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[inaudible]. Welcome to behavioral grooves. My name is Kurt Nelson and I'm Tim Houlihan behavioral grooves brings a behavioral science lens to understanding why we do the things that we do through interesting conversations with our guests.

We have been on this journey for almost two years now and are closing in on 100 episodes, so you know what that means, Tim?

Um, not exactly what does that mean?

It means that we're going to have a celebration and have our hundredth episode extravaganza that okay. Okay. Yeah, so that is coming up on the 17th of October in 2019 and we're going to be hosting our 100th episode at the Pennsylvania Academy for the performing arts doors open at 6:00 PM show starts at seven doors open at six and you are not going to want to miss this. We are bringing back one of our favorites, Annie Duke and another one of our favorites. Michael Hall's worth a, they're going to be on stage together and asking a, we'll be asking them questions on decision making and the application of behavioral science to real world problems.

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We're also going to be having the very funny and very insightful Jeff Kreisler on stage. I can't even say it without laughing cause he, cause he makes me crack up and you never really know what's going to happen with Jeff, but it's always good. Always gonna be good. It's always good. Yes. Yeah. Oh also, so tickets are on sale now. They are going fast. So if you are within an hour's drive or a train trip to Philly, there's really no excuse for you not to be there of course. But if you're not that close to Philly, we're also going to be live streaming this with the help of one of our sponsors. Uh, and our pod service host, pod bean, uh, they provide the background of behavioral grooves getting hurt out in the world and now they are bringing a new live stream service to the market and we're going to be one of the first podcasts to actually use this new service.

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It's going to be really cool and the event is going to be super fun. We also want to thank people science who was one of our sponsors for this great live event that's going to be happening. They bring some of the best research and insights on applying behavioral science to work. So make sure you check them out. Okay, let's talk about our episode today with professor Brad. Shuck. Good idea. Brad is an associate professor in the department of educational leadership evaluation and organizational development at the university of Louisville or Louisville, Louisville, Louis, Louis Ville. No, I think it was Louisville. Right? Thanks. That's how they say it. He is also recognized as one of the world's most knowledgeable experts on employee engagement and is a sought after speaker from around the world. Breads work on engagement and leadership as well as employee health and wellbeing are really at the cutting edge of the field right now. We are so lucky to have been able to talk to him about all these things in this episode plus a whole lot more. We even got to talk to him about stinky leaders. Yes we did.

- [00:03:00](#) And by the way, Tim, did you shower this morning and spelling? Um, I'll never tell because this is a podcast and our listeners will never know. So with that, take a moment to relax, open your mind up and listen to our very engaging conversation with dr Brad shuck.
- [00:03:23](#) [inaudible]
- [00:03:26](#) Alrighty, Brad shuck, welcome to the behavioral groups podcast.
- [00:03:31](#) Thank you so much for having me. How awesome.
- [00:03:34](#) We are excited to have you here and it's going to be a great session and we're going to start it off with a speed round. And as a listener of this, I, I'm, I'm afraid that you're already gonna know the answers cause we, we, we, we tend to stick with the same speed round questions. Well, let's just, let's just totally make up something new and just twist him up. All right. Hot dog or hamburger.
- [00:03:56](#) Oh, hamburger all the way up the mountain or down the mountain. Ooh, I like going up the mountain.
- [00:04:02](#) All right. Uh, Coke or Pepsi, Coca-Cola, man. A true southerner can talk to me a drink. Hey, come Pepsi's out of Texas and maybe I'm wrong there. I don't know. Um, okay. Which is better at engaging employees, the carrot or the stick?
- [00:04:28](#) Oh, the carrot man, all the way. 100%.
- [00:04:31](#) Yeah. Okay. So why, why, why isn't cared better? Shouldn't you just have some good damn rules and just, you know, just let people know what the hell they got to get done and just go do it. And here's the punishment if you don't, and you're lucky to have a job.
- [00:04:45](#) And so I think that is the problem with the state of engagement right now is that we have policy and procedure stuff to death for decades. And what we really need to do is help people find meaning and build them up in a way that drives that meaning. And that is a carrot, my friend, that is a care.
- [00:05:04](#) So talk more about finding meaning. What, what w w find meaning in what?
- [00:05:08](#) Yeah, I think so. I think it's about finding like meaningful work. So we reached back into the research. Khan wrote this article has got named William Conn works at Boston university, wrote this article around the psychological conditions of meaning or engagement at work and meaningful work was one of the conditions that came out of that. Uh, that research. And we have tested over and over and over again and our research and the idea that someone says, I find meaning in my work drives engagement every time.

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So, so what is meaningful work for people? Is it, is it all over the board? Is, are there some common factors that we can go, Oh, if you do these three things, we're going to find meaning where, where is that research going?

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So I think sometimes it's in the messaging. It's only the messages that we get from our leaders. It's in the messages we get from coworkers. It's the recognition that we get in our work, that there's some kind of connection to an end goal or an end product. I'm not just making these these boxes to be making these boxes, but they're there. They're going out for a reason. There's something connected to this that's, that's got joy. Now here's a word, here's some words we don't use. NHS very often. Love, joy, compassion, dignity, those. Know tho, those kinds of things. Drive meaning those kinds of things. Drive meaning

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well, but there, those are hard to create rules around, right? I mean, it's easy to create rules around policies and procedures, and if you just do this the right way, then everything's going to be fine and you'll be, you'll be a productive worker, right?

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Yeah, that's right. And we, we just have some new research out in human resource development quarterly that talks specifically to that, that it's far easier to live in a world that's policy and procedure and, and managed and rigorous than it is to live in a place of dignity, authenticity, presence, accountability and empathy. It's, I can spend less time thinking about people if I'm distracted, dishonest, disingenuous use humiliation as my leadership style. That's way easier for me than it is to treat people with dignity way easy. Right.

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Wow. I'm not getting a lot of hope in that story, man. I mean, this one idea of if it's going to be easier for me to be a complete asshole, that is not what we want. Right? Tim, it's always easier for you to be a complete asshole, but we won't go there. But that's just me.

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So here's what I'd say to that, I think, I think you're right. I think it is, it is easier, but the cost of that is far greater. The cost of turnover, lower productivity, uh, lower levels of creativity. Health goes in the toilet. I mean, people begin to have these really negative experiences of work. But when we live above that line and we take a little bit of time to treat people to, to meet people where they are, to, well, if I have to hold an employee accountable, that work, I like, I get that it's part of my job as a, as a leader. But I can do that with a place of dignity as well. So it's not accountability, it's about holding someone accountable with dignity and being an empathetic in the moment. Like, yeah, this is, this is tough. This is tough things to get and how do I do that?

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So, so this is tough, right? And as we're talking, you talking about all the things that, that make this difficult. So, so what can a manager, what can a leader in an organization do to help be that, that positive, you know, empathetic, you know, person who is going to, you know, engage his or her team and not be that, that

asshole like Tim here, you know, and just use humiliation asking. He's like, they want to stop acting like me is that they want to stop being a stinky leader, Brad,

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they want to S that's right. Well, I think so. I think the, one of the challenges that we have in the workforce today in organizations is people are at capacity. I mean, who's got, who's got this space to be present in the moment all the time. I mean, I listen, I don't even have, if I'm being really honest with you about this and my wife listens to this and she probably will, um, sh I don't know that I have the presence of mind could be those things when I'm at home. And I love those people. I've been married to my wife, this, we're in our 18th year now. We have an eight year old little girl at home. I'm not even sure. Thank you very much. I don't even know that I can do that stuff at home all the time. So the first thing I think we have to do is we have to tackle this issue of overcapacity at work. And the second thing we have to do is, is introduced this idea of a, of grace and, and that self-compassion that comes along with that as well as compassion for other people. Sometimes one of the most difficult things we do is to give ourselves the compassion that we need to step away and heal, uh, and give ourselves a little bit of grace. Like, I messed that up today, but that doesn't define me as a human being. I can be, I can be better next time. And I will.

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We talked to Steve Sizzler a few episodes ago and he was talking about the importance of being willing to accept the compliment that when, when you've made your best lasagna and you put it in front of someone and you say, what do you think? And they say, this is delicious. I'll just love it. And then if you come back and say, wow, I don't know, there could have been more meat in the sauce. That's right. I think we do that all the time. I know I do that, but, but can I, doing it at work I think would be really hard because, uh, the work environments tend to be more about success, success, success, and not so much about, well, this wasn't an optimal, uh, engagement on the, on this project.

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So I think one of the things that I would want to want to make like upfront is that this isn't about like soft stuff. So this isn't about like squishy rainbows and unicorns and, and everybody just kinda hug everybody. But the science behind this is, is actually quite real and, and quite compelling. So I agree. I, I think maybe we want to reframe some things, uh, about work and what success looks like. When I work with leaders, I'll often say it's not about what work gets done, it's about how that work gets done. And if we, if we can think just as much about how it gets done, as about what gets done and what gets counted, we might fundamentally shift the way people experience work across organizations.

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So talk a little bit about that research. You, you, you know, you're saying that this is, this is some quantitative stuff, so help help our listeners understand what does the, the, the research actually say about this kind of compassion and, and the way that you're, you're looking at this?

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Yeah. So the compassion stuff is brand new and we are super stoked about it. Um, it is, it is about how people live into this space of work. So what we're finding is that leaders are being asked to show up differently at work, but we

don't know what that means. So what are the new skills and how are people, how are people interacting with their places of work and experiencing their work? And compassion is a way in which we have conceptualized that idea. The research says this, that the three liter behaviors that drive things like engagement, turnover and performance are a dignity, accountability, and empathy. But in that model are three other behaviors around presence and authenticity and just connecting to this idea of being very human centered.

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You know, I'm Brad, I'm thinking back to early days that we met many, many years ago and you talked about what it was like being a manager yourself. I mean, you, you, you didn't come to academia right out of college. You, you actually took some time off to work in the real world as they say. Um, how much of those experiences inform your, the research that you're working on now?

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It is the narrative of my research is the reason that I did it, you know, and those experiences, the, the really tough experiences for me defined why I wanted to know more about this idea of engagement. How do I, how do I create places of work that help people live their best life versus suck the soul from them? And I had the walk away from leadership. Um, and not a lot of people know this story, but I was in some really unhealthy spaces with leaders who supervised me. And I had, I didn't, when I walked away from that, I had to heal. And it took me about two years before I would even consider a another leadership position supervising anybody because I was not in a good space at that time. I was, I was very discounting. I thought that I had some issues and problems, which is where our stinky and dysfunctional leadership research was kind of born out of,

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you know, I don't, I don't want you to feel like you need to throw anybody under the bus. I'm not interested in that. But for our listeners, could you elaborate just a little bit on what, what that environment was like?

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Yeah. So I, I had a, I had a supervisor, uh, who was my direct leader, um, threatened to hit somebody in a, in a meeting, I mean, raised their hand and was going to act absolutely, uh, come across their face in a meeting like, yeah. And you think about that and you're like, does that really happen in places? And the truth of the matter is, I've heard from countless people across the country that, that those things happen, um, continuously, psychologically demoralized, a discounted, taking credit for ideas that weren't, there's withholding information, ignoring people selectively to punish them. And, and I was in a mid manager position at the time and so my job was to keep the crop from rolling downhill. So I, I, I tried my best to stop that so that the people that work with me didn't have to endure that. And the sad part about that is they felt his effects anyway.

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Yeah, that's, that's a hard, it's really hard to be the dam when, when the water is coming so hard, right. I mean, you just can't stop it.

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You can, it was kind of like a fire hose. And, um, and the day that I submitted my resignation letter, uh, and I, right after he went to smack a female colleague of mine across the face and we stopped the meeting before anything got really physical. Um, uh, he got very angry with me, stop talking. And then on my very last day of work called out sick on that day and he, that was his, that was his habit when people would leave because they weren't leaving the company, they were, they were leaving him and they were disowning. There was, uh, a psychological thing that was going on there where he felt like he was being disavowed, if you will. It took a long time to heal from that.

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Yeah. It's surprising because I, I've been very lucky to, you know, in all of my work situations or most of my work situations work in a very positive, really, you know, enriching, engaging, you know, work environment. And so you even your company now, well outside of working with you, you know, and my, my, my boss now's an asshole. But you know, that's, that's me. Yeah. I can help you with that. Yeah, I know there's, there's a bigger issue there. We won't, we, you know, we, we, we won't go there, but it's, I, I do not find it surprising that there are organizations out there that have this and I have run across them. I've, I haven't had the to be part of them but, but I've run across in the consulting work that we do that you, you realize this, that you realize that there are managers and maybe not so much to the physical component that you're talking about, but a lot of those mental games that people play and that power, you know, I'm, I need to make sure I maintain power. In order to do that, you need to be pushed down and all those different fastest. And so it is there, in your opinion, is there a way, if I'm a CEO or a big leader, you know, but that, that manager who might be doing that is, is a really good, you know, high performing manager that their business unit is doing great. You know, is it better to get rid of that person or just, you know, where the consequences of of the negative V

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well, so here's how I would respond to that. Uh, I think that if you keep that person, you are putting employees at, at re at health risk. Um, and so you have to be able to, if I'm that leader, I've gotta be able to go home at night and say this person's performance is so good that I'm willing to ruin other people's lives because this guy or this gal can re records 20% performance, uh, revenue over the last quarter. And for me, I, I'm call bull crap on that. And the other thing I'm going to say about that is that those power bases are a myth. They go away the very first time somebody sees a chink in that armor, they will yank that armor off as fast as they possibly can and throw that person under the bus.

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Yeah. So help us understand, cause I know you're doing some research on the, on the health effects of, of this now. And so as you're talking about the, you know, can you sleep at night because not only are you, you know, making these people miserable, but you're actually impacting their health in their life, you know, going forward. Help us understand some of that research and what you're doing.

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Yeah. So some of your listeners might be familiar with this idea called social determinants of health and social determinants of health are these large scale

social factors that impact people's health. So for example, the geographical area of the city that I live in may not have access to certain things like a food or adequate doctors and things like that. As a result of that, I'm at higher risk for developing heart, heart disease or different risk factors. So we began to wonder, based in grounded in this very research around stinky leaders, um, do these people impact people's health over the long term? So,

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so I'm going to, I'm going to stop you here. Stinky leaders, cause Tim said it and now you said it and I'm pretty sure our listeners are going, what does the smell of my leader have to do with, with, with all the, so I don't think that's what you mean. So help explain what a stinky leader is,

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although they might be physically smelly. Also, uh, what we're, what we're talking about is like, we might use the analogy of a skunk, and this is kind of where this term came from, is if I, I have a dog at home, if my dog gets skunked that that smell stays for a little while and without intentional work, um, that smell will stay for a very long time. And the same thing happens with people that work where that leader professionally skunks a group of employees or a team of employees, and without intentional healing and intentional work that this function that occurred on that team is likely to stay with those people over the long term. So it impacts their decision making. 10 years down the road, if I ask you to think about that person, your blood pressure rises, you get a little hot under the collar. So that's why we say stinky is just like this. A skunk would Skoken animal leaders can professionally skunk employees. Wow.

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That's, that's fascinating. Scary, but, but fascinating. So go on stinky leaders or that you're working on that was leading to this health outcome component. Permanence of health. Yeah.

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Yeah. So how about I'm, so we wonder like, okay, do these people, uh, impact someone's health risk factors later in life. So as a result of this really dysfunctional experiences, are there things that happen to me and in my body, in my health that account for, uh, for some of those experiences and the reasons why. So we asked people about their sleep. So, um, do, do these things happen to you at work? And, uh, how annoying, how traumatic are they? We have this, we call it a stinky taxonomy. It's a super academic term.

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Oh wow. That's, I'm going to have to look that one up.

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Yeah. Yeah. Super, super, super academic. And we re we literally like plotted out the behaviors that are the most dramatic and the most annoying and the things that happen most frequently and, and so on. And what we found was that there was a relationship between, uh, those stinky behaviors. So things like ignoring me, uh, withholding information, using your power base in a dysfunctional way to people answering questions like, I don't sleep very well at night at all. In fact, I lay in bed and wake up at night a lot and I and I, I get sick to my stomach on Sunday nights. Um, people told us that they drank more alcohol as a result of those experiences. People told us that they were less likely to go to the gym,

they were more likely to eat fast food. Uh, and those kinds of things are indicators of longterm health risk.

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Now what we've done is we've connected with our medical school here at the university and we are working in a randomized clinical trial that's already ongoing and we're gonna plug and play in there and ask them about all right. Can you tell us a little bit about your work experience and what we wonder is when we look at people's cortisol levels, are we take cheek swabs or we are, we do a full blood panel on them? Is there any relationship to anything that we can find about experiences of work and these health outcomes? And we call those things work determinants of health. So one thing, go ahead. Go ahead. Well, we think there are these broad based categories of work culture that could help us understand unexplained variants in health outcomes. So social determinants of health for example, can explain about 30 to 35% of the overall variance and health risk.

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That's a tremendous amount of variance explained. The challenge with that is there still 70% that's unexplained and work has become such a central part of people's live. So if work is a central part of my life and my identity and I spent an enormous amount of time thinking about being in my workplace, are there factors of work that are intangible? So Alicia, with my leader relationship, my coworker, what's my culture like here? Do I feel like my job is meaningful, my work is meaningful? Do I feel psychologically safe? Do I feel physically safe? Dude, those things have an impact on things like hypertension and heart disease.

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You're kind of taking the, uh, the old Gallup question, uh, from the Q 12 about, I have a friend at work really in putting that on steroids. It is what it sounds like. You're really blowing that up and going deeper into what what it really means to be in the social environment at work. Right?

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Yes. That I, I, I think that's a really good way to think about this. This is about the employee experience and its connection to things like engagement, recognition, value propositions, and and using behavioral economics as a way to explain some of this.

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It's surprising to me that they're, that obviously this is, this is research that hasn't been done before, but when you talk about it, it, it becomes really apparent as you said, work is the central component of our lives. We spend, you know, the vast majority of our waking day at work and doing work and particularly now, even when you come home from work, you're still doing work cause you have your phone with you and you have your answering emails until all hours of the night, et cetera. And all of those factors that they haven't looked at this connection between health and that, that component of, of, of work. I know there's probably been other work studies with health, but that's probably job related as opposed to managers, societal and kind of relationship related.

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Yeah. So we are really trying to look at that broad base factors of work culture that we can explain and then connect to these, to these health outcomes. And what we're really excited about is that this, um, these, this data is going to be collected at different times. And so there's going to be this, this time wave a parameter to it. And then we're going to be actually looking at, um, at blood data, uh, at cortisol levels at, at, at stress. Um, one of the things that we, we met with a, uh, a student here at the university who's doing neuroscience research and looking at brain scans and the work that he's doing. Uh, they've already got brain scans. We can, we can go back and ask some questions and look at, all right, how does this stuff impact our, our neuro-pathways and create pathways that weren't there before that are now stuck in dysfunction.

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Wow. Cool stuff is really cool. So what's what you're gathering the data, you don't have, you haven't done a complete analysis, but Brad, what are your intuitions on this? What are your, what are your guesses about where you think this is headed?

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So, um, to take a more, maybe a more positive spin on this, here's what I think. I think there's going to be a real business case, a real return here on developing cultures of engagement, uh, and, and looking at building places where people flourish, where there is words like a joy and happiness. I, I'll tell if I can, one quick story. I was in India a couple of months ago and um, I was doing a, uh, Sherm workshop and there I was, there were 30 people in the room, they were all executive level. And I asked the question as a teaser to get us started. W why do you come to work in the morning? And I, you know, we expected this normal answers. I get paid, I got a, I got bills, I got kids. It's funny how that they go to work in India for the same reasons that many people in the United States to work.

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And they're human. They're human. Absolutely. Uh, and this, um, this lady still stood up in the back and she said, um, I come to work because I feel like I'm loved. And that shifted everything in the conversation. And to this day, man, like I can tell you where I was standing in the room, what other, and there was an audible gasp. Like, I never thought about that. And when, and when we get to go to that space, when you asked me about meaningful work, man, that's really meaningful work. When I'm coming to work and I'm with people that I know care about me, they have my back, they're willing to help me out, go the extra mile for me and that I'm willing to do the same thing. Man. That's, that's love. And that's joy and those things, those things drive in tangible outcomes that I don't even know we can measure yet.

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It's, it's interesting how you talk about that because to a certain degree it does seem fluff. Right? I mean, if I, if I'm just listening to this and hearing, Oh, you're just talk about love and joy and different pieces. It's like you said, unicorns and rainbows, right? But, but there's a, there's a tangible component within that. And culture is one of those aspects that I think inside organizations that it becomes this, this kind of a, the sea that we're swimming in and we don't even notice it, right? And, and all of a sudden we don't, uh, we don't even realize how

that's impacting what we're doing on an a day in and day out basis. And so those are the factors that if we pay attention to them and purposefully focus on making those positive. And to your point, you know, having that joy, having that love as part of it. And yeah, those words might not seem like they resonate within a corporate business setting, but there's some reality there. There's some, there's some actual elements of how people process the information and how they work together. And as you said, there's that gasp in the room and now you've switched that conversation. How do we get people to purposely focus on that and how do we get people to move in that direction? You have any, any words of wisdom for us? We're, we're searching here.

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Yeah. I, you know, one of the things is to switch the way in which we talk about work. You know, it, the value proposition of work has changed. Um, and it has, it has shifted over the past two decades where there was once a very transactional value proposition. So I get this and you give me that. And I think now what people are, are very, because what's being asked of them has changed, right? It is, you're right. When I go home, I'm checking emails or I'm writing papers or I'm putting together presentations. I teach at the university until nine o'clock at night. I don't get home to see my family and I'm not home til 10 30 or 11 o'clock. The ask for me is different there. Right? And so the value proposition has changed and what I need from my place of work and isn't about being in a place.

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It's about this experience of what it means to be a faculty member at this university. What are the intangible things that I get out of this? How do I feel like I'm valued as a member of the team? One of the most striking things that we found in our research was that the most powerful dysfunctional behavior that leaders exhibit and that coworkers exhibit, and I would also argue community members and spouses exhibit is ignoring somebody. Now that's funny to me. So I would've expected to find like throw stapler at head is the most dysfunctional thing. Somebody steals all of my money. What what people consistently told us was that being ignored was incredibly difficult. It was psychologically damaging. Now why would that be the case? Because when somebody says I'm being ignored, they say, Oh, I see you there Tim, but I don't care. I don't care that I see you.

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I notice you and I'm intentionally ignoring you. It's not that I didn't see, you know, I see you brother, but I don't care about you. And that's, that is brutal brother. That's hurtful, that's really, really hurtful. And I, so I think we have to think about the value proposition of work and how that's shifted over the last couple of decades in particular. Um, the last five to 10 years, I think it's significantly shifted because the ask is different. And I think we have to begin to think about the, again, how would this work gets done, not just work. What work gets done, words like compassion. I don't know that I'm sold on the idea of the word of compassion. It's the word that we used in the paper that we published.

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When we go in the rooms and executive teams, and I use the word compassion, I get the same response that I got when I went in to do my dissertation study when I was at Florida international and I said the word employee engagement. And I got laughed out of the boardroom. And then we'd be like, Oh, who cares? Why would we care about employee engagement? I just want people to show up and do their jobs. And I literally, I literally got laughed out of dozens of, of executive rooms because who would care about that? And now people cannot get enough of it. It is essential to have an engaged workforce. It is essential to focus in that area. And how, how many billions of dollars every year do people spend on employee engagement surveys and interventions when just 10 years ago nobody, nobody cared about it. I think it's going to change.

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So I appreciate that and I think that it's, it's a really compelling story, right? That that, that compassion is going to be there. I want to go back, you talked about the value proposition of work has changed and, and I see that continually changing and I, and one of the things that I've been paying more and more attention to lately is just the automation that's happening inside of work and this, this facet of wow, those, those jobs that used to be there are being automated away. That social group that we used to have, you know, a hundred people in here. Now we have 10 that are doing the same thing on the manufacturing floor. So we don't have that, that communal aspect of what's going on and [inaudible] and different pieces. I don't know if you've done, if any of your research has pointed to some of the components of, of automation and the impact that that's having on, on people and, and this, this realm.

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Well, sometimes I get asked about my opinion on artificial intelligence in the human resource space. So I'm, I'm a professor of human resources and org development at the university of Louisville. And people will say, what do you think about artificial intelligence and HR? And I think it's terrific and it's great, but I think we also have to invest as much in the human side of things as we do into the artificial intelligence side and to the tech side of things. And I don't see people doing that. And that's concerning to me. Um, the other thing that I would say about automation is that we, we faced this in the past with, uh, when we had, um, we built automobile factories, right? So co car factories where these, these are going to take jobs away from hardworking people and, and where are they going to go? They went to new tech related jobs that supported the automation that was occurring. So I think we've seen this before. Um, and we've evolved. What I think is really cool about this is I think it gives us the capacity to now think about the human side of work. And so if things are being automated, that frees up capacity and space in my life to be able to think about the kinds of relationships and social connections that I need at work to be able to get my best work done. Does.

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Yeah. And I think just to that point, at the, at least the part that is being automated first are those routine, uh, components that, that oftentimes we find really mind numbing doll kind of components. And so it offers that opportunity for that work to be more, uh, rewarding from that perspective of, Hey, I am doing something that is actually meaningful, not just the checking box after box

or putting, you know, tickets in, in whatever you know, space that needs me gets back to what Brad was talking about earlier with having meaning. You know, really having meaning that, that, that what my task is connects to some larger, larger perspective, some impact that I'm having on customers or,

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and that's, that's, that's a, that's such an easy thing to do. We did some research in the healthcare space where we looked at a group of, um, called child life therapist or child life specialists. There are, they're very niche group, often found in pediatric facilities where they will come in and they are the social emotional advocate for that child on, on, uh, what's gonna be a really bad day. They've a bad diagnosis. They've got some kind of traumatic issue that has happened in their life and this child life therapist comes beside that child and works directly with that family. Now what's important about that is they're not a member of the medical there. They're not a medical doctor. So they're not a member of the medical team per se. And what we found is that when child life specialists would come across at that particularly traumatic or challenging event that happened in their day, what gave them meaning was connecting with their coworkers, that team of specialists, they came around afterwards and debriefing that event, just talking about it. How did it go? What happened?

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That is, that is very cool. Yeah. And it, right. We are, we are social animals. We need that. We need, we need our tribe, right. To support us. I think that's true. Can I, I want to go back this, and I'm sorry that this is kind of rewinding a bit, but the ignoring people was, you said like the number one issue. Did you, do you mean that it comes up most frequently or that it has the highest, um, valence to it? That it was the highest emotional issue for her?

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It has the most valence to it. So we asked people a series of questions, uh, in this, in the stinky leader research research. And we asked them how often do these, we, first of all, we read everything we could on being a really crappy boss, uh, and cataloged all of those behaviors. And then we asked people about their experiences at work. We said, do you experience any of these things? Does your boss throw things at you? Do they pressure you, use drugs and alcohol? Do they, do they steal your ideas in meetings? Do they pull your chair out from under you? I mean, do they, do you know all of these things? And we ask them two questions. If they said yes, we didn't ask them to related questions, how traumatic is this for you? Is it no big deal to this really bothers me? So how frequently does this actually occur? And we found that it was the most frequently occurring high valence activity that happens to people at work in dysfunctional environments being ignored.

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Well, can you, can you expand on that? Do you happen to remember number two and number three? I'm just, I, I'm, I, I'm, I am personally familiar with this ignoring issue. Uh, and, and I, I've, I've seen this in not unfortunately, not in my own work life, but in [inaudible], you know, people that are close to me. I've seen this happen, but yeah, but can you, could you expand on that list? I, I'm fascinated by it.

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Yeah. I certainly can. So when we w I'm, I'm actually, I'm looking for the, for the research right now. The, ignores my opinion was number one, the S the second was, uh, takes ownership of ideas. The third, the third, the third was breaks, promises. The fourth was withholds information. And the fifth was, makes negative comments about me. And what's amazing to me about those as those are all emotional, psychological experiences that people live in isolation.

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Yeah. And in some ways, it really doesn't have anything to do with the work per se. Nope. No, we did to be ignored, actually. It doesn't, you know, on a purely rational basis, if I were an economist, I would say, so what? Go and do your job. But that's not the impact that it has.

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No, no, it's, we found it to be incredibly damaging at work and the anxiety that comes from that. And in some of our, this work, the terms of policy, we've had to dissect the differences between stress and anxiety stresses this external force that's presented to me. Anxiety is reliving that force internally over and over again. The anxiety that is produced from ignores my opinion is incredible. It's in, in some ways it's almost incalculable because over time think of what this does psychologically. The opposite of that though is feeling connected and being a part of a tribe and being around people that don't do those things. And think of the positive benefits that come from that. The kind of creativity, innovation, collaboration, that swells from feeling like I belong here, I fit here uniquely. That's cool stuff. And I think that's the people at work. I think that's the future.

[00:39:58](#)

I hope it is. I sure as hell hope it is, man. That's it. Well, like you said, the value poppers, that proposition is changing the, the uh, the foundations of work are changing the uh, the quote hope and the question is, are they changing for the good?

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Yeah, yeah.

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I guess that that's kind of the, well, and I think to that point, you know, the focus that companies, as you mentioned earlier, you know, you were laughed out of the room when you talked about engagement, right? So this new conversation that needs to start happening inside organizations, inside organizations at the upper most levels is around this compassion around the culture that is going to be an enlivening for people as opposed to deadening. And how do we as an organization come in and make that culture and work with that and make, be purposeful about creating that and holding people to your side. You talked about that accountability earlier, holding people accountable to saying this is who we are and, and that's what we do. And I think that's where culture comes in because then you get the normative component and you know, the social pressure to say, Oh well I'm not acting in the way that, that everybody else. And you get then ostracized when you're doing the, the negative components of that. So

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yeah. Yeah. And to not kill the meaning. I think work oftentimes inherently has meaning. I think our job is to not kill that meaning. How do we as a leader, how

do I not kill the meaning that is in what my employees are already, they already love to be here. This is a cool company. This is a great place to work. How do I not kill that?

[00:41:41](#)

Yeah. Yeah. Well, and as, as you said earlier, there are health risks associated with, with the bad leadership, with these stinky bosses, there are health risks. Um, okay, now it is time in our conversation to get to talk about music. Yes.

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I love it. I love it.

[00:42:02](#)

Unfortunately red, you know, we've known each other long enough to know that, um, that when I teed that up, I was anticipating a positive response and I got it. And hurt his Kirk and just sit there and go, Oh well I can ignore both of you at this way. Right. Is that I see you and I can just ignore it. No, I can't ignore you. This is part of, as we've said, I actually enjoy this part. I give you grief about this, but I do enjoy it. So music, so you're, you're a drummer, you are an active drummer. You don't just like sit in your basement and beat the skins. You are out actually, uh, you know, plan on a regular basis.

[00:42:41](#)

Yeah. So I play a oftentimes once or twice a month, um, I'm, I'm pretty active and that man music is, music is like breathing for me and playing the drums is it almost then we talked about automation earlier. There's almost like an automatic thing. Like I can't stop playing drums ever. I'm beating the steering wheel. I'm beating my legs sometimes. Sometimes my wife loves to put her hand on my hands and be like, you're going to have to be still for a minute.

[00:43:11](#)

Oh,

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so, so what are you listening to these days? What, what's, what's on your playlist?

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Yeah. So I, I love, uh, contemporary and modern folk music. It's my, it's my favorite genre. Um, but I listened to a lot. I was schooled in classical and jazz, uh, as a, as a young guy, uh, yeah. In high school and did some work in the, in college. And, um, but I have gravitated to, um, folk music and I love the instrumentation and the intricacies and the way that people play off of each other and create this pocket that people kind of live into as a musician.

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Cool. Yeah, so, so you're talking about, uh, you know, a small, small band, small minstrel show kind of gatherings, like, like banjo, guitar, mandolin, fiddle, kinda kind of set up like that. Right.

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I'm a sucker for banjo. I'm a sucker for the mandolin. I love to see at worked in, um, with modern instruments as you know, uh, you know, like a caught on a big stage with drums and bass and lead guitars and, and how all that meshes together. Um, but yeah, I, I absolutely love, um, those kinds of intimate sessions and my daughter does too. My daughter absolutely loves to go listen to a lot of

bluegrass music for example. And who would've thought an eight year old would love to do that, right?

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Yeah. That's a head scratcher. But you know what, that, that absolutely happened. Uh, so you, you and I've, you know, I've, I've seen you play, I know you've got the chops, so you must come from a rich jazz heritage because you've got the chops to be able to handle, uh, jazz licks and you know, you know how to swing that, that's for sure.

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I appreciate you saying that. You know, my, my dad when I was growing up, growing up as a kid allowed me to get a drum set when I was about 12 years old. And so

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a risky proposition for a parent.

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It was, and it was really loud and they suffered through years and years of me banging around on drums and a man, I would practice two or three hours a day and I don't get to do that now, but the, um, those things, it's like riding a bike. Like you get on and you got to knock the rust off a little bit, but if you can knock that rust off and you can get in the groove, it's a special place to be. It really is. Yeah.

[00:45:28](#)

So what is it about the drums? I mean, obviously to practice two or three hours a day on drums as that age. My, my 13 year old, I can't get them to, to practice 10 minutes on the piano every day. God, it's like pulling teeth. So what, what was it that was so compelling? What is it for you about the drums?

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Well, so you need to know that I, I have a pretty rebel personality, so if somebody tells me to do something, I'm probably not going to do it. Uh, it's very likely I'm going to do the total opposite of that thing. So I took drum lessons for about, I don't know, a couple of months and I just didn't, I couldn't stand it. So what I did was I would put on headphones, uh, and connect them to my stereo, which at that time had a cassette, uh, and place to put your CDs. And, um, I listened to Elvis, I learned how to play the drums listening to Elvis. In fact, the first paid gig I ever did was a two hour set of nothing but Elvis Presley music, uh, for a group of executives and finance. And it was crazy. And that I was this like 15 year old kid in this band with these professional musicians on Elvis. It was wild. It was crazy.

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I've, I've got those. I've got those same memories. I love that. Um, what, uh, so I, I think that that is kind of the magic of music. There is something that is deeply compelling about it. Um, let's talk about, about artists specifically though. Can you, can you share some of the, the, uh, when you talk about contemporary folk or, or jazz or classical, are there some artists that composers over the years, uh, that are going on right now that, that are just like, wow, really inspiring or kind of engage you in a way that, that they, that others haven't?

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There's gonna, there's this band called Elian named roar, which is, uh, out out of Kentucky, uh, and their music is, you can find them on Amazon or Spotify. I really liked their sound. Um, I love that they're local here and I know the lead singer personally, he's a, he's just a good human. So I'm attracted to the work. Um, we had them come and do a, an event for us and man, they just blew I, it was, it was two guitars and a little percussion and they blew the roof off the place. It was incredible. I like the Mumford and stone. I like their, I like their style and their approach. My, one of my favorite bands is for King and country. Um, they are a contemporary Christian band, but their drummer is ridiculous. And his left hand is crazy. What I love about it is they play things like the accordion, they play, uh, like melodic chimes in there and their shows and the, the drummer wears a huge top hat and he's just bouncing all over the state. He's like a wild man. It's crazy. And I, I tried to do that when I play.

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I was going to say, it sounds like your hero. Yeah.

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Yeah, totally. I've never met, I've never met it. I'd love to meet him sometime, but he, um, I've watched him play a couple of different times and his, uh, his attention to rhythm, his attention to the packet, his attention to presence, like in the song, it's just pretty incredible. Well, are there any, uh, jazz or classical composers or performers that, that were particularly inspiring to you? You know, I wish I get off, I get asked that question a lot and I wish I could name, I wish I could name one or two and I, and I can, I, I, um, I grew up listening to whatever was on the radio and whatever, whatever I could get my hands on. And, and I just, I, you know, I could say John Coltrane, but I've listened to his music for years and years and years. I even things like, um, like rod Stewart and Kenny G, like I, I've listened to some of that stuff in my younger years because that's what I had access to.

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You didn't have to say Kenny G you didn't have to say Kenny G I'm just saying, I said Kenny G yeah. You didn't have to though.

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Someone, someone listening right now probably just threw up a little bit. Okay.

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Not a problem. I'm sorry. I'm sorry, but nothing wrong with Kenny G. I wouldn't listen to it now. No. And I'm, I'm, yeah, I'm being very judgmental about that. But,

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so Brad, we, we, we don't always do this, but I think with you, it might be particularly, uh, relevant. So if there were, we have listeners out there that are in, in leadership positions and various different things. Are there, are there two or three kind of key things that you could leave our listeners with saying, Hey, these are the things that I think if you can think about or do that are going to really propel you to that next level? Is there, you know?

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Yeah. Yeah. So three things I would say is I would encourage the leaders out there to spend time thinking about the moments that really matter at work and

to elevate those moments as much as they can. Um, whether that's somebody's first day, whether that's they, they need to be recognized and they get to be recognized that live into a space and people to live into that space. The second thing is, is, is to not compare. So I find that comparison steals joy and when, and I would, I would hope that I lead in a place where I have pure joy for somebody when something great happens to them and not judgment of, well, I wish I could have done that, or I could do better than that, but really live into a place of joy for them. And the third thing, and this is really easy, is to go out of your way to treat people with dignity, to say hello to people in the hallway, to connect with people on a tough day, to find opportunities for recognition and to lend a hand to send this band ad. I do this, am I in my life now? Five extra minutes at the end of the day to send two or three emails to people who I just want to say thank you to and they don't expect it and they don't need it, but man, is it really good to get a note from somebody that says, Hey, I saw you at the meeting today and you crushed it. Man. I just want to tell you how much I appreciate you. Then that's it. Those are the three things I would say.

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Wow. Those are great. Thank you. Thank you for that wisdom, Ren. Thank you. Brad is great meeting you. Yeah, thanks. Appreciate this. Thanks for having them.

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[inaudible] welcome to our grooming session where Tim and I groove on what we learned from our behavior groups interview, have a free flowing discussion. On some of those topics and whatever else comes into our stinky, ignored my, wait. Whoa, wait. Why? Why us? How couldn't it be? The stinky boss ignored mine's, Oh yes. Our, our, our slinky bosses. It's our, our minds, right? So we're thinking about the [inaudible]. Oh, okay. So we're thinking about, we're not stinky books. I hope we're not stinky Boston. I don't want to be East in people eyes.

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We are, I think we are good bosses in general. I know that I made some mistakes. We all make mistakes. All right. Okay. There's enough meat in the sauce, right? There is definitely enough meat in the sauce with us. All right, so go for it. What, what, what are the things that you want to groove on here about Brad? Let's start with work needs. Meaning, Oh my God. Right. What a great topic. What, what, or what a great topic. And, and with that, I just want to say that Brad is taking, I'm not a revolutionary approach, but he's really amping up the game around employee engagement. Yes. The research that he's doing and the approach that he's taking to, um, to sort of evangelize this message I think is terrific. I just, I just think it's, it's absolutely phenomenal and I just want to applaud him for, for all the work that he's doing well. And to a certain degree it seems like it's common sense, right? Work should have meaning yet I think there is a large component of not just us population. I think the world population where work is a means to an end. That this is what I do to get paid so that I can go and have a life outside of it and I trudge through

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whatever it is that I am doing here to, to fund and pay for the rest of my world. Well, the employers are no different. There's still the Frederick Taylor's out

there that are just like, just get in there and do the damn job. Yes. You know, we're just asking you to stand in this line and do this for the next eight hours with, with two breaks and a lunch and that's it. And just go do that. So there are still employers out there that are not helping the game. I think that there's still some that are caught in the 19th century in terms of their perspectives. So yeah. And, and, and how much can we garner you to do what X faster, uh, Y faster, which if we take Brad's research and we take the information that we're talking about, the, the component of this that I think is really, maybe we didn't think about this or talk about this as much is when people find meaning in their work, I think the work actually gets better, their work output becomes more productive.

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Particularly if we think of more of the knowledge worker type components within there even, you know, to some of the more manual elements. I think there is aspects of that that have shown, you know, different things. I tell the story of my father in law who, you know, out of actually before college, he, after high school he went and he worked in a, you know, Southern California working in a, uh, manufacturing company making phones. And he was working really fast day number one. Cause he's just putting these components together in different things. And the guys came up to him and told him, Hey buddy, you got to slow down. Wow, you are working too fast. You've got to fit within the social norms is not how we do things here. Because if you do up there, then we all have to do up there. And that does not, don't, don't push the envelope there.

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Yeah. Well a Dan Ariely's work on the Ikea effect included a bunch of really cool studies. Right. Um, one of one, one of which I know you like to talk about the, the LIGO, uh, building study were going up and, and basically having a group of people, group of college students write a great these Lego creations and then you bring it up and you got paid for each one as you were doing it. And in one instance they took the Legos and they put it back on a shelf back behind knowing that in the end those Legos were going to get, you know, taken apart [inaudible] used. Right? Yeah. But in the other, uh, experiment, they basically started taking the Lego pieces apart right in front of the person and putting them back into, you know, the box that went out to the next one. And the result of that is that the ones where they put the Legos back up on the shelf made more. They, they were, they performed better. Right. Because their work wasn't destroyed in

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front of their faces. There was some semblance of meaning within that. Even if they know at some point that work is going to be destroyed. Various different things. And I bring that back also to the progress principle. You know, by, I'm Theresa, I'm a Lei. Right. Um, I think I pronounced Theresa marbly. Yeah. Thank you. The work that that she showed is that, Hey, making progress, uh, having that eye, that feeling that you're contributing is a significant motivator. Yeah. And when, when a a rally, uh, tested this idea of a, what would it be like? We had a bunch of people study something and then write up a paper and some recommendations and turn it over to a committee for evaluation when the, in

the, in the condition where the committee said, thanks very much, this is really interesting. We're gonna give it some consideration.

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We liked your points, but we're not sure what we're gonna do. That was a very different reaction than when, uh, the committee simply accepted the paper with the recommendations, didn't look at the results and just toss it aside and said thanks. And people just got depressed. They just felt like their work was less meaningful and they weren't interested in doing any more. They were less interested in engaging in another round of these assessments and recommendations because they're like, no one's gonna look at it. It's totally, it's completely irrational. It's totally emotional. But this is part of the social construct and the reciprocity that is all woven into the tribe that we call work. And if, and if we start to abuse that w if we, if we discount the meaning that the work has, we're going to alienate our workers. Well. And I loved how Brad brought in these, these words that we don't normally associate with work. Joy.

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Yeah. Love, dignity. Uh,

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I can't even remember. Compassion. Yes, yes. Those words are important. So if I'm a leader out there and an organization, how do I actually bring meaning into the company? How do I get my employees to find meaning and to live these concepts? Right? This component where the, he talked about the woman who said, I, I, you know, I love the people I work with. And that changed this conversation. Well, how do you, how do you design what that job is or how you interact with your team in order to elicit those emotions? And I think it's not readily apparent that if I do X and Y, it's going to get me Z. It's not a straight line. And it sure as hell isn't going to be a stick. You're not going to scare people into, if you don't do this, you're going to get fired. If you don't love your job, you're going to be, this is horrible and you're going to get a demotion. That's not going to work. Find joy here now or I'm going to you make

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you work extra time. When my kids were little, I was buying toys for the holidays at a, at target store and, and at the checkout stand the, the cashier simply said, Hey, do you have all the batteries that you need? I'm like, I think I do. And then she kind of helped me check there and she said, it looks like you're missing something. And she reached under her, uh, her, her counter and pulled out the ones that I needed. I was like, wow, are you getting an incentive for this? And she said, no, I just want to make sure that the customers are happy because if, if they're, if you're happy, you might like the store better. Well, because you know that if you go home and it's Christmas or whatever the gift and you don't have the batteries, your kids are going to be a bad dad. Yeah. And you don't want that. You don't want that. So that wasn't an incentive. There was no incentive. There was, there was a culture of we care about, you know, the that was created where the employees felt like we care about how the customers experience our store.

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So I think if I'm a leader in an organization, I think one of the big things is how do you communicate? How do you communicate out that vision for the

company? How do you communicate out its mission? Even what that vision and mission is. And, and I know that some people that are listening to this, they aren't at a CEO or that presidential level. And so they may not have control over that, but you can always do that with your own team. What does this team stand for? I remember working one time, um, when I was, you know, just freshly out of MBA and I worked for BI, uh, and we had a new leader come in, Steve Geiger, who said, Hey, we are, you know, we're going to be the little rebels within here and we're going to be doing things differently. And we set our own kind of vision for what we were.

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And it's for that division for, for the little group that we were and, and, and it brought meaning because it was now it was, you know, what we're doing has a purpose and, and we're, we're going to be leading the, so I think you can do that. And I think the, the big thing is, is that, you know, when you talk about, Hey, what are the goals for the organization? And if they're only financial goals, those are not going to be as meaningful for most employees as it is about what you're doing for the customer, for the world, for the environment, for, uh, you know, whatever that mission is that relates back to a human component.

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What do you say? We break down that, that idea of communicating more specifically. So in, in your case, let's talk about the media and the way that it gets communicated. So in, in your case, your example is that the leader brought this to the team in, in like a team meeting it sounds like. Right. And there was some discussion around it, maybe, maybe even some brainstorming or uh, you know, some on what that's going to be and how you're going to execute that. Right. So, so that's, that's a way of, of getting that communication out. Uh, another way might just be memos and posters and, uh, environmental kinds of [inaudible].

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Right, right. Well and think about, think about the, the, the types of words we've talked about framing a ton, right? Yeah. How do you frame that message? Do you frame that message first from this perspective of collaboration perspective of focus on the, uh, human element or do you frame that issue as we have, you know, we, we need to grow 30% and we're only at 24%. Dammit. We gotta get that extra 6%

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or, or your work in the call center is only worthwhile, uh, if you, if you close, you know, \$587

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worth of deals today. Exactly. So thinking about how you structure those messages going out, those messages can also be framed specifically around the job categories, right? Cause each job category is going to be different. I think that's, I think that's perfectly reasonable. I think to your point you talked about environmentally, right? Again, we talk about priming a lot here. It's cause it works because it works. I remember the the story where if you had pictures of your customers up on a wall, uh, in a creative ad agency, they actually looked at the output and they felt found that that output was more creative. Right? Um, somewhere on that, don't quote me on which exactly study that was cause my

Buba mind doesn't go that way. So, but with that, those, those frames, those things, the having the picture of the woman going through the finish line as the watermark, as the watermark in the call center, those are underlying components that send messages to us as employees about what this work is, what it stands for, how we, how we work together. And I think the collaboration part for that, Brad talked about that team aspect of having people on your team that you respect and love to a certain degree is really key to them.

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I think it also has to do with the consistency of messaging across the organization, right? If you've got, um, if you've got a, let's say a team leader at the call center that is saying, look, we got to love our customers. It really matters how we take care of our customers. And, and then her boss, uh, walks in one day and says, I don't care about loving our customers. We've got to get our numbers up. Yeah, well, boom, you've just destroyed whatever messaging you know, the, the, the team leader was doing. And that inconsistency, uh, really undermines well. Or actually maybe it's not so much undermining as much as it's creating the culture. It just says, well, it looks like we don't really have to love our customers. Right? And I think,

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so I've done some work with, with clients bringing in four drive model into, into organizations. And one of the things that I've done is we've done these four drive workshops with managers and we work with senior leadership first to get them aligned around what this looks like and what it means. But I think also with those managers, what the four drive workshop does is a little bit of what Brad is trying to do here. Now granted you remit the four drive has this, you know there's the choir and achieve

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potent, which kind of is money

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but it's also a recognition and various different things. There's a bond and belong

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opponent which you drive

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right into this element of collaboration and touch them and how do I feel with the people that I'm working in interacting with and not only my coworkers but how do I interact with my boss, how do I interact with my customers, whether they be external or internal. And it gives,

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it gives context to the next one to challenge and comprehension

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freehand, which is again

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that you know, there's a part of that which is meaning is is how am I, how am I aligning my, my goals, what am I doing? What is, what has it stretching me? Is it giving me meaning intrinsically? And then the last one ties right into it. Smack-dab you know, which is this defining

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fan, which really is around

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aligning purpose, right? Taking what it is that is meaningful to me and how am I expressing that inside of this company and how is the company expressing it back to me, which is all around that culture component. And so we work with these managers and it's amazing and a half day workshop going through all of those. And they're finding specific ways that they can increase those different types of, of attitudes and behaviors with the things that they're doing or that they're asking their employees to do. It's amazing to see that come out and it really ties right back into some of this stuff, which I hadn't necessarily correlated before, but it is about joy and love and dignity and all of those. Yes,

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it's way outside the box, right? In which we talk about this stuff. But I think Brad's really onto something here. Yeah. All right. So let's, I also want to talk about this, a social determinants of health because that was so awesome because there's two parts of it that I love. First stinky bosses, stinky bosses, which we are not, at least I hope not. And, uh, and uh, and being ignored when Brad was talking about being ignored at work is a bigger risk is, uh, is, is more powerful in the minds of the employees than having a stapler thrown at you. Wow. I just had, I was just in the realm of Holy hell what is going on in our world? Uh, where, where people are more concerned [inaudible] and reasonably so about their emotional wellbeing at work and they're more scared about being ignored. Well, cause it hurts a lot more.

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It comes down to the psychology of it. What the psychology of it really we are as humans, we look for that meaning that we bring to the world that we value.

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We are the meaning seeking machine

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well and that we have value. It's our self identity and, and ignoring our output are our contributions or even us as as beings is this is like taking a, you know, a big punch to that psychological gut that you have. Right. And it can be devastating in all of this stinky bosses ignor ignoring stuff comes into that, that social determinants of health, which to that degree I'm surprised that it has not been studied well or more or more, right? Yeah. Because at work, I mean social determinants of health have in, in where you live and variety of other factors. But the fact that it has not been studied at work surprises me or it hasn't been studied as much at work. And I love this idea that those toxic, I don't actually hate this idea that toxic workplaces have a negative impact on our health. I love the idea that Brad is actually looking at that and that that can lend itself into making changes in how people show up at work and how work is designed and how managers lead.

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It's so interesting how our emotional state is so, um, has such a powerful influence on how we perceive our world. Right. I think about, you know, what, what's the difference between, you know, waiting of 15 minutes for someone who you really don't want to, to meet, uh, versus waiting 15 minutes to see someone that you're really excited to see. You know, so the two totally different

experiences, right? Time in one case, the time is flying by and another case it's going slow at work. When we have these situations where we're really busy, where we have a lot of work to do and we love the work that we're doing, we just give it, we give the hours and we give the, the effort with a sense of joy in at least in part because we feel connected to the meaning to get back to the first thing. But when we don't feel we're connected to something and we don't enjoy the work and we have a stinky boss and we were in a toxic environment, then everything sucks then then working even 40 hours is, is like punishment. Well,

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and what I find fascinating is that mental interpretation of that leads to actual physical changes in our body. And so he was talking about blood pressure, talking about our ability to sleep, talking about the stress levels that we have and the cortisol, you know, components that are going up in our, in our body and all of the different hormonal changes that happen, which lend itself into, you know, heart attacks and you know, stress induced components and diabetes, uh, you know, type two because you're overeating and compensating for this stuff for a job that you probably don't care much about. Exactly about that because you don't have the meaning. Because if you had the writing, this wouldn't be part of this, it wouldn't be there. So it is a really powerful component as we think about this and important work. And I really hope that there's some really great insights that come out of this and that it changes the discussion, that it changes the discussion from just a monetary component, uh, at that senior level within organizations to saying, Hey, yes, we are driving these people and you know what?

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I'm going to promote that guy who's an asshole because he gets the performance done. Oh man. So now that that asshole is going to be he or she is going to be above even more people. But the fact of the matter is you're not looking at all of the costs that are associated with that because you're not looking at those health costs that are a result of how that toxicity spreads itself throughout the organization. And, and when that happens, it becomes part of the culture. Yeah. Then it just becomes the social norm. And, and companies get reputations. I mean, in our town, there are major employers in this town that have reputations for being really toxic environments. People know that and they're more reluctant to, to go to work there. You know, I've, I've talked to people in the job market all the time and they're just like, ah, I didn't, I don't think I really want to apply it there because they cause of this reputation.

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Well, and those reputations are based on the, um, the con company culture. Right. And he was talking to me, going back to the meaning, right. And finding meaning in, in the component of saying how overworked we are and how do we have time to even think about some of this component. When you look at some of this toxicity within workplaces, it's the overcapacity that we are being driven to work 60, 70 hours a week, uh, in jobs where it we're doing it and we don't necessarily align with the meaning and we don't have those components. It does become this toxic element that T I love the skunk analogy, right? You know, and that's what the, that's what the stinky leader, right? That's stinky

leader sprays. And that you don't get, unless you're very purposeful and do a really good wash. you can't wash that off.

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You can't wash that off. Right. So, and it goes back to when I started off and I was doing a lot of work with teams and looking at how to develop teams and how do you enhance teams and get their, their productivity up and get that culture changed. You know, people would come to me with saying, well, we have this toxic person on our team. We have this person who is the negative Nelly that brings everybody down, does all these things, and and 20 years ago, 15 years ago, maybe even 10 years ago, I was like, well, let's work with that person. We will work with that person to get them because all they need is to be trained or educated or whatever. It would be just just a little bit more information, more maybe knowledge change the incentives around how they work. Let's do, let's look at all these different factors, right?

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Let's give them the information. It's the GIF and you know, here's how you're impacting this, and of course they'll change and then everybody will be wonderful. What I have realized both from the research but also from personal experience, get them off that damn team as fast as you can. I don't care how you do it. It is a cancer. It might be finding the toolbox for the hammer or the T or the salad for the tomato. Exactly right. It's not that they're necessarily a bad person. Well, that's where I go. I go, I go, I don't think they're a bad person. They're bad. They, they show up bad in this situation and as much as you want to change that tomato into a hammer, it's not going to happen, you know. And so the best thing that you can do for both them and for your team is to remove them as quickly as possible because there is that, that stinkiness that, that then, you know, gets other people's stinky and gets other people stinky and impacts it.

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It just keeps spreading. And when you start spreading that, it's really hard to come back from that. Have you ever been sprayed by a skunk reel and stuff? No, I have not. My dog had at one point. Yeah. That was smelly. Yeah. And for how long? For a long time. What is it that you like vinegar, bath or something like that? Milk, I don't care. I don't know. But we had to do that like two or three times and a, the dog didn't like the bath baths in general did definitely did not like that. So, and I've probably, they're not that effective either. All right. So any more on the social determinants of health in that? So one last thing I wanted to just bring up cause we talked a little bit about AI right? And and one yeah. One piece. I do want to just say Brad had mentioned that, you know, we've gone through this in the past and and people have been retrained and they get into new jobs.

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I I wanted to bring in some research that that I've seen that basically said, you know, most re retraining programs are really ineffective. And there's some research that looked at, you know like manufacturing jobs cost in Ohio and the number of those jobs people, a, the percentage that actually signed up for retraining programs even when they were free was super small. It was under 50% and then the number of people that actually went through the entire

course was, you know, again more people dropped out and then the number of people that actually got a job in their new profession in that firm, that retraining course was even I think is somewhere around 10%. Don't quote me on that. It's about 10% of the total people, the total population that could have been retrained actually ended up getting a job in the new field. Right. Get in that retrained position.

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So it the, the fact of the matter is, is that yeah, it works over generations. You know, new people coming in are going to be, they're not going to go for those, those manufacturing jobs are going to go for different jobs because that's what they, they're going, but to take somebody who has been in a position for 20 25 30 even 10 years, and to expect them to be able to be retrained in a whole different field in a whole different way. You know, we think about manufacturing and most manufacturing jobs, people have a high school education, right? Or they did. Now it's actually getting more, you need, you need more in order to work in a manufacturing plant. But the fact of the matter is is you know they're, they're doing that for a reason that, I mean they're going into manufacturing for a reason because of the, you know, their aptitude or their, their desire to actually, they want to work with their hands, they want to work, they want to be in an environment where they're doing something very physical and very meaningful every day.

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And so while I applaud the component of AI being able to help so that we can find more meaning in the work that is left, I am also very scared about AI displacing workers. Even you go to retail, retail is going to be one of the big ones where it's going to happen, right? You look at a McDonald's already and you go in and you don't place your order with a person anymore. You place your order on a machine that then just gets served. So you know, all of a sudden they can hire two less employees behind the counter. You go in, it's going to add up. You go on self checkouts on all of your grocery stores and various other things. All of that is going to, to increase you look at manufacturing, that's going to happen. Again. Anything that's repetitive and those components you look at truck driving, you look at any of those types of services, automated, you know, self driving trucks are going to be the future. [inaudible]

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dominate, which in truck driving is one of the number one, you know, occupations in the United States right now, 29 some States it's the number one. So all of those people that are going to be displaced and it's not going to happen like overnight, but it will happen and it will continue to happen. And over the course of the next 10, 15, 20 years, it's going to cause a huge component within the workforce that we can't just retrain [inaudible]. They're a, they're not going to be those of jobs that are going to be equivalent and pay that are going to do it. So we're going to have to come up with some other solutions. So it's just one of those things you're thinking of. Uh, policy solutions, uh, some maybe political solutions. I'm a big believer and we've talked about this before of of universal basic income.

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Yeah. Uh, at some point where I'm looking at when you have robots doing the work right, that you were still buying those products. We are still a, and not to get back into Marxism, you know, but the, you know, you're looking at this where all of the capital goes to a few people and all of the profits go to a few people that don't get redistributed back out to the workers. Right, right. Which is not sustainable because if the workers don't have money then they don't have the ability to buy. And so your creating components for people that they cannot no longer buy. And so then that, that actually it implodes upon itself. Yeah. My opinion and somebody universal basic income just saying, Hey everybody, regardless of, you know, how much you you have or don't have gets a certain amount. It's star Trek. Right.

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You go and you, you know, star Trek, they don't get paid for the work they do. It's all the stuff they can just go and get. And so it's this, this world where, you know, things are produced. Um, not for anyway. That's, I never thought about the economics of star Trek. I think, Oh, there's lots of people that have thought about the economics of this doctor. Okay, I'll have to look up a blog spot for all right. I'm more concerned when it comes to the universal basic income, uh, without it in, at some point in the future, if we have millions of displaced workers, I'm concerned about, uh, black markets, you know, developing that. If people aren't going to have a way to earn money there, they simply won't be needed in the workforce, then it becomes a society of black market people, you know, then people will start getting ingenious about ways while I have to, I have to, you know, make ends meet.

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So I'm going to, I'm going to start selling something illegal. Yeah. Um, well you have that and then you also have the whole component of a revolution of spring. Cause when we know from history, when income disparity gets, when the rich get to rich and the poor get to poor, the bad things happen. You know what, there's a lot more of those poor people and you know, the component. And so there's all that, the, the dystopian future that we don't want to necessarily go down. But I think there's a, there's a key concept there. And how that gets implemented and how it gets put in place via policy is important. And I think there are, there are concerns over it. I get that there's the cost of it. Who pays for it? How does it pay? Does it raise every, all the prices and we don't have all the data on it, you know, but, but to that degree, looking out 10, 20 years in the future, if we don't do it, I think the problems are much larger than the, the, that we're going to be facing.

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Yeah. Otherwise, so, okay. So let me ask you a music question. Go for it. How about that? So, uh, you moved around a lot as a child, not a lot, but you, you lived in different places in the Midwest. I moved state in the Midwest, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota. So you go, you bounced around. So on. What I'm wondering is did those different places influence your musical interest differently? Oh, so like when I was in Wisconsin, did I like the polka and the kind of guy? No, I mean, but, but each, right. I mean if, if, certainly radio stations and music that is available nationally is just available nationally, but still there are regional differences and there, there

could be city differences. Do you think that that, uh, a particular DJ and in particular town could have influenced you or what your friends were listening to in, in a town in Iowa could be different from a town in Wisconsin?

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That's a good, that's a really good question. I hadn't thought about that from that perspective before because I would have said first off, no, I think I was there. But then once you've mentioned that, I'm going, wow, I think that's actually true. So I will, I will use the example. So when I, um, moved up to Minnesota after getting my MBA and I moved up here and I've lived up here ever since. Um, I moved from Iowa city and Iowa city had this radio station, which was the university radio station, K FAI, which had, you know, the new, um, kind of progressive new, you know, rock and roll that I liked, you know, it played those kinds of components. When I first moved up here, there was no equivalent radio station that I could find in Minnesota, in Minneapolis. Okay. About six to eight months later, um, there all of a sudden there was, I forgot, I forget what it was called, rock 100 or I forget what it was called some, but, but it was, it was the alternative music station. And I immediately gravitated to that. But otherwise I was, I was listening to, you know, classical rock, cause that's what they had available here versus country versus, you know, pop versus whatever it was. So, so yes, I think that does influence. I think growing up, I grew up, you know, at least in high school years in Iowa and you know, I still like Boston and you know, I know many people sit there and go, Oh my God, Boston is horrible. And I'm going, yeah,

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a lot of lessons old, a lot of records. So it wasn't like you were the only one I know, but you hadn't discovered an underground under, you know, under value because the radio stations that I listened to were playing a lot of Boston, you know, the classic rock

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stations that we're, we're playing that. So that's what I was exposed to. And thus it's what I ended up listening. It's, it's going to the conversation we had before where I was talking with my son and I was, he was talking about, you know, Oh that all that eighties rock sounds the same to me. And I go, Oh, all your rep sounds sound the same. But because, because if you only hear them once or twice, you don't, you don't, you're not familiar nuances and you don't get familiar with them enough. And I think there's that component of you listened to a radio station long enough and they play the same types of music over and over. You become accustomed to it and you start to like it. [inaudible] yeah, definitely near mere exposure effect. Right? Mere exposure. Absolutely. It makes a difference. Okay. Cool. Well thanks listeners for hanging out with us today.

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Thanks for, for listening in. We always appreciate you taking the time to give us a review because reviews make a difference. They, they actually contribute to our rankings in, uh, Apple and other systems advertising, uh, programs. So, and the, the reason for that, the meaning for us is not because we want to be ranked up high in the ratings. I mean, that's a little ego boost. I don't know, I'd kind of like this a little ego boost there, but for us it's really is about getting

more, it's exposing what we're doing. It's expanding the community to more people and expanding this community, which is what ultimately our goal is. We want to have this community be a viable, large community that, you know, as we're looking out in the future, we're also looking at ways, how do we get this community be able to interact with each other beyond just the podcast, which is why we're doing live events and other different components. We've got listeners in more than a hundred countries and that's, that's cool. But they're all disconnected right now. Right. And part of the future could be to be more integrative. Yes. So, so that's why we want you to, to give a rating. If you feel like you're getting meaning and value from this, this program leave us a good rating. So thank you. Thanks for listening.