do you spot them?

Moira: Well, I think that's, to your point, that's a blind spot for a lot of people. I always think about it, this challenge. You think of a fire. When a fire happens, to your point, people see it in very different ways. A firefighter sees it as their job. I see it as a crisis, an emergency. An arson sees it as their field day. Everyone has a different way of seeing the very same things. It's hard to really understand where your blind spots are, but I think the more that you surround yourself and push yourself to have people who are so fundamentally different from you or are ... I always want people to come at a situation and bring very, very different vantage points because then it starts to test me in terms of how I react and how I think.

Also, I think you really need to learn to listen and I think sometimes we're a bit of living through a listening vacuum in this country where there's so much noise. There's so much conversation and people have very strong opinions. I think great leaders, in order to drive change today, you have to step back, you have to listen. You have to understand people's points of view, synthesize it. Because if you want people to act and if you want to have influence and drive change, you have to understand their vantage points and that doesn't come when you're the loudest voice in a room.

That's your one small thing that I always check myself, is that the moment I feel like I'm about to talk and weigh in, I actively have to say, take a step back and let everyone bring their thoughts to the table first because it keeps me grounded and also keeps me focused on really convening all the different viewpoints that we brought together.

Dave: Your strategy there, at least at work, is to bring in a bunch of different opinions and listen to all them and see how they compare to yours and then draw a map of what the situation really is. Whereas to you it looks like a fire, to somehow else it looks like something very different.

Moira: But I think it's learning to take that pause in your life because we're so quick to react. Oftentimes we're so quick to have an opinion. You never want to have silence in a room. So I think you have to be conscious of taking that moment and taking yourself out of the conversation. When you're in a meeting or in a conversation, you're in that moment. It's face to face and you literally have to just step back and go from that 40,000 foot vantage point and try and assess the situation because it's just going to empower you to understand things that you didn't. It's also going to empower you not to be shackled by your own perceptions or your own quick judgments that you're going to make.

Dave: How do you do it when you're not at work? You mentioned before we started recording, you have two young kids. How do you know at home that you're not dealing with your unconscious biases? This is something that limits everyone's performance no matter where they are in life. How do you have a mirror there?

Moira: I think it's really hard to have a mirror there because, and I think it speaks to the fact that it's hard to have a mirror anywhere, especially I feel like if you have a commitment

to your career and your family and different obligations in your life. At the end of the day if everybody's alive, if there hasn't been a major crisis, you feel like the day has gone okay. It's block and tackle. You can get really caught up in this speed of just this pace of life that just propels you forward and that doesn't allow you to think.

For me, I always find pauses. I always if I feel like I'm getting swept up in the moment and it's just too much, I literally have to hit reset and pause. That can be stepping away for 60 seconds at home. At work, every day, I try and take moments throughout the day to just have three minutes of space in my head and you have to be very conscious of it. I walk out of the room. With my kids sometimes it's running into the kitchen, just trying to get away. But when you get take that moment to pause and recharge, it levels you and it allows you to think versus always reacting on emotion.

Dave: You're a pretty busy executive and so am I. Taking three minutes to think is sometimes hard when you're going from one conference room to another or you get home, I'm going to get my three minutes, but, "Mommy, mommy, look at this", happens all the time. What happens to you when you don't enough of those positive reflections?

Moira: If I don't get enough of those pauses, I feel it in my brain. I feel overwhelmed and exhausted and it's just too much. I have this thing where if I have a feeling that I want to crawl into a hole and hide, I know that I've pushed myself to my limit and it's unproductive. I don't make good decisions. I'm exhausted. I react. It's unproductive. Sometimes we feel like we don't have the time to take three minutes, but if something's a priority in your life and you learn to hard wire it and habitualize it, you can carve out three minutes. Maybe not every day or every moment that you want to, but you can practice it and habitualize it into your routine so when you know you're getting pressed and you know it's unproductive, it's diminishing returns at that point. You need to hit the reset button.

Dave: Sheryl Sandberg wrote Lean In and then a couple years later when she had some tragedy in her life, sort of reassessed the situation and I was just interviewing Lara Logan from 60 Minutes. A war correspondent and she's like, "Now I have two kids and, oh my God, I had no idea. I was telling women you can have it all, but I was doing it from the perspective of not caring for a family." What's your take on it now that you've gone from being an executive without kids to an executive with two young kids? What changed for you?

Moira: I think what changed is just how I prioritize different aspects of my life. I think women get asked, "Can you have it all at the same time?" Women and men can never have it all. You can never have it all-

Dave: Exactly.

Moira: ... in your life. And you can never have it all at the same time. But traditionally, culturally, and some people would say biologically, women continue to be the primary caregivers of their children. You look at the statistics around the household work, the caring of the kids, and people will say, "Does your husband do a lot of work at home?"

And they'll be like, "Oh yeah. He's a great dad. He chips in here." As if it's some fantastic thing that they spent an extra 20 minutes doing the laundry, when you're doing it six hours a week.

It does feel like this huge sense of responsibility, but it comes back to priorities. Anything in your life, if you prioritize it and really make sure to the best that you can, it's never going to be perfect, that you try and align your time with those priorities. It's never going to be perfect but you're going to get ... for me, I get to a better outcome. I also have really dropped the guilt about the things that I don't do in my life. That's another thing that I think women struggle with, is that we feel all these competing pressures to be great at work, great at kids, be huge contributors to our community. Be fantastic friends and family.

You just have to do the best that you can and something has to give. You really need to be conscious about how you use your time and your energy. You need to drop the guilt because it's unproductive. It's exhausting and nobody wins. And the other thing I learned about being now that I'm a parent, is that everything is a phase. The good phases are a phase and the bad phases are a phase. Right now I'm at a point in my career where I have a one year old and a three year old. It's a really demanding time in their lives. It's a lot of block and tackling. It's very physical. But it's a moment in their lives.

It may mean right now I need to reshift and recalibrate how I do things. I may need to be more creative about how I get things done, but it is a moment in time and when the next phase hits, I'll readjust and recalibrate then.

Dave: Recently, Naomi Whittel, who's been an entrepreneur for a long time and was former CEO of Twinlab, big supplement company, she talked about how when she was a young woman entrepreneur and she was about 23, she hired a nanny but she didn't have kids. She had a nanny to take care of her so she could take care of her company, which really made me laugh. It actually inspired a bunch of other people, both men and women, who I've just run into since then saying, "I never thought of that, but I need someone to take care of me regardless of if I have kids because I have a really demanding career."

I see a lot of guilt, especially amongst my women entrepreneur friends who they're saying, "I still want to vacuum the house and do the dishes and do the laundry and all this, but I'm working on building this company and I have my young kids at home or even I don't have young kids at home." But there's an inherent resistance to allowing someone to maybe take care of you when you're like, "I don't know how to take care of my career and my family." Do you feel that?

Moira: I sometimes feel that because by giving that to someone else, it means that you're not capable of doing it. Or at least in your head you think you're not capable of doing it. And that's sometimes the conflict with your identity as well because you think about all aspects of your life and you want to be great at this, in your career, at home. And asking for help sometimes is really hard. To raise your hand and say, "It's too much", sometimes feels like a moment of defeat.

But you have to recalibrate your thinking because in order to channel your energy effectively and accomplish the things that you want to accomplish, you have to let some things go. Just because you can do it, doesn't mean you have to do it. And so if someone else can take something else off your plate, let them take it off your plate. If it's not something you love to do, if it's not something that adds tremendous value to your life, if it's something that you can outsource, then do it because that allows you more time, more flexibility, more freedom to do the things that ultimately are going to have the greatest impact on your life, but you have to let that go.

It's not a sign of weakness. This is something actually my husband says a lot to me because when I struggle with it, he'll say, "It doesn't make you a bad mother or a bad wife or a bad woman if you want someone to help with the housework. Why would you want to spend an hour of your week if you have the opportunity not to, to outsource something when you can use that time in ways that add more value to your life." So you have to let go of the guilt. Ask for help. I sometimes say I would love a wife from the 1950s. I would love a wife, that traditional role from Leave It to Beaver where you come home from work and a meal is cooked, your clothes are cleaned, the house is spotless. The kids have been taking a bath and in their pajamas. You just get to put them ... they're in their angelic mode.

But life doesn't work like that. So what can you do to find those things that help you still achieve what you want to achieve? Take some of that burden off. It's just too much sometimes.

Dave: It's an incredible gift to be able to have someone help you and a lot of women entrepreneurs or just women in careers just aren't to the point where they can do that. You're right. There's a recent study that came out where they wrote about the percentage of time that women spend on household chores. It's lower than it's ever been compared to men, but it's still four times more than guys.

Moira: It's still 60 to 70% of household chores are done by women versus their male counterparts. It's demanding.

Dave: It is demanding and when you get to places in your career where it's just not going to happen. That's one of the first things that's most affordable to outsource but I still see that resistance. I also see a lot of people who are listening going, "Are you kidding? I can't afford childcare much less having someone help me do the dishes or things like that." But I think in all walks of life, just acknowledging, all right, I need to find a job that allows me to be a parent first and a job second.

When you say that, this is why there's a hiring bias against women. But here's the deal, just my experience as an employer and I want to see if yours is the same. I build that in. Bulletproof has maternity benefits on par with a company much larger than ours. One of my senior executives missed an all-day strategy meeting because her young daughter put a bead in her ear. And I'm like, "Yeah. Yeah. Kids do that." My only question was, "Well, at least was it a BPA free bead?" Because kids do this.

Moira: Things are going to happen. Unfortunately, not unfortunately, but life happens, right? I think for employers to think of their employees as one-dimensional is really shortsighted because when we leave work, we go back to the life that has so many different dimensions. Sometimes that bleeds into our daily lives. So I think as an employer, if you can think of opportunities and ways to create an environment that allows to bring their full selves to work, that recognizes that there are going to be curve balls. There's going to be sick days. There's going to be beads in the ear. That's really important.

I think, it's hard if you're a small business or an independent contractor, whatever it may be, to necessarily have extraordinary maternity benefits. But you can do things like flex work. You can be cognizant of the fact that someone may need to leave the office early to do something or to run out to an appointment, to take care of a sick parent, whatever it may be. It's really about the culture that you create. It's not always necessarily about ... one challenging thing is you see companies like Google and Netflix offering these crazy benefits. Meals, transportation, housing, schooling. You don't need to necessarily do those types of things to still create a culture that inspires and incents to be their full selves.

I also always think when you do allow people to live their life in its fullest way at work, they're going to give you the most. The women at this company or the women that I know who have been allowed to navigate the unique dynamics of childcare and work are the ones who ultimately are the most loyal, invest the most, who are going to give you the greatest ROI on your time and your investment in them. So think about the small things that you can do to shape a culture or opportunities for anyone in your organization to navigate these really complex and daunting aspects of life.

Dave: I actually tell the people in my company. I'm like, "Look, number one is your health. You have to take care of that first." With my assistant who helps me schedule all of my crazy Tetris-like calendar, I'm like, "Look, my health comes first." Because if you lose that, everything else sucks anyway. Number two, second is family. And number three is work. I'm CEO and I'm saying this and I tell my people that, too. We have flex work and things that at least for most jobs and there's some jobs where well, if your job is to make coffee, that isn't very flexible because people want to drink it when it ...

Also, if you need to swap a shift, you can swap a shift and things like that. How do you do this at a bigger company? Forbes is much larger than Bulletproof. How do you build that flexibility and that where people are willing to take care of themselves without feeling like they're actually showing up as weak with their colleagues?

Moira: It always starts with the top. The highest leaders in an organization always set the tone that trickles down to the rest of the organization. I think when you see, to your point, you're the CEO of a company. When you see someone like yourself who prioritizes family, it gives people permission to do that. That's so important to recognize that no one wants to get sick in life. No one wants a sick family member. No one wants these things that come up, but they do. So when you're compassionate and you help support them in those moments, that's so important.



When you set that tone from the top, it's critical. I think as leaders, you have to be really careful and cognizant of the message that you're sending. I remember so distinctly when I had my first child and I came back to work. I had to leave at 5:00 or 5:30 because I had to run home and let my caregiver go home. For the first couple of weeks, I would navigate a different route out of the office because I had never in my entire life left the office to go home at that hour. I had this wake up call. I said, "What kind of tone am I setting? I should talk about the fact that I have to leave at 5:30 and that that's okay. It doesn't mean that I'm not back online. It doesn't mean that I'm not working hard."

But if I'm not creating the environment where people feel comfortable to do that or see a mother having to run out to her kids' checkups, whatever it may be, then it's also creating the environment where other people are going to see that as not okay. You set the tone and you have to give people permission and that always comes from the leaders. It's the simple acts day in and day out. It can be policies and all that type of stuff, but it's the small things day in and day out that create culture and that set the tone. So really think about that when you're managing a team. It could be managing a company because those things are what ultimately add up to what your company is.

Dave: I had a friend who went to work for a big investment bank after business school. She was telling me. She was like, "Dave, most of the senior people run out for a business dinner and they come back to the office and then they leave their reading glasses and the newspaper and the lights on in their office and then go home. So everyone thinks they're still at the office." That sort of perspective of guilt about going to workout or going to eat quality lunch or to go and take care of your family. It seems like it's been built in since that 1950s housewife thing you talked about before.

If you're the breadwinner, you've gotta be all in. I'm seeing a shift in younger generations, too, with I actually want to have a life and I like my job. I'm loyal. I'm having fun but I'm still going to go do what I want to do. How have you seen that shift in Forbes over the last 10, 20 years?

Moira: It's been a huge shift because I think there's that traditional mindset in especially larger companies that it's about the hours that you put in. I think that is fundamentally changing as is this notion of your job starts at 9:00 and ends at 5:00. Even the notion that you work at one company your whole career for a decade or even the notion that you have one job at one time. What's happening is, given these rapid changes and the fact that they're happening quickly, it's forcing these repercussions throughout the entire culture of our organization.

it's really, at the end of the day, are you getting your job done? And how do you measure the results? How do you create the opportunities for people to do the best work that they can? If you have extraordinary talent and they have very full and complete lives, you need to celebrate and embrace that because they're going to bring their best self to work. So this notion of putting the hours in, grinding it out, if you stay until 10PM, it makes you some sort of hero. It doesn't. It probably means you're just wasting time or working inefficiently or just keeping the lights on for the sake of ego or perception versus reality.

So I think also, it's really talking about what your goals are, what your objectives are, and managing around those. Not necessarily managing around how people use their time and whether they clock in at a certain hour. And don't get me wrong, jobs can be demanding. It doesn't mean that you aren't necessarily working 10, 12 hours a day, but you have to give people a sense of ownership of their time. We see that now with Millennials and younger generations having the sense of autonomy of their time. At the end of the day, we still have to get the job done and if they're not, like anybody, that's another story.

But giving independence and ownership is so important.

Dave: It would be easier to say you grew up in a family with means, so you haven't personally faced the level of challenge that comes from ... I don't know. If I don't keep this minimum wage job, I don't know how I'm going to make rent kind of situation. Yet, you're now working with women across all types of leadership and things like that. Have there been moments in your career when you've really faced serious, oh my God, I'm going to fail with a capital F here and I don't know what I'm going to do?

Moira: Yeah. I think it's inherent to your career. It's never going to be a smooth ascendancy to where you want to go. You could never do anything of impact in your life without facing major setbacks. There are those moments where you are put to the brink where you are up at night. You have no idea if the decision is going to work out. You have no idea whether you're going to fail or succeed, particularly in an organization where you have hundreds of employees relying on the livelihood of this company. You have an audience of millions around the world who look to our brand to be empowered with knowledge.

That's a sense of responsibility that you can't take lightly. But at the same time, you can't remain stagnant. You can't do the same things you've been doing before, as you've done before and expect different or greater outcomes. I will say I've been pushed to the edge. The one different dynamic is being in a family business is first, I think your failures are a little bit more public or a lot more public. But I would say, too, you don't have the sense of freedom to necessarily talk about the crisis or the failures in your life that other people have because a lot of times people don't know what goes on behind closed doors.

People don't know necessarily when you've been taken to the brink or when you're on the precipice of really tough decisions or where things can go either direction. It can be really lonely as well because you can't talk about that with peers. You can't talk about that as freely with friends, so you really then create this very small network of people where you have that trust. And you can talk about these things that no one else knows or may ever know.

Dave: I've heard this repeatedly. I've had a chance to interview some billionaires and just very successful people and get to know them personally. For a good number of them, they have this sense of they don't know who their friends are because everyone I meet may want something from me and maybe they're nice to me not because of me but because I have the right name or because I have whatever assets. How do you navigate that?

Moira: It's something that you learn to navigate pretty quickly. Even as kids, you pick up on that from people very quickly. It doesn't make you not trusting of other people but you oftentimes know that you're going to be in a position where people are going to want something of you. That's why sometimes networking is so challenging because people always want a great story about their business. They always want you to be able to do this or that or they want Forbes to participate. That is fantastic. But at the same time, people always coming to you and wanting something or even you perceiving that.

You have to really understand who are people who are authentic, who share the same values, who are committed to things that you're doing. Who are the people who are going to see it purely as a transaction and what's always telling is when it's one and done. You do them a favor, you never hear from them again until they want something. You quickly learn how to use your platforms or your influence or your network and how to navigate that. But it's also made me ... it's been really challenging for me then to ask things of other people because we always live on the side of someone's always going to want something.

That's hard but with it comes great opportunity as well because it opens you to meeting so many more people, so I wouldn't say it's a tough thing. It's just a unique dynamic to the relationships you build and you always have to know why people are coming to you and what they really want. Is it valuable and worthwhile and authentic to what you're doing? Because it can be hard to say no.

Dave: I'm glad you said that part about hard to say no because this is something that affects all executives to a certain extent. You have to be willing to say no an awful lot because if you say yes all the time, you end up doing a bunch of crazy business things that are not good for you. Maybe for entrepreneurs like me, it's even harder because my nature is to do all sorts of crazy new things to see the ones that are going to be most effective.

But there's also, just from a societal perspective, women are quite often taught not to say no. You don't want to be that way, just the stuff we heard growing up. It's probably fair to say, not being a woman, that it's harder for the average woman to say no just to any random request than the average guy. Of course, everyone says no all the time but there's a ... at least from some very close friends that we've talked about this. They say there's a sense of discomfort there but when women move into positions of leadership, especially in your case where you have the Forbes name and you're in a position of leadership and people always want something.

How did you learn to say no as often as you have to do it?

Moira: It's still something that I struggle with because sometimes it's hard to say no. It's uncomfortable. People are disappointed. You have to get very comfortable though with the fact that not everyone's going to like you and that's okay. Ultimately, you want people to respect you but even if they don't, that's okay, too. So you have to step away from getting too caught up in what other people think about you. They may be annoyed or disappointed, but that's okay. You have to be comfortable in the decisions that you make because you're making them for a good reason.

It's not because you don't want to help people. It's not because you're mean or you don't like someone. Sometimes you have to say no because you just can't do it or the opportunity isn't available, whatever it can be. You can't feel guilty saying no. Also, I think sometimes as women and girls are taught up to be people pleasers. You want everyone to feel good and that's not life. So be comfortable with your nos and really be comfortable in why you're making that decision. Know the reasons behind it because that also validates and give you permission to be able to walk away from a situation that doesn't benefit anybody.

Dave: What advice would you have for a person who says yes too often, whether they're a woman or a man? How do they learn that feel comfortable saying no?

Moira: To me, the way that I have to, at least personally, the way that I do it is I go back to the end of the day. At the end of the day I say, "What do I hope to accomplish? What's a good use of my time? What's a good use of the resources that we have?" And if I'm wasting those assets away, then I am undermining not just my ability to be successful but the ability of our organization or the work that we're doing to achieve its highest outcomes.

If you're leading with a yes, that means that you're always leading with a yes, that means that you're not strategically prioritizing the resources that you have. For me, sometimes when you go back to the fundamentals of why you're doing something, as I said, it gives you permission to say more no. So if you're saying yes, it means you're taking sometimes the easy way. You're doing the easy thing that will ultimately cost you opportunity later.

Dave: Do you say no enough to your kids?

Moira: No, that's ... it's funny that you say that. I have two young boys. They just turned one and three last week. The three year old is finding his sense of independence and what I found is that it's a really tough balance because saying no is hard. It's hard at least at this age in the sense that it comes with tears and tantrums and just a whole lot of drama. For me, I give in because it's the easiest path.

Great example, my three year old just wants to sleep in our bed every single night. He is like a night time ninja where he finds every way to get out of bed and into our bed without us finding out. Sometimes I'm just too exhausted to carry him the five times back to his room. It's a fine balance with kids. But again, you have to just realize sometimes the easy shortcuts are going to undermine and create more work for you in the long run. You just have to learn not to give in. But sometimes you're just so tired. It's never perfect.

You could maybe tell from my reaction to this that I was up for several hours last night with the kids. It's always messy. It's never going to be simple.

Dave: I'm glad you said that. People build this picture of well-known people like you, that you have some life where there must be 13 night nannies-

Moira: Oh my gosh, I ... bring them on. I grew up, for example, one of five kids. We never had a full time nanny. My mother was a stay at home mom. I so valued the time that she put in with us and just the sense of home that she created. For me, I feel so extraordinarily lucky that we have a great nanny who gives love to my children in a different way than we could. But at the end of the day, we're still a family. So when I come home from work, she goes home and we're in this slog of bedtime, bath, books, feeding, bottles, cleaning, making breakfast the next morning.

Because to me, that's ... the craziness is also the joy. It's hard work, but I'm incredibly lucky because I can have flexibility in my schedule and I have great family and resources. But it's in those moments that really cement who you are as a human.

Dave: Well, thank you for saying that because parenting is a great equalizer. There are a few successful and some not successful people who just completely shirk their responsibilities as parents and their kids usually pay the price for that. In fact, it may be more common among people with means but I don't really have good data on that. It seems like I've seen a few really big examples but maybe they're just in the media.

The rest of the time, it doesn't matter what your walk in life, kids wake up in the middle of the night and either you're there or you're not there. I'm happy you just help people understand that doesn't change no matter where you are in life.

Moira: I think the one thing that you can maybe if you have the resources, find someone to help take off certain aspects of your life time wise, like laundry or cleaning or if you are fortunate to have those resources. I never want to fully outsource parenting. It's the most extraordinary gift that you can have in your life and you never get that time back. For me, what you invest in it, you get out in exponential ways. And yes, you're exhausted and it's hard work and all the things that you always say about parenting. But that's just part of the gig.

I was in my son's class a couple of weeks ago and it was their Spring Break. The parents were talking about where they were going. Everyone has a choice to make their own decisions but they were saying that they had to bring their nanny on vacation with them, otherwise it wouldn't be a vacation. It just reminded me that parenting changes things. When you commit to it, I committed to it fully and that's the good, the bad, the ugly. Recognizing again, that we have great support. But that's the fun part, too. For me, I was happy to go on vacation with my kids even though it's not anything like a restful vacation. But it's us.

Dave: What else are you doing to make sure that your kids grow up without the silver spoon effect, kind of everything's handed to them, you're from a well-known family, et cetera, et cetera? How do you teach them to be humble and serving and things like that?

Moira: Well, I think it's the same way that we were brought up. We were extraordinarily fortunate that we didn't have to worry about things like college tuition. We had choice in education and access to opportunity. But that doesn't mean that you can get a free ride in life. With that comes, I think, a sense of responsibility to think about how you

want to have impact on the world. It was never a question of if you worked hard, it was a question of what you're going to work hard in, whether it be the chores that we had, whether it be the jobs that we got, the summer jobs that we got.

It was about the values of knowing that it's always about hard work and committing yourself to the fullest. And that just because you have access to opportunities and you're very fortunate doesn't mean that you get to shirk off any responsibilities. My parents were hard workers. Again, just in business like in parenting, it sets the tone at the top. We had chores, work hard. Be good kids. Be nice to people and recognize that life is messy and complicated and you have to be empathetic to people around you and just learn to be a good person.

It always comes from role modeling. So the tone that you set is the tone that your kids are going to pick up.

Dave: I made the mistake, I pretty much decided a while ago that if it doesn't give me energy and bring me joy, I'm going to do my best to not do it. That's not to say I don't work at it. I work my ass off. But I'm explaining this to the kids, if I have the opportunity I'm going to spend time with you or with Mommy or working and providing value for people and things like that. Which means I actually don't want to do, I don't want to take the dishes out of the dishwasher. That's why it's your job. They're a little older than yours.

My son, he was maybe six when we had this conversation. He says after about two months. He goes, "Daddy. Taking the dishes out of the dishwasher doesn't bring me joy. I don't want to do it anymore." I'm like, "Oh man."

Moira: Oh, man. Gotcha.

Dave: We're going to have a conversation.

Moira: They're good negotiators that way. They know how to throw it back at you.

Dave: They sure are. And I said, "All right, Alan. Here's the deal. If you can find a way to add more value than taking the dishes out of the dishwasher, you don't have to do it anymore." He goes, "What do you mean?" I said, "I don't know. Find another chore that's even harder and find a way to do that and maybe one that's more fun." I said, "But until then, you don't have the skills or the knowledge to not do the dishes and that's the secret here. So you have to work hard on it." I think he's still working on ways to not do it, which is awesome. I'm really hopeful that at some point he finds a way to outsource emptying the dishwasher and I'll support him doing that.

If he wants to run a little farm stand and ... we've got two pigs. It's mostly so my kids can feed them twice a day because that's such an annoying chore.

Moira: And they eat everything. We used to have pigs. They're garbage disposals.

But I think that's great though because you have to ... I think life is full of things that you don't want to do. There's the adult equivalent in work of emptying the dishwasher or literally emptying the dishwasher. I think it's really important to understand that life isn't always going to be fun.

Dave: Exactly.

Moira: If you create the expectation that you're always going to be happy and that things always have to be great or that if they're not then something's wrong, you're creating these false expectations for your kids and for yourself. You're going to have to do things that you don't want to do. It's going to be hard work. Life is not always going to be easy and that's okay. You have to get comfortable with that and be realistic. I think sometimes we set these expectations that you always have to be happy and find your passion.

Those are all important things, but with that comes these moments of just getting the job done and slogging it out and getting through the day. It's never simple but you have to roll up your sleeves and be willing to jump in and embrace it fully.

Dave: Now you've had the opportunity on your own show to interview a lot of people about success. I might get the name of your show wrong there. It's something really like Moira Forbes On Success or something? What's the name of it?

Moira: Success with Moira Forbes. You were close. You were close.

Dave: I was really close.

Moira: You got an A- on that.

Dave: Now what have you learned that you didn't expect to learn from interviewing a lot of very highly successful people?

Moira: I think it was less about what I didn't expect to learn. It was less about these outlier things around leadership and it was more surprising and affirming to see the commonalities and the qualities that are common amongst people who have achieved such uncommon success. On paper when you talk about these qualities, they seem really simple or easy, but it's this practice time and time again. It's this commitment and dedication to certain things. For me, it was time and time again seeing certain threads emerge.

We talk about them a lot. One, time and time again, was this conversation on resilience and grit, which is a very popular word right now. That these women constantly faced roadblocks and hurdles and walls and they found continuous ways to get around it. That they didn't take no for an answer. That they found ways to pick themselves up off the ground and I always think that resilience is like a muscle. The more you use it, the more that you learn how to exercise those experiences the better. I think that's something that is this equalizer amongst these women.

Obviously, there's things like there's no avoiding sacrifice and the like. But I would say that concept of resilience and that decision to keep moving forward and to bend versus break in the face of life's biggest obstacles is critical. The other thing that I think personally was really important to me was the fact that I saw these women as leaders who had to be very authentic to who they were. Time and time again, I think we talk about leaders and the qualities that they have. It could be charisma, whatever it is. You say if I'm not like them, I can't have ambitious goals.

You have to get comfortable with your ... you have your own set of strengths and they may be different but you have to be authentic to who you are because that's where your greatest power lies. If you try and spend all your time trying to imitate the behaviors of someone else, or what you think you should be or how you think you should act, that's not going to help anyone. The reason why it was so important for me in my career, is growing up in a family business, you're constantly compared to the people before you. I had my grandfather who was this incredibly charismatic figure who would hot air balloon around the world and motorcycle and I couldn't even parallel park a car.

I had my father who, very different than his father, but who is this economic mind, a policy thinker, ran for political office, and I failed Econ 101. I was like, I'm not like him and so I saw these two people before me and in no way did I feel like ... I was a woman. I felt that my skillsets were very different and I kept thinking of these things that made me who I am as a liability. It was only as I progressed throughout my career to realize those things I thought were liabilities, actually are the things that make me unique, where my greatest power lies. Get comfortable with those and stop trying to pretend that you're someone else. Own it and be like the super hero of those qualities.

Be comfortable with it and run with it versus trying to avoid it at all costs. That was a really liberating and important thing for me. So I think that's also one thing that for me personally seeing that in so many extraordinary leaders validated or really encouraged me and pushed me to be more authentic in who I was in my career and in my life.

Dave: You heard different stories or different aspects of authenticity and a lot about resilience have been the two big cull outs from that?

Moira: The two big cull outs that stuck with me is that, again, that ability to bend and not break and recognizing that failure is never final. The thing that you fear most when something happens, is really not the worst thing that's going to happen to you in your life or not the worst thing that could happen. Very rarely does the worst thing you think can happen, actually happen. When it does, I saw these women constantly moving forward but always stretching themselves outside their comfort zone. I think doing that is part and parcel with the willingness to know that you're going to fall flat on your face or you're going to hit a roadblock and keep moving forward.

It's also just inspired me in my career to push myself beyond what I feel comfortable doing or to take risks that I maybe was more hesitant to take because if you see other



people before you having done it in very different ways, it just gives you a sense that you can do it too.

Dave: If someone came to you tomorrow, Moira, and said, "I want to perform better at everything I do as a human being", what three pieces of advice would you offer them?

Moira: Well first, I don't think you can perform well at everything that you are as a human being. So I would say get ... I think that sometimes, to our point earlier, sometimes that women experience is you're not going to be great at everything. First, I always say you have to ruthlessly prioritize. What are the most important things in your life right now? Each day, each week, each month, how does your time and the way that you allocated your energy align with those goals?

it's never going to be perfect. Again, if you give up on being perfect, but did you ... if you think of your life as a pie, of your time as a pie, did the pieces and how you allocate your time and energy, did it match up to what your goals and priorities are? For me, if my priorities are family, work, and myself because I think self care is so important. I had to basically let go of things like my social life is not that great right now. You just have to prioritize and say no. So that's one thing and it's so critical.

Second thing is, find what gives you energy. This is the world that you live in, but I always have to ask myself, what depletes my energy and what gives me energy? And not just necessarily the things I do, yes, you take moments out to pause or exercise, the food that you eat, but what are things in my day to day life that fuel me, that spark that curiosity, that create that moment that you want to go further, that really inspire you? What are the things that are energy vampires? And try and get rid of those. That's so important.

The last thing I would say is attitude. Your attitude is everything in life. You can wake up every day. You wake up every day and how you choose to approach that day, is the only thing that you can control. Attitude is also the greatest equalizer because it's one thing that we all have the power to really focus on and to choose how we approach the things that we want to approach in our life. You could choose how you see things. You could choose how you approach your obstacles and how you react to them. So for me, attitude is everything. It's essential to what I do and how I live my life and how I try and just stay positive.

Again, none of us is ever going to be perfect. So it's attitude, ruthlessly prioritizing, and finding things that give me energy and give me joy.

Dave: That's a powerful set of answers.

Moira, you're working on a women's summit in New York, June 18th. What are you doing with that and why did you decide to create a women's summit?

Moira: We had a huge platform in the women's space, creating content dedicated to empowering women to succeed in business and in all aspects of their lives. And what we

found is there's such a need and want to be able to come together with other women, other leaders who are doing very, very different things but share similar missions and approaching them from different vantage points. This summit first and foremost is an opportunity to create community and to create this extraordinary knowledge exchange. Live events are such a powerful way to do that first and foremost.

I think also, what makes the summit I think our most important yet is the past 18 months have represented this watershed moment for women in this country with allegations of discrimination and abuse coming to the surface in ways that we knew existed, but weren't talked about and addressed or recognized in a prevalent way. So now that these things have come to the surface, I think it's this moment of reckoning in terms of what's next. Rather than talking about the challenges and the statistics that we all know are so bleak, how do we create actionable solutions, the small things and big things that can move the needle in fundamental ways to create opportunities for women today and for future generations of women to emerge.

Dave: Awesome. Where can people find out more about both your show about success and about your new women's summit? Is there a link they can go to?

Moira: There's a link and if you go to forbes.com, always great content but also it's a portal to be able to see the work that we're doing. Also, what's fantastic now is just the power of social media. I always encourage people to connect on LinkedIn or Twitter and the Forbes communities as well because it's really fun to have these conversations with people whose perspectives can add value to what we're doing and form us and help us shape the conversations that are really important to leaders today, regardless of what stage they are in their careers.

Dave: I'm now following you on Instagram. I realized I hadn't done it yet. There we go. I just followed you. I'm your 3,033 follower. Woohoo.

Moira: Well, I look forward to following you as well. But it's fun because you get to connect with different dimensions of people's lives and I love it.

Dave: It's really cool. Just if you're listening to this, this is the only time in history that I've ever known where it's possible to get at least sometimes a real look at what successful people do because unless you have a carefully sculpted social media team controlling every post, and some people do that, but most of the time you'll find you can actually see what life is really like for someone that you see on TV or you hear about somewhere because that's what social media does.

I think it's kind of enlightening because of what you find and what I found over the last few years of interviewing a bunch of people and just in my growth with Bulletproof, is that it's amazing how many real people there are out there.

Moira: Yeah. And I think that's just it. You have to always then, speaking of biases, you go into these sometimes certain people that you know and you have a set of expectations, so you're surprised when they don't match those expectations. Oftentimes they're not

great expectations. Sometimes public figures, you think the worst and you're surprised that they're quote-unquote "real people". But I do love that there's windows into everyone's lives because we all have these shared experiences and they may be different or have unique aspects to them, but at the end of the day, we all are people who want to have impact, who want to get the most out of our lives, and it's nice when you can see those windows and also realize that nobody's life is perfect.

That's the one thing I will say, that sometimes Instagram is ... the downfall of Instagram is sometimes people feel so much pressure to make their lives look perfect and so fantastic. I think it's again that question of authenticity when you have the chance to pull back the curtain and see how the sausage gets made, which is just life. That's when you can make true connections and that's when you can have the most fun.

Dave: Beautiful.

Moira: So be careful if someone looks like they're having too much fun and their life is too perfect because it never is. Never is.

Dave: Awesome. Moira, thanks for being on Bulletproof Radio.

Moira: Well, thank you. I look forward to seeing your Instagram feed now.

Dave: If you enjoyed today's episode, you know what to do. Head on over to Moira's page on the forbes.com site and check out the women's summit if that's of interest to you. Or go to bulletproof.com/itunes and leave a review of this episode or just the show in general. I always appreciate knowing how I'm doing and so thank you.