

### Audio Transcription

Season /Episode #:	Season 3 Episode 10
Guest:	Dr. Maureen Marks
Title:	Stretching Your Leadership Acumen with Dr. Maureen Marks

Dr. Shari Dade	You are now listening to The Audacity to Fail podcast, a podcast about Misstepping into success. Get ready to dive into conversations and real stories from leaders as they share. How failure activates a growth mindset is an important part of learning and motivation for improvement. I'm your host, Dr. Shari Dade, psychologist with the National Center for Organizational Development.
Dr. Shari Dade	Thank you for tuning in. Let's get started.
Announcer	Support for this leadership podcast comes from the National Center for Organization Development. NCOD aims to increase the long term growth and performance of the Department of Veterans Affairs by collaboratively working with the leaders throughout the VA to improve organizational outcomes by supporting the development of an engaged workforce. For additional information on our services, click the link in the show notes.
Dr. Shari Dade	We often hear the phrase leadership is a journey, not a destination, and nothing exemplifies this more than the concept of taking stretch assignments. Stretch assignments are those tasks or projects that take leaders out of their comfort zones, challenging them to reach beyond their current capacities and acquire new skills? They're like the hidden gems of leadership development, providing an opportunity for leaders to not only expand their horizons, but also to push their own boundaries.
Dr. Shari Dade	Whether you're a seasoned executive looking for your next big challenge or an emerging leader eager to climb to the next step of the career ladder, you're in for a treat because this episode will explore the powerful role that stretch assignments play in the growth and development of leaders. On today's episode, I am delighted to be joined by our own director, Dr. Maureen Marks.
Dr. Shari Dade	Dr. Marks began her VA career in 1992 as a psychology intern at the Cincinnati VAMC and was hired as a permanent staff member in March of 1996. She spent over 14 wonderful years as a psychologist on the addiction treatment unit there and the last several years of her tenure at the medical center. Her time was split between these clinical duties and administrative roles.
Dr. Shari Dade	As director of psychology training and chief psychologist Dr. Marks has served as executive director for the VHA National Center for Organization

	Development since January 2020. NCOD Mission is to support leaders in creating high engaged work environment, and it provides services across all of VA. She has been with NCOD since 2010 in various roles, including Director of Organizational Health and Deputy Director.
Dr. Shari Dade	She most recently served as acting VHA chief of staff from May 20, 22 to June 2023. Get ready to join us as the Season three closeout episode as we explore the journey of myth stepping into Success. This is The Audacity to Fail Podcast Episode 30 Stretching Your Leadership Acumen. Good morning, Maureen. How are you?
Dr. Maureen Marks	Hi, Shari. It's great to be here with you.
Dr. Shari Dade	I am beyond excited to have you here today for this episode. So let's hop right in because I know I don't want to miss another minute of the wonderful wisdom that I know that you're going to share.
Dr. Maureen Marks	Okay, that's a high bar, but I'll do my best.
Dr. Shari Dade	Maureen, one of the reasons that I thought this would be a fitting episode for us to do a deep dive is because of something you mentioned during the VA psychology leadership Conference and we were closing out. You spoke about your most recent stretch assignment as the acting VHA chief of staff, and you mentioned the importance of taking on this role at this point in your career.
Dr. Shari Dade	And what I really found so incredible was just your encouragement to all of us, to have enough audacity to step into assignments, to opportunities or to projects that stretch us as we are continuing to grow as leaders. And from your experiences and your experiences with stretch assignments, why are they so important for leaders in their professional growth and journey?
Dr. Maureen Marks	Well, I think because it gives you an opportunity to learn some things about yourself that you never would have been able to do otherwise, I think. And to find out how much of what you already know translates into a new position and allows you to to flex those muscles and grow new ones that you don't get. If you if you stay on a particular path or you stay in a particular wheelhouse for your entire career.
Dr. Shari Dade	Yeah, it's one of those ways to continue early. Learn about one, just your your field, your career, but also who you are as a leader and who you are as a person.

Dr. Maureen Marks	My experience is that if you find yourself terrified, that's probably it's a good sign that you're about to step into something that's really going to be an exciting adventure and that you'll really grow from.
Dr. Shari Dade	Oh yeah, that's definitely been my experience when stepping into some of those assignments. And as I mentioned, the acting, the chief of Staff is a significant stretch assignment. And how did this assignment impact your leadership development?
Dr. Maureen Marks	It was crazy for me to think about doing this. I mean, at this point in my career, I was not expecting a stretch assignment. I know I'm I'm in the twilight, I'm in the twilight of my career. And that was not at all what I expected. But you asked me about what my growth was. Right. At first it was finding out that I could even do a job.
Dr. Maureen Marks	That big, absolute thing that I was within the first few months because I was terrified when when Dr. Lieberman called me about that, I was terrified.
Dr. Shari Dade	Imagine. Yeah.
Dr. Maureen Marks	And but within the first few months, I started realizing, oh, no, this there's a lot of this that really plays to some of my strengths. And there are and I'm able to learn what I need to learn. And I've got people around me who will help me and support me. And so that was that was incredible, was finding out that I could really do a job that big.
Dr. Maureen Marks	And I think now looking back, I feel more grounded in myself. You know, I feel like the things that I already knew about myself just deepened and expanded. And so I think those were probably two of the really big takeaways for me was I've confidence has never been a big issue for me, especially in the latter part of my career.
Dr. Maureen Marks	Yeah, yeah. But it's a different I feel grounded in that in a very different way and grounded in just knowing that when you allow yourself to be authentically who you are, definitely, and you bring that to every situation, you can find success in that. And, and this wasn't any different. That's I have learned that over and over again.
Dr. Maureen Marks	And I learned that in the chief of staff role that that's really what helped what helped me be successful was being able to just authentically be me and in need from from that.

Dr. Shari Dade	Yeah, I think that's powerful. Being able to stand in roles even when you're terrified, right? Even when it's a bit scary to be able to be yourself and to be authentic and be confident in what you bring to the role. Right. I think one of the things that you shared is the ability to know that oftentimes skills are transferable and, you know, the role is looking for for you and looking for what you bring to it, as opposed to you being able to say, okay, I've got to fit exactly what the role needs.
Dr. Shari Dade	And so, yeah, that understanding is something that I think is really powerful for leaders when they're thinking about is this stretch assignment for me or how do I move into this space?
Dr. Maureen Marks	Mm hmm. Right. And really, I think having faith that you're going to have people around you who are going to help you with it was a steep learning curve. I mean, I'm sure there were a lot of things that I really had not didn't have deep knowledge about at all. You know, all the congressional interactions more kind of deeply into H.R. issues and just the big rocks that get dropped at the door of the chief of staff for sure.
Dr. Maureen Marks	And trying to figure out how to make progress on anything that he does, these huge problems. And but I didn't have to do it by myself. I mean, when as soon as I said yes to this assignment and became kind of more public knowledge, I had people paying in me left and right. We've got your back. We're here for you.
Dr. Maureen Marks	We will help you. And I mean, how can you fail when you've got that kind of support?
Dr. Shari Dade	When you've got that kind of support? Yeah. Speaking of support, Emma, that is one of the really important things that a lot of guests throughout the season have really talked about. Who are their support people? Who are the people who are in their corners that are reflecting to them, that are pushing them, that are motivating them. When leaders are thinking about taking on stretch assignments, what kind of support or preparation should they seek as they're in that journey?
Dr. Maureen Marks	Yeah, well, I can tell you that when Dr. Lieberman asked me to take this on, I asked him if I could have the weekend to think it through, because it was I mean, it was it wasn't just doing the job. It was having to be in DC that much. And, you know, my mother's very ill here in Cincinnati and I'm her only caregiver here.
Dr. Maureen Marks	And so there was a lot to think about. And, you know, so I talked I talked to a lot of people over those next few days. I talked to one of the more important

	people I talked to with John Janssen, who is the chief chief of staff who is leaving.
Dr. Shari Dade	And exactly.
Dr. Maureen Marks	I want to get a feel for what what is this job, really, day to day? You know, what is it really like and what's going to be asked of me? And that was a really good conversation. He was really helpful. I spoke to my boss, Jessica Bongiorno, I spoke to, and Cody's deputy, Jeremy Rickert, because I knew if I was going to do this, it was going to have a huge impact on him.
Dr. Maureen Marks	Yeah, yeah, I spoke to I called Dee Ramsey, all the previous director events. Cody helped me think through this, you know, what am I not thinking about? You know, what do I need to think about in terms of how stepping into this role might affect my ability to come back to and Cody and be effective. And, you know, I had to talk to Jessica about how it might change my relationship with her and what we would do about that, like how we could protect our relationship so that when I came back to and Cody, she and I could would be okay.
Dr. Maureen Marks	I was worried about her and what being chief of staff for whatever amount of time it was going to be. How is that going to affect my ability to be? And Cody, director moving forward because you know chief of staff, he has to do stuff that people don't like sometimes, you know, and deliver messages that people don't want to hear and and be involved in policy and and that's those are things that and Cody specifically tries not to step into, you know, so that we can be consultants and be trusted advisers.
Dr. Maureen Marks	And so I was thinking about all of those things and talked to my husband and my mother and yeah, so all of those things really helped help me kind of think about and make sure that I was making whatever choice I was going to make was going to be informed, I was going to be clear, and that when I got to, yeah, I think I want to do this and I'm going to say yes, it was an informed choice and that I had the support of the people I needed to have the support from.
Dr. Maureen Marks	And again, that was crucial.
Dr. Shari Dade	Certainly there are a couple of things that that struck me in that when it comes to support, one is being intentional with your relationships, being intentional with the folks who are surrounding you, the people who have been supports up until this point. Right and right, seeking out new supports, new avenues and new areas for support. That intentionality that comes along with that, to be able to build your team so that right walking through this process, you've got all of those different angles that you need in the importance in the

	intentionality in that that you took, and then also the ability to take a step and say or take a beat and ask for what you
Dr. Shari Dade	need. Right? Can I have the weekend to think about this or can I have a moment to check in with the person who was in the position before or the people who are on the team. And so I think when we're thinking about the preparation for these stretch assignments, I think oftentimes, especially if we are emerging leaders, we're eager, right.
Dr. Shari Dade	Or like, oh my goodness, I want to take this and this is going to be so awesome. But the importance of taking a beat, being intentional, setting yourself up for success is is there. And that speaks volumes.
Dr. Maureen Marks	Yeah, absolutely. And I was really fortunate because I had a month like John was leaving a month after Dr. Lieberman had contacted me. And so I had time. I could come, I could go to DC. I was there for like three or four days shadowing John. Wow. So that I could kind of just see what his day was like.
Dr. Maureen Marks	I could be in the background while he was on certain meetings. I could meet with some of the staff in Tenby and there was a lot to learn and take in and building connections as quickly as I could with the staff in Tenby was really important. They I could not have done that detail without them. They were amazing and, and accepted me like welcomed me in to that Tenby family really quickly.
Dr. Maureen Marks	And I just I felt really grateful to them the whole time I was there.
Dr. Shari Dade	Yeah. And what that really speaks to is assessing whether the stretch assignment is going to be, quote unquote, the right one right, or whether it's suitable for your growth before taking it on. Right? You were able to go in and to shadow and to say, okay, what am I getting myself ready for and what am I putting not just myself but my organization, my teammates, my peers, my family into?
Dr. Shari Dade	And so when leaders are thinking about this and they're there assessing their readiness, how can they identify whether the stretch assignment is suitable or whether they are ready for those stretches?
Dr. Maureen Marks	Yeah, I you know, I don't know because I think that's a hard one. Sorry. Because if somebody had asked me, do you feel like you're ready to be the chief of staff for God knows how long, I would have said, Are you insane? You're insane, you

	know, So I don't know that. I don't know that. That you can ever really fully assess whether you're ready.
Dr. Maureen Marks	You know, I think Yeah, Yeah. I think having a certain level of trust in yourself and faith in yourself is really important. Absolutely. And I think what part of what helped me know that I could step into this was I asked, actually, Roman, why are you looking at me? Because this is different. I think my situation was different than a lot of people because I wasn't really looking.
Dr. Maureen Marks	I mean, I'm going to retire in the next couple of years. You know, I wasn't looking for a stretch assignment, and for me, it was having the conversation with Dr. Lieberman saying, why are you why are you looking at me for this? This makes no sense to me. And then he explained what he was looking for, why he why he wanted me in the role and the reasons he gave me were all things that I was like, Oh, I can do that.
Dr. Maureen Marks	Oh yeah, I can do that. That. All right, that makes sense. Okay, so the main reasons you want me in this role are things that I know are in my wheelhouse. I'll just have to practice at a very different level in a very different way. But I think but I think I've got like, the foundation of what you think you need in this role.
Dr. Maureen Marks	So, okay, I can I can do that. You know, if it's a stretch assignment that you're seeking out yourself, I think it's making sure that you have an understanding about what the role really is, what the what the goals are right now. You know, where the boss for that role in the team, for that role, what do they have?
Dr. Maureen Marks	A vision and is that a vision that you care about and something that you feel he can bring something to you? All of those things are really important. And if it's a stretch assignment that you are seeking because of where you are in your career and where you think you want to go, making sure that you're having conversations that help you to understand where things are right now, where they want to go, and really thinking about the skill sets you have that you can bring that may help them move in the direction that they want to move.
Dr. Maureen Marks	And in understanding that there's going to be a ton, that you're not going to know and that you're not there's no way you can be prepared for it. You can't prepare ahead. You've got to you've got to trust that you can manage it. Once you're in there knowing that you've got people you can turn to to help you think things through.
Dr. Maureen Marks	And I think for me, that's probably the one of the bigger things is if you go into a stretch assignment believing it's just going to be you and it's all on you and there's then you're, I think, a lot less likely to be successful. But if you go in

	seeing yourself as a piece of the puzzle that's already there that you can connect to and really see yourself as part of a team, I.
Dr. Shari Dade	Love.
Dr. Maureen Marks	That in and not treat it like it's acting. I mean, I think that's one of the things that is also really important. It's in I've worked, I've worked like deliberately. I've had that intentional mindset whenever I've taken on an acting role is that I'm not going to treat it like I'm acting if I'm in the role and in the role.
Dr. Maureen Marks	And as long as the person above me who's responsible for this position is okay with what I want to do and where I want to go, it doesn't matter who's going to come next necessarily. If they're good with it, then I'm going to move. And that's that's how I treated the chief of staff role. I didn't know how long I was going to be in it, and I just treated it like I was in it.
Dr. Maureen Marks	And part of why I was lucky was because I had Jeremy record and, you know, all of the leaders back at ENCODE, who I knew were going to just step up and keep the office running. And I, I could just focus on being in the chief of staff role because I knew that we have such great people in the office that people are going to step up and do what needed to be done to keep and functioning and moving forward.
Dr. Maureen Marks	And, you know, our ACE scores really, so that, you know, that it was a great year from our ACE scores. And to the point that I told Jeremy, maybe I should have just stayed away because things got so much better. We were second in improvement and we already had a high bar, so.
Dr. Shari Dade	Now, no, I mean, Jim's more like you. You really just dropped some really amazing points to think about for leaders. And, you know, one of the things that really sticks out is the ability to trust and have faith in yourself, right as who you are and what you bring into the position. I think often times I would stretch assignments, even just the idea of of stretching sometimes can feel, you know, ominous at times.
Dr. Shari Dade	You're like, oh my goodness, what what is this going to ask of me? And can I provide what is needed? But the ability to trust, the ability to have faith in what you are bringing and what is transferable to the roles that you are interested in, and that will take you further is really important. It reminds me of an activity a professor had is doing graduate school as we were about to finish and walk over that very soul into being a professional.
Dr. Shari Dade	Right. And you know, the anxiety that comes along with moving into a new phase of life or into a new thing and literally had us do an assignment where



	we had to write out what makes us a great graduate student with what has propelled us in this part of our journey and write out characteristics and skills and things of that nature, and then go and look at what makes a great psychologist or what makes a great psychiatrist or all of these different things and write up those things and then compare the list and say like, what skills are transferable?
Dr. Shari Dade	What do you already have that is there that's waiting to be unleashed in this new opportunity, in this new role? And so being able to have faith that you are already carrying some of those skills. And of course, it's a stretch assignment. So you're going to learn, you're going to continue to grow. But there are already some foundational things that are there that you bring over.
Dr. Shari Dade	And so it just reminded me of that activity that I did years ago and the ability to bring that back out for folks and say like, hey, this is something you can do to just make sure that maybe you won't be completely ready, but being able to have faith and trust that you are bringing in some things are very important.
Dr. Maureen Marks	Oh yeah. To me that's the essence of a stretch assignment, is that you're not ready. You're not ready. You wouldn't need to stretch. Right? So of course you're not ready. And that's okay. That's that's the point, is that there's going to be all kinds of stuff you're going to learn. And actually, as we're talking about this, one of the things that I think I had is an anxiety at the back of my head was, am I going to grow in ways I don't necessarily like?
Dr. Maureen Marks	You know, am I going to come out of this different in ways that I really don't want to be different now? Absolutely. And I don't think that happened. I think I was worried about becoming more hardened or cynical, and that didn't happen. There were moments during my time as chief of staff where there were things that were going on that if it were up to me, would have gone differently because of it.
Dr. Maureen Marks	But you get to see like all the pressures.
Dr. Shari Dade	All the pieces.
Dr. Maureen Marks	In that things are not, Yeah, that, that, that there's often not a clear right way to go or there's multiple ways to go. And then you have to balance what your different stakeholders are asking of you and and some of those stakeholders are have a very particular point of view that yeah, you have to pay attention to and, and that can sometimes it can sometimes lead you to having to make some choices that are not necessarily the ones that you're given.

Dr. Maureen Marks	If you had full freedom of your own, that you might make a different choice. But you do the best that you can. And that's, I think, as much as I thought I understood that coming into this role, I have a much different and much deeper understanding of death than I did.
Dr. Shari Dade	Absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah. No, that makes me think about sometimes stretch assignments may not always go as planned. Sometimes you are in a stretch assignment and things may shift or things may change. And sometimes you you really aren't able to stretch into the assignments. And how can leaders learn from failures or setbacks in these situations as they're moving through this journey?
Dr. Maureen Marks	Yeah, yeah, because I certainly had those in the last 13 months. Yeah. So I think for me, I learned this late 20 years ago that, that sometimes I have to adjust what my goal actually is. And even as chief of staff, there were times as much kind of authority and influences that role kind of has intrinsically. There were all kinds of times when I wanted things to go in a particular direction and they just weren't.
Dr. Maureen Marks	It was obvious to me that just wasn't going to happen and so I had to call back on what I learned 20 years ago when I was at the medical center, which was when I'm in those kinds of positions, I have to adjust my goal to being that I've said what I needed to say to who I needed to say it to, Oh yeah, or I did what I needed to do in the moment that that I needed to do it.
Dr. Maureen Marks	And as long as I did that, then I it's I can sleep easier at night as long as I know. And there were times when I just needed to make sure that doctor Alma Hall or Dr. Lieberman heard my point of view, that they were clear about where I how I was seeing things. And then they were going to make whatever decision they were going to make.
Dr. Maureen Marks	And they were both always really, really good about hearing me out. And I knew that they heard me. But as far as I was concerned, as long as I had said it, then I could be okay and whatever chips were going to follow how they felt, but I could be okay with it.
Dr. Shari Dade	Sure.
Dr. Maureen Marks	So I think the failures that I had, I would just I would see as temporary setbacks. You know, it's okay. Let's go to regroup. If it was still if it was really something that I still felt was really important and that we need, then this was just like I've heard you say on this podcast, this is just one way that didn't work exactly.

Dr. Maureen Marks	One more way that didn't work. I know this doesn't work. So let's figure out a different way forward.
Dr. Shari Dade	A different way.
Dr. Maureen Marks	Whereas yeah, where's, where can I get some traction? That was always because like I mentioned before, there are these big rocks that get dropped at the office door. You know, people.
Dr. Shari Dade	Are.
Dr. Maureen Marks	Coming and saying, Here, here's a big problem. And my realizing, well, if it was if it had been easy or pretty fixable, it would have been fixed before I got to the chief of staff store authority here. And so they're really big, messy, difficult problems that are very complicated involve multiple pieces across the organization. And so it was really just about figuring out who I needed to bring to the table, who needed to be in the conversation.
Dr. Maureen Marks	And our figuring out, trying to come to a common understanding about where we wanted this to go, where is it we want to end up and where can we get a little bit of traction right now? Like what's where can we get some purchase to be able to move something? It starts at least going in the direction that we think we want ahead with this thing.
Dr. Maureen Marks	And those were always the the things that were where the failures would happen because these are humongous, complicated problems that people have been trying to fix for a really long time. And so it's it's just trying to figure out, okay, so so let's try this. And if this doesn't work, let's adjust. And if we need to, like pick a different place to get some traction, then let's do that.
Dr. Maureen Marks	And just trying not to get discouraged by that and just consistently reminding myself if this was easy to fix, it would have been fixed by now. So we just got to keep trying and keep hoping that if we get the right brains around the table, we'll figure something out and we'll get at least get some traction.
Dr. Shari Dade	Definitely. Definitely. It really speaks to the understanding that failure is not the end, right? It is. It is the beginning. It's the middle. It's throughout. Right. The right. And those those are setbacks. Those are missteps. And being able to understand at the end of the day, as long as you show up, like you said at the very beginning, is authentically right possibly can with the knowledge that you bring, you are doing the job, you are doing the role, you are showing up as the leader that you need to be.

Dr. Maureen Marks	Yeah, my experience over and over again is that when people know, they feel in their bones that you genuinely care about what you're involved in and you genuinely care about the people around you, that when you make a mistake, people are very forgiving and they are they're willing to stick with you to keep trying because they believe in you, because they know that you care.
Dr. Maureen Marks	They know that you want success, that you want them all to be successful along with you, and that when that's the case, there's more room to make mistakes because you're in it together and they they feel you in it with them. And I think that just gives you a lot more room to be successful, you know, through the failures.
Dr. Maureen Marks	And some things are just messy. They're just messy.
Dr. Shari Dade	And.
Dr. Maureen Marks	They're going to be messy until you can until you can sort it out and figure some way through it. And I know it's hard. I have to remind myself that this is just going to be messy and that it's okay. It'll work out because it almost always does. It'll work out somehow. It may not be exactly how you envisioned it, but it'll work out somehow.
Dr. Maureen Marks	Somehow and yeah, definitely.
Dr. Shari Dade	And you've given some some great advice to some of the emerging leaders who are looking for assignments. Are there any resources or strategies you recommend to those who may be more seasoned looking to advance their leadership through stretch assignments?
Dr. Maureen Marks	I mean, people who are old like me, they're in a different place in their career. Yeah, I would say. I would say don't, don't get complacent. I guess, you know, there are so many opportunities. I think I head out. I mean, I know I had I had always anticipated that that I would once I became director, that was going to be I that was kind of I was going to be on my yeah, that was my last kind of hurrah until retirement turned Right exactly.
Dr. Maureen Marks	Slide into retirement in this position. Yeah. But I think it's really important if you get opportunities when you are in this kind of these last few years of your career to not shy away from them. You know, for me, there's so much meaning and value in being of service to the people around you and to the organization that you work for.

Dr. Maureen Marks	That I would say don't turn away from opportunities to be of even bigger service than you thought you could be. I've made some connections with people that that I know I will have for years, you know, and and I really see the last few years of a career are incredible opportunities to mentor. And that's the main thing that I had to give, is that I almost never say no to a mentoring opportunity.
Dr. Maureen Marks	If somebody wants to even just have one conversation formally or informally, I'm there, you know, because that's that's what I feel like I had to give at this point. And so I think for those who are at this similar place in their careers, you know, I'd really encourage you to be thinking about, you know, what are ways that you can be of service that you've never considered before.
Dr. Shari Dade	Absolutely.
Dr. Maureen Marks	That may help the organization in ways that you can't even imagine know to help other people grow in. And that helps you grow. I mean, it's I learn as much from the people I mentor as they get from me.
Dr. Shari Dade	So, yeah, mentorship is something, again, that has come up throughout the season, whether you are the mentee or the mentor or just the the power that comes from that type of experience in that relationship. And I love the idea of not saying I'm a double negative, not saying no.
Dr. Maureen Marks	Right, right, right.
Dr. Shari Dade	But saying yes to opportunities regardless of where you are in your career and regardless of what you believe your trajectory to be, because there are so many opportunities that could lend itself to your own personal growth, but the growth of others around you and the service that is so important as we are walking through this journey. Absolutely.
Dr. Maureen Marks	Yeah. I really think I think having had this experience as acting chief of staff, I mean, I got to do it for 13 months, which was way longer than any of us expected. But I know that that experience is not just it's not just helping me now, coming back to ENCODE, it's also going to be something that helps me in my retirement because I'm going to be even less afraid to try new things and take on new opportunities, having been able to do that.
Dr. Maureen Marks	Yes. And so I think it's not just about it being good for me in terms of my career and in terms of my VA professional life, but just good for me in my life and how I see myself and how I feel about myself and what I'm capable of at this point. And I know that that's going to that'll stay with me even after I.

Dr. Shari Dade	Yeah, no one can take that away. Absolutely. Absolutely. Omari This has been an amazing conversation and of course we have gotten to the end of the episode. The time goes by so quickly, you know, time flies when you're having fun. But before we leave, I do like to play a game of word association, so I'm going to say three words, three phrases, and I'd like to get your first ideas that pop up for you.
Dr. Shari Dade	Okay? Okay. All right. So the first word, is leadership acumen necessary? Oh, yeah, definitely. Leadership journey.
Dr. Maureen Marks	Fun and exciting like that.
Dr. Shari Dade	And then lastly, of course, the audacity to fail also necessary.
Dr. Maureen Marks	Oh, yeah, absolutely.
Dr. Shari Dade	Absolutely. I may be biased, but absolutely.
Dr. Maureen Marks	Yes. Yeah.
Dr. Shari Dade	Well, thank you so much. Like I said, this has been an amazing episode. It's been great to wrap up our season. It really has wrapped in all of the things that so many of our guests have talked about throughout this season. And I just really appreciate the support, the service that you give to this podcast, but also to us here in the office at NCO and throughout the VHA.
Dr. Shari Dade	So much appreciated and thank you.
Dr. Maureen Marks	Well, thank you, Shari. It's just been wonderful. And I always, you know, any opportunity to to talk with you and work with you. And Jan, I will grab hope.
Dr. Shari Dade	Cause of course. All right. Thank you. So we've come to the end of another great episode of The Audacity to Fail podcast. Thank you for tuning in to learn how missteps can lead to growth and success. Be sure to check out the key lessons in the show notes for a refresher. To request services from the National Center for Organization Development, check out our website also linked in the show notes.
Dr. Shari Dade	Remember, if you missed the target 100 times, you had that failed Instead, you've simply found 100 strategies that did not work. Be well and continue to fail forward until next time. Thank you.

