

HR Mixtape: Episode with Shari Simpson and Dr. Joey Faucette, Executive Coach and Culture Architect at Work Positive

Announcer:

You're listening to the HR Mixtape. Your podcast with the perfect mix of practical advice, thought-provoking interviews, and stories that just hit different so that work doesn't have to feel, well, like work. Now, your host, Shari Simpson.

Shari Simpson:

Joining me today is Dr. Joey Faucette, executive coach and culture architect at Work Positive. A best-selling author and podcast host himself, he helps leaders transform workplace culture to drive success by leaning into strengths and positive workplace approaches. Dr. Joey, thank you so much for jumping on the podcast with me today.

Dr. Joey Faucette:

Shari, I am so delighted to be here. We're going to mix it up, right?

Shari Simpson:

Yes, we absolutely are. And I, as an eternal optimist, am very excited about our topic today. We are talking about dream teams and positivity. So I'm going to start with maybe a tough one, maybe not. And when I think about today's hybrid environment and our ever-changing workplaces, what does a dream team look like right now?

Dr. Joey Faucette:

Oh man, great question. I think we're all struggling with that and we're seeing return to work, or as my military friends would say, the RTB, return to base, kind of calls going out all over the place. What does it look like to have a

dream team? First of all, you have to work your butt off more today to create a dream team than I think you did when it was one singularity. Whether it was all distributed or all in person, today we have a mix mash of it. What do you do? First of all, of course, you can get a free copy of my book, *Work Positive Team Edition*. Glad to send it to you. Just reach out to me on LinkedIn and you'll get all the five qualities of dream teams. But the number one quality for a work positive dream team is to listen actively. And the challenge today is that, well, just like you and I are virtual here, I'm watching your body language and looking at your facial expressions. I'm reading you as I'm speaking. So really, I'm listening while I'm talking. And I think that's a skill set that many people find quite challenging. Not that I've got it all captured, Shari, but just consciously saying to yourself, I need to slow down to speed up. I need to listen carefully to intonation. I need to more proactively watch body language. Now the cool thing is when you can do that in a virtual environment like we're here on Riverside, you can do it even better in person. So I would say that first one, actively listen, is supremely important in creating a dream team in a mixed mash of presence. And you add in the complexity of maybe somebody who's neurodivergent. So they kind of have all that chatter going on in their head all the time anyway. So it definitely is something to focus on.

Shari Simpson:

Right, absolutely. So you really lean into this concept of positivity for teams. And I know positivity doesn't mean going in like pie in the sky, white picket fence, everything's perfect. It's a different view of what that means. How do you define that and how do you talk about that with teams?

Dr. Joey Faucette:

Yeah, thanks so much for asking that, because there's this whole thing about toxic positivity and things like that now. So I like to keep it real, Shari. And keeping it real helps you be positive. So what you're doing is, first of all, you're training your brain. And that's the first core practice of a work positive culture framework, by the way. You're training your brain to focus on the positive and filter out the negative. Now, it's not some Jedi ninja mind trick or something. It's just saying to yourself, you know, I could give my mental energy to talking about how things suck around here, you know, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah,

whatever it is, the very specific details of why things suck around here. However, there are always bright spots. And so training my brain to find those bright spots, to focus on those bright spots. That's the perceived core practice and then the fifth core practice is received and that's where I'm expressing gratitude. I'm saying man Shari. Those were some great questions you asked during our podcast interview where'd you come up with those? Tell me how you got this that kind of thing. So I'm being very specific as opposed to a soap bubble compliment, which is like Shari. You're an amazing interviewer. I'm very, I'm giving velcro compliments then, right? And I'm grateful for that Shari, the way you ask those questions and you hear the distinction there. So it's not Pollyanna, it's keeping it real and dealing in the current realities as opposed to the imagined realities, which for most human beings, seven and a half to eight out of 10 times is negative.

Shari Simpson:

Had an interesting conversation with somebody the other day that I was interviewing for the podcast, and she talked about a concept that she uses with her teams called victim, villain, victor. And what she does, and it's the first time I've heard those, like, kind of those three V's put together like that. And so as she's having these conversations with her team, she's saying, you know, OK, I hear you're coming at this conversation like you're the victim. What if you retold the story and you were the villain? What if you retold the story and you were the victor? And it was so fascinating to hear her talk about how people come to a different understanding of the scenario, potentially by sitting in those different roles, which I think aligns very well with what you're saying is if you can come to it from a strengths-based view instead of all the things we don't have, you're going to be more positive.

Dr. Joey Faucette:

Absolutely, and the coupling of that with gratitude, as you just indicated, is so strong. Yeah, what your friend and I are both doing is encouraging people to take the movie that's constantly playing in their minds. Ramit Sethi would talk about it as our invisible scripts. So to take that movie, the reticular activating system, the RAS that's in the brain, and just rewriting that, reproducing that, redirecting that. In fact, most of these scripts, as Ramit talks about, and other

people who are capturing neuroscience, there's some kind of movie playing in our heads constantly, and most of them are from childhood. You can choose which one plays. Now, I'm not a Freudian psychologist or anything like that, but you can choose which one you play. In fact, there are a couple that I switch between in my mind, and when I catch myself being negative sharing, I say, wait a minute, you're at the baseball game. But instead, you know, I flip it and I go, wait a minute, you're sitting in a small group as a middle schooler. And so I just consciously flip back and forth between those. You have a choice. You're empowered. You choose the movie that your team's going to get from you.

Shari Simpson:

How do you start training yourself to do that mentally as a leader? Is there daily habits that you've incorporated or that you teach people?

Dr. Joey Faucette:

Yeah, and again, I talk about these in the work positive team edition book that I'll give you daily habits. I think of them as morning and evening at a baseline. I'll start with the evening. I can't even tell you how many years I've been doing it, but I have a gratitude diary and every evening, and this is not a novel concept anymore. When I first began teaching it years ago, it was somewhat then, but just cause I'm bald doesn't mean I've been around forever, right? It's a silver hair, right? So you just write down three positive experiences you had for the day and again, make it Velcro instead of soap bubble. You know, I enjoyed lunch today. Well, what was it you enjoyed about lunch? You know, you had a chef come in and prepare your favorite dish or something like that. Just be as specific as possible. And what you're doing there, Shari, is literally seeding your brain, specifically your unconscious mind, with something positive. So you will go to sleep with those positive ideas. And if it can be the last thing you do before you drift off to sleep, that's the best time because that's your last conscious thought. So your subconscious works all night long anyway. So you're just giving it something positive, or as I like to say, seeding it something positive. I promise you'll wake up more refreshed in the morning. If you ever wake up as tired in the morning as you went to sleep, it's because...

Shari Simpson:

Yes, more often than not.

Dr. Joey Faucette:

Yeah, well, your brain is just working out the problems that you couldn't do during the day. And oh, by the way, those nightmares come from that same place. So the morning habit that I really like to do is to fill my mind. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Any nutritionist worth their salt or sugar would tell you. And because you're setting your metabolic set point at that time, that's how your body is going to burn calories and burn the fat. That's what you want to do mentally as well. You want to fill your mind or flood your mind, if you will. However you best consume positive content, man, YouTube is just such a treasure trove of great people. I mean, listen to Ed Milet or somebody who's just like a behemoth. I mean, he's big physically, but he's a behemoth in terms of being an influencer. Listen to someone like that. I like to listen to Ed, but find somebody that you can listen to like that. It's just going to flood your brain. If you're a reader, read something positive, you know, read at least a chapter, a book a day. It's a habit that I have. I love music to all kinds of music. And so I got my jams on in the morning and I am, I'm turning it up. In fact, sometimes if I get up too early, like four 30 or something, my wife says, you know, could you keep the music down tomorrow morning? So I'm jamming, just really flooding my mind with something positive. And then a final thing I like to do in the mornings and as a great habit is visualization of my calendar for that day. Like this morning, I looked and I said, hey, I'm going to be talking to Shari Simpson today at 2.30 Eastern Time. Can't wait for that. Hey, what are some positive outcomes that, you know, the best possible outcomes that I want to see from that podcast interview with Shari? And again, it's called predictive encoding. I'm already visualizing those positive results. Will it turn out exactly like I did? No, because life is life, right? But I'm much more likely to get closer to those positive results as I encode those in my brain and predict the positive outcomes. By the way, Shari, your mind is either going to imagine or worry, and it's going to worry will be the negative consequences, you know, the worst possible outcome for my interview with Shari. Imagination, hey, who knows, we may reach a million views of this podcast, right? So just go ahead and imagine the best as opposed to letting your mind go to the default, to the negative.

Shari Simpson:

What do you say to those leaders who, and I'm really inspired by what you're saying. I know there's a lot of neuroscience to back it up. So that being said, I can tell you, I have definitely coached many a leader over the years who's like, that sounds too woo woo. That's too nice. What do you say to those people when you're like, no, really there's data to support it. But we know that data only works if you have that relationship and you can kind of tie into that person's why or motivation.

Dr. Joey Faucette:

Yeah, that is so true. Yeah, I used to get woo-woo a lot. Fortunately, with a Southern accent, nobody ever accused me of being from California, so that was nice. But back when I first started this, it was woo-woo. I like the word squishy now. Yeah, yeah. A lot of times you wind up with a CEO or CFO who is just driven by the numbers and is less, shall we say, conversant in people skills. My friend Lindsay Dowd says we shouldn't refer to them as soft skills. We should refer to them as power skills. One of my other friends, Larry Levine, who is from California, selling from the heart is his thing. He says, soft skills drive hard dollars. And there's a lot of truth in that. So what I would say is, at the end of the day, particularly with the rise of augmented intelligence now, human beings have an immense capacity to achieve. They achieve immensely in the midst of adversity. But the brain drives all that and focusing, learning to focus that limitless capacity of the human mind for creativity and innovation. Therein lies your competitive advantage. That's how you're going to remain not only competitive, but you're going to stop the competition on a global scale when you can unleash the power that lies within. And I think it's a power to work positive and you can create a culture that supports that growth of human beings. And so, you know, there's all kinds of things, belonging at work, becoming all those kinds of things that we don't have time to talk about today, but just really helps humans develop to be the, this is trite now, but to be the best version of themselves so that their work takes on meaning and purpose and satisfaction, that's when you're getting the most out of people. AI can handle repetitive tasks. We don't need people to do that anymore. In fact, AI can do it better and faster. Although it does, my Claude does hallucinate from time to time. So we just have to slip him something in his walk, in his

electrons to clear up the hallucination. But I mean, Claude can handle most repetitive tasks quite well. The joie de vivre really comes from the innovation and the creativity and we can solve people's problems in new ways, Shari.

Shari Simpson:

How do you help those on your team who come to you with a problem and they're looking at it from kind of the sky is falling perspective?

Dr. Joey Faucette:

Yeah, great question. I really appreciate you asking it in that way because what you did was you tapped into a couple of things there. You tapped into their IQ and their EQ, the intellectual quotient being, you know, what solutions could I come up with because I'm brilliant intellectually, but also there's that EQ side, which is it's hard to stay focused or to emotionally differentiate myself in the midst of this. First of all, I want to invite a leader to take her or himself down from the throne and come alongside that person. And as my friend Joshua Friedman talks about, empathy is just, I mean, it's the currency of change today and of growth for companies and individuals. So you can empathize, but now understand that's not sympathizing. I'm so sorry. You know, friendship or empathy to the point of you get lost in the malaise with them or you take on their anxiety about the situation or the mental block that's keeping them from doing it. And I'm an executive coach. I see I've certified have been for a number of years now. So we like to ask powerful questions instead of answering questions. So the most impactful thing you can do is to say, well, Shari, what have you thought about that we can do to address this issue? And therein lies empathy and collaboration and all the good kind of stuff because I am constantly amazed by the number of people who, when they come with a problem, they've been thinking about it for a week or a month or they've seen it coming. So they've already gone through a laundry list in their mind of things we could do, probably sorted and prioritized them. But for whatever reason they lack the courage or resilience or something, they're just reluctant to share that with me. So I ask, well, Shari, what have you thought about that we can do? What have you heard, Shari, that someone else has done in a similar situation? Who do you know that succeeded in a situation like this? Shari, what previous experiences have you

had when you faced a similar adversity that you could bring to bear on this particular issue? So in that way, then we begin to work together on it. That's why I say the leader's got to take her or himself down from the throne. Rather than assuming you've got to have all the answers as a bit of leadership. No, you're shuffling the cards, you're distributing the cards, and then you get to see everybody's hand and everybody wins in those scenarios.

Shari Simpson:

So my leader right now is going through that same certification and she is brilliant. She has a wealth of knowledge. And it's funny because I've noticed in our one-on-ones her, the way she talks to me has changed. And I asked her, I was like, is this from this coaching you're going through? And she's like, yes, yes, it is. She's like, it's taking everything in me not to provide answers or solutions to the problem. She's like, it's good. I mean, we're both kind of learning through it because there are sometimes I'm like, can you just give me the answer? Like, we got to get through this meeting. I need to move on with my life. But it's such a great tactic.

Dr. Joey Faucette:

It's not only a tactic, it's as your leader is discovering it's a huge mindset shift. What it does is in taking yourself down from the throne, you're literally tapping into the collective wisdom and energy of Shari and the rest of the team. Now, we have typically rewarded short-term brilliance, right? It's quarterly, you know, profits up for the quarter, therefore our stock prices are going up for, I'm able to rattle off answers. Those days are gone. Claude can do that. I can ask Claude and Claude can give me all these answers much faster than my leader can. It reminds me when Google first came out, my brother's daughter, she came, I happened to be in Huntington, West Virginia with them when she came home from school and she was like 14 years old or something like that, you know, maybe just entering high school. I said, well, how did, how did your first day of high school go? Well, I don't know how this is going to work because I had one teacher who kept asking us questions and she could have just Googled them for herself. I love that. That's kind of where we are today, right? Claude can answer all those questions that we used to reward somebody in the C-suite for being the smartest or just having an eidetic

memory, right? Claude's got an eidetic memory. Granted, he hallucinates from time to time. But what if I can tap into Shari's wisdom and John's wisdom and Caroline's wisdom and Jeff's wisdom and bring all that together in a collaborative spirit? How's that going to engage people? Where's the innovation and creativity in that? Claude can't really innovate or create. He's really good at rote, but just like the CEO used to be or my leaders used to be. Now we just want to, I don't mean to be repetitive, but the joy, the fever, that joy of life. We want to tap into that, give work a new meaning, purpose, and bring satisfaction to people's lives. Because when you do that as a leader and you're able to create that kind of collaborative environment, people, your team will run through walls for you.

Shari Simpson:

What do you see variabilities in generations with this approach? I know that's kind of a weird question because I think in some places there's a lot and some places there isn't. And, you know, even those that are in the research space think different things about how we talk about generations.

Dr. Joey Faucette:

They do. They do. They do. Well, I'm a boomer. OK. And man, my generation's really blown it. We really have, in trying to understand the complexity and diversity and yet the supreme opportunity we have. Frankly, we've never had five generations of people in a workspace before. I used to just say four, but my friend, Marisa Andrada, who was CHRO at Chipotle, said, hey, Dr. Joey, I had five, right? And so I'm like, jeez, I can't imagine that before. What we see happening are, yes, it's distinct. Yes, we approach it differently. I have two millennial daughters. I got into their headspace early when they were like in middle school, and middle school was just a lot different than junior high school. So that was my first inkling. That was over 20 years ago. But just being able to not only mentor, create mentoring relationships, but Shari, I really want to challenge, particularly people my age, to think about reverse mentoring. I read an article today, and this is not a political statement, but I read an article today about the Department of Government Efficiency that's currently on board. I mean, there's a 19-year-old who's doing software engineering for that. And I know there's some guys my age like, What the

heck does he know about creating efficiencies? I said, they probably weren't that generous, but it's still wet behind the ears. No, no, no, no, no, no. Let's respect each other and let's truly remove ageism. Whether it's somebody my age on Medicare or whether it's somebody who's 19 doing software engineering, let's just remove that. Respect each other as people who are highly gifted. So, identify those roadblocks, those mental barriers that will keep you from learning from someone else. If you will, as Patrick Lencioni talked about, be humble, hungry, and smart. If you'll just come with a baseline of humility that I can learn something from Shari Simpson today. And I can't wait to learn that from Shari Simpson. And then if Shari Simpson wants to learn something from me, that's awesome too, man. Let's talk about that.

Shari Simpson:

What a great perspective. OK, one last question, a little bit tactical. If you are talking to an organization and they're like, yeah, this sounds fantastic. We get it. How do I measure the ROI of a program like this?

Dr. Joey Faucette:

Great question. And, you know, when I first became an executive coach, I see a certifying all like that. There was this aura of coaching for the sake of coaching, almost like art, right? We have discovered ways of tagging coaching to, really even more than tagging, but directly tying it to certain ROIs. So the easy answer is, how are you measuring ROI now? What are your metrics? By the way, I'm constantly confounded by the people who don't know the answer to that question. And then in our case, in my case as a positive culture architect, what I like to help companies do is to establish culture KPIs. Here are the things we know from, again, not just neuroscience, but other sociological studies and things like that. Here are the things that create more innovation and creativity, a competitive advantage for you and a company. Here are the things, as I like to say, Shari, that grow people and profits. And we tie those two together and so when you start talking about a 19% increase in operating income, a 28% increase in revenue growth when you create a positive work culture, customer satisfaction goes up 450% when you start using, 450% when you start using coaching to help train your customer service reps. I mean, these are demonstrable data points that are gonna put

more money in your pocket. But the more money in your pocket is one metric. There are other metrics that we've talked about today, too, that I think are the pathway. So you can grow people and profits. It's not an either or. So the easy, fast way to do it is how are you measuring ROI now? Begin making your efforts today to create a work positive culture and watch those ROI metrics increase.

Shari Simpson:

How encouraging is that? Well, Dr. Joy, this was a wonderful conversation. Thank you for jumping on and spending a few minutes with me today.

Dr. Joey Faucette:

Yeah, it's totally my pleasure.