



Insider's Secrets to Great Leadership



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Leadership by Conscious Design—Interview Series I
Hosted by MaryAnn D'Ambrosio, Ph.D.

Leadership By Conscious Design Interview Series
Insider’s Secrets to Great Leadership – Transcripts

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About the Interview Series

Innovative Leadership

Lead Out Loud Now is very excited to reveal the next level in leadership development! Although this series is designed for individuals in corporations and business, you’ll quickly discover that the *Insider’s Secrets to Great Leadership* are timeless pearls of wisdom, that guide the leader who is within each and every one of us.

By Conscious Design . . .

The six outstanding heart-based leaders in the *Leadership by Conscious Design Interview Series* understand there’s a major shift or change taking place in the world and it’s no longer “business as usual.” You’re in for a real treat. These leaders have stepped up and are offering wisdom, experience, and practical tools that can strengthen your leadership capacity to enrich your personal and professional life.

The Guests are:



David O'Brien



Elizabeth Agnew



Stacey Hentschel



Patricia Varley



Sandra LeMieux



Andrea Woolf

About the Host



MaryAnn D'Ambrosio, Ph.D., is the CEO and Founder of Lead Out Loud Now. During her 30 plus years in the corporate world, MaryAnn has witnessed countless professionals holding back on their leadership potential. To grow the leader who is inside of you, MaryAnn has developed and introduced corporate colleagues and executives to a new leadership model based on Conscious Communication.

As a visionary, conscious communicator, motivational speaker, and personal and group consultant for personal mastery, MaryAnn will intuitively and empathetically guide you in advancing your leadership skills and potential. MaryAnn’s greatest desire is to see the leader within you acknowledge the call to serve by – stepping up and leading, now! For more information on MaryAnn and her work visit her website: www.leadoutloudnow.com.



Guest: David O’Brien

Hello everyone, and thank you for being here. This is MaryAnn D’Ambrosio of www.leadoutloudnow.com and I want to welcome you to the Leadership by Conscious Design Interview Series.

I created or designed this leadership series for individuals who are in business and in corporations and are seeking a new way of leading. This is exactly the type of leadership development I craved and searched for in my corporate career, and it’s my pleasure and honor to offer this series to you.

The leaders that are part of this interview series are authentic, the real deal. They’re heart-based leaders who walk the talk. In this series, you’ll learn what’s at the heart of great leadership and how this can increase your leadership potential by building your confidence, increasing your clarity, your communication capability and of course, that connection with others.

Today, our guest is David O’Brien, and David is president of Connecticut-based WorkChoice Solutions, a nationally recognized provider of leadership and team effectiveness consulting services. Prior to launching WorkChoice Solutions in 2000, David was senior vice-president and general manager with a global provider of workforce management services.

In his first book, *The Navigators Handbook: 101 Leadership Lessons for Work and Life*, this was released in July of 2008. His second book, *Tapping Your Leadership Wisdom*, is expected in bookstores in the spring of 2010.

Welcome David, I’m so glad you’re able to join us.

DAVID: Good morning MaryAnn. It’s very nice to be part of this conversation and part of this series.

MARYANN: Thank you. Can you just tell us a little bit more about yourself?

DAVID: Sure. The work that I do centers around acknowledging that this is my life’s work. I am very, very fortunate to be able to say at this juncture of my career that I am doing my life’s work and that came out of the experience that I had, as you mentioned, when I started WorkChoice Solutions back in 2000. Frankly, I don’t know if I ever told you this, but I had taken a sabbatical from that last corporate job where I was in the senior vice-president role. I took some time off, just under a year, to really sort out what had I learned about leadership, and specifically about leadership, but about work and work life and all of that over the previous 20

years. And so, my work has been around this whole issue of Leadership Organizational Effectiveness, human resources in general over the last 25 years.

MARYANN: Dave, how would you define great leadership? You’ve been in a lot of these roles and you’ve worked with individuals. What’s your definition of great leadership?

DAVID: Well, I think it’s important to note that there are – in my mind, there’s two dimensions of this. I often have people asked me, “so what is the difference between leadership or managing, what does great leadership really mean? And I think within the context of great leadership MaryAnn, there are really two dimensions.

The first dimension in my mind is what goes into it, what does it take to create that? And the second dimension is – so that’s kind of the input – and then the second dimension is what I think of as kind of the output; what does that input create? And as a beginning point, the input from the leader, the actions and state of mind, perhaps, that the leader needs to have, I think it begins with acknowledging the scope of their influence. It really begins with acknowledging and honoring the role of the leader. Within that of course, within that input, within that framework of what it takes for the leader to be considered greater, to produce a great leadership outcome would be the mutual respect, the trust, the integrity, the clarity, the communication – all of these things that help people understand where they’re going and what needs to be done and really, ultimately be able to trust and have confidence in that leader. And then the output that that creates, the great leadership kind of output - that second dimension – is that sense of clarity and purpose that’s shared by the group. I think it’s a heightened level of community and trust amongst the group, and I think at the very highest level, it really comes down to creating an environment where people as human beings, as fellow travelers, are better off because of the experience, because of that connection, because of that community, and they learn and grow and develop and experience this together as a group.

MARYANN: Dave, you mentioned trust as a big part of this. As a leader, how do you build trust with your peers, your colleagues, and then with the people you lead?

DAVID: I think as a baseline, it starts with honoring your commitments. Trust people... I’ve often said – you and I heard this, I’m sure most of our listeners have heard this – that trust takes a lifetime to build and can be damaged or diminished very quickly and in building that trust, I think it starts with acting with integrity consistently, being clear on that, having clear values – strong values and – I’m sure talk more about my thinking on that and the connection, of course, to our work that we do – but I think it starts with honoring your commitments, being clear, understanding – back to the point that I mentioned a moment ago, about what I think of this in the context of leadership influence – understanding the huge level of influence that we have as leaders, and our need to honor and respect that and the people are part of it. So, I think as a baseline, it’s about honoring our commitments and being very aware of the scope of our influence and impact as leaders.

MARYANN: Nowadays with the world, and especially the business world changing so rapidly, it really is no longer business as usual. And so in corporations and in businesses, there’s an immediate need for conscious leadership. What’s your definition of a conscious leader?

DAVID: I think it comes back to that foundational aspect that I’ve shared with many people over the years and that is really the awareness.

Just a story related to this. When I started to write the book, *The Navigators Handbook*, five years ago, my original intent was, as you know, to just look at common denominators of great leaders and do a kind of formal academic research kind of project, and it took on a very different tact. And one of the main reasons it did, was it began to look at the fact that these great leaders were defined as great leaders outside of work. And as I think I had mentioned to you one time, I became curious about why are they defined and how are they defined as great leaders outside of work? And clearly, the common denominator there that speaks to your point – I think speaks volumes to this point – is that level of awareness around their core values, and allowing those core values to guide all of their of leadership interactions, all of their decision making, all of their connectivity to the business objectives.

And I think, as a baseline, that conscious leadership is about being self-aware, it’s about having a deep understanding of those values but also, as I’ve said in many cases over the years, it’s not enough to just be clear on those values. I think one of the things that I’ve seen in my work over the years that connects to the great leadership characteristics is, not only that clarity, but also clarity around how do you live those values, day in and day out, how do they guide you in your role as a leader?

So I think it starts with the awareness, it starts with the clarity, and it becomes an ongoing process.

MARYANN: Do you believe then David, before you can lead others, or really be a great leader-you must become a leader in your own life first?

DAVID: I think it’s a big part of it, MaryAnn. I really believe that it starts there. I can look over my career over my 20+ years of leadership experience and realize that there was a progression there, there was an evolution of my own leadership capacity, of course, I think as there is for most people. But, I really believe that as we look at the fact that – one of the common denominators that I’ve seen again and again is that it starts there, that level of awareness, that self-awareness around values, and interest and capacity. I’ve said that in many organizations that I’ve done work in – the need to really honor that, to acknowledge that in order for me to be a good leader in this space called my work life, I need to understand how I lead my life and lead other parts of my life.

The point I made earlier about those common denominators, that was a very important discovery for me. I probably knew it going into it, but I hadn’t thought of it, I hadn’t anticipated it as part of the research for the book. And what I found was that those leaders that were again and again defined as great leaders at work were defined as great leaders outside of work, and I think that it starts there.

MARYANN: That seems to be a theme, Dave.

DAVID: I really do. I see it in so much of the work that I do, in so many of the conversations I have with leaders, whether it be in a coaching context, or just a conversation, in a less formal kind of environment, again and again, that comes back to that being a critical part of what great leaders do and have in common.

MARYANN: The leadership role right now is, it seems like at least in where I am in corporate, that the leaders have to have that high energy level, they have access or desire access to needed resources and they never seem to have enough time to do it all. So, as a leader what do you do to sustain a high energy level, have access to those resources and enough time to do it all when you’re faced with these challenges? So in other words, how are you “being” - what’s going on inside of you, Dave?

DAVID: I put a high premium on staying grounded. I know that in the constantly evolving work environment that I’m part of, all over the country with many different leaders, with many different organizations, and obviously being highly customer-centered in my work, I understand that there are always many, many balls in the air. There is lots of things happening and in an effort to stay absolutely focused, I find it very, very important to stay grounded, and understanding that. I was having a conversation with someone just, in fact, earlier today about the critical need as a leader to stay focused, to stay grounded because all of us get distracted, and I know that in an effort to do really good work – and this applies to any industry in any level of leadership and for that matter, any level of employee – in an effort to do really good work, it makes a huge difference when we’re able to stay grounded, when we’re able to stay connected to those truths, to those values.

For me, it starts everyday with a kind of meditated prayer, reflection around the gifts that I have-my gratitude, I plan my day. I was sharing that conversation, or that story, with someone just last week, about how I need to stay focused but also, how I need to stay organized. And so for me, as I begin everyday, staying grounded, working to get organized, planning my day, understanding what resources are available and what needs to be done to put it together, that goes a long way in helping me to achieve the impact that I need to do every day in my work.

MARYANN: If something were to come up for you unexpected and it potentially could throw your focus off, what do you, Dave, to keep that center, that groundedness?

DAVID: I take a break from it. I step away from it. Because of the importance that I place on this and the awareness that I have around it, I know – I have many, many cues that I can tune into, that tell me that I am getting out of that zone. I can start to feel anxious, I can start to feel frustrated, I can start to feel fearful – all of those are my cues to tell me I’m getting out of that zone, where I need to be grounded, where, by the way and not surprisingly, I don’t have scientific research on this, but I have a very strong sense from having this conversation with many people, that clearly we do our best work. Human beings, I think in general, do their best work when they’re grounded. And that word ‘grounded’ can have many definitions but, I think, in a very simple way, grounded is about being clear on my purpose, being clear on what I need to do, what my expectations are, what are my deliverables are, if you will, in the context of corporate life.

But, I think, really, it’s about those cues that then help us to realize we need to get grounded. For me, it’s very often and fortunately, this doesn’t happen very often, but when it does very often, I will just step away from it and collect my thoughts and regroup, and sense that many two or three cues, perhaps, have surfaced that tell me I am getting distracted. I am not going to be focused, I am not going to make my best decisions, and I am know that clearly my clients want and expect me to make my best decisions, and do my best work every time and that’s my goal. It’s a shared goal, but I think stepping away from it, regrouping... there are times where I will find humor to be a good tool. I have a cartoon file that I’ve kept for years and sometimes I’ll find myself getting off track and off-center, and I find that maybe I’m getting a little bit too serious about this, and I need to just lighten up, and so I’ll look at cartoons or I’ll more than likely and more than often, I just simply get up and go for a walk for 5 or 10 minutes and clear my head.

MARYANN: It sounds like, Dave, from what you’re describing for me, I would try to come back right into the present moment.

DAVID: That’s right.

MARYANN: It’s gathering everything that you need right in this moment. I like the idea of the humor piece, looking at a cartoon, because once you’re in that space, it’s a totally different space.

DAVID: Oh, it sure is, and coming back to that moment and showing up fully in that moment, because I think that’s what happens, when we get distracted as leaders, I think in any level, when we’re distracted, we’re not seeing the full range of our capacity to do good work, to make good decisions. And so being able to be fully present and put those distractions in the proper context provides us with a broader range of options for moving forward.

MARYANN: When you spoke of humor usually in business, or at least many times, it’s serious. Business is serious. How do leaders add humor and lightness to their leadership style with the individuals they lead and why is it important, Dave?

DAVID: Why is it important? I think that people need to laugh – people want to laugh. I think one of the characteristics that I’ve seen in my work around authentic leadership, one of the characteristics that comes up again and again in discussions with teams and individuals, is that one of those other common denominators of a good leader, is that they have a sense of humor. I think in the times in this permanent whitewater pace of business today, people need to lighten up a little bit. People need to be able to have that outlet that gives them – it can build community, for sure.

I can think of one example where a client of mine in response to the constantly evolving pressures of their work environment, we were just having a discussion over lunch, a group of us, only a few weeks ago, and they decided to start a to cartoon wall. Dilbert was at top of the list. Dilbert is one of my favorite cartoons because it offers great insight into what you shouldn’t do in most cases as a leader, but there are many others and so, their thinking is they would build this cartoon board in their lunch area, where they would all have kind of some responsibility to bring

in a favorite cartoon once a week, once a month. There was no pressure on them to bring them in with any great degree of frequency, but that they would all contribute to it and then they realize when they were feeling out of there – what they defined as their stress comfort zone, they would refer to the cartoon board and that would help them to keep things in perspective and lighten up a little bit. I think it’s a great solution, quite honestly.

MARYANN: Yeah, it sounds like a lot of fun.

DAVID: We do take it seriously and it’s important to take our work seriously. It’s important to take our commitments seriously, that’s for sure, but because of the constant pressure, and evolution of all of these, the way its constantly evolving, and the demands with doing more with less, and all of these productivity issues that are part of corporate life today, in and around this part of the country and in around the world, for that matter. I think it’s very important that people have a healthy outlet to be able to refocus, and I find that humor is an important one. I see it with many of the executives that I’ve work with that it’s a good outlet for them as well, as their team.

Back to the original point, part of that, I think, is one of the ways that it makes them real... part of authentic leadership. And people want that. I think that there is a genuine need. I think that the people really want that connection to that kind of authentic leader. It goes a long way in building the trust, for sure

MARYANN: And so in what role with authentic leadership, what role does communication play?

DAVID: I think of it often in the context of what role does effective communication play in allowing us to be successful? I will often ask that question. There’s a lot of work. It’s ironic; it’s kind of interesting that you raise this question. Just in the past month or so, there have been three projects that I’m working on that have had communication specifically, beginning with leadership communication as a central theme, but communication in general on a couple of them. And I think to answer my question - it plays a huge role in our ability to be successful. And, if we take that response again, what role does clear and consistent and effective communication play in our ability in any level to be successful, to be effective? Well, we know the answer is a large percent – it plays a big, big, big role in that. And if we look at that from the leadership perspective, we realize that it starts with us. And absent clarity from us as leaders, people make it up and sometimes, unfortunately, people make it up and it’s called the rumor mill. From my experience in having this conversation with many leaders over the years, the rumor mill is very rarely positive stuff; it’s usually negative, and that becomes a greater obstacle for the leader.

It starts with the leader having clarity around what the expectations are, what each person’s role is. Honest and open communication is a very important part of it, to be sure, and it goes a long way in building clarity and consensus and shared goals and direction for the team.

MARYANN: Dave, what if an individual had a role that was to lead without having formal authority. What techniques could they use?

DAVID: I think it would start and it would be helpful for them to seek out clarity around what are peoples’ expectations, what are the desired outcomes. I guess what I’m hearing you ask MaryAnn is, a person that doesn’t necessarily have leadership authority for a group, a team, a project but yet, they need to get things done, they need to do it from some level, maybe, in an informal way, help to generate guide an outcome. Is that what you’re asking me?

MARYANN: That’s it, exactly.

DAVID: So I think to that point, it would be helpful for the leader to start to build clarity around what is everyone’s role, what are the desired outcomes, what are we trying to achieve here, what does that look like, what is each person’s contribution. And for sure, it goes back to a point I made earlier about influence. I used that comment or theme earlier in the context of leadership influence, it shouldn’t be a surprise to anyone that we all have influence to be sure regardless of our capacity in a given job, whether it’s leader or not leader, individual contributor, and to that point, I think the person who doesn’t have the formal leadership authority for the group does have influence, and so he or she is in a position to be able guide this discussions around clarity of purpose, clarity of outcome, etc. And then honoring those commitments, being supportive, being open to other people’s input, etc., guiding it kind of a facilitated way, it could go a long way in helping them to achieve the informal authority and desired outcome.

MARYANN: Thank you. I find that many times, individuals that start out without that formal leadership authority and learn through it, turn out to be some of the greatest leaders too--because they’re experimenting as they’re going along. This is like the internship for leadership.

DAVID: Yeah, that’s a really good point, to be able to understand that it’s evolving and that you’re figuring it out as you go along. I’ve often had people – I’ve done work with, a number of early career, high potential folks, there is a couple of clients that I work with around the country, and I often hear from them similar things – “Am I at a disadvantage because I haven’t figured it all out?” . . . “Am I at a disadvantage because I haven’t had all of these lessons yet?” I think a key theme there is being a student of it, a key theme there is finding your voice and your style. I know I say this in my book and I’ve said it to many, many folks in different speaking engagements and one-on-one sessions, that it’s not about thinking for a minute that it’s the David O’Brien formula of leadership, or it’s the XYZ company’s formula, or anyone else for that matter; it’s about your formula, it’s about finding your voice in the process, making it yours, making it real and acknowledging this thing called great leadership is not a destination.

I am very quick to tell people in my work that I have, despite the fact that I have a book published and I’m working on a second one, and I’ve had had great success with this. First and foremost, I think of myself as a student of leadership. I know that I will work for a while. I’ve worked for a long time, I will work for awhile longer, probably another 10 or 20 years, and that being said, I am curious to find out what is this really all about, and how do great leaders happen, what is that about? And so while yes, I’ve had a variety of different leadership roles and I’ve had these accomplishments; first and foremost, I think of myself as a student of it that wants to learn more, because there is more to learn. And so, when I think of that early career person, I think it’s a good frame of reference for leaders at all levels, by the way, but it especially applies there to that person in your example.

MARYANN: What words of wisdom can you offer new or aspiring leaders as they navigate the waters of leadership?

DAVID: I think to a point I made there, to be able to find their voice, to understand that they have something to bring to the equation, to understand the huge responsibility that the leadership path brings. It’s an opportunity—it’s a responsibility. And that is because of the impact that we have on peoples’ lives. One of the greatest motivations for me in writing the first book was acknowledging, to that point, as leaders we have this huge capacity to impact peoples’ lives beyond the work environment. We have all had the experience over our careers of working for people that were not great leaders, and often the impact of that carried on beyond the perimeters of our job. We brought it home with us. And I think to a point I made earlier, that one of the outcomes, probably at the highest level in my mind of great leadership, is that people are better off because of that experience, they’re better for being part of that group, they’re better off for being part of that team, and that really is – it speaks to the concept of honoring and nurturing the huge responsibility of the leadership path.

We can have productive influence or we could have destructive influence and the productive influence is what builds that sense of community, builds that clarity. I think it’s also important for them to find their voice, as I said.

I would encourage them to read lots and lots about emotional intelligence. You know MaryAnn, there are lots of great things written on that. I think from my experience, as I’ve often told people in some of my training that in my 25 years of working in corporate America, I don’t think – and being a student of leadership, by the way, for that same amount of time – I don’t think there’s anything that’s been more important, more significant to the topic of leadership effectiveness, than emotional intelligence. I think it’s a standout. There are a lot of great books that have been written, there’s a lot of great learning beyond emotional intelligence. But if I were working with that early population as I do, as I mentioned earlier, some of the early career, high potential clients of mine that I work with, I give them some good insight into that and for those that I’m not working with, I would just recommend that they read a lot on emotional intelligence – Robert Copper’s work, Daniel Goleman’s work – there’s lots of great material out there.

I think I would also encourage them to realize that this is an ongoing process. To the point I made earlier, it’s not a destination, it’s a journey. Commit to learning, commit to looking at your style and interest and get clear on your values. See it as part of managing your career, because that’s part of what this is. We’re talking about their careers as leaders and having some clarity around that can go a long way in helping them to grow, to learn, develop and succeed in their role as a leader.

MARYANN: Thank you David, so much. It’s been an absolute pleasure to have you on this series.

DAVID: Oh, thank you MaryAnn. It’s been just great to be part of it.

MARYANN: And to learn more about Dave and his leadership and team effectiveness consulting services, please visit WorkChoice Solutions online at www.workchoicesolutions.com. It’s all one word.

This is MaryAnn D’Ambrosio, of www.leadoutloudnow.com, and thank you for listening to the Leadership by Conscious Design Interview series. So long for now, and may the heart-based leader within you – stand up and lead. Enjoy your day.



Guest: Elizabeth Agnew

Hello everyone and thank you for being here. This is MaryAnn D’Ambrosio of www.leadoutloudnow.com, and I want to welcome you to the Leadership by Conscious Design Interview Series.

I created or designed this leadership series for individuals and corporations and in business who realize there’s a shift taking place in the world and see this shift as a call to action or an opportunity to nurture and lead others to their greatness. This leadership series is about being an authentic leader and it’s exactly the type of development I craved and searched for in my corporate career.

You can view this series as . . .The Insider Secrets to Great Leadership. The leaders that are part of this program are AUTHENTIC, the real deal. They’re heart-based individuals who lead by example and walk the talk.

In this series, you’ll learn what’s at the heart of great leadership and how this can increase your leadership potential by building your confidence, clarity, communication capability and of course, strengthening your connection with others.

After listening to this series, you may also find an inner peace that will guide you during unsettling times and take you to another level of self-awareness.

Today, our guest is Elizabeth Agnew. In 2006, Liz established Integrative Leadership Strategies (formerly Vision, Goal, Action Coaching) to leverage her engineering background and passion for helping teams develop their leadership skills and communication better.

Liz felt a yearning to address the growing trend of organizations in technical fields needing tailored leadership development that spoke their language. Liz has logged hundreds of hours coaching individuals from companies, such as Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Google, Hewlett Packard and Sun Microsystems.

Before becoming a corporate coach, Liz was a project engineer at an engineering consulting firm, where she worked as a structural engineer, as well as with the firm’s recruiting, retention, and performance evaluation efforts.

A native of New York State, Liz holds a BS in civil engineering from Cornell University, an MS in structural engineering from Stanford University.

I’d like to welcome you, Liz. So glad you could join us.

Elizabeth: Thanks, MaryAnn.

MaryAnn: Liz, as we get started here. Can you just tell us a little bit more about yourself?

Elizabeth: Sure. Do you mean from a personal standpoint, or a little more about my practice?

MaryAnn: Either.

Elizabeth: Either. Well let’s see... I’ve been coaching for about three years and most of my clients are engineers and other technical people. I’m starting now to focus more on collaboration and team development, and that’s been really exciting.

I live in San Francisco; for the last four years I’ve lived here. I’m really having a lot of fun building my business.

MaryAnn: Wonderful, and you just recently moved too. That must be exciting.

Elizabeth: It is. Every time you move, I think it’s a chance to develop new habits and kind of hit the reset button on your systems and the way you’re choosing to live your life. So, it’s a great opportunity.

MaryAnn: I’m so glad you were able to join us. Today, we’re going to be speaking about leadership. Liz, you’ve worked with so many individuals that are more technically based from that sort of left-brain thinking. What do you see as the heart of great leadership?

Elizabeth: The heart of great leadership. I mean, the first thing that came to mind with that question was listening. I think it really is about connection, of which listening is probably one of the biggest things.

I think if you look at it from a technical standpoint, people so often focus on the skills and the actions of a great leader but really those, just automatically tend to fall in place I think when someone focuses on connecting with a person. We’re sort of made to do that as humans, I think, and I’ve found with my clients that they’re sort of relieved when they come to me and they’re able to kind of bring back into their lives that intuitive piece that’s all about connecting because I think it really gets put on the backburner in technical corporations.

MaryAnn: That really leads to how does intuition serve leaders in business? I mean, these are individuals who are very logical, linear. How do they use that intuition?

Elizabeth: Good question. I think a lot of our training and schooling taught us to ignore it because you can’t use intuition to design a building. I say it’s really about inviting that back in, inviting the intuition, and just simply embracing it because everybody has that ability, and it’s trusting it, validating it, and proving that it helps in times. There’s some sort of human element that plays into things in a way that is incalculable, I’d say.

MaryAnn: When you’re coaching an individual and you’re encouraging the development of intuition, what do you say to them and how do you help them develop that?

Elizabeth: I think it’s about really trusting it. I’ll say things like, “What would feel right to you to do right now,” or it’s more like I’m listening for whether or not they feel personally aligned with what they’re describing. Intuition is simply do you feel good about what’s happening, does it feel right to you? So they usually have an answer for if it feels right or not and it’s a matter of trusting that and listening to that.

I think so many times people are living in this alignment with what feels right to them, and it’s just a matter of opening those doors up and listening to that (there’s the listening thing again) in an internal way this time. So, opening those doors up, listening to what is true for them and honoring that, treating it just as valid as some external rule or what other people think.

MaryAnn: You use the word feel, trusting it, feeling it, and many times for the individuals in the technical profession, they tend to do mostly the thinking part. Is that correct?

Elizabeth: Yeah. I would say that’s right. I fall right on the border of a “T” and an “F” on the Myers-Briggs, so maybe that’s why I’m able to sort of bridge that gap. And I think I might be even answering the questions in a way that seems like it maybe isn’t pertaining to only technical people, and I think that’s part of what I help them do, is realize that they have these parts of themselves, they have the creative side, they have the artistic side, they have the intuitive side. I think a lot of technical people were drawn to the creative aspect of their work, especially engineers; we’re taught in undergrad or even when we’re getting sort of marketed to by universities, we’re sold on the design aspect and the creativity aspect. The sad reality, I think, in a lot of workplaces is that we end up churning out analyses and basically being productive robots, and so we’re losing that side of ourselves. I walk into it assuming that they have that, and it’s just a matter of reconnecting.

MaryAnn: That’s an awesome way of looking at it, and I guess I never thought about it. I’ve been in, almost my whole career, in the energy industry and work with mostly engineers and financial individuals. I never realized that from the engineering side they were drawn in because of the design aspect. You bring up a very good point. So now, it’s really about bridging that gap, bringing it all together for them and it sounds like that’s what you do.

Elizabeth: Yes, exactly, bridge the right brain and the left brain.

MaryAnn: The business world is definitely changing and it’s no longer business as usual. So, there really is an immediate need in corporations and in businesses for conscious leadership. What is your definition of a conscious leader?

Elizabeth: There is a need for sure. Well, most literally to me that it simply means that they’re aware. One way that I’ve defined leadership is that the leader has the ability to see themselves as part of a larger system, which is sort of like an extrapolated version of awareness; you can see how your role fits into the bigger picture in what you’re working on.

Also, it’s an awareness on emotional intelligence standpoint that they can see the impact they’re having on others in real time so that they get that feedback from someone else’s body language or facial expressions and use that in the conversation.

I would say the business world is really shifting to embrace more . . . I would say more feminine values of intuition and collaboration and it’s not about the pyramid. It’s not about the guy on top or the one who gets done first or the one who shouts the loudest; that things seem to be more leading towards collaboration and listening and openness and all of that.

MaryAnn: Are you finding that it’s really important to become a leader in your own life first before you can lead others?

Elizabeth: My god, I’ve said the same thing. On my website it says I believe that everybody is a leader because you, at least, have to be a leader of your own life.

I think probably that’s where people first learn to be leaders, this process of individuating that we embark on in our 20’s is that practice. So, if you can’t stick to your own values, and let’s just say that that’s what personal leadership is, where you know what you want or what you value and you’re able to say yes to that even if it means saying no to other things; if you’re able to do that. If you’re not able to do that, how can you do that in the name of vision that’s outside of your own individual life?

MaryAnn: So true.

Elizabeth: Maybe people are out there choosing things that are aligned with a vision for a company and not doing the same for their life but I can’t imagine it feels as easy or as authentic as it might if they were living and aligned with their values.

MaryAnn: I would imagine so because there’s a grace and there’s an ease of having that alignment because of the congruency.

Elizabeth: Exactly.

MaryAnn: You’re moving forward in the same directions on all levels. So, it really does make it easier.

Elizabeth: Exactly, yeah, and I can give an example in my personal life of choosing values if you would like.

MaryAnn: Yes, please.

Elizabeth: I’ve recently started studying nutrition and looking more closely at my own nutrition, and one of those values is to start buying organic and buying higher quality foods and they’re usually more expensive. I’ll be standing there in the grocery store looking at the organic spinach versus the non-organic and it’s literally double the price and kind of grumbling to myself but also thinking what is my value. I’m spending money on my value more than anything else.

And so I’ll sigh and I’ll say fine. My value is the organic spinach. A similar one is buying products that come in bigger packages so that less packaging is needed, buying in bulk; it’s the same thing.

In the short term, it’s a harder choice in the sense that you’re spending more money but in the long term, this is a choice in line of my values. And so I think the more someone practices that on an individual level, the message they’re sending to the world is that I live in alignment with my values no matter what the situation is, and so it’s so much easier to do that in a business setting where more is publicly on the line.

MaryAnn: Do you find that, at least with the clients that you’re working with, that that is happening more and more, that they’re going back and they’re providing you feedback also as to what’s happening in the corporation, they’re seeing more alignment with values?

Elizabeth: They’re definitely reporting seeing it in themselves and making choices with their own systems that align better, and yeah, I did a team facilitation recently where the director’s value is to create a culture of collaboration, and so just having me there was a way for him to live out that value.

It’s a real trust that you’re going to get more from it than you’re putting into it because by having me there to facilitate his meeting, he was spending more time and money on that one meeting, trusting that to invest upfront in collaboration will pay off in the long run. The same with the individual example of buying spinach; if I invest now, if this is really my value and I know why it’s my value, it looks like more investment upfront but the return is higher in the long run.

MaryAnn: Now, Liz, if you were hosting a workshop on the art and science of great leadership for a group of engineers and technical professionals, what would you want them to remember and to practice?

Elizabeth: I want to say listening again. I would say communication. Everything’s paradoxical, right, but I think one thing that I find with engineers and other technical people is that they come to me with a real craving for efficiency. They want things streamlined, they want systems efficient, and they want to stop wasting their time so they can get somewhere. At first, it seems like stopping and doing nothing and spending time getting to know somebody are waste of time until they can see how valuable that connection is and how essential that connection is.

It would be that message that the communication and the connection among people, if you boil it down, that’s really all there is, that’s all that matters in the world that people can connect. It’s remembering that and valuing that.

MaryAnn: And we, of course, can see that over and over again now with the big impact social media is having.

Elizabeth: Yeah, and I think as Generation Y enters the workforce, they’re really demanding collaboration and connection, and sometimes it can look like they want feedback and they want

attention, but really, I believe, that what’s underneath it is this craving for making it all about the human connection.

MaryAnn: Yes. I see that too and agree with that wholeheartedly. Now, an area that I found at least in working in the technical area, engineering, over almost my entire career that it can be very, very serious business. Why is it important for leaders to add humor and lightness to their leadership style?

Elizabeth: I thought about that, and I think it’s not necessarily that they need to add it but that it will naturally show up when they are aligned. I find that in my really powerful coaching sessions when things are clicking and the client and I are totally on the same wavelength, that humor and lightness just automatically comes. It’s almost like it’s a flag for that congruence. I think the reason it comes in those kinds of situations is because people are at ease and there is flow and humor isn’t what we think of when we think of like a comedian. I think true humor is simply the ability to see lightness in situations and it’s a much more natural form and everyone has that ability. So yeah, I think it just surfaces when people are at ease, and so the important thing, I think, is for people to communicate enough so that they can feel at ease.

MaryAnn: I found that to be true with individuals that when you’re really natural and you’re very comfortable with someone and you’re working with and you have a relationship where you can give and take, provide feedback, that ease and that ability to communicate and that humor and lightness, really when that shows up, everyone and everything around you lightens up and people just join in and it’s so much more fun.

Elizabeth: Exactly. Yeah, and that kind of ties back into the way that technical people work, and I think they tend to focus more on content because their content is what they’re known for, what their center of intelligence is based on. The thing that I’m teaching in collaboration is that the process is just as important as the content and I think the process gets ignored, doesn’t get made explicit. And so if the process is made explicit, it can allow for people to connect through the process and to agree on the process and to know the process so they all know not only what they’re working on but how they’re working on it. I find that that results in people feeling much more ease.

MaryAnn: In what ways can a leader engage people in their organization to be creative, flexible, smart, resilient?

Elizabeth: They can learn how to believe that those people already are those things.

MaryAnn: How do they do that?

Elizabeth: How did they learn how to believe that?

MaryAnn: Right.

Elizabeth: I recommend that they just make it up, that they just decide that they’re going to choose to see their coworkers or employees as resilient and as flexible and as smart and as

creative because everyone is. Everyone really is and it’s our ability or inability to see how they are, that is the important thing.

The other key to your question was the word ‘engage;’ how can a leader engage people in their organization? I think if they’re able to engage them, that will naturally result in more creativity, flexibility, and people are only able to be their smartest when they’re really comfortable. And so, creating that open communication, creating space for people to give feedback and thrive and get feedback and all of that will, I think, will really do the trick.

MaryAnn: So it sounds like when people are comfortable then they really do feel safe to open up and perhaps take a little bit more of a risk.

Elizabeth: Exactly. Yeah and if the process is really made explicit for the way that people are working together, then maybe there’s agreement about flexibility, and maybe there’s an agreement about resilience, maybe there’s something where people are able to really communicate how they see each other as intelligent, and maybe there’s space that’s created for creativity. So I think when people really step up to design an explicit process for how they want to work together and then they can design the space in for these qualities.

MaryAnn: That’s interesting. Liz, what words of wisdom can you offer new or aspiring leaders?

Elizabeth: I think it would be to kind of to tie back into what we talked about earlier, to choose to live in alignment with your values. I wrote an article recently about time management; it was the same thing. What is true time management? It’s spending time on that which you value, and the same with leadership.

I think great leadership is seeing yourself as part of a larger system and how do you fit into that, so it’s someone being aware of that. It’s also the willingness to help others develop as leaders. Leadership isn’t about you at the top; it’s about helping everyone be a leader of their own life and make choices in alignment with who they are and what’s going to make them really thrive.

So connecting with yourself so that you know what your value and connect with others so that you can help them understand who they are, so that they can understand what they value and choose to live that way, too.

I think if everyone is living in true alignment with who they are, then they can be their best. And if they’re their best, then that just has an exponential effect on what we can get done in the world.

MaryAnn: Thank you. Is there anything else you’d like to add today, Liz, for our listeners about leadership?

Elizabeth: Something is coming to mind; I’m not sure how to articulate it, but to really encourage people to throw away the buzzword – the leadership as a buzzword. It’s really not about title or rank or power, but rather about all the things we’ve talked about today, about living

in alignment with who you are and that’s a model – that serves as a model – and probably the people who are listening, when they think of leaders they have admired, it’s because those people were authentic. You could tell that something about them was allowing them to really be true to who they were.

MaryAnn: Thank you for those words of wisdom.

Elizabeth: I feel like that really gets us where we really want to go in the end, that that gets us to a place where things are important and things matter in life.

MaryAnn: Thank you, Liz.

Elizabeth: You’re welcome.

To learn more about Liz and her work, visit her website at www.integrativeleadershipstrategies.com.

This is MaryAnn D’Ambrosio of www.leadoutloudnow.com, and thank you for listening to the Leadership By Conscious Design Interview Series. So long for now and may the heart-based leader within you stand up and lead. Enjoy your day.



Guest: Stacey Hentschel

Hello everyone and thank you for being here. This is MaryAnn D’Ambrosio of www.leadoutloudnow.com, and I want to welcome you to the Leadership by Conscious Design Interview Series.

I created or designed this leadership series for individuals in corporations and in business who realized there’s a shift taking place in the world and see this shift as a call to action, or an opportunity, to nurture and lead others to their greatness. This leadership series is about being an effective leader and it’s exactly the type of development I craved and searched for in my corporate career.

You can view this series as The Insider’s Secrets to Great Leadership. The leaders that are part of this program are authentic. They’re the real deal. They’re heart-based individuals who lead by example and walk the talk.

In this series, you’ll learn what’s at the heart of great leadership and how this can increase your leadership potential by building your confidence, clarity, communication capability, and of course, strengthening your connection with others.

After listening to this series, you may also find an inner peace that will guide you during unsettling times and take you to another level of self-awareness.

Today, our guest is Stacey Hentschel. Stacey Hentschel, founder of Quantum Integrations is a speaker, advisor, coach, and organizational consultant. Over the last twenty years, Stacey has trained thousands of people in the areas of organizational development, team building, strategic planning, leadership, management, marketing, and communication. Stacey is regarded as a visionary thinker and has worked with over 500 businesses from startups to Fortune 500 companies.

I’d like to welcome Stacey. I’m so glad you’re able to join us today.

STACEY: Thank you so much. It’s great to be with you.

MARYANN: Stacey, can you just tell us a little bit more about yourself?

STACEY: Sure. I think the most important thing to say is that I’m very much in alignment with what you’re talking about. I definitely have a passion for humanity, for each and everyone of to live a highest purpose and to operate from what is really important and we’re passionate about and what we’re great at and what really opens us up to a highest level of creativity. So, we live from that joy and that we have something to give to the world, and I believe that each and every person has something that they’re here to contribute which really ties in with conscious leadership to really tune in to what that is within each and every one of us, that we’re here to give and that we can share in our own unique expression and others can receive with joy. And I think that’s one of the reasons why I’m here. To help others develop that, foster that, and give that, and when we’re living in that level of our own passion and what’s important to us, then we thrive and people around us thrive and things really work around us because we’re living in the moment. We’re living in grace and ease and we’re living in this excitement of our passion.

MARYANN: Well, thank you and I know you’ve worked with, wow, 500 businesses and thousands of individuals. What have you discovered or seen as really the heart of great leadership?

STACEY: I’m going to begin with the vision, a vision . . . we can call it a vision, we can call it our higher purpose, our gifts, is to have something that we’re excited about, that we really have something that means something to us, that matters to us.

I do a particular process where I call it a discovery process, that we tune in to what is important to us from when we’re very small as children and what was the thing that we wanted to do when we grew up, what dreams did we have, what was important to us, what really mattered and to tune in to that and to take what’s important to each and every person as being great leaders and tune in to that. Live from that, and follow that vision, and tune in to that, and study it and discover it, and learn about it. As we do that, we develop ourselves and then we can give that piece to others because we’ve really owned it ourselves, we’ve really tapped into that vision and we’re living in it, we studied it and we can give the components out and enrich others by that knowledge and information because nobody can do it by themselves.

Everybody has a gift and to make the world a better place, it takes each and every one of us to contribute our greatest gift. And when we do that, then there’s a wholeness to the world and we did it together. It’s like great and great leadership when you’re working as a team; it’s doing it together and when you do it together, it isn’t one person. One person might take a stand but when you do it together, there is something very exciting about it, kind of like what you’re doing, you’re doing it with a group of people that touches the world and gives a different piece and that has the world really be a better place.

MARYANN: And so it sounds like, Stacey, that what’s really important is - before one really becomes a great leader, that you need to become a leader in your own life first, before you can lead others.

STACEY: Absolutely. Absolutely. I call it ownership. You talk about authentic leadership, you talk about ownership, being a leader first, what’s important for you, sitting with it, learning about it, living it, owning it, and then it’s easy. When we fully own something, take full

responsibility – responsibility in a good way, not in a disciplined area way but in a good way – we fully own it and be responsible and be passionate, then we excel.

It comes back to, I think this happens in companies where people feel – I’m trying to look at the right language – but in a way that they don’t have power and when you are your own leader, you take your power back, power like not in force, but power like in inspiration like what matters to you and you have a choice. You have a choice of what you say, what you contribute matters, and how you conduct what you do matters, and that people listen to you and you listen to them. And when we live from a choice, then no one is at blame, no one is at fault and that’s when we thrive. We only get blocked in our own leadership, or get blocked in life, when we don’t feel like we have a say so or somebody took our ideas or took our power in some way. So, I think it’s important to tap into our own leadership gift, what matters to us, speak our truth from our heart, and listen from our heart and then work in collaboration, like you and I have been doing, in cooperation and really listen and then come – when we’re in leadership – come to what works from the whole.

You know, when you talk about systems, thinking what works from the sum of the parts and how to put that all together and you do that by deeply listening to each other, deeply coming from your heart, looking at the whole perspective, sleeping on it, tuning into it, and having a higher outcome. I think in true leadership you need to have total alignment. So, you need to be aligned when you set ownership, aligned within yourself on what matters to you and then have alignment with the people you’re working with. If you don’t, you really can’t have true leadership if there isn’t total alignment, or what I call congruency in the group.

It’s like the body, for the system of the body to really function well, and be a really healthy body, it needs to have congruency. If one part is out - that’s not healthy, it affects the whole body. The same with a group or organization, if there is incongruence out, if everybody isn’t going towards the same way – they can have different ideas. If they have the same values, same vision, same intent, but they might have a slightly different way to do it, that’s okay. If the core of the vision, the core of the values are set in place and really aligned from the heart, not from persuading or this or that, but really it’s true for each person, then you’ll have an organization that will flourish.

MARYANN: And now this is so important because the world, as we know, is changing and it really is no longer business as usual. So, there is an immediate need in corporations and businesses for conscious leadership. Stacey, can you just go over what your definition of a conscious leader would be?

STACEY: Well, in some of the work I do that I brought together, I studied some pieces on quantum physics and energy and how everything is put together. So when I think of a conscious leader, one of the things that I work with a lot is that everything we do affects everybody else, and everything is interrelated and everything has rhythms and patterns to it. It’s a system. It’s innate system. And so in knowing that, knowing that everything we do affects – you know, we live in a place of oneness, so every one of our actions affects every other one of our actions.

First of all, it’s the first thing in consciousness what I think of is awareness, and I teach that and I work with awareness. How do we become more self-aware, how do we become more present,

how do we live in the moment, how do we really work on how we’re speaking and how we’re breathing and how we’re feeling, and are we being open – and that takes work. That takes dedication. It’s like if we’re going to do a marathon, that takes enough dedication and I think to be a leader, it’s to do a marathon but not, again, not in a marathon like we have to do it marathon with enthusiasm and joy and because we’re excited about it moves us.

So, the first thing in conscious leadership is awareness and being aware, and I talk about something that I work with which is the four pillars which is about living in a state of awareness and consciousness and centering.

And then, the second pillar in working with that is a relational pillar; we’re all in a relationship with each other, working collaboratively, cooperatively and we all affect each other... nature affects us, people affect us, everything we do. All our actions affect us now and in the future, so we have to look into the future as we take actions and look at how it will affect the people in the organization, the people in our group, the people in our family, the people in our society.

The other part of the four pillars is generative. How do we generate, how do we work with producing results and getting excited, and how do we become adoptive and creative and flow with changes, and how do we create it sustainable and a structure that’s sustainable.

But I think the first key of the pillar is about consciousness, it’s about awareness and when I work with individuals or companies – or I even work with relationships, I do relationship coaching – the most important part is that awareness because if we can’t be aware of ourselves, of our actions, we’re not open to look and examine how we do things and what we do, and open to shift and make changes, then it’s very difficult to lead. I think the most important thing in conscious leadership is first of all, we need to develop safety with each other, we need to develop listening skills with each other, and then we have to notice any place we get defensive or go into our fear and then acknowledge that and then look and see how we can feel safe and work on safety together from our heart and so we’re listened to and heard. And then, when the heart is open – what I say, what I call we’re in a unified field, and when you’re in unified field you’re congruent and everything starts flowing – it happens naturally and it’s easy and it’s effortlessly, and it becomes timeless and we’re in what you call the zone. That’s what I also teach, is how to operate in this place called the zone and then everything falls together and it happens in moments. A project that could take hours and days and days and days could be completed very quickly when we’re in that particular space. It only gets hard and tough is when we have disagreements and when we get into a defense mode when we don’t feel safe, when our ego gets threatened, when we don’t feel like we’re heard.

So, it’s really about deep listening and changing and having an environment of trust and then having practices and principles that teach people how to be conscious and aware for themselves, their families, and others, so there’s cohesively and that works for the whole and it’s done with honor and love and respect and deep listening and really cherishing each other and appreciate each other and respecting each other.

MARYANN: You’ve brought up two very key things, safety being one, developing safety because as people are more comfortable they tend to open up more and take larger and larger

steps as well as trust. So, how can leaders build this trust with peers, colleagues, and the people they lead, let’s say in a corporation; in what ways and how can these leaders build trust?

STACEY: Well, I think the first thing – and I think you and I can concur on this, can align on this – is that they first need to demonstrate trust. We talk about role modeling and they need to trust themselves authentically; really trust themselves and trust their actions and believe in what they stand for and live by that. And I think that’s the most important thing is when...to develop trust you need to have trust in yourself and you also need to have trust in others. First, if you don’t have trust in you, then it’s really hard to trust others and then so it’s really developing that. And if there is a lack of trust in some ways, is to have a conversation and explore what’s the root of that lack of trust, what’s underneath that lack of trust, and how can it be resolved? Because most of our lack of trust with anybody – because I study more of the psychological things that come through us – is that at some level, usually in our childhood, we had somebody in our life that we didn’t trust and we didn’t feel safe and that, I’m going to say as a child we didn’t have a choice; their power took over our power and we had to do what they said rather than if we knew something wasn’t the truth and wasn’t right that we couldn’t stand up and say, “This isn’t right, that’s not true, that doesn’t feel right. As children for the most part, we weren’t taught or we weren’t given the position or raised in an environment where we could have in ourselves authority, we could speak up and have a conversation and decide as a group of what was best. We just had to follow what someone said and then do it.

So, trust is a huge, huge thing, MaryAnn, in companies and it’s what you call an underlying button for people that isn’t always known or expressed and it kind of goes under the radar. It’s kind of like they said, its if people don’t trust people then they’ll...at some level they feel it; they don’t talk about. It’s the elephant head in the room that everybody keeps walking by and doesn’t say anything about it because they don’t know how to bring it up. They don’t feel safe. They don’t feel able to bring it up in a corporate setting because we haven’t had training in – as individuals-- and how to do that. So, I think there really needs to be...what would be great for corporations and companies is to really have a school to develop how to communicate what we need and how we need it, and a school of how to develop deep consciousness so that we have very fine awareness of, “Oh god, something feels off here, something doesn’t feel good. Oh, I’m afraid I’m defensive,” that we can stop and we can notice it in our own body. We can be very self-aware, “Am I breathing fully, am I having eye contact, am I smiling, or am I clenching and tightening, and closing down and getting irritated and how does that feel?” and really learn how to work with that. And so then in a moment when it does happen to stop, learn practices – and I’m also working with then how to breath, how to reconnect, how to tune in to what’s really going on – and I know you talk about intuition also; how to tune in, what’s really going on, and then how to express it from the heart.

So, and some of those practices you could say it take years. I know I’ve been working with them for years. So, when I work with companies, I bring in a factor I call deep innocence. I say we’re all innocents. We’re always learning all the time and no one is perfect. And so if we know we’re going in learning together, growing together, we’re going to move through the snow or the mud, if we’re in snow and mud, and we’re going to shovel it and move it out of the way with as much heart and grace as possible and learning in fun together as a team, and bringing that in.

MARYANN: I’m sitting here, Stacey, and shaking my head going yes! Yes, because it’s so true. The comment about having a school for corporations in communication and really in conscious communication is the way to go.

STACEY: Yeah. I want to add something to that and I think what companies forget, what corporations forget – and I’m going to also include, if you don’t mind, relationships in family units because that is a unit. What we forget is: whatever ultimately stops us or if we’re not being productive, if we’re not being effective, or if we’re not thriving in what we’re doing in some level, there’s some unconscious belief system that’s running the corporate structure; some unconscious...some rule, some assumption that’s running the structure that’s saying, “It’s not okay to communicate. It’s not okay to be this way. It’s not okay to express yourself or with something,” and it’s kind of unspoken but you have to follow that rule so there isn’t the expression. And so it suppresses the energy of organization – because I talk about the organizations from a level of energy and moving forward with energy and really having the energy to move forward and have joy and have fun and play and get the work done – but if that isn’t happening in a structure or happening in your own body or happening in relationships there’s some belief system or some structure, something underlying that says, “This can’t be. It’s not possible and so then thus, I’m suppressing myself,” and which cuts off our natural flow, cuts off our consciousness, cuts off our passion. It doesn’t make for a good life. I’ll put it that way. And so, I think it’s important that companies do the deeper work also. They also need to do the platform work; the planning and but they have to do the deeper work, too and when they do the deeper work, then have a structure inside of that that they do have practices around consciousness and having fun and communicating and understanding and first working with self-ownership first and doing the inner work and then presenting it to the team itself.

MARYANN: And that’s so true, and another piece I think that part of this schooling would be developing intuition as well as emotional intelligence.

STACEY: Absolutely.

MARYANN: What ways can you see that happening, Stacey; to develop that innate intelligence that every single one of us has?

STACEY: I guess I want kind of begin with first of all there needs to be also willingness. I remember this one particular gentleman that I was hearing speaking and he talked about corporations. He said if you were going to do something you need to have people – he calls it – buying in; people need to be willing and open to explore. They need to have an interest in that. So, first of all that people... you present a topic – we talk about emotional intelligence or intuition – and explain to people what that is and the benefits and how they can thrive from that. And then if they’re interested then have people come to that.

So as far as working with developing intuition and emotional intelligence I always like to start with working with presence and how to be present. And when I say present I mean coming into what we call our center, grounding, noticing our breath, being aware of the movement...even the movement of the breath, and awareness of inner peace or an inner stillness within our body. And when we can tap into that place of this inner stillness and inner peace then what happens in the

body is the chatter, for the most part – not in all cases but – calms down a bit. And I talk about in the work I do that we’re in the belly, breathing from the belly, grounded and centered, our heart is open, we’re feeling an expression of joy or love – when your heart’s open you feel joyful or loving or happy or peaceful – and the mind, or the brain, all the thoughts are calm. And so then what starts coming through is what I call a greater intelligent. I talk about the brain’s capacity from just – a memory is like the size of a pea – but when we’re tapping into our intuition or, I call it the larger field of consciousness or knowledge, you’re tapping into this vast space of availability like the whole universe. So, then something starts – what I call it in...it’s kind of interesting – it drops through, that it feels like there’s an energy that starts pouring through the body when people are aware; people that can...when you can feel or there’s a noticing of your breathing – maybe if you don’t feel noticing of your breathing or a stillness or something you notice on a physical level that’s slightly different. You’re not as tense; you’re more relaxed in your body. Then you can start accessing what’s true for you versus your belief systems or something somebody told you or it isn’t working from those places from the outside; it’s more known from an inner place, a vaster place that’s more true to the heart and what’s more true to the whole universe, the vastness of everybody.

So, we’re tapping in more of the totality of the whole, the whole system, so your answers tend to be more based in wholeness and inclusion and more from your truth and the inner soul or the inner spirit within us that can help guide us. And when companies start operating from that they will make better decisions. Individuals will make better decisions. It will honor the earth, honor our economic system, honor our financial systems, honor the environmental systems, honor all systems more and things will become easier and smoother because when the individual is being honored and listening and tapping in, it’s honoring everything. It’s like when you go out in nature and really appreciate a plant or flower and you really be present to the beauty there is, I say, a peace that comes into our body that relaxes us. And when we’re sitting with another then we’re honoring them and listening to them, there’s a peace that comes and then there’s an enfoldment and then there’s an answer that comes.

What is it that Einstein says; that we cannot solve the problems from the same place they were created and most of the time problems are created because we’re in defense and in the mind and in fear inside our innocence and we can’t help it because those fears were adopted from our ancestors and in our neural nets so we react and respond from our habitual patterns inside our innocence within our body. And when we let go of that and see that we’re operating in our patterns and move into the stillness and presence, then the intuition comes in, we have more emotional intelligence because we’re not stuck in those patterns and we’re only stuck in those patterns because we’re innocent. And if people, MaryAnn, could shift those patterns they would. But most of the time we don’t know they’re there or we don’t know how to get out of them, and that’s why I talk deeply in the work that I do about being innocent and kind to each other when we do go into our emotional patterns, when we’re not into our intuition, when we do have something that is emotionally strong for us; we don’t feel safe or can’t trust and to work from compassion with each other and then help each other move. Because when someone gets upset, it’s usually about something that where they were deeply hurt in the past and then it’s usually never about the current situation at hand, it’s not about what’s happening in the moment; it’s about something that happened when they were three years old and we kind of joke around but not really joke around that many people that run companies are running it from their feelings of

inefficiency or ineffectiveness – a loss of power when they were three or five or ten, from their family units – and trying to make up for it in running a company in their innocence; in their innocence.

So when we explore that in innocence and in compassion then we can see that and work with our emotional intelligence and have compassion for each other. And then we come into our presence and tune in to what’s really true for us in our body and learn how to work with the intuition. And it doesn’t mean we’re not logical. We become more logical and we become more productive when we’re intuitive because we’re working from a higher framework and we’re working from a higher level of our sensations and emotional intelligence. There’s many, many levels of intelligence; the mental, the physical, the emotional, the kinesthetic, the visual. There’s many intelligence that we tap into when we tap into the whole picture and it creates a beautiful flow in companies and a beautiful interaction between the people and what takes place.

MARYANN: And so with that tapping into intuition/emotional intelligence leaders are able to then engage people in organizations to be creative, flexible, smart, resilient.

STACEY: Absolutely; absolutely. And I’m going to say with loving kindness; with loving kindness. And that’s really, really important.

MARYANN: And with that too, Stacey, I’ve found – at least with leaders that I’ve been with – that adding humor and lightness as part of their style is really important. And would you be able to go into why – maybe on an energetic level – why adding humor and lightness to a leadership style is important?

STACEY: Sure, thank you MaryAnn. Well, obviously if you think about humor, for all of us that are listening, that when anybody says something funny from the heart it brings a smile to our face. Just smiling and just thinking about humor I have a smile on my face and my eyes are smiling and it brightens up our whole entire neural net system and our whole entire body becomes more alive when we’re happy and smiling. And when we’re happy and smiling it includes all part of us.

Bruce Lipton is a gentleman that’s worked with the cellular structure of the body and what happens when we’re in happiness and joy and our cells are alive and they’re growing and they’re expanding and the whole body is healing. And he also says the cells are either in a mode of happiness and growth when you bring in humor or the cells are in a place of defense and cover up and fear and closing down and locking down. Because when you’re not happy and humorous and light you’re in defense and you’re in your old structures and your old models and your own body and you can’t...you have no room for new input, new ideas, creativity, flow, excitement, energy; all that good stuff that feels so good in the body.

So, the cells are either in one mode or the other. So what we do when somebody does crack a joke it shifts the whole cellular structure of the entire body, the cells become alive; they vibrate with this energy and then the room that your in – if we could see it on a screen which most people can’t see this but you can feel it for the most part – that it becomes alive and the energy flows and more ideas come in and any kind of remorse or disagreement or hesitancy or heaviness

can literally, poof, disappear and you kind of go on and all of a sudden it’s gone and then you’re creating again. It cuts through that. So it’s bringing that lightness or that levity in. And many great business people that I’ve worked with or studied with they say the most important thing is, again, to bring in the humor, to bring in the lightness. And if we’re not having fun at our work why are we doing what we’re doing? Because if we’re not having fun at our work and we go home then we don’t bring that necessary fun to our families... if we don’t bring it to our kids... then the world can’t expand; it can’t move to the higher levels.

So, given that we spend most of our life at work let’s create a place that is creative and fun and nurturing and is productive, is fulfilling, does make money, does honor all life. And when we do that with integrity inside we’ll feel better. And since everything we do affects the world and the consciousness and our family and our kids and our society; so then we all feel like we’re making a difference. We’re contributing something big that has a lasting difference, that matters, that can make a change. And I think in our hearts of hearts each and every person listening in, in my experience, really wants that. We want to do something that really matters, that – when we really dive deep enough, when we release our resignation and hesitancy – we dive deep enough within our soul, within our truths we really do want to give. We do want to contribute. We do want to share. We do want to help. And that’s what really matters. But a lot of times we feel hopeless that we can’t so that’s when we shut down; when the hopelessness comes in.

So it’s like what you’re doing, MaryAnn, is re-sparking a series to help whatever hopelessness within ourselves break through and open up this place of a regained consciousness. “Yes, I can do this. I can get support. I can be successful. I can live my passion and here’s some tools how,” and work different people to assist us in that fulfillment.

MARYANN: What I’d like to leave our listeners with is, Stacey, some words of wisdom that you can offer new or aspiring leaders.

STACEY: I think the first thing I want to say is to be gentle with ourselves and be kind to ourselves. Because when we’re kind and loving to ourselves when we lead we can be kind and loving to others. Given that people listening to this series have a desire to lead, whether it’s leading children to smile more, to be happy or leading people in a company or whatever way you choose to lead or you choose to give in this particular time or your lifetime, as you tap into your own passion and your own heart that you be gentle with yourself and loving to yourself. Laugh at yourself more and, I would say...I like the words that you said as far as being lighter with yourself and bring in the heart; a practice where you can feel your heart more and love yourself more because everything...how you relate to yourself – in the work I’ve done and how I’ve related to myself is how I relate to others – so to always, for the rest of your life.

And I want to say also, to end with, when I was in my 20s and I was working for a company actually, a gentlemen came to me and he told me, he said, “You know how to live a long life?” and I said, “No.” And he said, “Never stop learning.” And I said, “Okay.” And he said, “If you never stop learning you’ll always be young.” And we was, maybe, I don’t know how old, maybe he was twenty years older than me, or something. And I said, “Okay. I’ll remember that.”

So, I would lead us with that and this part of the series is about our own self-development and learning; being gentle and kind, bringing in our heart and never stop learning.

Thank you so much for your commitment and your dedication to what you’re doing and to share this with people in your life and the world and your deep devotion because you have such a big heart, MaryAnn; a huge, huge heart to do this. And I know it’s really coming from a true place that’s within you to give. And I honor and appreciate you for that. And thank you so much for what you’re sharing with others and your dedication and loyalty to that and your enthusiasm and joy to give this out so we can all grow and learn more together as a team.

MARYANN: Well, thank you very much, Stacey. And I know your words of wisdom have really touched me and I’m sure they will touch the listeners. And so what I’d like the listeners to know... that to learn more about Stacey and her work you can visit the www.quantumintegrations.com website and that’s Integrations with an “s”, or you can contact Stacey directly at (949) 495-9689.

This is MaryAnn D’Ambrosio of www.leadoutloudnow.com, and thank you for listening to the Leadership By Conscious Design Interview Series. So long for now, and may the heart-based leader within you – stand up and lead. Enjoy your day.



Guest: Patricia Varley

Hello everyone and thank you for being here. This is MaryAnn D’Ambrosio of www.leadoutloudnow.com, and I want to welcome you to the Leadership by Conscious Design interview series.

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You can view this series as the *Insider Secrets to Great Leadership*. The leaders that are part of this program are authentic, the real deal. They’re heart-based individuals who lead by example and walk the talk.

In this series, you’ll learn what’s at the heart of great leadership and how this can increase your leadership potential by building your confidence, clarity, communication capability and of course, strengthening your connection with others.

After listening to this series, you may also find an inner peace that will guide you during unsettling times and take you to another level of self-awareness.

Today, our guest is Patricia Varley. Patricia Varley is an international speaker, trainer, retreat and workshop facilitator, author, business and personal coach, who focuses on integrating professional, personal and spiritual growth.

Patricia has successfully worked for the past 15+ years with entrepreneurs, business owners, companies and national organizations across industry lines in reinventing success from the inside out by reclaiming the wholeness of people. This approach opens new paths to fresh ideas, clarity of thinking, accessing their full potential and ultimately lasting achievement.

Patricia has published numerous articles and is a featured author in *Power Tools - Top Executive Coaches Put You On The Fast Track to Success*. She also wrote and designed the workbook and manual *Because You Matter: 10 Heart Centered Principles for Living the Life You Desire*.

Patricia is a frequent radio and television guest and was honored by the Connecticut Business and Professional Women as Woman of Achievement.

It’s such an honor to have you here today, Patricia. Welcome.

Patricia: Thank you so much, MaryAnn, and it’s wonderful to be here. I’m very excited.

MaryAnn: Can you just tell us a little bit more about yourself?

Patricia: Absolutely. When you had first asked me to be a part of this series, I was really not only honored to be a part of it, but inspired by your focus of leadership because it is an area in my work as a facilitator, as a coach, as a keynote speaker and a trainer, to work with, inspire and assist leaders from many, many industries in how to flourish, navigate and transform in these incredible transformative times and changing times that we’re in.

My passion as a professional is to integrate what I call professional purpose, personal growth and spiritual awareness to bring a more holistic approach to business and to leadership.

I have an undergraduate degree in psychology and sociology in behavioral sciences because I’ve always been fascinated by human and/or individual behavior and organizational behavior, and what makes people and companies and organizations tick, what makes them work and also, I have a Masters in business and organization and management and leadership to bring in, not only the human behavior, but some more of the practical tangible strategic focus to business. And I feel that our unique essence and our heart, our soulfulness, our commitment to integrity, is the sort of foundation for my work, whether I’m training, speaking, coaching, or leading a retreat.

So in a nutshell, what I say is that I assist individuals and organizations in reinventing success from the inside out by reclaiming their wholeness and their essence and their purpose. So that is really... this is my calling; it’s not just my career. This is a sense of contribution that I really desire to make to the world at this time, and with leaders, so I’m very excited to be here.

MaryAnn: Oh, we’re so glad. I’m so glad you’re able to join us. Thank you for enthusiastically jumping in to be part of this interview.

Patricia: Sure.

MaryAnn: And so you’ve worked with a lot of leaders. What is at the heart of great leadership, Patricia? What do you see?

Patricia: Well, there’s a quote by Lao Tzu whenever I do a leadership workshop that I use and you may have heard this, MaryAnn, but Lao Tzu, the great philosopher said that *those who know much about others may be wise but those who understand themselves are even wiser. Those who are master over many may be powerful, but those who have mastered themselves are more powerful still.*

And when I think of leadership, I think of the terms self-mastery and self-leadership because we all, in a sense, we lead our lives whether we’re solo entrepreneur, whether we’re with the head of a company, that we run a family with children, whether we’re leading a healthcare company or a

nonprofit organization, it doesn’t really matter what we do. The key in being effective and being impactful and truly making a difference is what I would call self-mastery and self leadership, that it’s really about how we choose to show up with integrity, with purpose, what do we model for those that we are leading, that we are influencing; it’s really leaders or influencers, and people look to leaders as well to not only make a difference, but to create an example.

MaryAnn: And so it sounds like it’s very important to be a leader in your own life first before you can lead others.

Patricia: Yes, not even it’s in your own life but it’s in your own self, it’s within yourself. So when I say reinvent success from the inside out with leaders, it’s really more of an inside job of, that if a leader wants to truly affect change, wants to truly inspire and motivate others, let’s say, for a new project or to work with customers in the field. People can only give what they have and they can’t give what they don’t have. So to the extent that anyone is willing to look at themselves and say, “Okay, are there areas that I can become more effective or there may be some behaviors that no longer serve me that really aren’t inspiring my team?” Some of it is a self-evaluation and a self-inventory and the commitment to be courageous and do what I would call a self-inventory to recognize the areas that you’re strong in and maybe the areas that you can enhance. It’s a true honesty of what I call self-mastery to be a really effective leader.

MaryAnn: So, Patricia, what might that self-inventory look like?

Patricia: Well, some of it is to, first of all, remember that to self-inventory is to ask yourself, what I would say, thoughtful questions or conscious questions, and as an executive coach and leadership coach, a system of what I do with my clients is, are you open to new possibilities, are you an out of the box thinker, can you be a transformational leader, which means the willingness to be creative and step into a new paradigm? If something isn’t working, let’s say, in your company or organization, are you willing to step away and do maybe the uncomfortable whether it’s uncomfortable for you or uncomfortable for your team? Part of being a conscious leader, I feel, and being masterful and leading yourself is to increase your self-awareness and be willing to step back and even look a little bit more objectively at your team and your organization, whatever particular company or whatever you might be leading. Now, this is not always an easy process, MaryAnn, I feel that self-reflection is not always comfortable for people, and I’ve done many work with CEOs and presidents of companies and I say, you know, sometimes we really need to leave our egos outside the door and get to a more of a core place in ourselves where we’re really guided intuitively with both our minds, our intellect, our hearts, and our guts or intuition. So part of being masterful and those qualities of am I only using my head or am I using my heart, it’s bringing in different aspects of ourselves to make decisions to be a creative problem solver and also to inspire others.

MaryAnn: You brought up conscious leadership and the world is changing, and really, it’s no longer business as usual. So there is an immediate need in corporations and in business for conscious leadership. What’s your definition of a conscious leader?

Patricia: For me, a conscious leader is an individual who is awake and self-aware of their purpose, why they’re doing what they’re doing, who is willing to witness their organization, their

company. In other words, to step back and look at it objectively, which I had mentioned, a conscious leader is someone who is more integrated, and to me, a conscious person is someone who is really more self-actualized and more self-realized than someone maybe who is unconscious. So often people who are unconscious in front of judgment, it’s just where they’re at in their growth or maybe not aware or maybe more asleep to the cause and effect of their decisions. So a conscious leader is much more intentional and conscious of even their decision making and how it affects others.

MaryAnn: Thank you.

Patricia: You’re welcome.

MaryAnn: You do a lot of work with transformational leadership, what steps are necessary to transform yourself as well as your work environment?

Patricia: Well, transformation, we all know the story and the image of a caterpillar to a butterfly and when I look at the times we’re in now particularly in the area of leadership, if you look at what a caterpillar was, it had a really comfortable life but the only way that a caterpillar can become a butterfly is to go into a cocoon and it literally has to die to its old life. And it’s rather frightening because we don’t know what’s coming out the other side, it doesn’t know it’s going to be a butterfly, and I use that as an illustration because transformation is different from change. I feel, and what I’m witnessing with the people that I’m working with and just in looking at the world right now is we really can’t go back to how things used to be. Transformational leaders are like the butterfly emerging through the struggle, breaking down old structures, old belief system, old strategic ways of doing things that no longer serve us, that perhaps were not based on integrity, and it’s really of dying to the old way, the courage to break through the walls like the cocoon and emerge the other side; it then becomes something new and different but can’t go back to being a caterpillar. Does that make sense?

MaryAnn: It does.

Patricia: So that’s through transformation. If you look at our world now, even in terms of a lot of our paradigms and the way that things have been structured, so much has fallen apart, and really, we have to remember that that reason that they’ve fallen apart, and again, it’s frightening because there’s a lot of unknown, is that a lot of structures were not really serving us. They weren’t, perhaps, maybe for awhile but not any longer or based on integrity or perhaps some of the new models that are emerging. What’s challenging, I think, for transformational leader is that we don’t always know what’s emerging but the good news is there’s an opportunity to co-create together, to come up with different ideas, and that’s the whole thinking and stepping out of the box and saying is there a completely new way that we can come together.

One of the keys of a transformational leader is also the willingness, I believe, to be more collaborative, more cohesive with others and not so much the competitiveness that we’ve seen that often is a win lose. It’s a much more, what I would call, holistic or collaborative, collective way of leading to benefit the whole, really.

MaryAnn: Sure. Thank you. What are some tools or techniques that would enhance effective leadership and help individuals navigate through these changes or transformations?

Patricia: Well, on one of the things that I’ve done is I’ve created what I call are personal and professional mission statement questions and as leaders or a head of a company whether you have your own business or even a corporation, we all have seen the mission statements on the wall and it’s wonderful I’m all about mission statements but I think sometimes one of the things to do is revisit why are we doing what we’re doing, what’s the direction we want to go to. Sometimes it’s taking stock and saying okay, also are my personal vision in alignment with who I am and in sync with what I do.

What I have seen, MaryAnn, a lot, is that it’s a tool that’s affected is asking yourself as a leader, are my values as an individual in synch with the work that I’m doing and vice versa. What I have noticed is that the leaders who, let’s say, whose professional ethics and values and personal ethics and values are not necessarily in sync or there’s a discrepancy, are usually under a lot more stress, they’re not necessarily on purpose or doing things because they have to, not because they want to, which sometimes (many times) a leader has to do; but I feel that the type of leadership that we’re transforming into and what’s being asked of us is more the tool of saying, okay, what is important to me, am I willing to walk my talk and be in integrity, would I ask anyone in my organization or company to do something that I wouldn’t do. These are things that we all know but is there truly an open door policy.

Another tool and technique would be, and it depends on the organization, but many of them have been done in more of, I would say, almost the pyramid structure where you have the CEO at the top and there’s nothing really wrong with that but I feel a new model for leadership would be a tool of looking like can your organization be more like a web. So if you imagine a spider web in the center or spoke on a wheel even and the center is the leader, is the CEO, the executive, the entrepreneur. What are those spokes coming out of that center in yourself? What are the lines like coming out of like the spider web that you’re the center but there is more of an even playing field where it’s a more inclusive communicative organization versus more direct, versus directive. So can you see how some of these paradigms are changing?

MaryAnn: Oh, absolutely, yeah.

Patricia: So some of the tools... I’m giving you a couple of examples are ways in which you can sort to look at your personal values, look at your current mission, and decide is it serving, does it need to be changed to be more inclusive of maybe some of your managers or your sales staff, and whatever type of organization or company that you may have and even if you’re on your own business and I work a lot with women entrepreneurs who are leaders and if each year, look at your intentions. Am I aligning my values with my purpose and my mission? So these are some of the tools to keep yourself on track and when you’re aligned in integrity in which your purpose you have a lot more less stress and you’re much more in the flow and there’s more effectiveness and people feel that. Customers and clients and your team will be able to get that you’re really coming from that level of integrity.

MaryAnn: That’s so true. I’ve seen that in several cases with different individuals in the corporate world and I’m sure you see this too right now with the pressures of that corporations have, there is such seriousness within corporations. So what can leaders do to add lightness, humor, to incorporate that as part of their leadership style?

Patricia: Well, I mean, I love humor and it’s because right now everyone is very serious because there’s a lot of serious changes going on. So that is a reality. But humor, I read one time that you can release just as much stress and energy by having a good belly laugh than by having a good cry. You know what I’m saying? That the amount of stress you could release, so sometimes humor could be, I think, it’s very good for a leader. I know because I led a lot, I led women’s groups and I’ve been a leader myself even doing a key note or leading a training, I also will point at my own idiosyncrasies is a way to lighten up the room because we all have them. I think if we take ourselves too seriously but everybody takes themselves too seriously, so if there’s more of a balance with a leader and I’ve worked with leaders that really have such a funny sense of humor even in the midst of crisis, and what it does is it helps everybody step back and shift and look at things from a different perspective. And when we’re in the groove and really, really serious, and things are really, really hard, it’s difficult to see the forest through the trees. So sometimes the ability or the willingness to maybe see the humor in the situation can lighten it up but in that lightness, come new possibilities and new solutions. It creates more flexibility and kind of more breathing space, you might say.

MaryAnn: That is true. We’re finding that there is the new, the Generation Y-ers are entering the workforce now, and they’re coming from a totally different paradigm. What words of wisdom can you offer to these new leaders, or aspiring leaders that are entering the workforce?

Patricia: Well, what I would say is to be willing to be yourself – and I know that may sound so obvious, MaryAnn, but the willingness to speak up, to be courageous... the word, I guess, I’m really looking for is to be authentic – is that the more authentic and the real you are, you bring your gift and your talents, your unique contribution, the easier your job will be and the more you’ll be known by others more authentically, more real.

What I’m seeing with a lot of leaders is that – and I would say this to the new leaders coming in – is come from a place of contribution and not survival. I see a lot of people in survival mode, leaders and non-leaders. There is fear, there is lack, there is apparent chaos – the paradigms of structures are changing. So to focus on the positive, which may sound obvious, but to look at what is working, whatever situation you walk into, focus on what’s working, be honest about what’s not and what you might need to let go of, notice the areas where you can bring humor in and be flexible, to walk in integrity and to the willingness to be inclusive and engaging more collaborative with your team, are some of the things that I would offer new leaders. And to be committed to your own education, continuing to improve yourself.

And many of these things, again, may sound obvious but I think often, particularly when we’re in survival and we forget that we all have unique gifts and talents to contribute as a leader or otherwise. So focus on what is my contribution but . . . also the contributions of everyone on your team.

We *all* want to make a difference, and I think when we realize that in ourselves but also in our people, in our customers or in our employees, that they make a difference and to focus on what’s working, you’d be amazed how much that gets enhanced versus focusing on the fear or the lack.

MaryAnn: That is true. If you could add anything else for our listeners, what would you leave them with, Patricia, about leadership, great leadership, conscious leadership?

Patricia: Well, MaryAnn, I would first want to . . . one thing is to honestly acknowledge any leader, anyone at this time in history who is willing to be a leader, so just to embrace the responsibility you have and to recognize the contribution that you make, but that it is a position of responsibility and to ask yourself is my heart, my head and my gut aligned, and to bring in a more holistic approach to leadership.

To be a transformational leader takes courage and it takes the willingness to be, I believe, more integrated and to embrace self-mastery. And I know that may be a little bit repetitive, but I feel that these are really, really important points and that this is a time, truly, of transformational change, not just change, but to emerge into something different – so to recognize that what we know, though it’s served us to a point, is no longer going to serve us in the way that the new paradigms and a new strategic focus and conscious leadership will. So to recognize that these are times where that’s being asked of us and to be willing to at least be open to seeing things differently.

MaryAnn: Thank you so much, Patricia. It’s been an absolute pleasuring having you on the series.

Patricia: Thank you.

MaryAnn: For our listeners, for more information on Patricia and her work, you can visit her website at www.patriciavarley.com.

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Guest: Sandra LeMieux

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Today, our guest is Sandra LeMieux. Sandra has enjoyed a long and successful career working with a number of Fortune 500 companies, including IBM.

Sandra is an experienced manager, project manager, trainer, human resources consultant and an ordained reverend. As a result of her corporate experience, Sandra is able to combine traditional business practices and personal experience with metaphysical solutions that promote positive growth in individuals and the bottom line of the enterprise.

Sandra currently has her own company, LeMusing, and as a holistic life coach, helps individuals in all areas of their lives. Sandra offers individual consulting and healing, as well as programs that promote energetic wellness for groups and corporations.

I’m so pleased and honored to welcome you, Sandra.

SANDRA: Thank you.

MARYANN: Thanks so much for being here.

SANDRA: Thank you. It’s an honor.

MARYANN: Can you just tell us a little bit more about yourself?

SANDRA: I have – I would say – gosh, there is so many different ways you could define yourself, isn’t there? I would say the best way to define myself is I am willing. That just means, I am willing to listen to that still small voice within me over the egoic chatter or the list of shoulds; I am willing to step out on a limb and take the scary path to do what’s right, and I am willing to have fun doing all of that with an open mind and an open heart and open arms. That’s probably the best way I can describe it.

MARYANN: I know that for a fact; you are willing to jump out there and do what’s needed. Sandra, what would you consider to be at the heart of great leadership?

SANDRA: That’s such a profound question. When I read that one before, when you and I were talking previously, and I just wrote it down and I kept looking at this; I would have to say a couple of things came to mind.

Being reflective versus reactive, being focused versus distracted, being committed versus conflicted and being able to embrace success (yours and others), the willingness to listen – truly listen – and seek information. And then the last one that’s actually I would say is what I would consider the heart and soul of what makes great leadership is a person who has taken the time to clearly define their own life statement.

It’s fabulous to have mission statements for work; they’re necessary, but do you have your own life statement – how your gifts are going to work in this lifetime, how your values, setting an intention, sitting down and really writing the statement based on your top motivators, your key values, your natural gifts, and then measuring everything up against that. I really believe that *that* is at the heart of great leadership.

Those people that I have been blessed to work with throughout my career and that I’ve just met in my lifetime – even teachers that I’ve had, there are great leaders there as well; every walk of life has great leaders – and it were those people who were very clear about who they were and what they were choosing to stand for in their life and how *they* were going to utilize the gifts that they brought forth; they made the biggest impact on everybody around them.

So I would say that is probably *the* main one for me.

MARYANN: So it sounds like, Sandra, it’s really important for the great leader to be a leader in their own life first before they can really get out there and lead others.

SANDRA: Absolutely. How can lead someone if you don’t even know where you’re coming from?

MARYANN: Now, there is so much... I’m seeing this in the corporate world that there is so much change going on and it’s really no longer business as usual, and there is an immediate need in corporations and businesses for conscious leadership. What’s your definition of a conscious leader?

SANDRA: Wow. A conscious leader ... (#1) go back to one that is conscious and clear about their life intention and then one who ... I really think that conscious leadership, bottom line, is really seeing the divinity within each person who is presented to you in the work environment, be it a client, be it a secretary, be it a person who is your boss, or be it a person who works for you, that you truly see the divinity and have the honor and honor their presence – that to truly be a conscious leader I have to understand at the most core level that everyone is equal and what every person brings to the table is valuable towards the whole. And that there’s no such thing as this delusional hierarchy that we put in place such as, “You are my boss and you work for me, and this is my secretary...” or “this is my administrator...” those are all limiting belief systems.

I really believe a conscious leader is somebody who walks in everyday and says, “I’m coming in just willing to give and to share what I have for the betterment of this company and every person I meet today, and I am willing to be taught by every person I meet today” because that shows respect.

MARYANN: Wow. So really opening up and being open to feedback, as well as giving direction, all bundled together.

SANDRA: Oh, absolutely! Absolutely! You know, we can guide others – our presence can guide others – not just giving feedback verbally but just our presence, our demeanor, how we respond at an energetic level – people feel that when you walk in a room. People feel that. They know a leader immediately by their presence. I’m sure you’ve experienced that before. You can experience somebody who walks in a room and they have a smile on their face and yet there’s something about them that says, “I’m in charge” and it’s okay. You can almost see a whole room just go aaaahhhh.... It’s very powerful.

It’s a very powerful place to be when you’re standing honoring other people and as you said, willing to listen but also willing to guide and to share your gift, to share all of your wisdom that you have and to let that wisdom really better – not only enrich the company but enrich the people. To me, this is the key about how that bottom line gets enriched, so to speak, the money to the bank.

MARYANN: I love that. I love that – enrich the people.

SANDRA: Yes!

MARYANN: As well as the bottom-line.

SANDRA: Absolutely.

MARYANN: Wow. You mentioned something about the leader walking in with a smile on

their face and they can just sense by the presence that this individual is a leader. Now, at least I’m finding, it’s really important for leaders to add humor and lightness in their leadership style because it seems like the workplace gets to be very serious. So in what ways can a leader add that humor and lightness?

SANDRA: I think the first thing is that a true conscious leader knows how to laugh at themselves, and when they can laugh at themselves, they don’t judge others. But how can I not judge in person around me if I’m constantly judging myself. Right? I can’t give what I don’t have for me. So if I’m smiling and I have this just open, receptive energy, there’s going to be a humor at the table. There’s going to be a humor when a mistake is made instead of a criticism. A conscious leader is going to constantly be looking for what was the intent of the person and keep it lighthearted and to not let that person also beat themselves up because they may be so accustomed to that, that that person is beating themselves up. A conscious leader is going to stop that at the table as well, right? A conscious leader is going to be saying, “Wait. What was your intention?” “Well, my intention was this…” “Okay. Well, at least you tried.”

So, what would we like to do different and guide it into a solution oriented and then applaud them and have fun with it instead of making it so life or death – so this is the beginning and this is the end, it can only be this, it can only be that. Instead, it’s all of it and it’s all okay, and it’s all good, and I can use it for good.

MARYANN: What a great way to be able to engage people in the organization. So with that, how can a leader get their organization to be more – the individuals within the organization – to be more creative, flexible, smart, resilient?

SANDRA: Well, I mean it’s empowering. I’m sure that you’ve worked with people, as have I, that have disempowered those around them. They follow the structure that’s set up and once again, we go to the hierarchies (or as we used to call them, the silos). Silos never feed the herds; people have to go into separate silos to get information, right? It’s very time consuming and exhausting, right? It wastes your resources. Instead of operating holistically and empowering people to bring things to the table such as, “Okay, what we’re doing is not working; let’s have fun with this today. Okay, we tried this. Here’s where we’re at folks. This is not working. So we gave it our best try, so now let’s sit down and let’s do a brainstorming session. There’s no bad idea here. Let’s have some fun. I want you to think outside of the box…” and then don’t stop it after the meeting.

Constantly let them have an open door, an open email policy. Shoot me your ideas. If you think anything can be done better, shoot it to me, but then here’s the key, make sure somebody is assigned to re-act, to follow up, and to follow through on the ideas that are brought forth. A lot of times companies have the best intentions to promote like the creativity and to empower their people but what I’ve seen is it’s lip service. “I’ll send you in these great fabulous ideas… other people I know are sending you these great fabulous ideas…” and then this is what I used to hear from feedback from surveys, but you’re not doing anything with it. And they would be right.

It would just get stuck on somebody’s desk or one person would go, “Oh, we’ve been there and done that before. That didn’t work.” Well, this is now and that was then. We need to not have a

closed mind with any idea and there really should be a forum where anything that’s submitted is (#1) the person is praised for submitting that and then it’s reviewed, and it’s really looked at, and it’s really looked out outside of the box, that outside of the box thinking and challenge sessions are encouraged. I’m very passionate about that, as if you can’t tell. ☺

MARYANN: I could tell. So this is what, Sandra, you’re referring to—to look at it holistically.

SANDRA: For me, when I’m saying let’s look at this holistically, it’s like let’s look at the entire organization as a whole, instead of separate, and anybody from any department should be able to give input and maybe offer suggestion for another department. Ideas shouldn’t be kept at silos. Feedbacks shouldn’t be kept like, “Oh well, you don’t know my job so I’m not going to listen to what you have to say to me...” right? Also, treating it holistically meaning, how does this enrich the environment of the company, or is this an idea that would throw out an archaic rule that would allow more, as you said, ‘fun in the workplace’ like music or like plants in the office space. It could go in so many different directions but environment is another key piece.

I would say one that addresses mood, environment – any ideas that address the very livelihood of the people. So how they’re structured, their work schedules, getting flexible about that and thinking outside of the box about that because some people aren’t at their best at 8 a.m. but they could give you everything starting at 10:00, and if it’s feasible, treat it holistically.

Just because Joe over here needs to be in at 8:00 doesn’t mean that Sue over here needs to be in at 8:00. Really look at where you can break down the rules and just go for are we accomplishing our end result. And so looking at it from a 360 point of view of health, of the people and the company, of wealth, meaning enriching the people and the company, perfect self expression – is this allowing them to really bring to the table their truest gifts, their truest self expression or are we limiting our people. *And* is it forging positive relationships and giving them enough time with family. Relationships and family to me would be in the same box.

I call it the “perfect square.” When you can balance those, you have a holistic organization or you have a holistic balanced life of an individual.

MARYANN: That’s so key now and I’m finding that as the younger generation comes in, the Gen Y’s, into the workforce, this is something they are looking for – much more balance.

SANDRA: Yes. Yes.

MARYANN: And they’re quick to want more flexible schedules; whereas I see some resistance from other individuals who may have been in the company 20, 30 years; there’s more resistance on that side from the leaders.

SANDRA: Absolutely! Absolutely, and actually – I won’t tell what company this was – but I ran into this doing some consulting work. I had a team of very mixed, diverse backgrounds people, some Gen Y folks thrown in there as well, and they were like everybody has to fly out. Everybody has to be on the client’s site... blah, blah, blah, blah... my client didn’t ask for that. They’re like, “No, this is the way we do it.”

This is wasteful of the bottom line (#1), (#2), this person is a single parent. I’m going to get much more work out of them if I let them work from home and let them WebEx in and bring them up here for the major meetings when there are needs to be face time, and then I had some Gen Y’s who, point blank, they functioned better in the back room with all the computers, they didn’t mind being on site but they didn’t want to have to be locked into meetings all day and they needed the flexibility to work at their most high creative time, which for some reason was later at night. It was really a fight to go, “Let me manage my team as long as I get you the bottom line. Let me manage my team.” We were grossly shorthanded and they would not give me the leeway to do that. Ultimately, they lost that contract.

MARYANN: Wow.

SANDRA: Yeah. It was just a very interesting dynamic to watch and to be powerless to do anything other than to keep communicating what could be done.

MARYANN: That sounds like their leadership may have been stuck in certain ways.

SANDRA: Yeah, it was black and white. Here are the rules, everybody has to abide by the same exact rules, instead of here is our strategic statement. Here’s our mission statement. Here’s our goal. Here’s our project plan. Here’s our timeline. As long you guys are accomplishing this in high integrity and meeting the contract – hands off. But it was about power over and structure and control, and a lot of people don’t work well with that and they start to shutdown and you lose their creative wisdom.

MARYANN: Sandra, with leaders who are in – the type of leaders that you’re describing that tend to see it black or white, what would you recommend for them to help build trust with their peers, colleagues, and then also the people that they lead? It sounds like there might be a trust issue here.

SANDRA: You know, I think that there’s sometimes is a trust issue or that’s all that leader knows and they’re overwhelmed and overworked themselves. So to go outside of their comfort zone when they’re overworked is... it’s just, “No, no, no. I can’t manage it then.”

Sometimes it is a trust issue because you have a lot of new people and not a lot of new players, and also they don’t trust that process, they don’t trust that the work will get done. I mean, it is a risk. Whenever you try something new, it’s a risk.

It’s communication. Sometimes it’s baby steps. “Let me try this one thing and as long as I meet this, can we do...” and just really working with the person and asking them, “What is your resistance to this? I’m sure you have a very good reason for this that I don’t understand. Could you please educate me so then I can go communicate it.” Sometimes that question actually... I’ve seen people change their position when the question is asked in that way because then as they’re trying to explain it to you, they realize they’re just quoting a rule and that they don’t really support the rules. So it’s not really from their intention statement, like we talked about before; it’s just that they’ve been taught to follow the rules and they’ve never questioned the

rules and they’ve never been allowed creativity before. So, you know, in that way it can open the doors up as well.

Sometimes, you know, you’ve just got to go with the flow and just keep communicating feedback of things that we could do better. “Here are my suggestions...” and just never giving up sending that information in because I think sometimes perseverance builds trust; when they see that you’re that passionate about it, it builds trust. They suddenly have a respect for you and will start to entertain it and maybe ask you to compromise and tweak it a little bit at their comfort level and start integrating things in slowly at that point.

Does that answer your question?

MARYANN: It does, thank you. Yes.

SANDRA: You’re welcome.

MARYANN: There are just two more questions that I’d like to ask you, Sandra. The first one being, how does spirit or spirituality actually fit in with leadership?

SANDRA: Well to me, they’re not separate; they’re one and the same. I can’t be separate from my spirit so if I’m really walking my talk... if I’m really walking my talk, I’m going to bring it into the workplace. I feel like we need to get back to the kind of like that rules conversation and go back to the conscious leadership piece – what kind of denotes a conscious leader – it’s really knowing who you are and knowing when to kind of push up against the rules because they don’t measure up with who and what you are and how you are choosing to lead.

To me, spirituality being brought into the workplace also means me taking spirituality or my spiritual viewpoints, my code of ethics, of how I’m going to live my life. That’s really what my intention statement is to me – my personal code of ethics. And so, taking my personal code of ethics in my own verbiage but always listening to the person in front of me and being open to tweak that verbiage to meet them where they are.

MARYANN: So with that, Sandra, what words of wisdom can you offer new or aspiring leaders?

SANDRA: Be your true self. Really be willing... it’s scary to take risks but be willing to take risks. And I don’t mean like, “Oh, I’m going to do something against what company policy is...” nothing like that, but be willing to take risks.

Be willing to go in and listen, and watch the people around you. There’s so much that they are teaching you every second that you are allowed to be in their presence and taking that information and doing the due diligence, to take notes about the people not just the meetings, take notes about the people, take notes about what interested them, where did you see them get passionate in the meetings because wow, that’s where you’re going to be able to leverage them later. Right? Really pay attention to those people. Find out where you saw them smile and light up. Find out where you saw them kind of shrink down or look down, like their power had just

been stolen from them. Make notes so that you know how to work with this person, to bring out their best and to lift them into a better place. Because - if you do that, you will always succeed. Always.

MARYANN: Those are great words of wisdom. Well thank you, Sandra, and it’s absolutely been a pleasure having you on this series.

SANDRA: Oh, thank you so much. It’s been an honor and if there’s anything I can ever do to help you, let me know.

MARYANN: All right. Well to learn more about Sandra and her work, you can visit her website and that’s www.lemusing.com or you can call Sandra. She’s actually launching a “*Women of Wisdom and Wit*” *Teleseminar Series* in the late fall of 2009 and that’s something that I know you’ll want to check out. It’s going to be awesome! It’s *Women of Wisdom and Wit Series* for men, too.

With that, this is MaryAnn D’Ambrosio of www.leadoutloudnow.com, and I want to thank you for listening to the Leadership By Conscious Design Interview Series. So long for now, and may the heart-based leader within you – stand up and lead. Enjoy your day.



Guest: Andrea Woolf

Hello everyone and thank you for being here. This is MaryAnn D’Ambrosio of www.leadoutloudnow.com, and I want to welcome you to the Leadership by Conscious Design interview series.

I created or designed this leadership series for individuals in corporations and in business who realize there’s a shift taking place in the world and see this shift as a call to action or an opportunity to nurture and lead others to their greatness. This leadership series is about being an authentic leader and it’s exactly the type of development I craved and searched for in my corporate career.

You can view this series as the Insider Secrets to Great Leadership. The leaders that are part of this program are authentic, the real deal. They’re heart-based individuals who lead by example and walk the talk.

In this series, you’ll learn what’s at the heart of great leadership and how this can increase your leadership potential by building your confidence, clarity, communication capability and of course, strengthening your connection with others.

After listening to this series, you may also find an inner peace that will guide you during unsettling times and take you to another level of self-awareness.

Today, our guest is Andrea Woolf. Let me tell you a little bit about Andrea.

In 1995, Andrea Woolf reached a turning point. After 25 years in the corporate world, she discovered the coaching profession, and knew immediately that it was the contribution that she was here to make. Thousands of clients have relied on Andrea’s heart-based wisdom and ear for clarity to help them discover meaning, purpose and passion in their life.

In addition to her coaching, Andrea is a trainer and speaker, and her first book, *Ignite Your Life! How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be* will be out soon.

Welcome, Andrea. I’m so glad you were able to join us today.

Andrea: Thank you so much for inviting me here today, MaryAnn. I’m delighted to be here. This is one of my absolute favorite topics, so I really appreciate the opportunity to share with you and your audience.

MaryAnn: Thank you. Can you just tell us a little bit more about yourself?

Andrea: Yes, I have been a coach for over 14 years, and I’ve been working with individuals who want to take their life to a next level; it’s usually their professional life that begins the process with me and also, I go into companies and I always coach the owner/founder/leader of the company, because whatever is going on in the company usually starts right there. And then the more visionary that person is, the more teams they let me work with – the management teams and the sub teams, so that we’re all in one conversation.

In more recent times with my partner, Don Osborne, we have created a website, www.wakeupabundant.com, which is all about abundance practices in every area of life. And abundance, of course, is one of the key pieces to business; it’s the bottom line, after all. But, of course, there is much more to abundance than just money and that’s true also in business. And when we have a dynamic happy healthy team, then the sky is limit. And when we don’t, of course, there is a lot of struggle involved.

One of the key areas that I work in all the time is this area of leadership because there is actually often nowhere to go learn this stuff. I’m really excited to be sharing some ideas and concepts today.

MaryAnn: Wonderful. And you work with so many leaders and you’ve seen probably so many different styles, Andrea; what’s at the heart of great leadership?

Andrea: Well, the first word that comes to mind is trust. One of the hardest things for people to do is trust, especially if they’re not very clear and confident about themselves. One of the things that I work with people on is to what I call ‘be that which they want in others,’ which means lead by being trustworthy yourself and then invite your team to be that with and for you, too.

It’s really important. Without trust, and trust is foundational, everything else is really one big mess and one big struggle. So creating trust is really important.

The second skill in a leader is that ability to build trust in his or her team. Now that’s a process and we do live in a sound byte society now, we want things now and we want them quickly. I believe that trust is earned. Me saying to a client, for example, trust me sounds really great; however, that’s going to happen over time when they see who I am, how I show up again and again and again and gradually trust is built. Building trust with a team takes time.

The next important thing about really the heart of leadership is treating everyone respectfully. Now this may sound so simple and way too obvious, but I have to tell you that I’m often invited into teams that are very upset with each other. They have a lot of stresses, perhaps one or more of them aren’t performing up to par, and there’s lots of historical stories that they’re dragging

around about each other, and so this thing about treating everyone respectfully is very often one of our biggest challenges.

One team that I was brought into work with, all leaders in the firm, they work with clients with high net worth and institutions; my first meeting, all men, they were amazing, they were like spitting each other in how they were speaking to each other and they had no idea they were doing it. So, whilst they resisted me wanting to start with working with them on communication, I said to them within three weeks that’s what we will be working on and indeed, we were because this respect thing is very important. Once we’re treating each other respectfully, everything else can open up.

My next thought on this is what I call the three Cs. True leadership in a true leader, the true leader is calm, clear, and consistent. You know you can count on them in the eye of the storm to be that rock of Gibraltar, to be that solid voice. You know you can depend on them and count on them and go to them in times of confusion, chaos, or stress. A true great leader easily inspires and motivates. So, in other words, one might think that there’s a lot of self contemplation in a leader, and to some degree there is, they’ve done inner work and preparing to be great leaders, however, a true leader is focusing out there on serving his or her team and is usually not one size fits all with individuals in a team, so individually inspire and motivate the team members.

Usually, great leaders are powerfully committed to what they’re doing and they then engender that in their team. So, they’re not wishy-washy about it. They’re very decisive, true great powerful leaders, and even if they’re off track they live with the consequences. That’s a major quality in a powerful leader. So, they’re clear, decisive, and committed to what they’re up to.

Then, the next point is, because they’re so okay with themselves, they’re secure and confident, they surround themselves with strong leaders. Often I’ve gone into companies where the opposite is true. The head of the company is strong character, strong leader, and they surrounded themselves with weak leaders and they’re very frustrated. They want them to be more like them but they hire differently. So, then if we follow this logic, they’re great interviewers. They know they’re looking for strong leaders. They’re really good at team building. Now again, in my experience, most of us have nowhere to go to learn this. How to hire well and how to then have everybody get along in the sandpit together, like really play nicely together as a team. There are very few places to go and learn this stuff.

Like I said, the leader has a very strong sense of himself or herself, so they don’t need to have ego. They can be very humble and yet clear and decisive because they’re secure and confident.

MaryAnn: As I’m listening to you, Andrea, I’m hearing how it’s so important to become a leader in your own life first before you can lead others.

Andrea: Right. Well, yes. So, authenticity is the name of the game. It really helps if you’re walking your own talk for others to follow, you know, like the pied piper. If the pied piper really couldn’t play the music or was tripping every step or something like that, then there might have been less followers. So, it’s really important to be authentic. It’s not necessarily about knowing everything about leadership but it is helpful to have some experience. So, even if, let’s say

you’re an up and coming leader, to go volunteer somewhere for a charity that meets with your passions and take a leadership role over a team. That’s rather like herding cats, it will be great experience because when you’re managing volunteers it’s all too interesting, right. They don’t necessarily call it work for you, but it’s great experience. So, I really believe it’s important if you want to grow is to go find opportunities to lead teams. Even if you go work with kids, you’re kind of managing the kids.

So, as you do that, you see there’s no way to get to know yourself in that position, if you haven’t actually done it. You can sit and read books. You can listen to tapes, CDs. I’m dating myself with the tapes, of course. You can do all this study stuff which is vital and important and essential, however, it’s in the doing of it where you really get to learn about what your management style is.

So, an interesting idea here is that leaders can come from surprising places. It isn’t necessarily the highly experienced that necessarily are the best leaders. They may have really “bad habits.” If I could share a story . . .

In my last job, which was in a multinational corporation, there was a young man, by the name of Tony, who joined the company in the mailroom and this young man – he shared stories about his background with me – he came from nothing. He came from very poor background. He came to work everyday in a pressed white shirt, pressed pants, and a very neat tie on every single day and he had a ready smile to absolutely everybody he was delivering mail to, and he was paying attention. As he was going around the company, he really got to know an awful lot about all of us. So, gradually, he was starting to gently, very humbly (because he didn’t consider himself a leader) start to make suggestions. Before we knew it, he was hired into the IT department, which was starting to grow, and he was answering the phone at the IT service desk, and he was great at it because he was so wonderful with every one. Then, in a very short space of time, he was actually promoted to getting out and being face to face with the internal customers around the company, actually servicing them with their IT needs. Then, very soon thereafter, he was promoted in to a leadership role in the IT department. Really, when everyone looked back at it, we could all see those signs of leadership in him when he was this young man in the mailroom.

Leadership can happen anywhere and I encourage everybody I work with to show up as a leader.

I was working with an accounting department of a very large real estate firm and I was working with the management team in one group and everybody who reported to all of them in another group. In that second group, in the first meeting, I was asking everybody to introduce themselves to me and tell me what they did there. We went around the table and we came to the young lady who said, and I quote, “I’m just a receptionist.” To cut a long story short, I helped her see that not only was she not just a receptionist and she also, by the way, was the newest person in the team and thought she actually didn’t know anything. I helped her see that, number one, she had fresh eyes on everything being the newcomer, so she had lots to contribute and there was no “just” to her being the receptionist because the receptionist is absolutely the most vital person in the company. They’re the first line of contact with everybody coming in to that company, either by phone or walking in the door. So she grew a little taller and she grew a little

more confident. In the ensuing meetings, really participated which she wouldn’t have done otherwise.

Leadership is inside each one of us if somebody just takes the time to bring it out in us.

MaryAnn: That is so true and it’s incredible when an individual, like yourself, to the woman who thought she was just the receptionist, can comment and provide her with additional insight so that she grew a little taller.

Andrea: She did.

MaryAnn: She stood so much more truly in her power and knowing who she was. So, how wonderful is that!

Andrea: Exactly. Wonderful.

MaryAnn: You know, there’s so much change going on in the world right now and it really is no longer business as usual. So, there is an immediate need in corporations and in business for conscious leadership. Andrea, what’s your definition of a conscious leader?

Andrea: Okay, so the first thing I would say, because I encounter this so rarely, it’s amazing to me but most companies I go into have no vision whatsoever. They may have tactical goals, in other words numbers, but most companies have no vision whatsoever. Like, what they’re doing it for, what they stand for in the world, what the vision is, where they want to be in 3-5 years.

One of the true elements of conscious leadership is understanding the vital importance of creating vision within the team and not only that but also then the next level down, sort of the most strategic level, and then the next level down to that is tactical. Now, most of us are operating at tactical level. We’re bouncing like ping pong balls, highly reactive versus proactive. So when we pause and invest the time and the energy to create vision, we’re doing it the other way around, and so we’re anchoring everything in vision, and I encourage leaders to actually get buy in right from the beginning by involving their team in the creation of the vision and then the strategic goals and then the tactical goals. Because if you do that, then they own it and what we want is: absolutely everybody in the team owning the vision, the strategic goals, and the tactical goals. Then, you have a team that’s on fire because they feel, and literally are, involved and are very connected to what it’s all for.

The next quality I would say about conscious leadership is . . . be innovative. Be open to new ideas from many sources and especially from your team. I can’t tell you how often I see leaders who think they have to be the ones coming up with all the great ideas. Quite the opposite is true. Really powerful conscious leadership is about facilitating brilliance out of your team. They will invariably levitate off the ground, feel so great that an idea of theirs is being included and hailed as magnificent. It’s not about heavy lifting in conscious leadership; it’s about causing this in others, causing greatness in others.

I am a strong believer in using tools whether they be books, tapes, CDs. I have something right on my desk all the time called the Creative Whack Pack, which is by Roger Von Oech. He wrote an amazing book called *A Whack On The Side Of The Head*. Now, this is just an example of a tool but they’re both be deck of cards and the book are all about looking at things in a whole new ways. So, we tend to get very clenched, with blinkers on in the corporate world, and a true conscious leader will really bring out creative thinking and expansive thinking and promote discussion and debate, even disagreement by the way, amongst the team. Because out of that will come alignment.

I don’t know if you’ve heard of the book *The Five Dysfunctions Of A Team* by Patrick Lencioni. It’s absolutely an amazing book and inside that book – and I’ve had many teams that are desperately unhappy with each other, start by reading that book, looking for where they are in that book and then we use it as a tool to then investigate from. There’s a concept in that book called constructive conflict. One of the biggest challenges in teams is not being able to disagree with each other. There’s a perception that if I disagree there’s going to be a fight or hurt feelings. So there’s a lot of withheld communication in the corporate world, and one way out of that is to not only have it be okay to disagree with each other, like really push for it because out of disagreeing with each other where then each of the team members has to make a case for what they believe would be for the highest good of the team, there comes respect, there comes dialogue, there comes listening to each other, there comes many, many great things that wouldn’t happen without really having a team go for that. So, a great leader, a conscious leader, will be not having it be all kind of calm and smooth all the time but really raising tough questions for the team to address and solve.

MaryAnn: Now, what’s the name of the book again, Andrea?

Andrea: *The Five Dysfunctions Of A Team* and the author’s name is Patrick Lencioni.

MaryAnn: Thank you.

Andrea: So, I believe that a truly conscious leader really cares about his or her team, and you can’t fake that. Yes. I don’t think it’s enough to just have lots of experience to be a great leader if you really don’t care about your team. Then, consequently from that, something that I encourage all leaders to do because it’s absolutely free, it doesn’t cost anything except breathing and speaking, is to give tons of acknowledgement, be looking for every opportunity to acknowledge individual team members and also give kudos to them. I have come across situations where leaders take credit for a team member’s ideas and accomplishments. I strongly encourage them to stop doing that and to allow them to get the limelight because from that, you’re perceived as an even stronger leader. So, looking for opportunities to really acknowledge and give credit to your team members.

A conscious leader doesn’t arrive at a moment where there is a lotus position and now we’re done. We’re here, we’ve arrived. This is it and now we’re done. We’ll just maintain this. They’re always looking from the point of view of how to improve, how to be more efficient or effective. How to deliver even greater service - perhaps to the external customers or maybe to

internal customers or perhaps vendors. A conscious leader is really innovative in this sense where they don’t settle. They’re constantly looking to how could we be doing this even better.

Like I said before, they lead by example. So, they’re not just asking this of their team, they’re doing it themselves.

MaryAnn: So, a lot of this, Andrea, sounds like it could be very serious business. How can leaders add humor and lightness to their leadership style?

Andrea: What a great question. So, you know, we make up this story that business has to be serious and grim but actually there’s no rule. I haven’t found a book where there’s a rule book and it’s written in that book that business must be grim and serious. Quite the opposite, I find that when people having a great time, whatever they’re doing, they tend to give 1000% more. There are ways to do this.

For example, meetings; I believe it’s really important to meet regularly so that there’s no psychic ability needed within the team to know what’s going on, so that you’re all in the same page, so that you have this opportunity to contribute. So, regular meetings are really important. However, there’s no rule that they have to always be seated or the same every time. You could make them fun, whatever fun means to your team. You could rotate whose chairing the meeting and, that person, it’s their job to make that meeting fun and everybody will have different ideas on how to do that. Using fun tools; bringing in speakers, experts; create contest; use colorful stuff, pens or objects. I am a strong believer, as a trainer, to get people up and moving. We tend to go into team meetings, some sit down, but there’s no rule that we have to do that. We could get up every so often and switch places. There’s something called pattern interrupt where you’re literally looking at it from a different point of view by simply moving your chair. Most of all, I mean, a really important thing to do is to look for opportunities to celebrate together. Celebrate successes, celebrate events. I’m a strong believer there’s no such thing as too much fun.

MaryAnn: In what ways can a leader engage people in their organization to be creative, flexible, smart, and resilient?

Andrea: Okay. There are lots of ways. Let me give a couple here. So, it’s really important for people to show up like this that they know that they’re valued. That may sound slightly odd but it’s really important when somebody knows how important they are and how valued they are within the team, they will be amazing. They will show up in amazing, amazing ways. They will bring all of them to the task at hand.

Also, which is a slight variation on the same point, to each person within the team to know how they make a difference. I was working with an immigration law firm and how the founder of the law firm, the senior attorney, had hired, would he have hired people who each spoke with different language so that he could offer that amazing service to all of his individual and corporate clients. So, there was always somebody who spoke their language on site which was extraordinary, right. Here’s what was going on though.

English was the common language but nobody really understood each other. They definitely didn’t understand each other’s culture and there was very little “understanding” going on. Also, the roles were not clear. There was a very unclear structure in terms of who was doing what and by when, very simply put.

So, before we got into clarifying the roles, what I did is I had them, in the conference room, pick somebody they were going to acknowledge, and they all picked one woman who was like the angel of the law firm and they acknowledged her first. There was literally not a dry eye in the group when they did this and week by week, we picked somebody new. So, all of them were acknowledging that person. So, they went from not looking them in the eye, don’t pick me, to couldn’t wait to get acknowledged by their team. By the time we had gone around the whole team, they were hugging at work, they were helping each other, they were literally a transformed team because rather than focusing on what was wrong with each other, which is what most of us naturally default to, they really now were clearly focusing on what was great about each other, how each one of them made a difference, how everybody was really supremely valuable in that law firm. Once we had done that, everything else was easy. We created a new structure for the roles within the law firm, we created new processes and it was humming and business expanded as a natural consequence.

MaryAnn: That’s such an inspirational story!

Andrea: It was amazing to be part of it. If I may just add a little something to it...

MaryAnn: Sure.

Andrea: We then created the mission statement together. John, the attorney, had wanted to start with that and I said, “No, no, no. Let me do a little work with the team first.” So, they all had an assignment to go away and put a list of words together that really expressed for them what this law firm was in the world, who they were for their clients and in the world. The following week they all came back with their list, they all were very good students, they all did the assignment, and without exception, every single one of them had the word ‘family’ in their list. This would never have happened if we had not taken the time to do the work first and get connected. So it was a very different mission statement they all came up with than it would have been if we had just done sort of the corporate thing.

MaryAnn: I’m curious, did you have the word ‘family’ somehow in the mission statement?

Andrea: Oh yes. They were completely aligned on it - they all had that word.

MaryAnn: Wow.

Andrea: So they were a family helping families and corporations. Yeah, it was amazing... amazing mission statement.

MaryAnn: Wow.

Andrea: Yeah, really amazing.

MaryAnn: Incredible.

Andrea: Yeah. So that’s one thing. The clear role is very important with everybody knowing what they’re there to do, how they interface with each other, that everyone’s vital – and this is really a cultural thing, and it comes from the leader. If the leader is this and says “this is how it is here,” then when you come into that team, you’re going to either fit or not fit and then either leave or be let go.

Regular meetings – like I said before, there is nothing that replaces it. Consistency on this will really be the name of the game. But there is no rule that they have to be grim, remember; they can be really fun, with everyone attending, no excuses, everyone participating and being on time and everyone contributing.

This is how everyone’s on the same page. A metaphor I use all the time is a rowing team. If you think of rowing teams and they’re racing against each other, they make it look so easy and effortless, they put their ego on the side outside the boat, they all face in the same direction, rowing in the same direction as one, so they’re barely creating a ripple in the water and they’re following the direction of the cox.

When we take a hop, skip and a jump into business, it’s rarely that clear or that simply. However, it can be. It really can be! And when it is, when we leave our ego to one side and we understand the greater good of the team and what we’re all doing it for, then it’s easy and effortless, we stop paddling like in the opposite direction just because we feel like it and creating all these upsets and ripples, which is often what goes on in the corporate world.

So getting on the same page is not complicated; it just takes a few of these things.

MaryAnn: Andrea, to wrap this up, if you could just give new or aspiring leaders, new individuals to a company, some words of wisdom, what would they be?

Andrea: Okay, here we go.

(1) I am repeating this, but it’s really important. Take time to do the inner work. Get clear about yourself. If you don’t have experience to draw from, think about great leaders you’ve either known you’ve worked under or have come across in your life through books, movie, TV, etc. Think about what’s great about them. If you could be like them, a great leader, what would that look like for you, who would you be and what would you do?

There is two parts to this – it’s the being thing and then the doing thing. How would you lead, what would you do and how would you be?

When starting with a new team (this is really important), take your time, get to know them. Trust is earned leadership, then accepting you as leader is earned. And also, I strongly advise to get to know what preceded you. Not through gossip; I don’t encourage gossip at all, but just

getting informed so that you know what you’re dealing with when you come in as a new leader. Engage your team slowly and bring them with you, invite and welcome their input and then, with their help, co-create your new team under your great leadership.

I just want to talk about a couple of abundance practices here, as we’re wrapping up, which is definitely in our Wake Up Abundant program, and these are two wonderful things.

One is gratitude. You know, being grateful in any role that we’re in, especially a leader is a marvelous thing. When your team sees that you’re grateful to be leading them, it is heart opening. Gratitude is truly a heart opener and you’re grateful for everything, how they’re showing up and how they’re helping you and so on. There are so many opportunities to show and express gratitude.

The second thing is reward. You know, we often forget to reward. And reward may be financial in nature, but not necessarily. A reward could be a little gift, it could be a special gift certificate for a dinner for this person and his wife or . . . you understand . . . there are so many ways to reward. Reward can be verbal, too.

Gratitude and reward will reap huge abundance inside your organization as you lead them to greatness.

MaryAnn: Thank you so much, Andrea. It has been an absolute pleasure.

Andrea: Thank you too, MaryAnn, it’s been a delight and a pleasure to spend this wonderful time with you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

MaryAnn: To learn more about Andrea and her work, be sure to visit her website www.wakeupabundant.com.

This is MaryAnn D’Ambrosio of www.leadoutloudnow.com, and thank you for listening to the Leadership By Conscious Design interview series. So long for now and may the heart-based leader within you stand up and lead. Enjoy your day.

About the Series

Innovative Leadership

Lead Out Loud Now is very excited to reveal the next level in leadership development! Although this series is designed for individuals in corporations and business, you'll quickly discover that the ***Insider's Secrets to Great Leadership*** are timeless pearls of wisdom, that guide the leader who is within each and every one of us.

By Conscious Design...

The six outstanding heart-based leaders in the ***Leadership by Conscious Design Interview Series*** understand there's a major shift or change taking place in the world and it's no longer "business as usual." You're in for a real treat. These leaders have stepped up and are offering wisdom, experience, and practical tools that can strengthen your leadership capacity to enrich your personal and professional life.

The Guests are:

- **David O'Brien**, President of WorkChoice Solutions
www.workchoicesolutions.com
- **Elizabeth Agnew**, Founder of Integrative Leadership Strategies
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- **Stacey Hentschel**, Founder of Quantum Integrations
www.quantumintegrations.com
- **Patricia Varley**, International Speaker, Trainer and Coach
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- **Sandra LeMieux**, Founder of LeMusing
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- **Andrea Woolf**, Co-Founder of Wake Up Abundant
www.wakeupabundant.com and www.andreawoolf.com

About the Host

MaryAnn D'Ambrosio, Ph.D., is the CEO and Founder of Lead Out Loud Now. During her 30 plus years in the corporate world, MaryAnn has witnessed countless professionals holding back on their leadership potential. To grow the leader who is inside of you, MaryAnn has developed and introduced corporate colleagues and executives to a new leadership model based on Conscious Communication.

As a visionary, conscious communicator, motivational speaker, and personal and group consultant for personal mastery, MaryAnn will intuitively and empathetically guide you in advancing your leadership skills and potential. MaryAnn's greatest desire is to see the leader within you acknowledge the call to serve by—stepping up and leading, now!

