

# Hummingbird Humanity

an LGBTQ+ owned business

## Hummingbird Hour

Imagine Belonging at Work

This episode was originally recorded on June 21, 2022

00:00:10:15 - 00:00:30:15

Brian McComak

Hello. Happy Tuesday. Welcome to Hummingbird Hour. For those of you who might be here with us for the first time, Hummingbird, our is Hummingbird Humanity's Monthly Live Conversation series where we connect with her. And usually it's me. Sometimes it's other members of the hummingbird team.

00:00:31:02 - 00:00:52:24

Brian McComak

And we connect with people making a difference in the world. Right now, we're focused on highlighting authors who have written books that help to create workplaces where humans thrive. And many of these books center around the diversity, equity and inclusion conversation that is so important and so present in our organizations today.

00:00:53:21 - 00:01:14:02

Brian McComak

And and today's conversation is no exception to that to that conversation around how do we make workplaces better through the lens of belonging. So looking forward to today's conversation. So thank you for being with us. We also encourage that, you know, that all of you here are part of our as part of our community to connect with

00:01:14:02 - 00:01:29:22

Brian McComak

each other. So feel free to introduce yourself and the chat show where you're zooming in from. Share your LinkedIn so people can connect with you. And the Hummingbird team will be moderating the chat and helping to answer questions and offer resources and links there as well.

00:01:29:23 - 00:01:51:10

Brian McComak

So feel free to engage with the community in the chat as we have today's conversation. So as we kick off today's event, I want to highlight a few of the awareness months that are in progress. So first we have Pride Month and certainly as a member of the LGBTQ plus community myself, this is a month that is

00:01:51:10 - 00:02:09:10

Brian McComak

very special to me. So happy pride everyone and I hope you are finding ways to celebrate in your communities and with your your friends and loved ones. We also have Immigrant Heritage Month in progress and one more, which is the National Caribbean American Heritage Month.

00:02:09:19 - 00:02:28:14

Brian McComak

I didn't memorize these. I tried. So thank you for the slides prompts. Katy it's super helpful. Next month for Hummingbird Hour, we have Ray Arata joining us. Ray is the founder of the Better Man Conference, which is an organization that works to include men in the AI conversation.

00:02:28:15 - 00:02:45:19

Brian McComak

And we need everyone, including men, to be part of that conversation. So if you're curious to understand about the work that Ray is doing to to drive the the forward, the commitment to human centered workplace cultures, and through his lens of working with men.

00:02:46:04 - 00:03:01:14

Brian McComak

Join us next month and we'll learn from Ray. Today, I'm thrilled to be joined by Rhodes Perry, who is the founder and CEO of Rhodes Perry Consulting. Rhodes has just recently released his I think it's your second book.

00:03:01:15 - 00:03:02:01

Brian McComak

Is that right?

00:03:02:02 - 00:03:03:10

Rhodes Perry

RHODES Yes, yes.

00:03:04:17 - 00:03:19:18

Brian McComak

Second book, imagine belonging. So that's what we're going to spend our time together talking about today. So let me just tell you a little bit about Rhodes to kick off the conversation, and then I'll invite you to to share a little bit as well.

00:03:19:18 - 00:03:44:11

Brian McComak

Rhodes And say hello to the group. So Rhodes Perry is a bestselling author, sought after keynoter and an award winning social entrepreneur nationally recognized as a diversity, equity and inclusion thought leader. He has 20 years of inclusive leadership experience, having worked at the White House, the Department of Justice and key flag national media outlets like Forbes, The

00:03:44:11 - 00:04:06:15

Brian McComak

Wall Street Journal and the Associated Press have featured his powerful work. He serves as the CEO of Rhodes Perry Consulting, a global leadership and management consulting firm, helping executives build enduring cultures of belonging. He earned a B.A. from the University of Notre Dame and an MBA Masters of Public Administration from New York University.

00:04:06:16 - 00:04:22:06

Brian McComak

He also serves on the National LGBTQ Plus Chamber of Commerce's transgender and gender expansive task force and on the Cascade AIDS Project's board of directors. Rhodes, Welcome. Thank you so much for joining us today.

00:04:22:21 - 00:04:29:04

Rhodes Perry

Thank you for having me, Brian. It's great to be here. And hello, everyone. Happy pride. It's exciting. Exciting, very exciting.

00:04:29:20 - 00:04:32:14

Brian McComak

Happy pride. What are you doing to celebrate Pride this month, Rhodes?

00:04:33:07 - 00:04:48:04

Rhodes Perry

Oh, well, we had our Pride Festival here in Portland, Oregon, last weekend. And I don't know. I mean, every day I feel like the work that I get to do is kind of a pride celebration year round. So it's it's very concentrated.

00:04:48:04 - 00:04:55:23

Rhodes Perry

So it feels like everyone's invited to the party in June. So, yeah, it's a little, little things here and there. What about yourself?

00:04:57:05 - 00:05:10:01

Brian McComak

I. Well, my community, Walton Manor's in Fort Lauderdale. We had our Pride Festival this past Saturday, so I went to check out that Pride Festival. It was incredibly hot because Florida can be hot in the summer in case anyone heard that yet.

00:05:10:17 - 00:05:26:14

Brian McComak

And it was a it was a wonderful celebration. And it was the first the last will menace pride was. They tried last year, but there was a horrible accident that happened to them to cancel the best estimates. And the year before it was canceled from the from COVID.

00:05:26:14 - 00:05:30:00

Brian McComak

So it was nice to see the life returns of that party.

00:05:30:08 - 00:05:45:01

Rhodes Perry

Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's the in-person events. It seems like this year is the year that many parades are actually happening in person and not kind of like a more curated kind of parade with people inside cars kind of protecting themselves from COVID.

00:05:45:01 - 00:05:49:18

Rhodes Perry

So slowly, slowly, we're we're reentering, I guess, cautiously.

00:05:50:10 - 00:06:07:22

Brian McComak

Cautiously and optimistically, returning to whatever we're doing now after COVID. So. Well, happy again, happy pride, everyone. And I want to give a nod to something that that road said a moment ago, which is, you know, that that his work is the celebration of pride all year.

00:06:07:22 - 00:06:22:20

Brian McComak

And as something that while I love what you offered there roads around June is when everyone's invited to the party we are still gay or queer all year so if you want to celebrate us and the other month of the year or any other day of the year, please feel free to do so.

00:06:23:01 - 00:06:23:11

Rhodes Perry

Yes.

00:06:25:05 - 00:06:35:22

Brian McComak

So so you know, as in the introduction, I mentioned that you've written two books and been on the precipice of launching my first book. I'm curious, why did you decide to do it again?

00:06:37:02 - 00:06:51:05

Rhodes Perry

Yeah, that was a question I kept asking myself the second time around. And the reason is that the first book that I wrote, it's it's called Belonging Network, and it was really everyday actions that any of us can take to to build a more inclusive organization.

00:06:51:13 - 00:07:08:21

Rhodes Perry

And it really broke down kind of the what what are we talking about? Why does it matter in the workplace? And then how do we do it? Right. So pretty basic. And in that last chapter on the how kind of like jump into inclusive leadership and a jump into vision setting and really getting getting leaders in particular

00:07:09:05 - 00:07:19:20

Rhodes Perry

to name, you know, what does success look like? What is your long term vision for building a culture that you can experience on a full sensory level? So what does it look like? What does it sound like? What are you doing?

00:07:19:20 - 00:07:31:09

Rhodes Perry

Where are these kind of inclusive behaviors that you're doing? And a lot of people really like that part of the book. And they said, Why didn't you start with that part of the book as as a as kind of the belonging book?

00:07:31:09 - 00:07:47:05

Rhodes Perry

And I, you know, my response is that a lot of people don't really understand what it is that we're talking about. It's a pretty elusive concept. So the second book was really for, you know, inclusive leaders, like how were you to find that, you know, not so much about your positional power, but you want to be a

00:07:47:05 - 00:07:59:16

Rhodes Perry

part of shaping culture and you're inside of your organization. And so that book really breaks down kind of like what is culture? You know, like we're swimming in it, so how do we actually name it? You know, what's kind of the role of myself?

00:07:59:16 - 00:08:16:10

Rhodes Perry

If I'm moving into a leadership position, if I'm building a team or just, you know, if I'm an entrepreneur and I'm starting my own business, how do I structure an organization with kind of equity in mind from the beginning to kind of build a culture where more of us can show up fully as ourselves?

00:08:16:10 - 00:08:36:07

Rhodes Perry

And so that's kind of why. But like, what's your question? Why did I do it again? It's it's a painful process, right? So I can really relate to where you're at right now and just keep on that path, because the way that you're writing about the culture work that you do, only you can do it.

00:08:36:08 - 00:08:46:07

Rhodes Perry

And it's going to resonate with a lot of people. Like, Oh, you finally said that thing that I've been feeling in a way that really makes sense to me. I haven't found that before, so you'll get a lot of that.

00:08:46:23 - 00:08:50:11

Rhodes Perry

It is very unexpected and the book will take a life of its own for sure.

00:08:51:05 - 00:09:03:20

Brian McComak

Thank you. Thank you so much. And yeah, it is. You know, as you've said, the journey to bringing a box of life is a lot. And, you know, it's a lot of work, it's a lot of challenge, it's a lot of heart and soul.

00:09:04:08 - 00:09:18:19

Brian McComak

And it's also a lot of joy and excitement and unexpected milestone moments. So, you know, so I'm thrilled about it. And I joke about writing the second book. I already have my idea for the second book. So because I kind of caught the bug.

00:09:18:19 - 00:09:29:16

Brian McComak

So I love, you know, I love and similarly well, if you're assuming I have to get one book out first, but it'll continue the journey of the first book. So I love that I get to learn from you on that journey.

00:09:30:09 - 00:09:40:15

Rhodes Perry

Be careful. You might have 27 books by the time you're all set, and there's a lot to say, right? There's a lot of work ahead for all of us. Right. So I'm glad that you're participating in that process.

00:09:41:05 - 00:09:56:18

Brian McComak

Thank you. Thank you. Well, so you have you mentioned that, you know, that it's hard to understand culture. The culture is this amorphous thing. And you have a you've centered your messages around a creating a culture of belonging.

00:09:57:06 - 00:10:05:16

Brian McComak

So can you help just for those of us who are here with us there watching later to understand how you think about culture and and the construct of belonging?

00:10:06:05 - 00:10:25:05

Rhodes Perry

Yeah, definitely. So Fabian Shorters is someone kind of does a lot of culture work, is kind of well versed in this area. And I really like his definition of talking about culture. And he describes it as the transferrable set of beliefs and behaviors that allows a social group to survive.

00:10:25:18 - 00:10:37:15

Rhodes Perry

And I really like that because it's you know, there's a lot of deficit definitions on culture. Sometimes they're really abstract and loaded. You know, I like using that definition because I like working with leaders to ask them, right.

00:10:37:15 - 00:10:56:01

Rhodes Perry

You know, what are those transferable set of beliefs and behaviors that allows your group to survive or thrive? What did you learn? And maybe you didn't learn this in your particular organization that you're at, but what did you learn about leadership to allow you to survive and to ascend into the roles that you're in?

00:10:56:11 - 00:11:17:05

Rhodes Perry

And would you transfer those behaviors in particular onto the next generation of leaders? And that always sparks like a really interesting conversation. And then when I when when I go into talking about the concept of belonging, which I find that leaders really like talking about that too, because many of them are like, Great, I feel this every

00:11:17:05 - 00:11:27:16

Rhodes Perry

single day. I love this topic. Let's talk about it. Let's do it. So if they're if they're starting to act on kind of that that footing, I'm like, okay, great. I'm glad that you have this high sense of belonging.

00:11:28:03 - 00:11:39:11

Rhodes Perry

Let's let's start to imagine those on our team who are least likely to even feel safe showing up in the workplace and where there might be a disconnect. Do you imagine that anyone inside your workplace might be feeling that?

00:11:39:18 - 00:11:55:12

Rhodes Perry

And that opens up a really interesting dialog to that when we talk about belonging to kind of like take it away from this illusive feeling to things that we can actually measure. I really like co calls research where they broke down belonging into like these four ingredients.

00:11:55:12 - 00:12:10:23

Rhodes Perry

So they talked about and I think this is where a lot of us start from, especially during pride month, like being seen, right? So being rewarded for all of the genius, all of the talent that you bring into the workplace and obviously all of those live experiences that shape who you are, all of the identities that make

00:12:10:23 - 00:12:19:24

Rhodes Perry

up who you are. Right. And like when you're seen and you can bring as much as you want into the workplace or not, as you know, you have the agency to choose. Like, if you have that choice, that's awesome.

00:12:20:00 - 00:12:38:08

Rhodes Perry

You know, that's like the first sign. But the second piece is, like, feeling connected. And I think this plays into trust, right? So how building those strong and meaningful relationships like if you can if you can name like maybe for relationships like on your team or within your organization where you feel really connected, you're more likely to

00:12:38:08 - 00:12:52:16

Rhodes Perry

have that strong sense of belonging. If not, if you can't even name one person, that might signal, you know, there's a there's a culture of disconnect. And then that leads to the third piece, which is support. So it's getting what you need so you can do your best at work.

00:12:52:16 - 00:13:03:19

Rhodes Perry

And what I'm going to need, it's going to be super different from you and everybody else on your team. Right. So it's being aware, right? If you're connected, it's like, Oh, of course Rhoads needs this and he's going to write that project out, right?

00:13:03:19 - 00:13:23:03

Rhodes Perry

You know, so that's really huge. And then the last piece, which I really like, is this sense of pride. So like in the spirit of this month, the pride being that the values that you have when you think about how you behave in the world, that's in alignment with your organization's values and like in that kind of

00:13:23:03 - 00:13:41:06

Rhodes Perry

alignment, you know, just, you know, there's a sense of pride, purpose, and who doesn't want to feel that? Who doesn't want to feel meaning when they show up in the workplace? And then I like talking about that. We can measure those things and we can also talk about like what happens, like what's the cost if we don't

00:13:41:06 - 00:13:55:02

Rhodes Perry

build this in the workplace? And that's where like this this kind of sting of exclusion comes in. So it's really just kind of inverse of those four ingredients, right? Like if I'm not seeing, I'm feeling invisible, you know, if I'm not feeling connected, you know, disconnect.

00:13:55:12 - 00:14:09:07

Rhodes Perry

If I'm not supported, I might feel discouraged. And if I don't feel pride, you know, I'm feeling shame. And that's like such a powerful, icky feeling. But like that shame of like, what is it about me that's not in alignment here?

00:14:09:07 - 00:14:25:15

Rhodes Perry

What is it about me? That's. That's there's something. Something that makes me different isn't embraced. And, you know, we're in this era of, like, the great resignation. You know, last year, 47 million employees left their jobs in, you know, pay and compensation.

00:14:25:15 - 00:14:38:23

Rhodes Perry

Definitely. You know, that's a factor of that. But the primary reason so many people are leaving is toxic workplace culture. Right. You know, just like this element, this these kind of ingredients are not there. It's like, what is it all for?

00:14:38:24 - 00:14:49:03

Rhodes Perry

You know, if I have all of these other options or at least like, you know, I can take some time, you know, if you're privileged enough to be able to do that, you know, and some people don't even have that privilege, but it's so bad.

00:14:49:03 - 00:15:04:03

Rhodes Perry

It's like I'm out, you know, and I'm going to find something else. So I think like employers, right? Like we're in this moment. Where you can be an employer of choice and you can be you can kind of say, we're going to try to change the way that we've been running things.

00:15:04:03 - 00:15:15:21

Rhodes Perry

Or, you know, you can be the employer that sticks their head in the sand and just stick to the status quo. But you're going to continue hemorrhaging employees until hopefully you wake up and say, we've got to do something different.

00:15:16:05 - 00:15:16:12

Rhodes Perry

Yeah.

00:15:18:13 - 00:15:39:07

Brian McComak

So much good stuff in there. And there's where do I want to go next? Do they have like 17 questions? So I'm going to I'm going to go one, one question, one memory that came to mind as you were talking about the the having the can the connection aspect of that experience and having people that you have

00:15:39:07 - 00:15:50:00

Brian McComak

a meaningful connection with at work. It reminds me of for a number of years, one of the most important questions on employee experience surveys was Do I have a best friend at work? Which I think which gets to that.

00:15:50:18 - 00:16:03:13

Brian McComak

Whether you have that, you feel like you're, you know, a member of your your chosen family as part of the the community that you work with. I want to just ask for your counsel here for a second to see if you like what I do.

00:16:03:13 - 00:16:16:09

Brian McComak

We're not there for you. It's suggested to be different. The way that I think about it and talk to our clients about how we measure culture is really through the Employee Experience survey, we say it's really about that's the mirror of how your employees are experiencing their culture.

00:16:16:16 - 00:16:20:11

Brian McComak

And so is that how do you measure? Is that how you measure it or you do have another approach?

00:16:20:24 - 00:16:32:23

Rhodes Perry

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I do it in a number of ways, but definitely through survey surveying, as you know, kind of on the quantitative side, for all the data nerds, you kind of need to see things, especially if you can get an end big enough.

00:16:32:23 - 00:16:49:04

Rhodes Perry

The statistically significant I think like those questions are really huge. You know, my approach is kind of when I talk about belonging, you know, we talked about those ingredients, but the primary things that make that foundation are psychological safety and trust building.

00:16:49:04 - 00:16:59:08

Rhodes Perry

So I'm the kind of like, you know, asking, like, do you have a best friend? You know, do you have someone who's going to have your back support you? You know, that gets to kind of some of the trust that you have interpersonally.

00:17:00:05 - 00:17:13:21

Rhodes Perry

There's also trust with your leadership team. There's trust in the organization itself. You know, it's a measure that I think on the psychological safety pieces, I think Amy Edmondson makes our jobs really easy, you know, kind of like, you know, can you operate?

00:17:13:21 - 00:17:33:03

Rhodes Perry

Can you do your work without fear of negative consequence? And so she kind of breaks down without being able to ask for help when you need it, being able to it to mistake when you make one, being able to offer constructive feedback when you have it without kind of retaliation, fear of negative consequences, losing out on a

00:17:33:03 - 00:17:51:23

Rhodes Perry

promotion stretch assignment, you know, even losing your job, you know, I mean, these are all things that are huge. And I think like especially like, I mean for us, like being a part of LGBT communities, right? Like how many times, you know, just kind of in terms of covering, you know, important parts of ourselves, did we do

00:17:51:23 - 00:18:04:17

Rhodes Perry

that because it's like, oh, I don't know if I don't know if my colleagues can handle all of me. I don't know if I could talk about my gender history of being socialized as a girl and like people's minds are going to implode because it's too, you know, it's like, I don't even want to do that right

00:18:04:17 - 00:18:18:21

Rhodes Perry

now, but like with what the expenses is like, we missed those opportunities to really get to know each other better so that when we do need to have each other's backs, it's like, You know what? Brian's got me, you know, like we, you know, like we have a deep relationship.

00:18:18:21 - 00:18:34:19

Rhodes Perry

And so I need some help on this project. I know he's going to have my back. And so, you know, like bringing it back to leaders, right? You know, the cost of doing nothing. If people think, oh, this belonging stuff, you know, this kind of culture building stuff, we'll get to it, you know, three years from now

00:18:34:19 - 00:18:49:07

Rhodes Perry

. I mean, you know, what's the same culture strategy for breakfast, you know? So it's like whatever you want your business to do, if you're not prioritizing this work, you're really at a disadvantage, especially in the environment that we're in right now.

00:18:50:11 - 00:19:07:24

Brian McComak

Yeah, I agree. Absolutely. Well, and what I heard there and and for all of you with us, hopefully as I ask for counsel and advice from Rhodes, it helps you to have these conversations with the people at your organizations who are who are responsible for culture the way it was borrowing from.

00:19:08:14 - 00:19:23:21

Brian McComak

You know, because I think one of the things that happens when we're creating employee experience surveys or some sort of assessment for ourselves is how do I create these questions? Well, there are experts who've done lots of research who have been helped to craft some questions, or we can borrow from those who have have already solved those

00:19:23:21 - 00:19:24:08

Brian McComak

puzzles.

00:19:24:16 - 00:19:42:12

Rhodes Perry

Absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah. I mean, and I will keep plugging Amy Edmonds and I feel like she's such a gift to so many different fields, but especially for those of us doing this work, the the psychological safety measures, it's base, you know, I mean, we're just talking about being safe on the job.

00:19:42:12 - 00:19:59:03

Rhodes Perry

We're not talking about like trusting each other or feeling like I belong. It's just like, you know, that that first measure is really, really key. So if we bring in the DEI components, you know, who's most likely to have a high level of psychological safety and who's least likely to even feel safe?

00:19:59:04 - 00:20:14:18

Rhodes Perry

Right. So if we're starting to think about people with a marginalized identity or multiple marginalized identities, that starts to get way more complicated. And so a big approach that I use is the work off of Jon Apple's targeted universalism, right?

00:20:14:18 - 00:20:31:03

Rhodes Perry

So if we want everyone to belong in the organization, we have to have targeted interventions around those least likely to feel it so that we all can kind of get to kind of an equitable place where we're starting to at least feel psychologically safe and we can build upon that.

00:20:31:03 - 00:20:47:17

Rhodes Perry

Right? So that's where I kind of that's where I start with leadership teams, just to kind of think about that in a way that also allows them to kind of work through some of their own stuff. Right. And I think one of the biggest things that I see with leaders is that, you know, on paper it's like

00:20:47:17 - 00:20:58:18

Rhodes Perry

, okay, you know, we'll do this work. And I think some of the thought bubbles are not the fear of change, which I think a lot of people conflates, you know, like, oh, people just don't like change. It's just like, that's just not true.

00:20:58:18 - 00:21:09:13

Rhodes Perry

You know, if you are going to tell me, I'm going to give you a brand new face I look like. So you're going to give me a new bike and you have to change your shoes and you have to change all your gear, but you're going to go faster.

00:21:09:13 - 00:21:24:09

Rhodes Perry

I'd be like, okay, sign me up. I'm ready for that change, right? It's more kind of the fear of loss. And it's it's just a it's a false fear of I'm going to lose my power or status. And I think that kind of fear, it trips up loss aversion, right?

00:21:24:09 - 00:21:40:08

Rhodes Perry

Which is kind of like the fear of losing something is two times more powerful than gaining something, which I don't get that. But that's that's humans. That's how we work. And so I think loss aversion clouds leaders better judgment of what they do gain.

00:21:40:12 - 00:21:59:01

Rhodes Perry

Right. Which is just kind of aside from a legacy, if you're doing the right thing, which is, you know, I would argue it is the right thing. We have we know what the business cases, you know, we've got 40 death or 40 years of data that confirms like at every point that an organization like in our you

00:21:59:01 - 00:22:13:15

Rhodes Perry

know, we care about retention, we care about productivity. You know, we care about people showing up and feeling purpose in their job. So when we do this work, that's that's there, you know, and in this era, you know, people stick around for the long haul when we do this.

00:22:13:15 - 00:22:26:07

Rhodes Perry

So I think leaders, you know, really making space for them to kind of work through what they have to work through is maybe for some of us, it's like we're ready. We were ready five years ago or 20 years ago to do this work.

00:22:26:07 - 00:22:36:24

Rhodes Perry

So catch up leaders. And we also have to acknowledge where people are starting from and some of this maybe might be brand new to this work. So we have to exercise that kind of grace.

00:22:39:12 - 00:22:58:07

Brian McComak

Which can be hard to muster sometimes, but we do need to do it. Grace as well. The way that we at Hummingbird talk about it is and I certainly respect that there are systems of oppression that have been incredibly harmful and hurtful to communities.

00:22:58:07 - 00:23:18:07

Brian McComak

And so I understand the anger that can come with that. And sometimes I feel that anger myself because there are things about my lived experience that that have I have felt those moments of hurt. And what we try to try to focus on is if we attacked, let's use that word, then we put the other person in

00:23:18:07 - 00:23:35:19

Brian McComak

firefighter frees and we are no longer having a conversation that's going to move us forward. So we say like, how do we find ways to offer grace, as you mentioned, to allow for there to be a healthy space for dialog and understanding that allows us to move forward and up in a positive direction.

00:23:36:12 - 00:23:52:08

Brian McComak

And and, you know, and I think it took us a long time to really think to think through how how does that either meet or not meet the goal to break down systems of oppression and because it feels like a slower, slower burn.

00:23:53:03 - 00:24:00:17

Brian McComak

But but I also think it's long term, it's more meaningful. And I hear that that's sort of how you think about what you're doing with your organizations.

00:24:01:20 - 00:24:19:22

Rhodes Perry

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, it's it's definitely a long a long game. And and I think that that's the tension, right? I think that the tension that and I think this is more for employees that, you know, it's just the frustration of this is not happening fast enough and there's not the transparency.

00:24:19:23 - 00:24:34:04

Rhodes Perry

I think that it would be different if any of us applied for our next great opportunity and where we were applying like there was some acknowledgment of this is this is our current culture. You know, this is what we're seeing that we've we've done some assessments.

00:24:34:12 - 00:24:46:13

Rhodes Perry

We're sharing this with you to say this is a work in progress and you know, we are intentional about this is where we're heading, you know, and we're starting to kind of name the kind of culture that we're trying to build and we need you.

00:24:46:13 - 00:25:00:07

Rhodes Perry

You are a culture. Add to this. Please be a part of that. You know, we want to give you as much information so you can make an informed decision. And too often what happens is where, you know, we're searching, we're kind of like, you know, researching, you know, maybe a potential employer.

00:25:00:19 - 00:25:17:20

Rhodes Perry

There's the About US section. You know, there's this beautiful statement about commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion, about culture, a healthy culture. And then you show up maybe in the first week and you're kind of like, wait, you know, in the interview process, everyone was saying this about this amazing culture.

00:25:17:20 - 00:25:32:11

Rhodes Perry

And yet I'm picking up things right now that are kind of running counter to that. There's there's a the alignment is not there. And and it right then, you know, you're talking about building trust. Trust in the organization starts to get eroded pretty quickly.

00:25:32:19 - 00:25:45:16

Rhodes Perry

And then, you know, I mean, right now we can't afford that. You know, I think if people really want to, you know, be a part of like the great recruitment and key people, you know, like that, we can't employers can't do that anymore.

00:25:45:16 - 00:26:00:06

Rhodes Perry

And especially with younger people, younger generations coming in where, you know, I think I was I was reading an article about Zoomers Generation Z, and it's kind of like the generation that wants it all, you know, and that was kind of the frame.

00:26:00:15 - 00:26:14:21

Rhodes Perry

But what it was saying in the art, what it was saying in the article is that, you know, perhaps for older Gen Xers, you know, baby boomers, traditionalists, that, you know, these generations just didn't ask for as much as they could have.

00:26:14:24 - 00:26:34:00

Rhodes Perry

Right. So I really like that take. And I just think it's it's it's important for those of us really actively building cultures, either in our own organizations or for a larger employer, be really mindful of of kind of what what employees want, what, what prospective employees want.

00:26:34:15 - 00:26:39:13

Rhodes Perry

And it's way more than that, I think many of us are anticipating. And I think that's a good thing.

00:26:40:06 - 00:26:56:09

Brian McComak

Yeah, I would agree. The the way that I think about it is that I'm, you know, this new generation that has been entering and is entering the workforce, they're they're more vocal and they're clear about what they expect.

00:26:56:09 - 00:27:14:19

Brian McComak

And they're not afraid to say, hey, you got to do better. And I grew, you know, in the conversations I've had with others, like peers of mine, I think we wanted those things, too, but we just didn't feel like we had the space, the the room, the maybe the safety, you know, to to really challenge the systems

00:27:14:19 - 00:27:29:18

Brian McComak

that exist. And so I'm so grateful that they're with us in these organizations. And as someone who runs a business, I also appreciate the challenges for leaders because, you know, I invite the team that I have the privilege to lead, to challenge me.

00:27:29:19 - 00:27:48:07

Brian McComak

And in the spirit of honoring that, that's going to happen anyway. So let's just allow it to be a healthy conversation. And sometimes it's really hard. And I. I think that meeting today is I do I do think I believe that we're tracking in the direction that leadership management is going to be more human.

00:27:48:20 - 00:28:02:04

Brian McComak

It's also, I believe, inherently harder than anything that I learned growing up in management and, you know, the things that, you know, that were, you know, the suggestions for for good principles. Some of those still work, but so many of them have evolved as paradigms.

00:28:02:08 - 00:28:14:16

Brian McComak

And it's harder now. It's also more meaningful. So how do you how are you helping leaders and managers through that transition? Because it they have to go through a lot. And I'm like, I know I'm one of those leaders who is going through a lot myself.

00:28:15:04 - 00:28:28:17

Rhodes Perry

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, a lot of it is coaching and equipping with skills that none of us were equipped with. Right. Or or we learned, you know, as as we fumbled to kind of be better versions of ourselves.

00:28:29:21 - 00:28:49:20

Rhodes Perry

So I think it's at least in the approach that that I take through, through long term learning engagements. Right. So this is not no one's going to master this in a year. I was going to say 20 minutes and an hour long training or a day long training or even, you know, a week long training.

00:28:49:20 - 00:29:04:20

Rhodes Perry

I mean, this is this is about learning some skills, awkwardly practicing, you know, inclusive leadership skills and being able to process them and get some coaching on them until you get to that kind of masterful. Are more skillful, I would say.

00:29:04:20 - 00:29:21:15

Rhodes Perry

More skillful practice. Right. And it's like it's like learning something. It's like learning an instrument. Right. I think sometimes for many of us in leadership positions, you know, many people, you know, you've you've earned you've worked hard. Many of us have worked hard to be where we're at.

00:29:21:24 - 00:29:34:09

Rhodes Perry

So there's a lot of skill in the thing that got us to where we are. Right. And yet this moment is demanding kind of a new way of leading or ways that weren't honored. So for some of us, maybe we've always led this way.

00:29:34:24 - 00:29:50:01

Rhodes Perry

And finally, like these skills are really being prioritized of like, oh, my gosh, we have to be more collaborative. We have to kind of share some of our power. We have to give other people credit. It's like all of these things that kind of ran counter for us to even survive in the workplace.

00:29:50:01 - 00:30:04:09

Rhodes Perry

So it's kind of it's maybe cognitive dissonance. I don't know if that's the right way to describe it. Like something is happening where it's like everything that we've learned, not everything, but a lot of the things that we've learned about what it means to be the leader we have to consciously unlearn.

00:30:04:22 - 00:30:17:11

Rhodes Perry

And then we have to learn some new skills to be relevant in kind of the workplace that we find ourselves in right now. So it's awareness raising around that. But I think most importantly, it's not just raising awareness, right?

00:30:17:12 - 00:30:31:17

Rhodes Perry

It's like really giving a defined set of skills to say like, these are the skills that are going to be most helpful. I think, Brian, you offered a great example of like with your team of like, you know, I'm opening up, I'm open to hearing feedback, right.

00:30:31:17 - 00:30:45:19

Rhodes Perry

And just, you know, the leaders that I work really trying to get them to to see feedback as a gift no matter how it's expressed. Right. So maybe someone's really upset because they've been micrographs for the seventh time of the day that day.

00:30:46:02 - 00:31:01:03

Rhodes Perry

And they're coming at you with like this happened again. And it's kind of like, okay, thank you for sharing that. Like, if you could just do that as a leader and an even if you're not ready to respond, even if you're kind of having a reaction in your body, it's kind of regulating that and getting to a

00:31:01:03 - 00:31:19:13

Rhodes Perry

space, maybe taking care of yourself to process like, okay, that happened. What, what's the kernel of truth for this other person's experience that they cared enough to bring this to my attention? And, you know, how do I how do I receive that with care and reflect it back when I'm ready to to have like a more meaningful

00:31:19:13 - 00:31:33:15

Rhodes Perry

conversation of like, you know, hey, Brian, when you said this, you know, here's what I heard. Here's maybe where I caused harm or here is like a learning lesson for me. Did I get that right? And, you know, kind of that nonviolent communication framework, for better or worse?

00:31:33:15 - 00:31:48:18

Rhodes Perry

I think it does it does help in kind of like meeting a conflict, even if you would describe it as a conflict. But the conflict isn't bad. Right. You know, when we think about like group formation, you know, there's the forming, there's the norming, the storming before you perform.

00:31:49:03 - 00:31:59:07

Rhodes Perry

Right. And to many of us, I think, you know, I moved out to the Pacific Northwest. So it's a culture of very kind of conflict avoidance. And I moved from New York City, which is kind of the opposite.

00:31:59:07 - 00:32:13:17

Rhodes Perry

So, you know, it's it's this interesting, see people's relationship to conflict as it relates to kind of feedback. And yet that's one of those skills like if we can really embrace that, that can help leaders tremendously because we don't know everything.

00:32:14:14 - 00:32:31:06

Rhodes Perry

We in fact, we know probably very little. Right. And if we're smart, we surround ourselves with a team of really amazing people that, you know, really can help the greater good of the organization. Right. So, I mean, that's maybe one skill that it that I give kind of as an example.

00:32:32:06 - 00:32:54:15

Brian McComak

Yeah. And one of the other. Evolutions I'm but where do I want to use evolution's in these constructs is that I've seen is the need to chart a different way. I learned like so many of us, that perfection is the goal, which is not realistic for anyone.

00:32:55:18 - 00:33:15:21

Brian McComak

But since that's what we're trying to attain, I think a lot of us as leaders have tried to create a brand of perfection, which makes it really hard then to say, I got that wrong, I'm sorry. And so really tearing down that paradigm and actually what I believe inherently is same, I got it wrong.

00:33:15:22 - 00:33:26:09

Brian McComak

Apologizing in a genuine way is actually credibility building and trust building and safety building. So it does does all these other things that we weren't getting before.

00:33:26:18 - 00:33:32:10

Rhodes Perry

Yeah. Yeah. And that that brings that brings me back to Amy Edmondson. I told you I would talk about her.

00:33:32:10 - 00:33:33:07

Brian McComak

Love her, don't you?

00:33:33:19 - 00:33:49:11

Rhodes Perry

I do. I do. But I feel in that place. Right. It's kind of like how do we create an environment where, one, we can we can recognize that the imperfections, the mistakes, the failures are so valuable to workplace.

00:33:49:11 - 00:34:06:01

Rhodes Perry

Right, that when we have strong and cohesive teams and that's what she found in her research when she was looking at hospital teams like literally life and death. Right. That those hospital teams that were the most strong and cohesive were the ones where they were able to to share, hey, we've made mistakes.

00:34:06:01 - 00:34:20:24

Rhodes Perry

In fact, like her research found that like the strong and cohesive, cohesive teams actually made more mistakes and that confused her. So when she started to do more research, she realized that those teams were more likely to say, we made mistakes, you know?

00:34:21:00 - 00:34:33:20

Rhodes Perry

So they were they were they were admitting to the mistakes. While other teams are probably making the same number of mistakes and they were more willing to talk about them and work through them. And when when they were able to work through those mistakes more, that's where they had their innovation of.

00:34:33:21 - 00:34:47:22

Rhodes Perry

If we did this procedure different or if we did this process different, we would have a way better resolve, right? So I think for us as leaders to recognize, like if we model, we're human, we're not robots, we are going to mess up.

00:34:47:22 - 00:35:07:08

Rhodes Perry

We are going to maybe colossally mess up. Right. And if we can normalize that to recognize that that could be the moment where we're able to tweak something where we can have like a business breakthrough or at least get a result that is desirable in the only way that we can get there is to to kind of

00:35:07:08 - 00:35:22:03

Rhodes Perry

break up with that desire, you know, that maybe the way that we've been trained, like excellence equals perfectionism. And that's not true. Excellence is something different. And being perfect and perfect is a trap because none of us are ever going to get there.

00:35:22:03 - 00:35:35:13

Rhodes Perry

Right? So we'll always feel like we're not worthy. If we're striving for that, we can strive towards excellence, the excellence we can achieve if we kind of acknowledge there's going to be a lot of mistakes along the way, I'm going to make them you're going to make them.

00:35:35:13 - 00:35:46:06

Rhodes Perry

Our team is going to make them. We don't want that to happen. Right. But let's normalize when it does that. There's going to be some important learning lesson for all of us and not to shame anybody when it happens.

00:35:46:06 - 00:36:05:23

Rhodes Perry

Right. Because I could be the next person that makes the next mistake, you know. But I think where a lot of organizations struggle is when one of their leading values is excellence, you know, and then, you know, you know, I think that's that's where things can go sideways, you know, where it's excellence equals perfection.

00:36:05:23 - 00:36:08:07

Rhodes Perry

And that's not that's not necessarily the case.

00:36:10:15 - 00:36:27:02

Brian McComak

Yeah. And well, it's and it's it's so not realistic. I love that you said where humans are not robots. I say that all the time. And because I think there are so many aspects of how we've created organizational cultures that are asking us to be robots as that now we show up and it's just not possible.

00:36:27:24 - 00:36:52:17

Brian McComak

So. So I love I love this conversation. I want to bring in another dimension, though. So we've been talking about culture and the various ways to to understand culture. We've talked about belonging. We've talked about how leadership is changing and evolving and and what workers today want from their organizations, something that you've mentioned this word a

00:36:52:17 - 00:37:10:21

Brian McComak

number of times. So and I know I hear it, I don't know if others are keen into it. Is this word of equity and there's intention around equity. And I know that, you know, in the conversations I have with the leaders that I get to work with that the con the concept of equity is, is hard to

00:37:10:21 - 00:37:27:24

Brian McComak

understand sometimes, but we can usually get to the understanding of equity. It gets much harder to say how do we start to create solutions that will right the wrongs or or create that experience of equity? So I'd love for you to just share with us and share with the group.

00:37:27:24 - 00:37:33:13

Brian McComak

Like, how do you think about equity and how are you leaning in to that to create cultures of belonging? What does that look like?

00:37:34:05 - 00:37:50:10

Rhodes Perry

Yeah. Yeah. And so equity first and foremost is inequality. So I think like if we could start there, you know, what we're striving for is not for everyone to have the same exact thing in the workplace, right? Because that's just not going to work.

00:37:50:10 - 00:38:06:17

Rhodes Perry

We all start at different places in terms of what our needs are and what it will take for us to thrive as individuals. So I think, like, there's two ways of thinking about equity. One is kind of like interpersonal equity, and that's something that I alluded to earlier, just kind of talking about belonging on that component of

00:38:06:17 - 00:38:19:18

Rhodes Perry

support. So getting what you need so you can do your best work and being realistic that, that, that your needs are going to be super different from your colleagues. So that's kind of like how we kind of behave with each other and how we interact.

00:38:20:06 - 00:38:36:16

Rhodes Perry

The other component is really recognizing the systems and structures that create inequities, right? And so I can use myself as an example as one person whose my experiences are probably super different than the rest of the folks that are here right now.

00:38:37:08 - 00:38:49:15

Rhodes Perry

Maybe something maybe a few of you can relate, right? But, you know, being a trans person, I got involved in equity in doing t work as a necessity 20 years ago because I was hired for something completely different.

00:38:50:14 - 00:39:07:19

Rhodes Perry

And when I got into the workplace, I realized, oh my God, you know, like I have, I've already kind of like socially transitioned. I was kind of medically transitioning at that time and what I needed, you know, just to kind of show up and do the thing that I was hired for, it wasn't very clear how I

00:39:07:19 - 00:39:22:17

Rhodes Perry

could get those things that I needed. So what I needed to do was to work with people. And fortunately, the employer that I worked with and again, this is like 20 years ago, they were very supportive and said, we have no idea how to support you, so we want to do this with you because we want to

00:39:22:17 - 00:39:37:11

Rhodes Perry

make this better not just for you, but for future trans people that come through this organization. And so we work together, but like the, you know, just those examples of, you know, being able to get health care, that kind of worked for me.

00:39:37:18 - 00:39:51:01

Rhodes Perry

That was a huge challenge, being able to have identity documents that align with who I am because I hadn't yet legally transitioned. Right. And so just getting a name tag, that was my name, you know, just to be respected at its most basic level.

00:39:51:02 - 00:40:07:00

Rhodes Perry

I'm not even talking about pronouns, but just like my name on a name tag or an email, right? So these are like I mean, this is a very simple, simple example, but it's showing like one person's experience in an organization that from from the organization's perspective, everyone's treated the same.

00:40:07:09 - 00:40:27:04

Rhodes Perry

So we're all equal, everybody gets the same thing. But it didn't allow probably many other people for different reasons to thrive in it. So if we can think about like if we can think about interpersonal equity and then kind of structural like organizational equity, those are kind of like we can separate that out a little bit because

00:40:27:04 - 00:40:39:13

Rhodes Perry

I think for some of us, if we're not if we're not the CEO or commissioner or the executive director, we probably feel like we have very little power to change those structures. Yet we have a lot of power in how we relate to each other.

00:40:39:16 - 00:40:50:11

Rhodes Perry

Like Brian, you know, how can I help? You know, like I know that things are going on with your family. You share that with me? How can I support you today? You know, just to kind of get the things done so you don't have to stress here, right?

00:40:50:11 - 00:41:08:09

Rhodes Perry

Like that. That might be an example of I may not be a leader with a capital L, but that's a leadership behavior, you know, and I can deliver that kind of equity. And, you know, when I'm when I'm getting involved with an organization that really wants to work around policies and structures, that gets me excited because then

00:41:08:09 - 00:41:23:01

Rhodes Perry

we can talk about some of those. tional inequities. And in order to identify those, we need to work with those folks inside of the organization, at least psychologically safe. What about this organization is making you feel unsafe? Is it the people?

00:41:23:08 - 00:41:39:02

Rhodes Perry

Is it the way that the organization is structured? Is it is it the way that we kind of advance talent and it's going to take, you know. Yes. Survey employees. I think the other pieces like those focus groups of really being able to kind of interact with people at lots of different levels.

00:41:39:11 - 00:41:52:19

Rhodes Perry

People of different identities to really get at. You know, where might those barriers be? Because, you know, for a lot of the leaders that are kind of, you know, at the highest levels of an organization, they've they've they've kind of navigated they've worked their way.

00:41:52:19 - 00:42:12:23

Rhodes Perry

Even if there were inequities, they figured out a workaround. But, you know, they don't necessarily have that firsthand experience of knowing kind of where all those tripwires are. And so that's I think that's why people have a hard time really kind of acknowledging the full scale of equity, because it's it's big, you know, and it's not just

00:42:12:23 - 00:42:34:01

Rhodes Perry

the workplace, right? It's kind of like all of those all of the ways that we arrive to the workplace. So kind of thinking about our family and our community structure, its thinking about schooling, education, trade, schools, like what opportunities that we have leading up to arriving to the workplace and.

00:42:35:12 - 00:42:57:05

Rhodes Perry

Those are big, you know, so when when companies, you know, if you're in a bigger corporation or a bigger organization that has lofty commitments to the environment or social or, you know, the ESG kind of commitments to environmental, social or governance, you know, these are the pieces that can get at equity if we're really strategic and invest

00:42:57:05 - 00:43:17:12

Rhodes Perry

back into our communities, if we're mindful of how our organization is having an impact on our environment, you know, and if we're thinking about ways of being more transparent of kind of how the highest levels of leaders are operating within our organization equitably, you know, I mean, like it's being so that we can we can find different

00:43:17:12 - 00:43:23:24

Rhodes Perry

entry points of what where what, what feels possible for us and for each one of us to that, that might look a little bit different.

00:43:25:18 - 00:43:40:04

Brian McComak

Yeah. I really I really appreciate the the lens on that that individual component and the equity conversation because, you know, it is it's something that I feel some day, some days, probably most days of like I'm really trying to change the world.

00:43:40:04 - 00:43:52:17

Brian McComak

And I also know I'm just one human and I'm I'm my ego is not big enough to for me to think that I can change the world, but I can change a, you know, make a difference in a person's life or in a team's life or in our company's life in some situations.

00:43:52:17 - 00:44:03:16

Brian McComak

And and I know that there are lots of other humans out there who are also doing that. And collectively, that's where the change happens. But we have to sort of pay attention to what's within our scope of possibility.

00:44:04:06 - 00:44:19:05

Rhodes Perry

Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. And what will it take for you to give yourself permission to do that for everybody that's here? Right. Because we can make lots of lots of excuses, especially if we think about equity from like that kind of systemic level of like, oh, my gosh, that's too big.

00:44:19:09 - 00:44:31:19

Rhodes Perry

Like I'm going to check out and, you know, but but what is it that you might be able to do just to have that positive influence of showing up for someone on your team to support them by giving them what they need, you know?

00:44:31:19 - 00:44:51:02

Rhodes Perry

And that's going to take getting to know the people that are on your team, you know. And you know, that takes time and that takes a commitment. So but, you know, as you and as you said, right, like if we all just had one little teeny, tiny thing, even if it was for today, that would have massive

00:44:51:02 - 00:44:54:08

Rhodes Perry

rippling effects, you know, across the entire world, you know.

00:44:56:21 - 00:45:16:07

Brian McComak

You know, something that I've heard from several CEOs that that I've worked with. And I'm curious if you did something similar and how you been and more importantly, how how would you respond to this? You know, so I start talking to them about all the things we're talking about here, about how do we create.

00:45:17:00 - 00:45:34:15

Brian McComak

And, of course, the language that use as human centered workplaces. And that means allowing humans to be human and acknowledging that perfection on a reality, acknowledging that there are emotions that humans come with because they're not robot robots, acknowledging that there are systems of oppression and that we have to create space so that we can talk about

00:45:34:15 - 00:45:48:09

Brian McComak

them and we can tackle them on an individual or organizational basis. So, you know, all of these and they're like, Brian, that all sounds great and important and we should do that. How do I do all of that and still run my business?

00:45:48:09 - 00:45:59:20

Brian McComak

Because it feels like that's going to take over my entire organization when leaders is like, we're just going to have an emotional roller coaster every day at our company if we do this. And fortunately, I haven't seen that happen.

00:45:59:20 - 00:46:08:15

Brian McComak

But have you had those conversations with leaders as well as they're as they're trying to say, how do I how do I sort of shift my thinking about what what an organizational construct looks like?

00:46:09:08 - 00:46:25:08

Rhodes Perry

Yes. Yeah, yeah. And I think sometimes, you know, and I'm I guess I'm assuming and I probably shouldn't do that. But I think, like, I think what I what I'm hearing underneath that, I guess this is how frame it is that it feels like.

00:46:26:22 - 00:46:36:13

Rhodes Perry

Based on all of the things that I just share in that previous response to you about equity, it's like, we'll have to do all of that or it's just not going to be enough. And it's not that, right?

00:46:36:13 - 00:46:54:24

Rhodes Perry

It's not that. It's it's, you know, as you said, you know, if we're going to bring our full human self into the workplace, like what makes us human, like the best parts of ourselves are the feelings, right? And too many of us fear feelings in general, let alone inside of the workplace, where for many of us we've

00:46:54:24 - 00:47:14:23

Rhodes Perry

been trained, all of that stuff we leave at home and we just show up as kind of like doing our functions and our tasks. And when we, when we sever that, right, that's that then compromises relationships. And so I think what leaders can do that's well within their reach is even in meetings, you know, like kind of

00:47:14:23 - 00:47:32:11

Rhodes Perry

think rethink, check it, right. Of just, you know, if you're managing a team and you've got, I don't know, ten people on your team, five people I don't know how big your teams are. But, you know, especially like if you're in a hybrid workplace, you know, the zoom is a fabulous tool where you've got to chat, you

00:47:32:12 - 00:47:50:06

Rhodes Perry

know, and kind of like asking people to kind of contribute, you know, like kind of a temperature check of what's going on, you know, and making those kind of icebreakers interesting, you know, not just kind of like, how are you feeling, you know, but kind of what's a song that brought joy to you today or something where

00:47:50:12 - 00:48:03:08

Rhodes Perry

where you can kind of kind of connect and be real before you kind of jump into whatever's on the agenda. It might sound silly, but those are the things that you start to really get to know. Different people like O'Brien.

00:48:03:08 - 00:48:22:13

Rhodes Perry

I didn't know that you like B.B. King. Cool. You know, like we can connect about jazz or something afterwards. But that's I mean, that's basic and it's super simple. Kind of beyond that, you know, is for leaders to kind of acknowledge that, you know, we are the workplace, we're a microcosm of the world operate in, you know

00:48:22:15 - 00:48:40:09

Rhodes Perry

, so it's a kind of acknowledge what's going on in the world when things are happening. Right. And to acknowledge that, you know, you know, whether it's, you know, a shooting that's happening, you know, in a different part of the country, which is frightening and kind of like our reality right now.

00:48:40:09 - 00:48:56:10

Rhodes Perry

So to name that, you know, to not use euphemisms and to talk about how that can have an impact on the people in the workplace and giving people that space. Right. You know, having some more flexibility. You know, there's there's lots of examples around what leaders can do.

00:48:56:10 - 00:49:15:10

Rhodes Perry

I think I think making excuses, though, and just saying it's too much, we don't have time and it would be a distraction to what it is that we do. I think that could be possibly the worst thing because it's almost like meeting the moment with silence, you know, and and being a little, I guess, aloof.

00:49:15:10 - 00:49:31:09

Rhodes Perry

I don't know if that's the right word. It's kind of not not really plugged in to to what people are craving, especially from leaders. You know, and I think over these past two and a half years, so many folks wanted to hear more about what leaders were doing, how they were thinking about kind of.

00:49:32:14 - 00:49:47:19

Rhodes Perry

Just how we're structuring work right now to kind of get through the pandemic, to get through these times. So the over communication was almost well received and a lot of the conversations I was having with folks that I was consulting with it was kind of that that concern of, is this too much?

00:49:47:19 - 00:50:06:16

Rhodes Perry

Are we are we over communicating? And, you know, at least from what we were seeing out in the field, it's like you need to communicate more. People really feel disconnected right now. And so the workplace in some ways, even even today, is still kind of it has the potential of being a sanctuary from a lot of this

00:50:06:16 - 00:50:20:10

Rhodes Perry

stuff that's happening world. So that again, can be the opportunity if you want to be an employer of choice and to help your company be that how can you be that sanctuary in the midst of this this storm that we're all living through right now?

00:50:24:06 - 00:50:40:18

Brian McComak

Now I have images of The Hunchback of Notre Dame in my head. There's a beautiful there's a beautiful song in there about sanctuary, which is coming to mind for me. So. And I, you know, I love to connect the world to movies and music, so I love that.

00:50:41:02 - 00:51:01:18

Brian McComak

And you've just I know we have we're in our last few minutes. You know, you just sparked a question for you, but that I hadn't thought of coming into this conversation. But this you know, there's this reality that we are facing today and have been for the last couple of years, you know, all the things happening in

00:51:01:18 - 00:51:22:04

Brian McComak

our world. One of the evolutions of workplaces is that more people now work remotely or virtually. And yes, when you talk about this, this would I in the way that I often say it is, is that humans have a desire to be to be connected and to be part of something.

00:51:22:21 - 00:51:45:03

Brian McComak

And the the construct of virtual working, where we work from home in our, you know, by ourselves, many of us doesn't have that same level of connection and togetherness as we had in workplaces before. And I agree with you, though, that that, you know, organizations can be a sanctuary and can be a place that can really be

00:51:45:03 - 00:51:56:19

Brian McComak

. And again, the language I use is human where humans thrive. So what is the thing, you know, the things you're you're talking about and with your clients around, how do they create belonging and connection in this virtual workplace?

00:51:57:19 - 00:52:16:19

Rhodes Perry

Yeah. I mean, it's it's ongoing. So I think these are maybe some promising practices or ideas, but I really like the use of kind of these these drop in hours that people are doing. Managers are just kind of fellow colleagues of, hey, every Friday, you know, kind of from 8 to 10, we're going to be kind of

00:52:16:19 - 00:52:35:09

Rhodes Perry

doing this co-working. So we're going to come in, we'll do a check in, we'll be working together, and then we'll do a check out. We're finding it like that, that it's it actually kind of increases connectivity. It also increases productivity, and it makes people feel connected when they're not able to be in that kind of shared group

00:52:35:09 - 00:52:50:23

Rhodes Perry

space. But on that question about hybrid work, right, like where some people are actually in physical space while other people are still kind of working remotely, is kind of like, have you seen the L technology or do you know what I'm talking about with yeah.

00:52:51:05 - 00:53:09:24

Rhodes Perry

So the so if you were, say you had a couple of your a couple of your employees inside of an office, you're all around the table. Right. And maybe I'm kind of joining you remotely with another person. You know, in order for us to feel connected, there's now technology.

00:53:09:24 - 00:53:26:12

Rhodes Perry

And I'm sure there's other things that I've seen in AI where the AI sits at the table and the AI functions as the camera, one of the cameras that's here. So for everybody that's participating remotely, the owl moves its eyes towards whoever around the table is speaking.

00:53:26:17 - 00:53:46:10

Rhodes Perry

Hmm. So it's it increases that kind of engagement. And so it's kind of it's the best. I think it's kind of one of those working technologies where I think there's some people have opinions about it, but it's trying to kind of bridge this reality that most of us will likely be in some kind of hybrid work situation

00:53:46:10 - 00:54:05:16

Rhodes Perry

at some point. So so I think technology can help with some of that, too. I think our only limitation with creativity in the ways that we're working now is our only limitation is our creativity. Right, to try to to try to see other ways of, you know, this worked for me.

00:54:05:16 - 00:54:18:14

Rhodes Perry

You know, I'd like to share this with the group and test it out, you know. And so I would encourage people to test and change because I think we're still in it to say, you know, this is the tried and true way of of building connectivity.

00:54:18:14 - 00:54:28:18

Rhodes Perry

I think one of the best ways is for us to kind of experiment together, because this is the first time we've been here. Right. And so we're trying to share our promising practices.

00:54:29:12 - 00:54:48:04

Brian McComak

I love that phrase, promising practices. I'm going to borrow that and I'll share one that we've we've started to use at Hummingbird. Something that we realized is that in this version now, Hummingbird is 100% virtual. We all work from home in our various homes across the country.

00:54:49:15 - 00:55:16:06

Brian McComak

And we because of that, that that reality, it has driven more written communication where we're communicating and trying to exchange, you know, dialog and your messages around sometimes difficult topics in Slack. And, you know, of course, so many of us learned years ago that trying to communicate and communicate about sensitive things in writing is not necessarily the

00:55:16:06 - 00:55:32:12

Brian McComak

best answer. But we're now in this new environment. And so we're like, okay, we're, I'm going to use the tool that's available. And so what we've what we realized is we had a few moments where there was, you know, unnecessary or unintended, you know, anxiety that was sparked by something that was said.

00:55:32:12 - 00:55:50:05

Brian McComak

And so then this person's like, okay, can we talk? And then a week later, they're like, what? What was that all about for that, you know, that week? And so we have implemented a safe word. And if you're if you're having a slack conversation so that it which is pineapple, it's you know and just to say

00:55:50:06 - 00:56:02:03

Brian McComak

hey like there's something isn't feeling good about this conversation for me because we can't see verbal or nonverbal cues in those moments. And so that way they can say, you know, that and add a little levity to the situation.

00:56:02:03 - 00:56:11:01

Brian McComak

And then we can jump on a call and say, like, let's figure this out together. So that's something we're trying to see if it helps avoid. It's always unintended, but it still happens.

00:56:11:18 - 00:56:22:02

Rhodes Perry

I love that. I think that's really smart and you know, and I'm sure that it will continue to evolve as you as you use that practice. And yeah, I mean, Slack is one of those really great tools as well.

00:56:22:12 - 00:56:39:13

Rhodes Perry

And you kind of name some of its limitations, you know, another, another interesting know. Now we're kind of like sharing tools and things like that. Loom is one of those really great tools where it's just, you know, it's kind of an app where you can record yourself and share a message.

00:56:39:13 - 00:56:52:09

Rhodes Perry

So sometimes, you know, and I think this is just kind of meeting different people's communication styles. So I'm definitely a writer who speaks, you know, whereas, you know, there's so many gifted people in my life who just kind of riff.

00:56:52:09 - 00:57:06:24

Rhodes Perry

They're ready to like they have a book. All they have to do is speak, you know, and it's they're. And so Lou might be a great technology for those people where it's like, I have something to communicate that's near and dear to my heart, but writing it out feels overwhelming.

00:57:06:24 - 00:57:20:20

Rhodes Perry

So I'm just going to hit record and share this and share it with the team. So, you know, I think that's that's another kind of going back to basics. You know, when you're thinking about interpersonal equity is like, you know, Brian, what's the best way that I can reach you?

00:57:20:20 - 00:57:33:11

Rhodes Perry

Do you prefer email or text or you know, because I think sometimes that's also generational or I want a phone call. Right. But that that can really go a long way in kind of, you know, just building a good rapport with your colleagues.

00:57:34:04 - 00:57:50:00

Rhodes Perry

But I love I love the safe word and rhythm writing because that you do miss out on so many important cues. But even, you know, even though we're not sharing the same physical space, you know, I mean, there's so many micro movements in our face that say so much, you know.

00:57:50:06 - 00:57:57:07

Rhodes Perry

So for those of us who are sighted, you know, that that's definitely very helpful for us just to kind of guide in the conversation of what's happening.

00:57:57:14 - 00:58:13:05

Brian McComak

Yeah, absolutely. Well, and for for those of us who can also hear the that even just the tone like the you can catch the undercurrents of what someone is not saying and you lose all of that in the written word, which is a beautiful form of communication.

00:58:13:05 - 00:58:30:01

Brian McComak

But it has it has some, some challenges, but we are at the finish line. Rhoads Thanks so much for for saying yes and for joining us today and sharing your wisdom and sharing about how, you know, leaders can create cultures of belonging.

00:58:31:05 - 00:58:43:09

Brian McComak

I know, but I learned so much today, and I'm sure that others the others did as well. So I'm sure that there are going to be people who want to follow you and connect with you. And by the book, can you give them the spiel about where they where they find all those things?

00:58:43:20 - 00:58:59:24

Rhodes Perry

Yeah. Yeah. You can find everything about me at roads, CARICOM, that's probably the best place. So if you want one place, that's that's a good, good place to go. And I would encourage you, if you like conversations like these, I host a summit every year.

00:58:59:24 - 00:59:15:12

Rhodes Perry

It's called the Belonging at Work Summit in this year. It runs July 11th through the 15th. And if you go to blogging network summit dot com pretty easy you can you can register the summit is 100% free and it's 100% virtual.

00:59:15:12 - 00:59:31:07

Rhodes Perry

So we really just want to get out as much information as possible. We've got we've got about 20 different D I thought leaders. We're talking about some of the big things that get in the way of our commitment succeeding and we're ending the week by screening.

00:59:31:07 - 00:59:47:23

Rhodes Perry

My name is Polly Marie, which if you have not seen that documentary, it is amazing. And the producer, one of the producers will be will be fielding questions after we screened the film. So the theme this year is imagine belonging at work on a global scale.

00:59:48:07 - 01:00:12:06

Rhodes Perry

And so we really wanted to show that film because polyamory was a person in like the 1930s, probably was assigned female birth. A lot of people use than them pronouns because Poly tried to transition in the thirties and had some pretty big barriers, but they were kind of the legal mind that influenced Thurgood Marshall and Ruth Bader

01:00:12:06 - 01:00:33:20

Rhodes Perry

Ginsburg on creating the civil rights. Basically the legislation that allows many of us to enjoy the freedoms that we have today, even though we have a long way to go. Pollay was that visionary during a really during a time that they described as Jane Crow and lived through that and still still their vision.

01:00:33:20 - 01:00:42:07

Rhodes Perry

We're still working to bring into reality. So I can't think of a better person to kind of feature during that week than that film and really Latina poly stories.

01:00:43:12 - 01:00:57:07

Brian McComak

That sounds wonderful. Awesome. Well, we will be sure to share that with our community as well and encourage them to join you in July. So, yeah, so thank you again and for all of you with us today. Thank you for being with us.

01:00:57:14 - 01:01:01:14

Brian McComak

Happy pride and stay safe and be well.

01:01:02:00 - 01:01:03:02

Rhodes Perry

Yeah. All right. Thanks.

01:01:03:11 - 01:01:04:01

Brian McComak

Thanks, everyone.

01:01:04:16 - 01:01:05:00

Rhodes Perry

Take care.

01:01:05:10 - 01:01:05:21

Brian McComak

Thanks

