Module 1 - Lesson 1 (Export3)

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When I first started my company I considered bringing on a partner, Doug was the smartest person I knew, at least I thought so at the time. And I believe Doug would be a genuine asset to the team. I thought he could help move the company forward. I hired Doug as a technical executive in my company. And I plan to make him a partner at some point. But I soon discovered something that completely changed my mind.

Doug, wouldn't or couldn't develop his people skills, Doug's extreme attachment to significance, which he got by being smarter. Everybody created a lot of challenges for my self, our clients, my team, and my companies in general. And basically, it created challenges for everybody, Doug dealt with his ego was constant, constantly looking for ways to validate his identity for ways to prove that he was smarter than everybody else, which gave him that significance. And imagine somebody that's always looking to prove that they're smarter than everybody else, how that comes across. This, of course, cause Doug's people skills to greatly suffer, he had created this view of the world of his own and expected everybody else to operate within his parameters. And as a result of that, he wasn't communicating clearly, effectively, or getting along with anybody. Although Doug was extremely technically competent. He was he was very good. Technically, he was failing as a company leader, when I tried to talk to Doug and hold them accountable. Doug quit, he had always been the smartest person in the room, and he really couldn't take feedback or criticism. So instead of trying to improve, he decided to move on. That was many years ago. And since since Doug left my organisation, he's had many, many jobs, since this tells me that he hasn't really changed at all. So what happens is Doug, goes to a new job, it seems perfect at first is great. But then he quickly runs into the same challenges that everybody else is stupid, they don't really understand what he's thinking. And then he leaves and then repeat the process over and over and over. So he starts out, thinking the company's great, gets frustrated, repeats this process. And basically, he he's on this hamster wheel, and never gets off of it, or never zooms out to see that he might be part of the problem. As a result of this, Doug is very aggravated, frustrated, and unhappy. And he expects everybody else to change. Because he thinks he is smarter than everybody. He is right whose digital protractor is bigger. Doug refuse to develop his people skills. And he bragged many times, he bragged many times to me, and everybody else, how he was intellectually superior to everybody. And by being intellectually superior. This allowed him to treat people however he wanted, he believed, because he was, you know, the smartest person in the room, that he could walk over other people. As he said to me many times, he bragged about being able to walk over other people because he was smarter than them. But But the bottom line is, if you actually step back and look at Doug, he lived in fear, Doug was terrified of being intellectually inferior, and that somebody else might have a bigger digital protractor and somehow prove they were smarter. This created a toxic culture. And I think in cybersecurity and other technical careers, we've created a culture where we have many dogs out there. And this culture is toxic. Because we have people that have a high IQ, they're super smart, technically, but they don't have a lot of people skills. And they treat other people horribly. And they justify it because they're smarter than other people. So this is something we need a shift in our culture. And one of the things I think about periodically is, you know, Doug, was Doug is extremely smart, technically. And there are a lot of people that are extremely smart in one facet of their life. But to me, if you are extremely smart or have intelligence, that intelligence should apply to how well you live your life in general, not just to this one sliver of your life. So if I'm extremely intelligent, I should be able to develop people skills, I

should be able to get along with my family, my friends, my co workers, I should be able to do other things besides one little specific, you know, area or discipline. And unfortunately, we've created this culture that We allow people that are extremely technical, to get away with treating other people horribly, we've justified it and say, and we say things like, well, they're extremely technical, and they have a high IQ. So it's okay that they treat people like garbage. So I think we need to shift this. I'm a believer that you get what you tolerate. And we've tolerated this culture. And that's why we're getting it. As leaders though. We need to shift this culture, we've allowed it to happen, it's time to change that status quo, and shift the culture. And as a leader were responsible for that running on the hamster wheel.

I was running on my own hamster wheel for quite some time before I realised it. When I quit my corporate job, there wasn't like this immediate switch, or anything that flipped. It wasn't like, if I completely ignore the importance of people skills one day, and then the next day, I fully embraced other people's skills. And I just flipped that switch. It really took me a while to realise that I was a source of my own problems. Because as I mentioned, before, I was chasing significance, I was chasing certainty. And this was an endless and exhausting pursuit, it took me a while to finally step off the hamster wheels, zoom out of my life, stop running, and take stock of where I was, and what would really make me happier fulfilled. When I started my company, Alpine security, things started to change. But they started to change very slowly, starting and growing a company, a cybersecurity services company, was a lot more difficult than I thought, I actually thought it'd be pretty simple, but I grossly underestimated the amount of effort it would take to grow my company, I found myself having to manage everything. And I realised that if I didn't improve my own people skills, my own influence skills, my own leadership skills, then my company would only be as able to move as far along as I was myself. And what I started doing was really working on myself. And then I listened in on phone calls with my team, I listened to how they were talking to their clients I listened to with our clients, I listened to how we were talking to each other. And I noticed patterns in our communication style, I noticed there was a lot of insecurity, a lot of fear, a lot of posturing. And during my observations, I also realised how consequential my team's general lack of people skills was, as I mentioned, I was the business owner, I started the business and I funded the business for my life savings. I literally cashed in almost everything to start the business. So there was immense pressure on me to make it work. Because if it didn't work, I assumed all the risk. And I would be out of you know, on the street, basically. And I think this new awareness. And the necessity really, is what caused me to, with hyper vigilance, pay attention to some of the issues we have in the company. And the communication patterns I noticed, caused me to have like this light bulb moment, as I like to say, as I became aware of these patterns in my team, I became aware of them myself as well. And to this day, I still believe that self awareness and self improvement are extremely important. And I know I have many, many areas to improve in my life, including people skills, it's not like I've mastered everything, mastery, something, it's an endless pursuit, really. And what's interesting is when I started seeing these patterns of communication in my own company, and within within myself, I started looking backwards throughout my career, and I realised that this issue that I was observing, had been part of my entire career. I had witnessed this in every organisation I was a part of, and I wouldn't assist in myself, I used to be part of the problem. And it's kind of like that saying goes, you know, once you buy a new red car, let's say then you see a red car everywhere, you know, what's your brain's reticular activating system is is in tune to something, you start seeing that and noticing everywhere. And that's how it was for me once I saw these issues with communication, which stemmed from that insecurity and the fear and the posturing. Once I saw the how these played out in my company. I saw it everywhere. I saw the same problems. in my industry, I say that saw the same problems in other industries with highly technical people. It was, it was it is basically an epidemic. Our brain is programmed to find what you're looking for which and this ties into one of the concepts in thinking Grow Rich by Napoleon Hill. Whenever we envision or think about in our brain, we notice in the outside world, one of my favourite quotes from Thinking Grow Rich is whatever the mind can conceive and believe it can achieve. If you think the world is out to get you, for example, your brain will find ways to support this idea. This is an important concept. You know, one fundamental decision you can make in life is if the world is a hostile world or two friendly world, whatever decision you make, that's how the world will seem to you without the right mindset. There's really no awareness of what's possible, and what opportunities exist. The shift in perspective is everything.

And it can have a massive impact both on your life analyse of your team. As a leader, it's extremely important that you have the right mindset. Because without you having the right mindset, your team is not going to be able to embrace the right

mindset, a limited edition in theory. In 2007, a friend of mine bought a new car, he bought the limited edition Toyota Corolla matrix in theory. Supposedly, as he told me, only 2500 of these were produced, it was Speedway blue, what that was a colour it sounds really cool. And it was awesome. The two of us would take it on road trips to do triathlons, it would fit his bike and my bike, it had plenty of room. And it was really like the ideal car, he always bragged about how this was a very limited edition. But the irony is, wherever we took these road trips, almost every single road trip, I saw Limited Edition. In theory, Corolla matrix, six matrix matrices that were also Speedway blue. So it's like, it's like what I mentioned earlier, if you are attuned to something, your brain will find it out there in the world. And the interesting, the interesting thing is if if he never said that this was such a limited edition car, I probably never would have looked forward to it never would have even noticed these Speedway blue matrices on the road. hack your brain, the problems I saw in the tech world were everywhere. But I also saw a glimmer of hope for resolving them and making the industry better and more secure the same time. At the beginning of this course, I told you, the methodology isn't a silver bullet. It's not like the two minute or three minute abs. As I mentioned, following the steps in this course, won't change you or your team overnight. This is a journey. As I mentioned, the methodology is a journey changing and improving behaviour takes time. I mentioned a light bulb going off for me. But that was really just the beginning, the light is still shines very brightly on all the work I need to do still. And I'm still a work in progress. And I always will be deep work takes time because we have to reprogram our brains, we have to shift our beliefs, we have to shift our identity. And this isn't something we can just change overnight. It typically takes a little while or a long while. And it's something we have to keep working on. So we don't fall back into old habits, our patterns in our behaviours. They run inside our brain sort of like a computer programme. And a lot of what we have in our brain is basically malicious software or malware. So we need to remove that malware and run better code in our brain effectively. And we often don't realise that these patterns are there. But we, we have these patterns. And they're these programmes. Basically, they're automatically triggered. When somebody says something, we read something, we hear something, we this programme automatically kicks off in our brain. And before we know it, we've sort of executed the whole programme. So this is where awareness comes into play, which is the first step in the methodology. As an example, let's say your mom always used to get on your case about making your bed. It was something that she nagged you about constantly. Now, as an adult, every time you're asked to make the bed, you get irritable, because it kicks off that programme I talked about in your brain that was established there when your mom used to nag you about the bed and you just start getting upset about it and you don't really know why. Because that's programme has been installed in his time to alter that programme or change it. There are many bad habits or programmes we have in our brain. And we need to hack our brain and reprogram them to get rid of that malicious code as I mentioned, how habits form in our brain we have neural pathways. These neural pathways are comprised of neurons that are connected by dendrites. neuron branches reach out to other neurons. to exchange data. And these are created in the brain, these branches that exchange data. And this establishes a habit or behaviour. And the interesting thing is, the more you do the same thing over and over, the stronger those connections and the stronger that pathway in your brain. And it basically turns into like a superhighway. So the minute you hear something like a siren, you know, your pulse quickens, you start thinking of all this narrows the things you did wrong.

That's that pattern running in your brain, that's a superhighway. And it's been running for so long, that it just runs automatically. And this is why it's extremely difficult to break old habits, because effectively we're tearing down that superhighway and creating it creating a new pathway that starts out like a dirt road. So we have to make the new habit or the new pathway, a superhighway and have the old one basically dissolve. And this takes a lot of time and effort. There's this concept called neuro plasticity, our brains, just like a muscle have the ability to change, we just have to just like our muscle, we have to exercise our brains in a way to form the new pathways, which will allow us to have a new habit formed or new behaviour, we have to replace those old bad habits. And what happens if we don't replace those old bad habits, we're essentially caught in this like, if then else loop. So if somebody says this, then this programme kicks off in my brain, and I run through it, if they don't say that, then I do something different. So it's really like a computer programme, but we just don't realise that we like to think we're not very predictable. But we're actually extremely predictable. And our brains are really not that much different than computers we like. So we'd like to think we're unpredictable, but we're really not. So I'd like you to take a second and think about the last time you were triggered. Last time. Somebody said something. You saw something on TV, you witness something, you read something, the last time you were triggered. And you just sort of ran this programme, I want you to think about that. What happened? How much control? Did you really have over how you responded? Did you just go on autopilot? Like I'd mentioned before about the bed scenario, like the last time you were told to make the bed? Did

you have a rational conversation about it with your spouse, or whoever told you make the bed? Or did you just get irritable and snap like you always do if you just followed a pattern of behaviour, once you were triggered, and at the end of it, you had the same outcome as you always do. That means you ran that programme, if the outcome based on that trigger is not the outcome you want is time to reprogram your brain. And one of the things that's interesting is we like to think and we've been become conditioned to some degree, that the only decision making cells are in our brains, but our entire body is really made up of cells. And all these cells communicate with with each other. So it's important we tune into more than just our brain when making decisions. And we'll talk about this concept a little bit later on in the course. And the bottom line is you know, we have this entire neurological system that stores and processes information faster, that we can consciously rationalise it, and most people dismiss it. So sometimes you have that gut feeling. You know, your heart is telling you something, your hair stands up on your arm. You've got this chill down your spine, there's there's all these senses that are telling you something from your body's perspective, your cells are telling you something so it's not just in your brain. And as I mentioned, we'll cover this in more detail later on. So some of the key takeaways from this module. In this lesson less than one here is that intellectual bullying is really just insecurity in disguise. People who intellectually bully are terrified, really, of being intellectually inferior to someone and they might have to prove that they are smarter. This creates this false sense of confidence that's built around their intellect. Another takeaway is that there's a general notion that if you have a high IQ, you're incapable of relating to people. This is really just an excuse to justify this behaviour. Another takeaway if you think the rose out to get you, your brain will find ways to support this idea. If you think the world is a friendly place, your brain will find ways to support that idea. People have routine behaviours and patterns that run inside your mind all the time just like a computer programme. These patterns really dictate how you interact with the world and with yourself. The programme is also set You know what kind of language you talk to yourself your inner talk, that's a programme that runs as well. And most people think that these neural pathways are like locked in place, that they're hardwired our brain is hardwired, we can't learn anything new, we can't change our pattern, we can't change our identity. But that's not true. If that was true, it'd be pretty boring life if we can't actually learn anything new, or change your bad behaviours, so we can actually rewire our brains and replace those old pathways. With new ones, we can really reprogram our brains. What's next?

And the next lesson, we'll continue to dive deeper and deeper into the secure methodology by exploring a concept that I call total intelligence. By the way, have you heard of the story, the eight year old girl that received a heart transplant and was able to resolve a murder case. We'll cover that in the next lesson as well. So let's continue on to lesson two.