

# BE THE ONE TO INSPIRE SYSTEMATIC CHANGE

**Versiti Podcast:** Season 2 - Episode 6 (Part 1)

**Host:** Edgar Daggett

**Guest:** Marc Hardy

## INTRO CLIP

**MARC:** One person that I met that was very influential during my time is the custodian at one of my schools.

**EDGAR:** Okay. Yeah?

**MARC:** He was an older Hispanic gentleman and, wherever I'm working, I always try to make sure that I get to know whoever the custodian or janitorial team is.

**EDGAR:** It's also learning about different people's cultures and seeing what they celebrate, what they don't celebrate and being like, wow...

**MARC:** Exactly.

**EDGAR:** So who are those two people in the background there behind you? I see Nipsey's right there.

**MARC:** Yeah. Yeah! So we got Nipsey, and we've got Malcolm X. So... I work off of inspiration. So any chance I can be inspired, I'm all for it.

## BUMPER

# Versiti Ep 6 Sub

**EDGAR:** How's it going everybody? Welcome back to another episode of the Stand Out from the Inside podcast presented by Versiti. Once again, I am your host, Edgar Daggett. Super excited to bring you guys another episode, if you haven't caught back on any of the past episodes of Season Two or any of Season One, check out the Stand Out from the Inside channel on Versiti. The link will

be down below. And then don't forget to follow, like, subscribe to all of our channels. Once again, I'm super excited. Hope you guys are enjoying the year. We are getting really, really close to 2023. I can't believe how fast this year has gone by. It's been incredible bringing you guys all these incredible guests to hear all the amazing stories that people in our communities are doing. We're bridging gaps together, bringing people together, and making a real big difference within all of us. And hopefully you guys are all learning as much as I am learning here, talking to all these guests, but to bring you another one, we have another guest by the name of Marc Hardy. He is from Indianapolis, Indiana. I believe he's directly from the hometown of the Colt, but to bring him to the Stand Out from the Inside podcast; welcome Marc.

**MARC:** Edgar. Thank you, man. And you know, it's a sour time right now as a Colts fan. I must say. You know, we embarrassed ourselves yesterday, but that doesn't have to be a part of the interview. We don't have to talk about that.

**EDGAR:** Like I said, I'm on the same boat. We're in Detroit out here. So, we're getting better. It's we're—

**MARC:** You guys won.

**EDGAR:** Yeah. Making better steps, you know, hopefully we'll get a super bowl going in a couple years.

**MARC:** Yeah. Hopefully not before us, but it's okay. Oh, I do like your studio, man. I really like that picture behind you. You got nice setup there.

**EDGAR:** I appreciate it, man. It was a lot of design strategy. We had Randy back there from Foureva Media who's the man behind the podcast, moving all the cameras for you guys. He put a lot of design and a lot of thought into it. So, you know, the lights, it makes it feel like it's a little nightclub back here as well. So it's awesome.

**MARC:** Y'all did well. I'm excited to join you today.

**EDGAR:** So welcome, man! How you been?

**MARC:** I'm good. I'm good, man. I really, really can't complain. My birthday is this week. That's exciting.

**EDGAR:** So happy birthday for that!

**MARC:** Yeah! But yeah, I'm good, man. How how's everything your way?

**EDGAR:** It's been good. We're wrapping up the year, you know, busy season. But, enjoying it as much... We still can't believe 2023 is right around the corner, so it's exciting.

**MARC:** Yeah. Time is flying by, man. Time is flying.

**EDGAR:** Yeah. So tell the viewers, the watchers a little bit about who Marc Hardy is. [00:04:22]

**MARC:** Okay. Hopefully I can keep this as succinct as possible. But like you mentioned, I'm from Indianapolis, Indiana. I was raised here pretty much my entire youth. After graduating high school, I went on to Indiana university in Bloomington, Indiana where I studied sociology and African-American/African diaspora studies. Had zero clue what I wanted to do with that even after leaving school. So I spent a couple years trying to figure that out. I was in different odd jobs while trying to figure out what my true passion is. But one day I woke up, I said, if this is what adulting is like: waking up and going to do the same job every day and coming home just to prepare to do it all again the next day; I wanted to make sure it felt impactful for me. So I joined an AmeriCorps program, which is — if you're not familiar — it's like the federal government's national service organization where I volunteered a year of my time to help students in underserved schools with reading and math. One on one help that they needed and deserved. But right before I went... and that took me out to the bay area in California. And that's where I did that program. But right before I left on June 17th, 2015 I remember it was a very, very hot day outside. And I was walking into my apartment and I grabbed something cold to drink and I turned the TV on and usually I land, I go to YouTube or maybe ESPN. But that day I landed on CNN and they were reporting on the tragedy in Charleston, South Carolina, where Dylann Roof went into Emmanuel AME Church and murdered nine innocent people who welcomed him with love and open arms into their Bible study. And it was at that moment where I was like— As you know, that moment hit me pretty hard because I grew up in the AME Church; very, very similar to Emmanuel here in Indianapolis. And my grandmother would attend those weekly Bible studies with about 12 people in 'em. Very similar to that one. And it was at that moment, I was like, that could have been my church. That could have been my grandmother. That could have been me. So as long as I'm here on earth, I have to feel like I'm doing something to prevent the next Dylann Roof. So that was in 2015 and I spent like a year trying to figure out okay, What can I do from my position in society, and while I was living in the bay area, I just started writing. I wrote about how I felt about

injustice issues, but also spent time brainstorming ways that ordinary people could have a positive impact on issues they feel strongly about so that we don't feel completely helpless. Right? We all can do something. So it's all about just finding what that is. And so my book (Can I Be Real?) came out in 2017 and naturally after that, I just started leading workshops and presentations and consulting around all things diversity, equity and inclusion. And during that time, I moved back to Indianapolis and I was still working in the schools doing school operations, and also leading some of our DEI initiatives as well until I moved into a full-time role with another school organization as the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Coordinator. I was able to have some success there, which we were pretty proud of. And since then, I've been tapped for another opportunity that's led me to Merchants Bank as the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Manager here. And I lead all of our efforts here, both internally and externally. But that's sort of my full-time life now, both during the day and in the evenings. And as we're gearing up for a very exciting time with, Can I Be Real, Inc.. As we're coming up on our NAP Spades Cup, Black Friday Edition, which is a spades tournament. I'm sure we'll get more into that. But it's a wonderful opportunity and a way we give back to things that are important to us.

**EDGAR:** No, thank you! So how was your time in the Bay area? Like, what was that like and how does that differ from Indiana?

**MARC:** So as you can imagine, everything was different, literally everything — from the weather to the people to rent prices, right?

**EDGAR:** Yeah. Yeah. California.

**MARC:** Everything was very different, but I really, really enjoyed my three years out there. Mainly because I'm always interested in learning more and you never know... My life model is you never know who you can learn from. That could be a 90 year old person; that could be a four year old person; that could be a Black person; that could be a Hispanic person; a member of the LGBTQ+ community. I always look for opportunities to learn. The Bay Area definitely offered me that. And I think the main thing, it was just very inspiring being out there because my roommate, he's an engineer, a software engineer. My roommate, when I was out there — and I would notice he was like, you know, building his own startup and that was kind of the thing: everybody has their job, but they're working on their startup, you know? [00:10:40]

**EDGAR:** Mm-hmm.

**MARC:** And I knew the tech space wasn't for me. I'd look at his computer screen when he's working. And I'm like, man, that looks like it would put me to sleep. But I was really inspired from the sense of building something of my own that I could potentially leverage throughout my life. So I definitely caught the entrepreneur bug while I was out there because of that. And it's benefited me in ways that I couldn't even imagine to this point. So very, very grateful for my time out, out there.

**EDGAR:** So did you meet that person, that 40 year old that was inspiring to you during that time out there?

**MARC:** Well, yeah. Well... That's kind of an ongoing thing. So like... But I can say, one person that I met that was very influential during my time is the custodian at one of my schools.

**EDGAR:** Okay. Yeah?

**MARC:** He was an older Hispanic gentleman and, wherever I'm working, I always try to make sure that I get to know whoever the custodian or janitorial team is. Because, one) they're typically great people; but two) they have different experiences in life that I could learn from. So one thing in particular from him that I learned is the different ways that, the different celebrations that, the Hispanic culture has. I'm spacing on the proper name, but it's one that I found very interesting was they celebrate— and shout out to Hispanic Heritage Month; it's currently Hispanic Heritage Month, so... But one thing I learned is they have what's called like the Day of the Dead. There is an actual term for it. I'm not sure if you're familiar or not, but I thought that was pretty interesting where they have a day where they, you know, honor their people that have passed on in different ways. And that was something that I wasn't necessarily familiar with or something that I did. But that was really touching, especially for someone who myself who's lost people very close to me; specifically my mother. So that was pretty eye opening for me. And like, how are there ways that I can honor her. You know? So that was inspiring and we had a lot of great, great conversation. But yeah, that was definitely beneficial for me. And it is definitely something I'm thinking about even years later. So that relationship.

**EDGAR:** It's also learning about different people's cultures and seeing what they celebrate, what they don't celebrate and being like, wow, we don't do that, or I've never done that over here. You know, what, we celebrate—

**MARC:** Exactly. [00:13:44]

**EDGAR:** It's interesting, always to find new things that people do. So who are those two people in the background there behind you? I see Nipsey's right there.

**MARC:** Yeah. Yeah! So we got Nipsey, and we've got Malcolm X. So...

**EDGAR:** Malcolm X. All right.

**MARC:** They're there to... and you have to excuse me. I've only been in my role maybe a little over two months, so I'm still trying to decorate around here.

**EDGAR:** Yeah, yeah, you're good.

**MARC:** Yeah. But those are two very inspirational people for me and. With Nipsey, like he was much more than an artist to me. That was the first person I really enjoyed watching his interviews, because they were always so inspiring, man. I work off of inspiration. So any chance I can be inspired, I'm all for it. And any chance I can inspire someone else, I'm also very for that as well. And Nipsey was just very inspiring, man. The way he stayed authentic while also uplifting his community in numerous ways, whether it's buying businesses within his community and giving people jobs and legit ways they can support their families; especially people who have been in the prison system. And then also he opened Vector 90, which is like a co-working space in which he also gave youth in the inner city the tools to like, learn how to code and different things around technology to better prepare them for the very popular tech industry that's out there in California. He was just, a leader. A real leader. And unfortunately, he's passed, but I think his legacy will forever live on, especially in my household. So, yeah. And then Malcolm X, we all know Malcolm. Just his intelligence, his desire to really create the best life possible for people who looked like him. There's a lot of ways I try to implement that into my own personal life as well. So those are definitely two figures I had to put up as I'm brainstorming and trying to figure out how we can solve this problem or this problem. I always appreciate that inspiration around me. So...

**EDGAR:** No, two game changers. Two people that, in their day to day were changing, but not knowing that they're also changing the future. The way people believe, the way that people see, and specifically for Nipsey being able to change if you're in the prison system, when you leave that you still have an opportunity to change your life. Like you don't have to continue on a road that maybe has already been designed for you. But you can do so many things. And yeah, that software tech is obviously the biggest giant that we have right now. Everything's tech around the world of tech. So learning, getting a certificate in coding, or just learning like different ways to... whether it's marketing, finance...

giving those opportunities to students or to young children that possibly didn't have that opportunity and bringing that opportunity in front of them and being like, this is here for you, if you wanna take it. I think it's incredible. [00:17:20]

**MARC:** Exactly, exactly. And, I'm pretty sure that when Nipsey first started rapping in whatever year that was; I don't know if he immediately imagined that he would have such a large impact on a dude, I don't know, maybe five years younger than him in Indianapolis, Indiana, who is still, you know, inspired by his words and his music, even after he's gone. Like, I don't know if he initially envisioned that. And that's something that I like to kind of... my motto is if I'm able to change like one person, one biased person's view on the world or view on people who look like me, I feel like I've done my job because you never know how far your impact can reach. Right?

**EDGAR:** Yep.

**MARC:** Same with the work that you do and you never know who may get any of the information that you're sharing. You never know if you impact someone who may then impact someone else and encourage them to donate blood. So you never know the potential of your impact. So that's something I took from both of them as well.

**EDGAR:** No, it's incredible the impact that they still bring to this day. It'll be forever it'll be talked about. I was reading one of the articles and when he passed away Nipsey they were designing, you know, a lot of people were putting his pictures out there in California. They were painting murals and it brought a whole different attention to them or to those students. And not only they were like... they weren't viewing it as, okay, you're writing on the wall. Some of that, they were viewing like the art that was being created. [00:19:20]

**MARC:** Yeah.

**EDGAR:** And they were keeping it out on the walls and a lot of those students were able to go to school at an art school and continue to learn and progress their skills. Which I think was incredible for the city to do.

**MARC:** Exactly, man. Exactly. You know, tragedies are terrible, but sometimes there are some things that come out of it that are long lasting and beneficial for people. And that's just another example.

**EDGAR:** Yeah. Yeah. No, it's ridiculous, but it's an amazing way that people are dealing with things nowadays. So Indiana, huh? So how's Indiana living now? You said you're about two months into this DEI role, manager role.

**MARC:** Yeah.

**EDGAR:** Where at exactly, are you doing this role at?

**MARC:** Okay. Yeah, so as I mentioned a little in my intro, my background is really in education. I spent the first, I don't know, seven years or so of my professional career within education. So that's where my roots are. But I recently made the transition into the banking industry and more specifically the mortgage banking industry. My bank, Merchants Bank, we primarily deal in the mortgage lending space. And we have offices all over the country where we work on funding, like affordable housing projects and things like that. So I'd say with Indianapolis as a whole, I think, in the DEI space, we're really starting to come together in that way. As far as like DEI leaders across the city really come together to try to make systemic change. So that's very inspiring, but in my specific role I'm able to work in a lot of different departments in which mainly recruiting, working with our recruiters to diversify our candidate pool. Cuz the banking industry is typically filled with white males. So exposing, whether it's minority high school students to the possibilities within banking, college students, as well through our internships. And we have apprenticeships for high school students as well and even some colleges with non-traditional students. So mid-career people who are looking to go back and start a new career and start with education. So working with some of those local schools to kind of get some of those people in the doors, but also our external efforts. Right? So, there are long systemic issues within banking industries and mortgages. I just trying to break some of those down as best we can, being intentional about how we formulate mortgage products for people in low to moderate income neighborhoods for minorities, for women. So working with our mortgage department and our small business association and business banking people. And then, internally it's Hispanic Heritage Month. So that's very exciting. This is my first culture month organizing activities here. So we have a lot of educational materials that I've been sharing company-wide. We'll have all of our employees will be able to engage in a catered meal by a Hispanic restaurant, Hispanic owned restaurant. So that's our way of investing in that community as well. And we have offices all over the country, so that's pretty exciting.

[00:23:37]

**EDGAR:** That's awesome. Yeah.



**MARC:** Yeah. And we've got some speakers coming in to kind of give us like some history of the Hispanic community and within our country. So both, and just giving us local history and national history. Got some trivia games lined up, so we're pretty excited. We're getting the ball rolling and just trying to make something happen, man. Trying to go from good to great.

**EDGAR:** Oh, that's awesome. So would you say as a DEI manager that your intentions are first for the organization, for the people, and then you reach out? How do you view it?

**MARC:** Yeah. That that's... I would say that, yes. Because if we... So coming in, you have to ensure that everyone is really on the same page and buys into whatever DEI efforts you're trying to initiate. So, there's a few ways to do that, but one is making it just relatable as possible to people. So like I said banking is typically made up of white males, majority and we're no different. So like really helping them understand why this work is important and how it does impact them. And not just white males, but you know, any one of a majority group, right? Or a group that is traditionally in power. So I'm a man. I need men here to understand the importance of Investing in the women of the organization and promoting them to senior leadership and the benefits that come from that. Right? So it's really getting people within the organization to understand, okay, this is why this is important for me. You know, I may be a white male, but I do have a wife who's a woman. I would want her workplace to be equitable for her and inclusive for her; or I have a son or daughter who identifies as being a part of the LGBTQ+ community. Right? So, I would want whatever school they go to or whatever company they're with to be as inclusive as possible. Those same people's wives and people's family members that are different; they work here too. We need to make sure that, not only are we helping them be the best they can be and giving them the tools they need, but valuing their input and ensuring that there are diverse people, in the beginning, to even hear from. Right? It's all about just making it relative to people and making it personal for people.

[00:26:43]

**EDGAR:** Yeah.

**MARC:** And then we can kind of start the work internally and externally now that we're all on the same page.

**EDGAR:** Yeah that's, that's awesome, man. It's, you know, it's an industry that you say is very dominated one way. It's how to be creative and how to be like, okay, this impacts you in a way. DEI is increasing and continuing to increase and we're seeing it everywhere. So some of the work and some of the data that's

out there; it's already out there, but how do you bring it up to, or how do you bring it to light? So, this master role that you have, I gotta ask because this is impressive. So how do you go about and have a book also? Like, this is a challenging subject that you're hitting on and traveling, how do you find the time to write a book? And for those that don't know, Marc Hardy has a book. We'll feature the link, but it's called, "Can I Be Real?" How do you find time to write, to get that book out?

**MARC:** Yeah, man. So, thanks for bringing that up. It's available on my website as well as Amazon, but you know, it's... intentionality was huge for it. Right? A lot of people start books but may not finish.

**EDGAR:** Okay.

**MARC:** And so for me, it was all once I figured out. Okay. Because I spent a year trying to figure out how I could have some sort of positive impact on these issues that I feel strongly about. So once I was able to think of that, I wanted to ensure I was intentional about it to see it through. So that included having a designated day and time that, if I didn't write anything throughout the week, Saturday mornings, from nine to 12, those were dedicated writing times. If I'm ever busy, I know that Saturday is when I'll have time to write. And obviously I wanted to write more than that, more frequently than that. But that was the first step. And I think another step was having an accountability partner. So, I wasn't working with anyone else that was currently writing a book, but I did identify my mom to like hold me accountable. Right? We lived three time zones away from each other because she was still in Indianapolis. But during our conversation, she would always bring it up. How's it book going? How's the book going there? And if I said, well I haven't wrote anything in about a week. Then she's like, okay, well, why? And it was coming from a genuine place of interest as opposed to like coming down on me about it. And she was like, well, what's blocking you? What's stopping it? And how can we maneuver past that? So those two things I think really helped me and honestly, I was very passionate at the time and I still am. But very, very passionate about what I was writing about. So that made it a little easier too. Like, I can't wait to talk about this subject, so that was something that really, really kept me going as well. And, I didn't want to just talk about things that frustrated me. I definitely wanted to share that, but it was important for me to also start brainstorming ways that people can come up with some sort of solution. Each chapter is followed up with brainstorming a solution or brainstorming a list of how — whatever we were talking about in that topic — how we can kind of reach some sort of solutions from our point of view. So whether it's... there's a chapter on education, there's a chapter on relationships with the police. There's a chapter on

the N word there, you know? So I wanted to make sure that I wasn't just venting, which is very important. People can kind of get an understanding of where I'm coming from or why I may respond to things the way I do, but also okay, now that we know this is an issue, how do we kind of, how can I have a positive impact to you? If I can't solve it nationally, how can I solve it in my state, in my city, in my neighborhood, on my streets? Right? [00:30:15]

**EDGAR:** Mm-hmm.

**MARC:** Because all of that is helpful. All of that is beneficial. And like we mentioned earlier, you never know who you inspire, who they may then inspire. So it can be like a domino effect. I hope that answers your question.

**EDGAR:** No, no, it does! What I like about it, it's like a bunch of different subjects that you can pick and choose and learn and probably see like an opinion of yours; what your thoughts are on. So that, that's super interesting. I don't think I've... there's not that many books that are like that. Chapter one, if you wanna read about X item and be like, okay, I wanna understand a little bit about it and kind of see like a different side or a different viewpoint. So that's awesome. How long did it take you to complete?

**MARC:** So it's not a long book. It's 108 pages.

**EDGAR:** Okay.

**MARC:** It took me 14 months. It would've taken me about 12 but while I was writing it was... So I started in August of 2016. In November of 2016 is when Donald Trump was elected president...

**EDGAR:** Alright everybody. This is part one of a two part special for you all. I wanna thank everybody for listening and watching. Once again, this is the Stand Out from the Inside podcast presented by Versiti. I'm your host Edgar Daggett and we will see you all next time for part two. Peace!