

WEBVTT

1

00:00:02.430 --> 00:00:05.070

<v ->You are listening to the HR Mixtape,</v>

2

00:00:05.070 --> 00:00:08.100

your podcast with the perfect mix of practical advice,

3

00:00:08.100 --> 00:00:09.930

thought-provoking interviews and stories

4

00:00:09.930 --> 00:00:11.190

that just hit different

5

00:00:11.190 --> 00:00:14.073

so that work doesn't have to feel, well like work.

6

00:00:15.300 --> 00:00:17.613

Now your host, Shari Simpson.

7

00:00:18.990 --> 00:00:21.210

<v ->Joining me today is Kim Nemkovich.</v>

8

00:00:21.210 --> 00:00:25.050

She's the senior HR business continuity manager at Amazon.

9

00:00:25.050 --> 00:00:27.090

She started life in retail and e-commerce

10

00:00:27.090 --> 00:00:28.950

in HR about 16 years ago

11

00:00:28.950 --> 00:00:31.800

and in the last few years has found her wheelhouse

12

00:00:31.800 --> 00:00:35.220

in building teams and driving work culture improvements.

13

00:00:35.220 --> 00:00:37.620

She leads with humor, empathy and tears.

14

00:00:37.620 --> 00:00:39.270

Her ultimate goal is being authentic

15

00:00:39.270 --> 00:00:41.583

and genuine to help her team deliver results.

16

00:00:46.260 --> 00:00:49.320

Kim, thank you so much for jumping on with me today.

17

00:00:49.320 --> 00:00:51.930

<v ->Thank you so much for inviting me, it's a pleasure.</v>

18

00:00:51.930 --> 00:00:54.900

<v ->So you pride yourself on not being</v>

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00:00:54.900 --> 00:00:57.150

the run of the mill HR person.

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00:00:57.150 --> 00:00:58.590

So I thought we could kick things off

21

00:00:58.590 --> 00:01:00.780

by maybe you sharing a memorable incident

22

00:01:00.780 --> 00:01:04.620

or moment where your unique approach to HR really shined.

23

00:01:04.620 --> 00:01:09.240

<v ->Yeah, absolutely, it took me a while to find my HR style.</v>

24

00:01:09.240 --> 00:01:10.073

For a long time,

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00:01:10.073 --> 00:01:12.810

I didn't know if I could actually cut it in HR,

26

00:01:12.810 --> 00:01:13.980

because my first HR job,

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00:01:13.980 --> 00:01:17.130

I was very different than my peers and the other folks

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00:01:17.130 --> 00:01:20.310

that had the same role and so I tried to be more like them.

29

00:01:20.310 --> 00:01:22.500

I felt uncomfortable doing that.

30

00:01:22.500 --> 00:01:25.320

And of course I was then second guessing my own intuition.

31

00:01:25.320 --> 00:01:27.870

And so over time, I really found that

32

00:01:27.870 --> 00:01:30.210

when you find your HR people, so to speak,

33

00:01:30.210 --> 00:01:31.560

the ones that you see yourself in,

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00:01:31.560 --> 00:01:33.900

it really helps you find your own voice

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00:01:33.900 --> 00:01:35.700

and be confident in who you are

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00:01:35.700 --> 00:01:37.680

because there's just so many different types of people

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00:01:37.680 --> 00:01:41.190

who work in HR and you want to find the ones

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00:01:41.190 --> 00:01:43.473

that help you find your own voice as well.

39

00:01:44.760 --> 00:01:47.580

So one of the things that I've experienced

40

00:01:47.580 --> 00:01:49.249

and focused on a lot is development

41

00:01:49.249 --> 00:01:52.110

of my team and the teams I work with,

42

00:01:52.110 --> 00:01:53.790

just trying to impart whatever knowledge

43

00:01:53.790 --> 00:01:56.037

or learnings I've gained over the years,

44

00:01:56.037 --> 00:01:58.560

and I was conducting a mock interview with a leader

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00:01:58.560 --> 00:01:59.850

that was up for promotion,

46

00:01:59.850 --> 00:02:01.800

helping the format of their responses,

47

00:02:01.800 --> 00:02:03.030

digging in from our data and results

48

00:02:03.030 --> 00:02:04.067

and just really trying to test him,

49

00:02:04.067 --> 00:02:07.950

and at the end of the mock, before I could stop myself,

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00:02:07.950 --> 00:02:10.110

I told him there was no way in hell

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00:02:10.110 --> 00:02:12.626

I would ever promote him, and a little aggressive,

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00:02:12.626 --> 00:02:15.090

a little little forward for HR

53

00:02:15.090 --> 00:02:17.850

and certainly probably shouldn't have used the H word,

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00:02:17.850 --> 00:02:19.410

but then I went into telling him all the things

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00:02:19.410 --> 00:02:20.460

that he did wrong,

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00:02:20.460 --> 00:02:22.290

and he just kind of sat there in shock

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00:02:22.290 --> 00:02:23.400

knowing he had done poorly,

58

00:02:23.400 --> 00:02:25.920

but maybe not ready to hear just how poorly

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00:02:25.920 --> 00:02:27.810

and then I told him all the things I recommended

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00:02:27.810 --> 00:02:28.950

he should do to prepare,

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00:02:28.950 --> 00:02:31.230

and that was gonna be an additional 40 hours of work

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00:02:31.230 --> 00:02:33.570

on top of his current 60 hour work week.

63

00:02:33.570 --> 00:02:36.180

And so he kind of whimpered out of my office

64

00:02:36.180 --> 00:02:39.540

and looked defeated, and two weeks later,

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00:02:39.540 --> 00:02:42.360

he shows up and he's got this huge grin on his face,

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00:02:42.360 --> 00:02:44.820

and he'd passed the interview loop and got promoted

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00:02:44.820 --> 00:02:47.250

and he told me that the direct feedback that I gave him

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00:02:47.250 --> 00:02:48.240

was his catalyst,

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00:02:48.240 --> 00:02:50.310

like if it hadn't been delivered that way, if I just said,

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00:02:50.310 --> 00:02:52.290

well you could really do these things,

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00:02:52.290 --> 00:02:55.860

he wasn't gonna take the same like aggressive approach

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00:02:55.860 --> 00:02:57.540

to really reformatting everything

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00:02:57.540 --> 00:02:59.100

and taking a different approach.

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00:02:59.100 --> 00:03:02.730

So that part is like exciting for me,

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00:03:02.730 --> 00:03:05.160

cause I'm glad he got promoted and I wanted to help him.

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00:03:05.160 --> 00:03:08.370

James is a great manager, he still is to this day.

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00:03:08.370 --> 00:03:10.710

But what I love most about that is

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00:03:10.710 --> 00:03:12.990

now I still have people that reach out,

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00:03:12.990 --> 00:03:14.940

other leaders in the company that say, hey,

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00:03:14.940 --> 00:03:18.060

I talked to James, I'm going for promotional interviews.

81

00:03:18.060 --> 00:03:21.360

He really recommended that I mock interview with you

82

00:03:21.360 --> 00:03:24.060

based on your feedback you've provided him.

83

00:03:24.060 --> 00:03:27.180

<v ->What a great testament to how HR</v>

84

00:03:27.180 --> 00:03:30.000

can show up in a really transparent way

85

00:03:30.000 --> 00:03:32.010

and I'm sure that you delivered that message

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00:03:32.010 --> 00:03:35.310

with compassion, but also very clearly

87

00:03:35.310 --> 00:03:37.533

so that James was prepared to hear it.

88

00:03:38.430 --> 00:03:41.130

I think sometimes we sugarcoat things and people sometimes

89

00:03:41.130 --> 00:03:44.970

just need that really authentic raw information

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00:03:44.970 --> 00:03:48.750

to be able to hear it in the moment so I love that story.

91

00:03:48.750 --> 00:03:52.740

How have you taken some of those tactics and used them

92

00:03:52.740 --> 00:03:56.160

for really building your own HR team?

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00:03:56.160 --> 00:03:58.260

<v ->I think in a lot of ways,</v>

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00:03:58.260 --> 00:04:01.560

it's that forward openness that gives the team

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00:04:01.560 --> 00:04:04.680

the opportunity to understand where they're going

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00:04:04.680 --> 00:04:07.830

and what the right approach can be.

97

00:04:07.830 --> 00:04:11.520

And if I'm not direct with them, it gets wishy-washy,

98

00:04:11.520 --> 00:04:13.500

and I've gotten that feedback before too,

99

00:04:13.500 --> 00:04:16.590

where I'm not really clear on what the deliverable is

100

00:04:16.590 --> 00:04:20.130

and what you want from me, where I'm thinking, oh,

101

00:04:20.130 --> 00:04:23.610

I'm telling them to think big and make up their own plans

102

00:04:23.610 --> 00:04:25.860

and decisions and so it really...

103

00:04:25.860 --> 00:04:27.540

Without that directness,

104

00:04:27.540 --> 00:04:29.820

it really can be challenging not just to build the team,

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00:04:29.820 --> 00:04:32.340

but also to give them the right guidance

106

00:04:32.340 --> 00:04:35.610

to help them feel confident in what they're going to do.

107

00:04:35.610 --> 00:04:38.040

<v ->I know that throughout your career and your messaging,</v>

108

00:04:38.040 --> 00:04:40.590

you have mentioned leading with humor

109

00:04:40.590 --> 00:04:44.040

and empathy and maybe occasionally tears.

110

00:04:44.040 --> 00:04:46.290

I'm curious, how do you see these aspects

111

00:04:46.290 --> 00:04:49.560

shaping the culture and companies that you've worked with?

112

00:04:49.560 --> 00:04:50.580

<v ->Oh, I love this question.</v>

113

00:04:50.580 --> 00:04:54.750

So one of my favorite quotes is laughter through tears

114

00:04:54.750 --> 00:04:58.440

is my favorite emotion and Dolly Parton,

115

00:04:58.440 --> 00:05:00.780

that was her character in the movie Still Magnolias

116

00:05:00.780 --> 00:05:03.180

who said that and I definitely funnel her

117

00:05:03.180 --> 00:05:06.870

into my life in many ways, both personally and professional,

118

00:05:06.870 --> 00:05:08.160

but I think

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00:05:08.160 --> 00:05:10.620

my approach is wearing my emotions on my sleeve.

120

00:05:10.620 --> 00:05:13.080

I share my fears and my excitement in equal measure

121

00:05:13.080 --> 00:05:13.913

with the teams

122

00:05:13.913 --> 00:05:16.320

and I found that by humbling myself in front of others

123

00:05:16.320 --> 00:05:18.060

helps them to feel open too

124

00:05:18.060 --> 00:05:21.420

and these human feelings are what gives the business life,

125

00:05:21.420 --> 00:05:24.690

that's what helps show why we spend 40

126

00:05:24.690 --> 00:05:27.640

or more hours a week together with these folks by choice

127

00:05:28.719 --> 00:05:31.110

and then how the company's policy is applied

128

00:05:31.110 --> 00:05:33.810

by these humans is what shapes the culture.

129

00:05:33.810 --> 00:05:36.330

So it's not just this policy shapes the culture,

130

00:05:36.330 --> 00:05:37.980

it's how we take it, interpret it,

131

00:05:37.980 --> 00:05:40.710

and apply it in a variety of different ways.

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00:05:40.710 --> 00:05:45.660

And like I've worked in retail customer facing HR roles,

133

00:05:45.660 --> 00:05:48.570

I've worked in distribution or fulfillment center roles,

134

00:05:48.570 --> 00:05:51.120

and for the last four years, I've been in more virtual

135

00:05:51.120 --> 00:05:53.310

and traveling roles supporting a logistics network

136

00:05:53.310 --> 00:05:58.310

and in each of those, I've experienced happy, sad, angry,

137

00:05:58.440 --> 00:06:01.410

and even scary moments with my coworkers

138

00:06:01.410 --> 00:06:02.910  
and with my directs.

139

00:06:02.910 --> 00:06:04.170  
And in many of these situations,

140

00:06:04.170 --> 00:06:05.670  
I've needed to be the voice of reason

141

00:06:05.670 --> 00:06:06.870  
and take the appropriate action

142

00:06:06.870 --> 00:06:10.080  
and if you haven't already shown the team your true self,

143

00:06:10.080 --> 00:06:11.760  
they don't trust you in those moments

144

00:06:11.760 --> 00:06:15.030  
and that's the thing I try to impart on my leaders

145

00:06:15.030 --> 00:06:17.580  
within the organization, like be yourself.

146

00:06:17.580 --> 00:06:21.120  
Show who you are and don't feel like you have to separate

147

00:06:21.120 --> 00:06:23.130  
your personal and your professional lives.

148

00:06:23.130 --> 00:06:26.523  
You are one person and it all applies in those spaces.

149

00:06:27.630 --> 00:06:32.430  
<v ->There's so much truth to showing up as your authentic self</v>

150

00:06:32.430 --> 00:06:36.810

and in all the ways that you're messy,

151

00:06:36.810 --> 00:06:40.800

I've shared on the podcast a little bit about my sons.

152

00:06:40.800 --> 00:06:43.650

I am a military mom, I have three kids in the military,

153

00:06:43.650 --> 00:06:47.310

and my youngest just went to bootcamp in June

154

00:06:47.310 --> 00:06:49.757

and that was a hard time for me.

155

00:06:49.757 --> 00:06:51.810

It was the first time I've been an empty nester

156

00:06:51.810 --> 00:06:55.320

and going through not having children at home anymore

157

00:06:55.320 --> 00:06:58.530

and being able to show up at work and say, you know what?

158

00:06:58.530 --> 00:07:00.900

I'm a little soft emotionally this day,

159

00:07:00.900 --> 00:07:04.530

so this is the level you're gonna get out of me today

160

00:07:04.530 --> 00:07:07.560

has been one of the most things I've appreciated

161

00:07:07.560 --> 00:07:08.670

with the work I do

162

00:07:08.670 --> 00:07:10.740

and the supervisors and the teams that I work with,

163

00:07:10.740 --> 00:07:13.410

because I do have that space to show up

164

00:07:13.410 --> 00:07:15.150

as my authentic self.

165

00:07:15.150 --> 00:07:17.370

As you've worked with your HR teams,

166

00:07:17.370 --> 00:07:19.770

I think sometimes we can fall into...

167

00:07:19.770 --> 00:07:23.730

Lots of people can fall into the Monday morning blues

168

00:07:23.730 --> 00:07:27.870

or the Sunday scaries or whatever the catch phrase is

169

00:07:27.870 --> 00:07:31.440

and I always think of office space when she's answering

170

00:07:31.440 --> 00:07:32.820

the phone and like the whole--

171

00:07:32.820 --> 00:07:34.350

<v ->Case of the Mondays.</v>

172

00:07:34.350 --> 00:07:35.460

<v ->Case of the Mondays,</v>

173

00:07:35.460 --> 00:07:38.670

how do you keep your HR team motivated

174

00:07:38.670 --> 00:07:40.170

with some of the tactics you've talked about?

175

00:07:40.170 --> 00:07:43.110

So they go into Mondays with a full cup

176

00:07:43.110 --> 00:07:45.663

and their cup stays full throughout the week.

177

00:07:46.650 --> 00:07:47.610

<v ->It's a challenge,</v>

178

00:07:47.610 --> 00:07:50.250

and it depends on how your team is set up

179

00:07:50.250 --> 00:07:52.830

and how interactive you are.

180

00:07:52.830 --> 00:07:54.780

My team right now, we're all virtual.

181

00:07:54.780 --> 00:07:56.400

So I sit in my office at home,

182

00:07:56.400 --> 00:07:58.170

they sit in their offices at home.

183

00:07:58.170 --> 00:07:59.580

Fortunately we're gonna meet this week

184

00:07:59.580 --> 00:08:01.440

and see each other in person, which is nice,

185

00:08:01.440 --> 00:08:03.780

but it's about staying connected

186

00:08:03.780 --> 00:08:06.210

through each of the different, like, ways

187

00:08:06.210 --> 00:08:08.820

that we run off separately during the week.

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00:08:08.820 --> 00:08:12.300

So we have a team meeting each Monday and being virtual,

189

00:08:12.300 --> 00:08:13.290

it helps us connect.

190

00:08:13.290 --> 00:08:16.140

We discuss our plans, the challenges that we're facing,

191

00:08:16.140 --> 00:08:17.550

and I like to try to understand like,

192

00:08:17.550 --> 00:08:19.200

what can I either remove from their plate

193

00:08:19.200 --> 00:08:22.290

or change or deprioritize to help them feel like

194

00:08:22.290 --> 00:08:25.260

they have the time and energy

195

00:08:25.260 --> 00:08:27.450

and support to get through that week.

196

00:08:27.450 --> 00:08:29.884

I like to find out about their weekend,

197

00:08:29.884 --> 00:08:32.700

what did their kids' fifth birthday party,

198

00:08:32.700 --> 00:08:34.470

how did it go?

199

00:08:34.470 --> 00:08:35.790

How'd the cake turn out,

200

00:08:35.790 --> 00:08:37.620

I have one person on my team

201

00:08:37.620 --> 00:08:39.240  
who makes these beautiful cakes

202

00:08:39.240 --> 00:08:41.100  
and so always asking about those.

203

00:08:41.100 --> 00:08:42.030  
Did they go camping?

204

00:08:42.030 --> 00:08:43.203  
How was the trip?

205

00:08:44.130 --> 00:08:47.250  
I have a Denver Nuggets fan who was very excited

206

00:08:47.250 --> 00:08:49.110  
very recently because they won the championship.

207

00:08:49.110 --> 00:08:51.420  
So it was kind of asking more and understanding more

208

00:08:51.420 --> 00:08:55.080  
about their personal lives and doing it because you care,

209

00:08:55.080 --> 00:08:56.370  
I think makes an impact too

210

00:08:56.370 --> 00:09:00.390  
and that's one of the challenges that I try to help

211

00:09:00.390 --> 00:09:04.650  
our leaders overcome is you don't just ask to get a result.

212

00:09:04.650 --> 00:09:07.590  
You ask because you care and if you don't care,

213

00:09:07.590 --> 00:09:08.433

it's gonna show.

214

00:09:10.110 --> 00:09:11.910

But I try to make sure that we're talking about

215

00:09:11.910 --> 00:09:12.990

both personally and professional.

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00:09:12.990 --> 00:09:17.220

Kind of hearkens back to the previous question you asked me.

217

00:09:17.220 --> 00:09:18.510

We're the same person.

218

00:09:18.510 --> 00:09:20.310

We're just doing different things in our personal

219

00:09:20.310 --> 00:09:22.860

and professional lives and so I try

220

00:09:22.860 --> 00:09:24.870

to maintain it to that week cause you're right,

221

00:09:24.870 --> 00:09:29.760

it's 40, 50, 60 hours depending on what's going on of

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00:09:29.760 --> 00:09:31.800

trying to tackle the biggest problems

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00:09:31.800 --> 00:09:33.000

that we've seen in our careers.

224

00:09:33.000 --> 00:09:34.350

And so on Wednesdays,

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00:09:34.350 --> 00:09:37.650

I have the team recap their project statuses and outline

226

00:09:37.650 --> 00:09:38.700

their challenges for the rest of the week

227

00:09:38.700 --> 00:09:41.280

so that I can jump in and escalate,

228

00:09:41.280 --> 00:09:44.883

get our leadership involved more to solve more problems.

229

00:09:45.900 --> 00:09:46.733

And at the same time,

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00:09:46.733 --> 00:09:49.350

we've built out some mechanisms for engagement that help us

231

00:09:49.350 --> 00:09:51.060

to connect and learn about each other.

232

00:09:51.060 --> 00:09:52.140

So if we don't have the mechanism,

233

00:09:52.140 --> 00:09:53.790

it's just gonna fall by the wayside

234

00:09:53.790 --> 00:09:55.560

because it's not in our top goals or priorities

235

00:09:55.560 --> 00:09:57.213

for the company or for our team.

236

00:09:58.140 --> 00:09:59.550

So like, we'll try things...

237

00:09:59.550 --> 00:10:02.100

Last week, we had World Music Day,

238

00:10:02.100 --> 00:10:05.190

everyone shared their favorite songs and why they loved it

239

00:10:05.190 --> 00:10:07.890

in our Slack channel and we made it into a playlist

240

00:10:07.890 --> 00:10:09.270

and now we all have it to enjoy

241

00:10:09.270 --> 00:10:10.620

and listen to everybody's songs

242

00:10:10.620 --> 00:10:12.480

and kind of get to know each other

243

00:10:12.480 --> 00:10:15.300

and understand what people do to decompress

244

00:10:15.300 --> 00:10:18.273

or why they love a song or things like that.

245

00:10:19.500 --> 00:10:20.460

And I think one of the things

246

00:10:20.460 --> 00:10:22.590

that's had the most longstanding impact,

247

00:10:22.590 --> 00:10:23.640

about four years ago,

248

00:10:23.640 --> 00:10:26.400

I started something with one of my previous teams

249

00:10:26.400 --> 00:10:28.350

and it was called a Thankful Thursday call.

250

00:10:28.350 --> 00:10:31.650

And we would each jump on, it was at the end of the day

251

00:10:31.650 --> 00:10:33.090

and we would say one thing

252

00:10:33.090 --> 00:10:35.190

that we are professionally thankful for

253

00:10:35.190 --> 00:10:37.410

and one that we're personally thankful for

254

00:10:37.410 --> 00:10:40.110

and it was just such a great way to wrap up our Thursday

255

00:10:40.110 --> 00:10:43.020

and be ready to just finalize the week on Friday

256

00:10:43.020 --> 00:10:45.690

and go in with a positive attitude.

257

00:10:45.690 --> 00:10:50.370

<v ->How have you supported your employees when they're empty?</v>

258

00:10:50.370 --> 00:10:54.600

And a lot of times in HR, we can reach that

259

00:10:54.600 --> 00:10:58.860

where we've given so much, we have empathy burnout,

260

00:10:58.860 --> 00:11:01.020

we have compassion fatigue,

261

00:11:01.020 --> 00:11:04.470

and we still are giving high discretionary effort.

262

00:11:04.470 --> 00:11:08.640

And so we walk into our HR leader's office and safe space,

263

00:11:08.640 --> 00:11:12.300

and so you kind of lose yourself for a moment.

264

00:11:12.300 --> 00:11:15.270

How do you help people engage when they're in that moment

265

00:11:15.270 --> 00:11:19.590

because HR can be a very taxing role to be in.

266

00:11:19.590 --> 00:11:23.220

<v ->0h absolutely, I can't count the number of times</v>

267

00:11:23.220 --> 00:11:26.850

that someone's cried in my office and I cry with them.

268

00:11:26.850 --> 00:11:28.080

And I don't know if that's helping,

269

00:11:28.080 --> 00:11:30.540

but it certainly connects us.

270

00:11:30.540 --> 00:11:32.280

I feel their pain when they come in,

271

00:11:32.280 --> 00:11:36.180

and I think a lot of HR professionals have that same impact

272

00:11:36.180 --> 00:11:39.810

of you sit there and you live in that moment with them.

273

00:11:39.810 --> 00:11:43.101

And then it's really kind of up to me to find out

274

00:11:43.101 --> 00:11:45.873

what can help them through it.

275

00:11:47.100 --> 00:11:48.570

First is listening.

276

00:11:48.570 --> 00:11:52.170

I think so often, we're problem solvers,

277

00:11:52.170 --> 00:11:53.730

we wanna make everything better.

278

00:11:53.730 --> 00:11:56.190

I'm always like constantly like, what do you need?

279

00:11:56.190 --> 00:11:57.120

What can I do, how can I do it?

280

00:11:57.120 --> 00:11:59.700

And I'm like, when do I ask that for myself?

281

00:11:59.700 --> 00:12:01.260

And so I try to flip it and say, okay,

282

00:12:01.260 --> 00:12:03.360

let me hear what they're saying.

283

00:12:03.360 --> 00:12:05.370

Let me see if there are things

284

00:12:05.370 --> 00:12:07.860

that are pressing in their statements

285

00:12:07.860 --> 00:12:11.220

that could be impacted by something I do.

286

00:12:11.220 --> 00:12:12.450

Can I give them an extra day off?

287

00:12:12.450 --> 00:12:14.220

Do they need to finish out the day?

288

00:12:14.220 --> 00:12:16.530

Do I need to send them a little care package?

289

00:12:16.530 --> 00:12:19.290

I had a girl, bless her heart,

290

00:12:19.290 --> 00:12:21.420

she lost two weeks worth of work

291

00:12:21.420 --> 00:12:23.410

because her computer crashed

292

00:12:24.420 --> 00:12:26.970

and we were launching the training

293

00:12:26.970 --> 00:12:28.560

that she had created the following week.

294

00:12:28.560 --> 00:12:29.970

Mini heart attack,

295

00:12:29.970 --> 00:12:32.580

I think back to college and all the papers that I lost

296

00:12:32.580 --> 00:12:34.890

because I fell asleep cause I stayed up way too late

297

00:12:34.890 --> 00:12:35.723

trying to write them,

298

00:12:35.723 --> 00:12:38.910

but in her instance, like she had no...

299

00:12:38.910 --> 00:12:42.240

There was nothing that could be done except we needed time

300

00:12:42.240 --> 00:12:44.730

and we needed space to get it done.

301

00:12:44.730 --> 00:12:47.790

And we expanded or not expanded,

302

00:12:47.790 --> 00:12:51.240

extended out the time so that we could get her

303

00:12:51.240 --> 00:12:53.730

that extra time to pull it back together.

304

00:12:53.730 --> 00:12:55.140

I sent her a little care package,

305

00:12:55.140 --> 00:12:56.700

it was something simple.

306

00:12:56.700 --> 00:12:59.280

She lives 1,000 miles away,

307

00:12:59.280 --> 00:13:03.030

but that's the joy of things like DoorDash and GrubHub

308

00:13:03.030 --> 00:13:05.640

and all of those where you can...

309

00:13:05.640 --> 00:13:06.510

If you have somebody's address,

310

00:13:06.510 --> 00:13:08.730

you can send them a little package, a little treat.

311

00:13:08.730 --> 00:13:10.800

And so sent her some caffeinated drinks,

312

00:13:10.800 --> 00:13:13.560

sent her some desserts, sent her a card.

313

00:13:13.560 --> 00:13:15.600

Trying to help her see that

314

00:13:15.600 --> 00:13:17.430

I've got her back and whatever she needs, I'll do it

315

00:13:17.430 --> 00:13:20.520

and while there was nothing we could determine on that call

316

00:13:20.520 --> 00:13:21.930

that I could fix,

317

00:13:21.930 --> 00:13:25.290

here's something to show like, you're doing a great job,

318

00:13:25.290 --> 00:13:26.700

you're gonna get through this

319

00:13:26.700 --> 00:13:28.500

and wherever I can help, let me know

320

00:13:28.500 --> 00:13:32.100

and I think it's those moments of listening,

321

00:13:32.100 --> 00:13:33.963

asking the question of what can I do?

322

00:13:34.860 --> 00:13:38.670

Also knowing that a lot of times people won't say, oh,

323

00:13:38.670 --> 00:13:39.960

here's what I need or here's...

324

00:13:39.960 --> 00:13:42.603

Cause they're in it, they're stuck.

325

00:13:44.040 --> 00:13:45.720

And so taking what they've told you

326

00:13:45.720 --> 00:13:48.630

and trying to find ways to solve their problem

327

00:13:48.630 --> 00:13:50.730

when they're just too deep in it.

328

00:13:50.730 --> 00:13:54.150

<v ->Yeah, there's so many times you can be just so deep.</v>

329

00:13:54.150 --> 00:13:55.530

And as you were sharing that,

330

00:13:55.530 --> 00:13:58.800

that story about her losing all of her stuff,

331

00:13:58.800 --> 00:14:00.900

I felt that in my soul,

332

00:14:00.900 --> 00:14:02.910

cause I have been there where you've been working

333

00:14:02.910 --> 00:14:06.540

so passionately on something and the second time around

334

00:14:06.540 --> 00:14:07.980

just isn't as good, let's be honest.

335

00:14:07.980 --> 00:14:11.160

Like you kind of gave 100% the first time around.

336

00:14:11.160 --> 00:14:12.270

And not that it's gonna be bad,

337

00:14:12.270 --> 00:14:14.760

but it's like when you take a test

338

00:14:14.760 --> 00:14:16.680

and they tell you not to go back and change your answer

339

00:14:16.680 --> 00:14:20.272

cause your first answer's probably the correct one.

340

00:14:20.272 --> 00:14:24.330

You've shared a lot about your journey

341

00:14:24.330 --> 00:14:25.830

and about your approach to building

342

00:14:25.830 --> 00:14:29.310

your HR team, but you kinda fell into HR,

343

00:14:29.310 --> 00:14:32.130

which a lot of us have who are in the HR space.

344

00:14:32.130 --> 00:14:35.940

I'd love to hear your story and how you got into HR.

345

00:14:35.940 --> 00:14:37.500

<v ->Yeah, it's interesting</v>

346

00:14:37.500 --> 00:14:41.850

because when I was in high school, college,

347

00:14:41.850 --> 00:14:43.110

you're going through that career search

348

00:14:43.110 --> 00:14:45.780

of what do I wanna do, what do I wanna be when I grow up,

349

00:14:45.780 --> 00:14:47.430

I didn't know that HR existed.

350

00:14:47.430 --> 00:14:50.880

I literally didn't know what human resources meant.

351

00:14:50.880 --> 00:14:53.218

I knew companies had them, but I was never...

352

00:14:53.218 --> 00:14:56.840

It just sounded, hmm, I don't know, okay.

353

00:14:57.683 --> 00:14:59.130

So when I went to school,

354

00:14:59.130 --> 00:15:01.440

I went to school for graphic design.

355

00:15:01.440 --> 00:15:03.450

I planned to move to the big city after that

356

00:15:03.450 --> 00:15:07.440

and get a job in graphic design after college.

357

00:15:07.440 --> 00:15:09.390

I went to Youngtown State University,

358

00:15:09.390 --> 00:15:11.610

which is a smaller state school

359

00:15:11.610 --> 00:15:12.840

in between Cleveland and Pittsburgh.

360

00:15:12.840 --> 00:15:14.190

So I figured I'd land in one of those two.

361

00:15:14.190 --> 00:15:18.330

I ended up landing in Pittsburgh and after I moved there,

362

00:15:18.330 --> 00:15:21.090

I actually ended up doing an internship in San Francisco

363

00:15:21.090 --> 00:15:22.410  
with a graphic design firm

364

00:15:22.410 --> 00:15:25.590  
and I found that I really didn't like creating designs

365

00:15:25.590 --> 00:15:26.970  
for other people.

366

00:15:26.970 --> 00:15:28.503  
That control freak in me,

367

00:15:29.430 --> 00:15:33.540  
learned that other people in my opinion had horrible taste

368

00:15:33.540 --> 00:15:35.160  
and I could not stand

369

00:15:35.160 --> 00:15:37.080  
that they were ignoring my professional advice.

370

00:15:37.080 --> 00:15:39.030  
Like I went to school for this,

371

00:15:39.030 --> 00:15:41.190  
I know what I'm talking about.

372

00:15:41.190 --> 00:15:43.923  
That young confidence, that bravado that you have.

373

00:15:44.820 --> 00:15:46.650  
So when I moved to Pittsburgh

374

00:15:46.650 --> 00:15:50.670  
and was completing that internship and I was like, oh man,

375

00:15:50.670 --> 00:15:54.090

I don't know, now I've gotta search for a different career.

376

00:15:54.090 --> 00:15:56.220

I started working for a big box retailer

377

00:15:56.220 --> 00:15:58.980

and I was overseeing a couple different departments

378

00:15:58.980 --> 00:16:01.950

while I was searching for what am I gonna land in?

379

00:16:01.950 --> 00:16:04.230

My supervisor there actually identified that

380

00:16:04.230 --> 00:16:05.063

maybe I'd be a good fit

381

00:16:05.063 --> 00:16:06.540

for their executive leadership program

382

00:16:06.540 --> 00:16:09.303

and I was like, leadership, what's that?

383

00:16:10.800 --> 00:16:12.930

And so I started taking some of the classes that they have

384

00:16:12.930 --> 00:16:14.520

and eventually I actually interviewed

385

00:16:14.520 --> 00:16:16.050

for their salaried leadership roles

386

00:16:16.050 --> 00:16:19.110

and was fortunate enough to get that.

387

00:16:19.110 --> 00:16:20.610

And then they asked the question of, well,

388

00:16:20.610 --> 00:16:22.140

which role do you feel is best for you

389

00:16:22.140 --> 00:16:24.540

and they've got all the I'm in retail

390

00:16:24.540 --> 00:16:27.600

so it's sales floor, logistics,

391

00:16:27.600 --> 00:16:30.600

guest experience or customer experience roles.

392

00:16:30.600 --> 00:16:31.920

Anybody who worked where I worked

393

00:16:31.920 --> 00:16:33.810

will now know exactly which company I'm talking about

394

00:16:33.810 --> 00:16:36.603

cause I said guest experience, just spoiler alert.

395

00:16:37.440 --> 00:16:39.360

But after working there for a while,

396

00:16:39.360 --> 00:16:42.120

I was like, I saw that HR was the role

397

00:16:42.120 --> 00:16:45.180

that got to drive engagement and fun

398

00:16:45.180 --> 00:16:47.910

and they were always talking to the team

399

00:16:47.910 --> 00:16:50.760

and getting to share positive messages

400

00:16:50.760 --> 00:16:53.610

and it's different everywhere, but it was like,

401

00:16:53.610 --> 00:16:56.010

I wanna have that experience where I can focus

402

00:16:56.010 --> 00:16:58.260

more on people than on a process.

403

00:16:58.260 --> 00:17:00.600

I didn't wanna set planograms

404

00:17:00.600 --> 00:17:04.830

and run a register or that sort of thing.

405

00:17:04.830 --> 00:17:06.780

And so between that

406

00:17:06.780 --> 00:17:08.370

and seeing that they got to be on conference calls,

407

00:17:08.370 --> 00:17:10.470

which I thought was so cool,

408

00:17:10.470 --> 00:17:13.173

little did I know how uncool they are,

409

00:17:14.100 --> 00:17:16.410

but as I went through that process, I was like,

410

00:17:16.410 --> 00:17:17.610

I think I wanna do HR

411

00:17:17.610 --> 00:17:21.510

and either fortunately or unfortunately enough,

412

00:17:21.510 --> 00:17:22.343

they put me in it.

413  
00:17:22.343 --> 00:17:24.210  
They're like, okay, we're gonna let you do this.

414  
00:17:24.210 --> 00:17:26.400  
Like you've never had a leadership role before.

415  
00:17:26.400 --> 00:17:27.810  
Put me in HR, which I don't know,

416  
00:17:27.810 --> 00:17:29.370  
I don't know that I trust their judgment on that,

417  
00:17:29.370 --> 00:17:30.620  
but thankfully it worked.

418  
00:17:31.601 --> 00:17:32.850  
And the rest is history.

419  
00:17:32.850 --> 00:17:35.070  
Since then, I've had probably...

420  
00:17:35.070 --> 00:17:36.690  
I should have probably done the math,

421  
00:17:36.690 --> 00:17:40.320  
seven or eight different roles in a variety

422  
00:17:40.320 --> 00:17:41.910  
of two different companies really

423  
00:17:41.910 --> 00:17:43.770  
that I've worked in HR for.

424  
00:17:43.770 --> 00:17:48.333  
Both large companies and both very different styles.

425  
00:17:49.260 --> 00:17:53.520

And I think I would've never found this

426

00:17:53.520 --> 00:17:57.000

on the path I was on so I'm really appreciative

427

00:17:57.000 --> 00:18:00.540

that I tanked that internship.

428

00:18:00.540 --> 00:18:02.640

Like it's a really good thing that graphic design

429

00:18:02.640 --> 00:18:05.400

was not my ending career

430

00:18:05.400 --> 00:18:07.200

because I think it would've been much shorter

431

00:18:07.200 --> 00:18:11.073

and I'm a better person for working in human resources.

432

00:18:12.180 --> 00:18:14.520

<v ->If we could take anything away from that story,</v>

433

00:18:14.520 --> 00:18:16.440

it's conference calls are not cool.

434

00:18:16.440 --> 00:18:20.820

I absolutely love that you had that mentality going into it

435

00:18:20.820 --> 00:18:24.930

because that warms my heart, cause I completely agree.

436

00:18:24.930 --> 00:18:27.090

You shared throughout our conversation

437

00:18:27.090 --> 00:18:28.800

some really cool tactical things

438  
00:18:28.800 --> 00:18:32.430  
that I just wanted to highlight around supporting your team,

439  
00:18:32.430 --> 00:18:34.860  
send them a little something, a treat.

440  
00:18:34.860 --> 00:18:37.860  
It doesn't have to be this big grandiose gesture,

441  
00:18:37.860 --> 00:18:40.200  
it can just be like, hey, I'm thinking about you.

442  
00:18:40.200 --> 00:18:42.540  
I wrote down Thankful Thursdays, love that.

443  
00:18:42.540 --> 00:18:45.000  
I'm sure our listeners can totally steal that.

444  
00:18:45.000 --> 00:18:47.640  
And then the last one, the teen playlist,

445  
00:18:47.640 --> 00:18:49.590  
think that is a genius idea

446  
00:18:49.590 --> 00:18:52.380  
because there's always go-to songs for hey,

447  
00:18:52.380 --> 00:18:55.320  
my workout go-to song, my chill in my office song,

448  
00:18:55.320 --> 00:18:58.680  
my fold my laundry song, all that stuff.

449  
00:18:58.680 --> 00:19:01.230  
Being that we're on the HR mixtape

450  
00:19:01.230 --> 00:19:04.440

and you think about your own kind of journey,

451

00:19:04.440 --> 00:19:07.050

what would you say is like your opening track

452

00:19:07.050 --> 00:19:08.550

or your triumphant closer,

453

00:19:08.550 --> 00:19:10.800

like some of the things that you think of

454

00:19:10.800 --> 00:19:13.230

as those pillars for your HR journey?

455

00:19:13.230 --> 00:19:15.150

<v ->Yeah, when I think about that,</v>

456

00:19:15.150 --> 00:19:18.570

this is a tough one because you think about 15 years

457

00:19:18.570 --> 00:19:20.730

and how do you boil it down to those three

458

00:19:20.730 --> 00:19:22.980

kind of sections of your life

459

00:19:22.980 --> 00:19:27.183

and I think the first part was so much growth,

460

00:19:27.183 --> 00:19:29.790

and learning and understanding what leadership is,

461

00:19:29.790 --> 00:19:32.700

and then human resources itself,

462

00:19:32.700 --> 00:19:35.280

I think that first part was trying to be successful

463

00:19:35.280 --> 00:19:38.640  
by doing everything on my own.

464

00:19:38.640 --> 00:19:41.970  
I spent years thinking that I had to do all the work,

465

00:19:41.970 --> 00:19:45.090  
and I finally learned that when I hit a wall,

466

00:19:45.090 --> 00:19:48.330  
that I had to teach my team to take on new things,

467

00:19:48.330 --> 00:19:51.000  
allow myself to step up into larger spaces

468

00:19:51.000 --> 00:19:52.380  
and take on new challenges as well

469

00:19:52.380 --> 00:19:54.040  
because if I was gonna try to

470

00:19:54.900 --> 00:19:58.203  
run the world like Beyonce, who runs the world,

471

00:19:59.220 --> 00:20:01.500  
I thought I was going to run it all by myself, but no,

472

00:20:01.500 --> 00:20:05.790  
it's all of us if you use our resources appropriately

473

00:20:05.790 --> 00:20:06.720  
and it took a...

474

00:20:06.720 --> 00:20:08.280  
I mean, I wanna say it was like a four

475

00:20:08.280 --> 00:20:11.920

to five year timeframe of me getting real close to burnout

476

00:20:13.260 --> 00:20:15.540

because I just tried to do everything on my own.

477

00:20:15.540 --> 00:20:18.000

I think as I was learning

478

00:20:18.000 --> 00:20:20.100

that I couldn't do everything by myself,

479

00:20:20.100 --> 00:20:23.610

I also then learned that my team's successes

480

00:20:23.610 --> 00:20:25.623

lead to my own successes as well.

481

00:20:26.820 --> 00:20:30.630

As a leader, you typically have far more tasks, or sorry,

482

00:20:30.630 --> 00:20:34.170

not far more, far fewer tasks that you accomplish.

483

00:20:34.170 --> 00:20:37.830

Like, I'm not ticking off a list of create this or do that.

484

00:20:37.830 --> 00:20:40.170

It's more check in with this person,

485

00:20:40.170 --> 00:20:42.690

read up on that, follow up on this document.

486

00:20:42.690 --> 00:20:45.840

It's never the same...

487

00:20:45.840 --> 00:20:47.700

Personally, I get like nice dopamine hits

488

00:20:47.700 --> 00:20:51.120

when you check something off the list and it's less of that

489

00:20:51.120 --> 00:20:52.020

in a leadership role.

490

00:20:52.020 --> 00:20:54.240

It's the follow up, it's support,

491

00:20:54.240 --> 00:20:56.970

it's removing barriers and adjusting your mindset

492

00:20:56.970 --> 00:20:59.040

to supporting others

493

00:20:59.040 --> 00:21:00.540

completing their work as a game changer

494

00:21:00.540 --> 00:21:01.373

and that's, I think,

495

00:21:01.373 --> 00:21:03.660

where I really felt my ability

496

00:21:03.660 --> 00:21:06.333

as a leader expand a lot more.

497

00:21:07.830 --> 00:21:12.150

I feel immense pride for the accomplishments of my teams.

498

00:21:12.150 --> 00:21:14.640

They're remarkable individuals that came together

499

00:21:14.640 --> 00:21:15.900

and they made so much impact

500

00:21:15.900 --> 00:21:19.800

and without me learning that they needed to be successful

501

00:21:19.800 --> 00:21:23.190

and that I was the barrier buster for them,

502

00:21:23.190 --> 00:21:24.450

they wouldn't have had the right support

503

00:21:24.450 --> 00:21:26.050

to achieve as much as they have.

504

00:21:27.706 --> 00:21:29.456

And then I think the closing track,

505

00:21:31.170 --> 00:21:34.113

it's about embracing failure as a teaching tool.

506

00:21:35.340 --> 00:21:38.250

None of us want to fail, it hurts.

507

00:21:38.250 --> 00:21:40.860

I know I get disappointed in myself, I'm my worst critic.

508

00:21:40.860 --> 00:21:45.150

I think a lot of times we feel like we've let others down,

509

00:21:45.150 --> 00:21:48.660

we get nervous about our own ability to accomplish things.

510

00:21:48.660 --> 00:21:50.280

And so I take time after each project,

511

00:21:50.280 --> 00:21:52.380

whether it's a good project that had great results

512

00:21:52.380 --> 00:21:54.990

or one that had some opportunities

513  
00:21:54.990 --> 00:21:56.840  
that we're gonna need to work through

514  
00:21:57.810 --> 00:21:58.860  
to meet with the owners

515  
00:21:58.860 --> 00:22:00.480  
and talk about what did go well

516  
00:22:00.480 --> 00:22:03.690  
because even in bad projects or ones with bad results,

517  
00:22:03.690 --> 00:22:05.990  
there's still good things that come from that.

518  
00:22:07.290 --> 00:22:08.370  
What could have gone better

519  
00:22:08.370 --> 00:22:10.290  
and how they're gonna apply,

520  
00:22:10.290 --> 00:22:12.120  
what they learned on future projects.

521  
00:22:12.120 --> 00:22:15.693  
It's simple follow up and check and correct,

522  
00:22:17.130 --> 00:22:21.180  
but I think I focus on talking about the tough stuff

523  
00:22:21.180 --> 00:22:23.040  
and then moving on.

524  
00:22:23.040 --> 00:22:24.690  
Don't belabor it.

525  
00:22:24.690 --> 00:22:26.070

Get past it.

526

00:22:26.070 --> 00:22:28.140

Find ways to make it successful.

527

00:22:28.140 --> 00:22:30.840

Like, I know they say failing up is a bad thing,

528

00:22:30.840 --> 00:22:32.460

meaning you're not that great

529

00:22:32.460 --> 00:22:34.954

and somehow you keep failing up the ladder.

530

00:22:34.954 --> 00:22:38.040

I think if this is kind of failing forward,

531

00:22:38.040 --> 00:22:39.750

so that doesn't have the negative connotation,

532

00:22:39.750 --> 00:22:41.370

using what we mess up

533

00:22:41.370 --> 00:22:44.460

to help us take the right steps down the path.

534

00:22:44.460 --> 00:22:47.970

<v ->I love that, what a great outline for a future in HR.</v>

535

00:22:47.970 --> 00:22:49.680

Start with growth,

536

00:22:49.680 --> 00:22:52.620

learn about developing your team and successes,

537

00:22:52.620 --> 00:22:55.920

and then leverage failure for continued growth

538

00:22:55.920 --> 00:22:57.840

as you continue your career.

539

00:22:57.840 --> 00:22:59.850

Love those, Kim, what a great discussion.

540

00:22:59.850 --> 00:23:02.820

Thanks for taking a few minutes of your day to chat with me.

541

00:23:02.820 --> 00:23:04.410

<v ->Thank you so much for having me, Shari.</v>

542

00:23:04.410 --> 00:23:05.553

It's been so fun.

543

00:23:08.310 --> 00:23:10.560

<v ->I hope you enjoyed today's episode.</v>

544

00:23:10.560 --> 00:23:15.000

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545

00:23:15.000 --> 00:23:18.543

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