Episode 75: Questioning Assumptions to Understand Values & Behaviour

with Jordyn Hrenyk, Michif researcher & PhD candidate at Simon Fraser University

Jordyn Hrenyk uses her background in strategy and entrepreneurship to study behaviour, business, and society at both the micro and macro levels. Jordyn's research portfolio questions a variety of implicit and explicit assumptions, such as how values are communicated through everyday business decisions, how entrepreneurs impact one another and create market norms, how business concepts are taught, and who can learn from Indigenous business leaders.

Transcript:

KIRSTIN APPELT, HOST: Welcome to this edition of Calling DIBS. I'm your host, Kirstin Appelt, Research Director with UBC's Decision Insights for Business and Society or DIBS for short. Today we're calling DIBS on Jordyn Hrenyk.

Jordyn is a PhD candidate at the Beedie School of Business at Simon Fraser University. She's an Indigenous scholar who does really cool work in the business and society area. And last season we talked to one of her coauthors, Emily Salmon, about their project on Indigenous case studies. Today, I'm really excited to hear about some of her other fascinating work because she's got a very diverse portfolio of research projects. So I'll go ahead and welcome you to the podcast, Jordyn.

JORDYN HRENYK, GUEST: Thanks so much, Kirstin.

[Jordyn introduces herself and provides a welcome in Michif, which is the language of the Metis]

Hello, everyone. My name is Jordyn. I'm a Metis from Metis Nation Saskatchewan, but I live on, or I call, Vancouver home now. And Vancouver, of course, is on the traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh peoples. I'm really happy to be joining you, and I'm really grateful for the chance to talk about some of this work.

APPELT: Awesome. So excited to have you with us today, and you want to just tell us a little bit more about yourself to start us off?

HRENYK: Sure, yeah. So as you mentioned, I'm a PhD candidate at the Beedie School of Business and in the area of Business and Society. I work with two wonderful co supervisors, Dr. Dara Kelly and Dr. Stephanie Bertels. As I mentioned, I am from Metis Nation Saskatchewan, originally born in Treaty 6 Territory, but I've actually grown up in different urban centers around B.C. and of course live in Vancouver to attend SFU today. Outside of work, before grad school, I used to work with Indigenous entrepreneurs and I worked in the technology space and the education space and really helped Indigenous entrepreneurs kind of build and grow their businesses. So that was kind of my life before and I still try to maintain connections there as well, but of course, as you know, being a PhD student does take up quite a lot of my life these days. But that's a little bit about me.

APPELT: Yeah, I think you'll find once you're done with your dissertation, you're like, oh, right, hobbies, I don't have those again now.

HRENYK: I hope so. I hope to get back to that.

APPELT: Well, that's actually a really perfect segue because I was going to ask a little bit about your journey, and I know you don't think of yourself as a behavioral scientist per se, but your work looks at decision making and behavior, which kind of makes us academic cousins of a sort with this focus on behavior and business and society. So how did you get interested in looking at behavior? What led you to this area of interest?

HRENYK: Sure. Yeah. So as you said, I kind of came to behavior maybe a little bit sideways or from the side a little bit. I study business decision making, and specifically I work with entrepreneurs, Indigenous entrepreneurs, and how they decide to run their businesses, how they make their business decisions, and particularly how they interact with one another. So that, you know, connection between decision making and behavior I think really comes out in those interactions between entrepreneurs and also between entrepreneurs and their customers, their suppliers and other people in their networks.

And I think I became interested in that because I became interested in this idea of kind of the theory of everyday or how people, when they make decisions on a daily basis, how that kind of becomes who you are. Your everyday decisions really influence who you are overall and how you're expressing your values. And values is a really, really important part of my work. I know we'll talk about that more today, but I became really interested in how you can hold certain values or believe you hold certain values, but maybe act in ways that don't necessarily apply that. So I wanted to kind of look at that tension and try to understand that a little bit better.

APPELT: Oh that's so interesting. Yeah, and then I'm already hearing these interesting parallels to how the behavioral decision sciences talks about things. So, yeah, I'd love to pull apart some of the ideas.

One of the things that's interesting slash annoying in academia is that we all have our own jargon and use different terminology or sometimes use the same terminology to mean different things. And since you do come from this perspective and you've mentioned having more of a macro lens on behavior, I'm wondering if you can walk us through what micro and macro mean in this context.

HRENYK: Yeah, definitely. So macro and micro are really interesting concepts when you're studying entrepreneurship because you could fit into, you know, again, to go to a little bit of the academic terminology in the business school, you could think of yourself as a strategy scholar, studying how businesses make decisions, how businesses organize themselves, how businesses enact their values or don't. But when you're talking about entrepreneurship, that's usually one person making those decisions, so you can think about it at an organizational level or, you know, the individual person. And I tend to kind of jump between those two levels.

I really think about how an entrepreneur is representing themselves and their values, but also realizing that many of them are kind of trying to keep themselves one step removed from their customers by creating this business. It becomes not a shield, but another place where they can enact their values and maybe their business's values are slightly different than their personal ones. So that's kind of how you can think about macro and micro. It is an individual person making decisions, and sometimes I look at the level of individual decisions that they make, but at the end we're talking about a business which could potentially employ, you know, up to 100 people and still be considered a small business.

APPELT: Well, that's so interesting. And I'm already curious because then you got so many decisions that seem so rich.
And so another set of terminology that you've used that I'd like to hear a little bit more about is that your dissertation focuses on the idea of entrepreneurs, effectuation, and the theory of every day. And I know what the word entrepreneur means, but effectuation and the theory of every day are newer to me, so could you unpack those for us?

HRENYK: Sure. I actually do want to start with entrepreneur that I think it's a really funny aspect of entrepreneurship research defining an entrepreneur because I think many people on the face of it, know what the entrepreneur, what the word entrepreneur means. They know what an entrepreneur does, but where you define those boundaries between, for example, an entrepreneur or a business owner can be very interesting.

I tend to have a very inclusive and very broad definition our understanding of entrepreneurs. My kind of copout rule of thumb is if someone considers themself an entrepreneur, I tend to consider them an entrepreneur as well. It's to me, I focus specifically on Indigenous entrepreneurship, which has been defined by, I mean, I'm not going to get the exact quote right. It's basically been defined as an Indigenous person carrying out a business or an organization for the benefit of Indigenous people. So I really do look at those things like motivation and community connection and orientation towards values when I'm studying entrepreneurship, which is not emblematic of the entire field of entrepreneurship by any means. But when I talk about entrepreneurs, that that tends to be what I'm talking about is Indigenous people who run organizations or own organizations and operate them with some kind of, you know, eye towards or been towards benefiting themselves, their families, their communities and Indigenous people overall.

Turning to some of the other kind of jargon, as you mentioned, that I that I do use in my research this idea of effectuation again has a pretty rich history in the entrepreneurship field. But I want to kind of simplify it or make it make sense.

And so what it is really is this decision making logic. It's a way of making decisions based on constraints, basically based on the kinds of resources that you have access to, what you can do with them, rather than, you know, setting some big audacious goal and going out and trying to reach that goal. So if you've been in an entrepreneurship class or you've taken any entrepreneurship classes, often you'll be taught or you'll be instructed or encouraged to kind of set some big goals, then start to find ways to gather those resources to reach that goal. Where the effectuation approach really asks the questions, starting from what do you have? What resources do you have? What connections do you have? And gets you to think a little bit more generally about what you might want to do.

So the kind of metaphor that's used a lot in the literature to break it down a little bit is this idea of making dinner. There's kind of two ways you can make dinner. One, you can have a recipe in mind, you can know exactly what you want to make, and you can go to the store, maybe several stores and buy all of the right ingredients to make that recipe and make that dinner exactly as you envisioned it. Another way of making dinner is opening your fridge and your cupboards and saying, okay, what do I have and what can I make out of this? Effectuation is that kind of decision making approach emblematic of that second approach really. It's what do I have, who do I know, what resources are available to me and making decisions based on that.

And that tends to be very appropriate or applicable to entrepreneurs that don't have a lot of resources, that aren't necessarily going to be able to go out and get a big bank loan, even if they have a great business plan because of, you know, some structural reasons that may prevent people from accessing those kinds of resources. So that does tend to be quite appropriate to the very small scale entrepreneurs that that I work

with. And I should say I tend to work with, or at least in my dissertation work, I'm working with Indigenous artists who don't want to necessarily or may not be able to go out and get, you know, big bank loans and launch huge businesses. They just kind of want to do their daily work and support themselves or create a life for themselves in this kind of work.

And then finally, that really leads to this idea of the, you know, the fear of the everyday, which is where we look at those quotidian or really narrow or individual decisions that people make and actions that they take, which over a period of time really make up who we are and make up our approaches and our expectations and our ideas of ourselves. Another way I think about that, you know, you hear the quote, the days were long, but the years were short. I tend to look at the days, right? I look at those individual decisions and together those make up the years. Those make up our over arching approaches, but looking at those individual facets can really help us to understand how those big or macro events ended up taking place.

APPELT: Wow. That's so fascinating. I love that idea because I think I don't know the field, but to me, it feels like there's not enough done in that space because there's these systems and they're just the systems that are, but when you take it into looking at, okay, here's how those systems are created or businesses or organizations or whatever they are, but just like over a series of days, this is how that all adds up.

And then that idea of working from resources available is also really, I think, distinct from a lot of how the field of behavioral science works, where often it is going in with that goal and seeing how you can, you know, pie in the sky, what you can do rather than saying, okay, here's what's here and how can we work within that? So I think that's such an interesting field to be working in.

And so, again, not knowing much about this space, what do you think your dissertation is adding? What's the unique lens that you are trying to pursue?

HRENYK: Sure. Yeah. I think it builds from what you just said. I think a lot of entrepreneurship research, not all of it, I'm certainly not the only one doing this, but a lot of entrepreneurship research does tend to be quite cognitive focused, quite focused on big systems or institutions that appear at some point. We don't know exactly when, but these institutionalized expectations exist, and I don't think we've done enough yet, or I think there's certainly more room to look at these daily decisions and not only how daily decisions are made from a logical or cognitive framework, but how our personal values, how our professional values, our organizational values encourage us to act in certain ways.

You know, every time we go into work, every time we open our business for the day, we're faced with a set of choices, and we can either find ways to enact these values that we say we hold, that we believe we hold, that may be written on our website as our organizational values. We have tons of opportunities every day to decide to enact those values or not, and really, when a person comes into an organization, they may see the business values, for example, written on the wall. They may see them in a mission statement written on their website. But in their interactions with that business, they'll very quickly get to know if those values actually mean anything in that organization or if they're just lip service. And so I really like to and it's something I focus on a lot when I teach.

For example, business ethics is this idea of everyday enactment of our values and everyday enactment of the kind of business that we want to be, the kind of entrepreneur that we want to be. I think that's really, really related to this broader topic of business and society, the way we interact with our friends and our family and our customers and our suppliers and especially even our competitors. That is what sets our business apart. That is what defines our business values, not the mission statement that we have on our website.

APPELT: Yeah, and I think part of what I find so interesting about your work is that it's, to me, it feels like it's questioning some of the assumptions that, you know, sometimes we just take these ideas as, okay, it's there and we don't actually think about how it got there. And also, when we're making decisions, sometimes the values are more implicit than explicit, and so this is making sure that they are explicit, and when you're making decisions, you're considering the values and not just having them be in the back of your head. That's something that sometimes they come to the fore, but actually making decisions with those.

And then something else it's triggering for me is we recently had our big annual conference, Big Difference BC, and our keynote speaker was a psychologist, Betsy Levy Paluck, and she talked about her work that looks at repositioning social norms and the history in the behavioral decision science field that I'm in is that social norms are often treated as kind of static. Like this is the norm, this is what it is, this is what it's been, this is what it will be. But in reality, social norms are evolving. And so this is kind of reminding me of the values decision making. It's not the mission statement that's on the website, it's what we're actually doing and communicating to another. So norms evolve and they're driven by groups and subgroups, and so we decide what's the norm. The norm is just, you know, basically short for what's normal, so we're deciding what's normal. So does that resonate with you? Do you see that as similar or different to how your field conceptualized is the idea?

HRENYK: Yeah, I love this. So I used to be or I was brought up in the tradition of institutional theory. Actually an institutional theory is all about norms and what's expected of us. And you're right, sometimes we can conceptualize those norms as really rigid and impossible to change, or we can conceptualize them as, you know, changing every day. And it really does matter. And I think my work kind of falls somewhere in the middle. I think there are really stable aspects of our society, facets of our society that can be very difficult to change. But once you get down, as you mentioned, to the level of subgroups or organizations, I think people underestimate how much agency they have to decide what's not, and that's something that I really do see coming out in my research.

And I have this very specific group of entrepreneurs. Sometimes I get questions about why I picked such a narrow or small group of people. I study Indigenous bead workers, people who create beadwork like beaded jewelry and things like that, and it is a very specific thing, but that lets me get at this really specific subgroup and their idea of normal and their expectations and in that subgroup of entrepreneurs is able to make decisions for themselves, you know, collectively of what's normal and what's expected in the way we want to treat each other. And that also spills over. I see into other areas of business, their types of businesses. So I think it does really resonate. You know, we create the expectations, we create what's normal. I'm not going to pretend that everything is malleable and we can change society in a day, but you know, we are the ones who are choosing or not choosing to enact society's expectations as it was given to us. So I think, yeah, that does really resonate and I think it is quite relevant to the work that I do.

APPELT: Yeah, it's actually reminding me that in her talk, Betsey actually even used the term social norm entrepreneur as someone who's like daring to change social norms or work against what the prevailing norm is. So yeah, I like that. This is like a space, like you said, where global norms can be hard, but if you're in a small group, then you, you do have that opportunity.

And so that's also drawing another connection for me, which is this idea-- you mentioned that sometimes we don't realize that role we're playing. And so one of my good friends, Vanessa Bonds, who's a social psychologist that we spoke to last season, has a whole book on how we often underestimate our impact on others. And so I'm wondering if you can speak to how you see that playing out in your field of study.

HRENYK: Yeah, definitely. So I would say Indigenous entrepreneurship, as I've mentioned, is really focused with this eye towards how our actions, how our organizations impact other people. So I would say a lot of Indigenous entrepreneurs do think quite seriously and quite carefully about the impacts their business is having on other people, not just their employees, but even their customers and their suppliers and their competitors, which is what my dissertation is focused on.

But I think one aspect that people, Indigenous entrepreneurs, even in this field may underestimate is that how much agency they have over kind of the prevailing norms of the market. They may see themselves as, you know, I'm just me and I'm going to change my pricing strategies, so I have a sliding scale prices so that people who can't afford me work but would really benefit from it can still access it. But, you know, they think of themselves as one individual trying to do a good job of enacting their personal values. But by doing that, and by signaling that signaling their values in that way they're giving permission are making it easier for the next person to make that choice.

I'm so, specifically in my work, I look at how individual decisions to kind of resist the expectations of profit maximization, how that gives permission for other people to do the same thing, and it kind of creates this cycle of pushing each other to kind of enact values in stronger ways. And so I think people may for a time anyway, if they're not connected in the way this this kind of network of entrepreneurs is, they may not realize the effect that they're having on other entrepreneurs or other people in their field when they choose to do things differently.

And so part of my hope with this work, part of the practical relevance of this work, I hope, is just to demonstrate how important and how valuable that is for changing the norms of the entire marketplace. As I said, spilling out from just Indigenous bead workers to other kinds of Indigenous entrepreneurs and hopefully other entrepreneurs in general. But yeah, I think I think they do kind of consider how their business actions influence, you know, stakeholders, as they call them, employees and customers, but they may not fully understand how their individual actions are changing or are creating the market that they're a part of.

APPELT: Yeah, yeah, that's such an important and interesting distinction to talk about the different folks and levels and people organizations that we're influencing.

So knowing that we, or they, since I am not an entrepreneur myself, how you can have this influence on other entrepreneurs, how do you think that should change how entrepreneurs work that should that give them more willingness or courage to be able to make changes? Or how do you think, how would you like to see that awareness impact how people behave in the marketplace?

HENRYK: Yeah, I hope that it encourages people to be loud about the decisions that they're making. I hope it encourages them to realize that they can have a strong influence on this market. They can change things for the better. They can recreate the market in the way that they want to see it, just by being vocal about the kinds of choices that they're making.

And beyond entrepreneurs, I do think, you know, academics and other folks who have quite a lot of agency in their work, I think we can be doing this as well. You know, we as researchers, for example, can be quite vocal about the ways we interact with our participants. We can spend time in the articles that we write and other research that we produce talking about how we've tried to enact, you know, principles of ethical research. Often people will just say, you know, I got ethics approval for this project, and it can go into more detail about the ethical protocols and how we've tried to enact them in our daily research, so I think just like entrepreneurs, academics and many other groups of professionals can take advice and can look to the

leadership being displayed by these entrepreneurs and do that for ourselves as well and try to change the spaces and the institutions that we're a part of.

APPELT: Yeah, I really like that. And one of the ways it resonates for me is that, as you are well aware, that in academia, traditionally a very narrow type of knowledge sharing has been prioritized. Just, you know, you write a journal article and that's it. And I think now that more and more folks are finding ways to share their research beyond just peers, but to other audiences who either participated in the research or would be interested in the research. So these more practitioner or lay audience focused conferences and podcasts and things, I think the more people who are doing that, it's a neat way that I'm seeing, seeing this play out, this idea of like changing if one person is doing a conference like that or a podcast like that, then it gives other academics a nudge that direction as well. And so it can, like you said, change the marketplace in really positive ways.

HRENYK: Yeah, I think, as I said, it gives permission for people to spend time on things that are not considered traditional research outputs. Just like in your business, seeing other people choose not to make as much money as possible makes it seem more viable for you to do that as well. And so I think these kinds of positive cycles can be created actually quite easily. It does take some mechanisms to know each other is out there, some mechanisms for us to be able to collaborate or share stories with one another effectively. So I think things as you're mentioning, like podcasts and research forums, are really important ways for academics to kind of model that same behavior.

APPELT: Yeah. And then this is also got me thinking this point about different ways of sharing information, I know you have another project on the go around storytelling, and so I was wondering if we could hear a little bit about that.

HRENYK: Sure. Yeah. So this project started, I think like four or five years ago, and it's actually a continuation of the work that I've been doing for a long time around business case studies.

So in the realm of entrepreneurship, education to a lesser extent, you know, business education, overall case studies are really, really important ways for instructors to share stories of real businesses with their students. And I found over the last decade at this point that this kind of method of bringing in a particular case study is a really important and common way that business schools try to bring in Indigenous content into their curricula. So often an instructor there might not feel super comfortable or ready to create an entire lesson about Indigenous approaches to business or whatever it is, but they can bring in, you know, a published case study about an Indigenous entrepreneur into their class. And then that becomes kind of the only level of exposure that their students have to Indigenous ideas of business. And I do think that there's merit in that-- just hearing Indigenous business stories is a really important and powerful thing for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

I can say, you know, when I was an Indigenous undergraduate student in a business school, we did not speak about Indigenous business once. It never came up. And so I'm glad to see those kinds of things changing. But this particular project, we're really looking at the case study and the ways it's normally written and the ways that those norms are. Expectations kind of reinforce our Western perspective on things. As you mentioned, my coauthor, Emily Salmon, I think was talking about a related project that we're doing on this.

But in terms of storytelling, I've started working with a group of Indigenous scholars and Indigenous women at the Beedie School of Business, and together we're kind of trying to rewrite those rules a little bit. We're trying to produce a set of business stories, we call them, instead of case studies, a set of business stories that do kind of go against those expectations of a business case study. So, you know, we write the stories in first person.

They don't end necessarily on a decision point. Sometimes they're in present tense versus past tense. So we kind of are just really trying to subvert those normal expectations of storytelling that we see in a case study and trying to bring in more principles of Indigenous storytelling or oral history, for example.

And we think that, ah, we know from research that narratives can have a very strong influence on the way people make decisions and the way people think about, for example, Indigenous people. As I mentioned, most business students have very little opportunity to think about Indigenous people running businesses, to think about Indigenous people as agents. Often when Indigenous people are talked about in a business school setting, it's, you know, a population or a community that a particular firm is trying to control and something I'm trying to influence in some way, trying to get them to agree to a certain project in their stories project and kind of looking at the power of narrative, we're really trying to flip that and put Indigenous people at the center of the stories and allow out their perspectives and worldviews to be heard. So that's like I said, we've been working on it for, I think for years now, not really an end in sight, but it's really, really exciting to see how it's developed over all that time.

APPELT: Yeah, that's so interesting. And I like how it ties in because it's making me think of how narratives are formative and how we mentally construct norms because, you know, we're hearing those stories over and over again, and so then what we think of as norms develop. And so, yeah, I like that connection there.

And I know you also have another one that is looking at interactions between people, and from what I remember, it's looking at Indigenous youth entrepreneurs and how mentors versus peers play different roles, so again, looking at different ways people influence one another. Can you tell us a little bit about that project as well?

HRENYK: Sure. So for that project, I was working with an organization called NACA, National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association. They are based in Ottawa, but they operate across the country and they work with what are called AFIs or Aboriginal Financial Institutions. So those are the folks that kind of do provide, you know, funding and support for Indigenous entrepreneurs in many cases. And NACA is kind of an association of those different groups from across the country.

So I was working with NACA on an Indigenous youth entrepreneurship kind of inquiry, there's very little. But we know about specifically Indigenous entrepreneurs in Canada, what we do know tends to come from very, very small studies where you're talking to a group of youth entrepreneurs from one community, for example. So we don't have a good kind of understanding of who Indigenous youth entrepreneurs are in Canada, what they care about, what they don't care about. We tend to just, you know, think or expect that they think and feel and work in the same ways as adult entrepreneurs, which we know is not necessarily the case. The motivations for engaging in that kind of work tend to differ quite a lot.

So in that project, we first started out with a big survey. I think I looked at the literature and I think it's the biggest survey of Indigenous entrepreneurs in Canada that exists. We talked to over 100 youth entrepreneurs from every province and territory in Canada and asked them quite in-depth questions about why they operate their business, what they care about, what they want in terms of educational opportunities, what they need to grow their businesses, things like that. And we had a lot of really interesting findings come out of that project.

You can read the whole thing on that website, but one of the aspects that I think we're now trying to dig a little bit deeper into is this idea of support and what Indigenous youth entrepreneurs want. And I think the expectation for a long time is entrepreneurs want mentors. They want people who are professionals in the field that they're a part of to give them advice about where to take their business next and what they should be doing.

And what we found in our survey and some follow up interviews, we did 13 follow up interviews, is that a lot of the times youth entrepreneurs are happy to have mentors. They're happy to have people to talk to go off kind of done it before. But where they really get most of their advice on how to make decisions and when they're facing a difficult decision, who they go to is their group chat, not their mentor. It's their peers, other people who are maybe not in the same industry as them all, but in the same kind of, you know, life stage or the same kind of stage of running their business. They turn to those folks to make business decisions rather than these people we consider experts. And there could be a lot of different reasons for that.

As I've said, I'm not a psychologist, so part of it, maybe even straight up, you know, feeling intimidated, going to a mentor with what is seemingly a small question or a daily challenge or a daily interaction that they feel maybe they don't want to go to that mentor or that question. So instead they turn to friends and peers who are in the same place. So in that project for really trying to uncover kind of the power of peer networks, how do you create these networks so that they are strong so that youth feel that they have people that they can turn to when they're making business decisions? And this is not to say, as I mentioned, it's not to say that mentorship is bad. It's just to say this may be an overlooked aspect of supporting entrepreneurs, and we may need to figure out more effective ways to build these kind of peer networks.

APPELT: Yeah, I think that reminds me of just other conversations I've been having on other topics where it's not an either or, it's both. And it's not that we don't want mentors, but that that's not all that's needed.

The other thing I like there is just growing more connections to other parts of the work you've talked about. I think it goes back to your idea before questioning assumptions where we assume we know more about youth entrepreneurs and then your work is really questioning those assumptions and seeing what's from their perspective what they have, what they need, etc., so I like how you've structured your body of research and all the interconnections. I know in academia, at least in my field, we always we had to have like a narrative of how our work all fits together. And you've really done a nice job at having your different threads running through your research. So it's very, very interesting to hear about the different components.

HRENYK: Yeah, I think there is some, you know, freedom, thanks to my wonderful supervisors and the program that I'm in, for me to really take on projects and work that is interesting to me that I feel like I can be a benefit to. I am a little bit spoiled for choice, which I know is not the case for everyone, but it's been wonderful to be able to take on projects only that I think I can contribute to, and only that I think, you know, align with my expertise and what I know. And so I think, you know, this as you have very nicely called it, this program of research has maybe come together a little bit haphazardly.

But at the same time, in the same way, I encourage entrepreneurs to think about their values and their mission or vision when they're making daily decisions. I do try to keep those things in mind when I'm approached to work on particular projects or approach to be on different teams. I do try to think about, you know, who is this going to benefit, is it going to benefit me and my career or is it going to benefit hopefully me and my career and other people? You know, is this project actually going to touch the individuals that I'm working with? And then in my case, that's of course, Indigenous entrepreneurs. So I do try to keep them at the heart of the projects I take on, and I think that has led me, so far anyway, down a good path.

APPELT: Yeah, absolutely. And I think you have a good eye for finding assumptions that are in some ways so implicit that they don't get questioned. And you have a good eye for like, oh, you know what? That's an assumption. That's not a fact or something else. That's an assumption and we can question it. So it's fascinating.

So I have two traditional kind of wrap up questions and I'm actually going to flip the order and ask my usual last ones first, which is just were there any things about your research that I haven't asked that you'd like to share or any other last thoughts on the research side?

HRENYK: I think the only thing I would want to mention, and this is something I say to my students as well, I tend to teach or I have taught classes of mostly or entirely non-Indigenous students. And so the thing I like to share is yes, my work is Indigenous focused. I work solely with Indigenous entrepreneurs or Indigenous organization leaders, but I think that there's so much that the general market can learn from Indigenous entrepreneurs and you shouldn't feel that insights from these Indigenous specific studies can't be applied to your work.

When I presented, for example, on my dissertation in the past, I've had people from different high technology spaces come up to me and say, this reminds me so much of the way my group of companies interacts with one another, so I think it's really important for professionals and entrepreneurs and scholars to realize that Indigenous business leaders have insights that can support mainstream business practices as well.

I think one of the things that sets Indigenous businesses and organizations apart is that values lens is that really, you know, ethical approach and community-oriented approach to doing business. And I hope that other organization leaders are able to look to Indigenous leaders and see, oh, there's something I can take from there or there's something I can learn from that, rather than saying, oh, that's only for Indigenous people or that doesn't apply to me. I'm really encouraging people to think, I guess, cross-culturally and understand that Indigenous business leaders can be just leaders in business as well.

APPELT: Absolutely. And I think going back to this idea of assumptions, it's long been an assumption that Indigenous business leaders and other folks have something that they would learn from other models of business. So if it's going one way, why isn't it going both ways? Why isn't everyone learning from everyone? And I think that's an important overarching assumption that we need to question.

HRENYK: Yeah, sorry. One more thing. Especially as, you know, business leaders are looking to create, you know, sustainable organizations or ethical organizations or I'm thinking about planetary limits and stuff like that, a lot of that is already baked into the way Indigenous entrepreneurs think about their businesses. So once again, I really encourage people if they're in, for example, the sustainability space or other areas of business and society, to look at these models and these approaches that we have in Indigenous entrepreneurship research.

APPELT: Yeah, that's fantastic. Well, on a very related note and perhaps redundant at this point, but do you have a message for folks who are early in their journeys of exploring behavior and decision making other than the two brilliant points you just made?

HRENYK: Yeah, I think are people who are, you know, joining this field either as researchers or practitioners. As I have mentioned, I wouldn't necessarily call myself a behavioral scientist, but what I know or what I've learned about this field is that, you know, decision making and behavior isn't only driven by cognition. And I would hope anyone kind of joining this field now can be reminded by our conversation today to really think about, you know, the non logical side of our decision making, the values driven side, the way that we actually make decisions on a day to day basis rather than how we think back on those decisions later. And I know that's something that behavioral scientists think a lot about, and so I just want to encourage people to consider values and what you might call the softer side of decision making as well as, of course, the more logical, the more cognitive focused aspects of behavior in decisions.

APPELT: Yeah, I really like that as an ending point, and I think it's something we try to stress in our courses, but it is, I feel, and often not as captured in the kind of standard reading materials. And so podcasts like this are exactly the perfect way to get those messages across because it's hard to find a textbook chapter on this part of decision science. So I love that.

And just thank you so much for spending time with us today. I am spending so much time with my own academic lens on behavior and decision making so it's really a rare treat to be able to talk with someone with a different lens and hear about the work you're doing and make connections between our different fields and research portfolios. So thank you and good luck with your dissertation. You're going to be such a wonderful assistant professor in the coming days, weeks, months, and I can't wait to see what all you contribute, so thank you for joining today.

HRENYK: Thank you so much. This was great. I'm really grateful to have been asked and asked to share some of the projects I'm doing, so thank you so much.

APPELT: And thanks to our listeners for joining another episode of Calling DIBS.