

- [Shari] Welcome to our special edition of PCTY Talks at SHRM '22 in New Orleans. It's day one at SHRM's annual conference, and joining me on the mic today are Sarah Noll Wilson and Dr. Teresa Peterson, who have an upcoming session at SHRM this week and are working together to help leaders understand and navigate the complexities of the humans they serve through transformational coaching and workshops that can build and rebuild teams. Sarah and Teresa, thank you so much for jumping down the podcast with me today.

- [Sarah] Thanks for having us.

- [Teresa] Yeah, our pleasure.

- [Shari] So I'd love to dive right in. What are the top things HR professionals need to address when it comes to building trust in organizations?

- [Sarah] I think the one thing I would love HR professionals and and frankly, anyone who's in a position of formal authority and power, is to not assume that they're creating safety. I think a lot of times we see people who assume that they're creating safety and so they don't pay attention to it. And that's something that's really important in our work is to help people get really courageous in looking at and listening for and seeking out insights to what are we doing or not doing, that's actually getting in the way of us being able to create safety. So I think one of the first places we need to start is a welcoming of the idea that our place of work might not be as safe. And also then safe for who? Who actually feels safe here? So that was the first thing that came up for me as you asked that.

- [Teresa] Yeah, I wanna echo that, Sarah. I think if people don't feel safe, psychologically safe, the rest of the work is superficial at best, that has to be in place and it has to be in place for everybody.

- [Sarah] Yeah, and I think that, you know, when we talk about trust, trust is, it's complex and it's not. You know, there are things that we do systemically. There are things that we have with our policies and our procedures and our benefits. But the reality is is that, you know, trust is eroded over time. Every single interaction, this is something we're really passionate about, is helping people understand that literally every single interaction you have with somebody, whether it's formal or informal, whether it's in person or virtual, you're having an impact, right? You're either building trust, you're sustaining trust, or you're decreasing trust. And sometimes I think we take those smaller moments for granted. I mean, we had a session recently where some of the things that people reported on, that made them feel less trustworthy, were things that, I assume, leadership was like that's not that big of a deal. We're just gonna take away this or we're gonna change this or do this, and not including people in that

had a really significant impact. And so just being really intentional in all of your interactions to make sure that you're coming from a place of authenticity, empathy, and really sound thinking.

- [Teresa] Yeah, and I would echo, this is coming to me from a conversation I just had, but and not taking for granted that people know you trust them to make a decision or that they have your trust or that they can share with you. Sometimes the people fall into the trap of assuming everyone knows they can approach them or they just should know that our relationship is solid, instead of having a conversation about it, even with just a few words to say I trust you to make this call or you know you can always come to me and saying it over and over, instead of a one time opening grand gesture.

- [Shari] That's such a good point about saying it over and over. You know, there's one thing to be onboarded into an organization. You have your first one-on-one and your manager kind of gives you the lay of the land, the expectations. But yeah, if you don't hear it over and over, you might think that's just, oh that's just something they say.

- [Sarah] Yeah, that's lip servicing. I think that's something that, you know, when we talk about the complexity of trust is, everyone is coming to the table with different, I don't know, buckets of trust, if you will, right? So depending on my lived experience, especially if I'm a member of a marginalized community, I'm more than likely coming in from a deficit of trust. Or if my experience is one of working in a traumatic workplace, I mean that's something that we hear a lot 'cause we'll work with leaders who've been brought in to turn around a team. They're like, I don't understand why they don't, you know, like trust me or trust that. It's well, the last leader, the last person in the position of power and authority, caused actual harm and created such an unsafe retaliatory environment, so you have to work even harder to rebuild that and then heal that divide.

- [Teresa] I see that so much in the HR space, when you might have somebody come into an organization and they get introduced to HR for the first time, and depending upon what kind of culture you've created in your HR department and what your role is in an organization, you can be seen as the policy police. And so, if that's been your experience working with HR and they come to you and they're like, hey, I wanna know about your career aspirations and where you wanna go. It's like red flag. Like why do they wanna know that?

- [Shari] Yes.

- [Teresa] Are they gonna take away responsibility or whatever? So man, that's so important to think about those little pieces like you talked about, is they are telling a narrative on what the organization thinks about trust.

- [Sarah] I mean, and you know, I spent quite a few years in HR, that it is challenging because you know, people think, oh well you're the group that hires and fires. And that is true. And we have to understand that there is an inherent power dynamic in being in HR that will influence and can influence a relationship. So again, we have to work even harder to build those relationships, that me just caring or being empathetic or compassionate isn't enough. Because just like a manager, we have influence. We can influence somebody's potential opportunities. We can influence their development opportunities, right? So we always have to be aware of that power dynamic, just by virtue of the power HR has.

- [Shari] So as you guys look ahead to this week, into the amazing content that's gonna happen here at SHRM and all the amazing speakers, including yourself, what are you most excited about for this year's SHRM?

- [Sarah] I just wanna hug people. I'm just really looking forward to the energy, people being excited, and hopefully, with the people who are willing and open, a lot of good hugs and just laughter and smile and seeing each other and also just, yes. I mean, and obviously the sessions are always amazing, for networking and learning, but on a personal level, connection is really important to me right now.

- [Teresa] It's my first time coming to SHRM, so I'm excited to just take it all in. I don't know what the whole week will be for me, so I'm excited to just go along for the ride with some learning and connections and just keep meeting people, keep connecting, and eating beignets. So, those are my priorities.

- [Sarah] So many beignets. We've been talking about

- [Teresa] So many.

- [Sarah] That we're gonna be double fisting beignets, like . Just gonna one in each hand every morning.

- [Teresa] So yeah, learning, connecting, eating, those are my priorities for the week.

- [Shari] I love it. I feel like that that's our tweetable quote right? Learning, connecting, eating at SHRM '22. So last but not least, you have a session coming up. What's the title of your session here at SHRM this week and when, where is it being hosted?

- [Sarah] Yeah, it's called "More than Feedback: How Receiving Feedback can Impact Trust and Safety." It's Tuesday morning at 7:30, bright and early.

- [Teresa] Get up, get your beignet, and come on over.

- [Sarah] Yeah, bring it. You can eat the beignet in the session, we will not be offended.

- [Teresa] Absolutely. And we're in room 275 to 277, and it's going to be, I mean, a couple of things. We're big believers that theory is great, but tools are better. We always believe in coming from a place of abundance. And so our job is to come and share as much practical insight and practices as we can. Practical practices, you like that redundancy?

- [Teresa] I like that.

- [Sarah] That's how practical it's gonna be. But to really examine, and again, from that place of trust and realize that every single time we're asking for feedback, it's actually more than the feedback we're getting. What we're doing is sending a message of is it safe to disagree with us? Is it safe to bring up hard stuff? Will we take action? And more importantly, do we retaliate, which is not something that people maybe would own that they do, but we know that that is literally the most common fear people have when being asked to give feedback, 'cause they're afraid of retaliation because of how common that is. And one more thing I wanted to mention. So following our session, we will be doing a book signing for the book that I wrote called "Don't Feed the Elephants: Overcoming the Art of Avoidance for Powerful Partnership", which was my loved letter to fellow conflict-avoiders and how we can understand our avoidance and move forward. So I'll be there signing, Teresa will be there answering questions, and you can pick up the book in the bookstore and we would love to hear what you think about it and see you after the session.

- [Shari] Wow, awesome. I'm excited about the session and make sure you check it out here at SHRM '22. Thanks ladies. Thanks for listening. And don't forget to join the conversation using #PCTYSHRM.