Successful Hybrid Teams Have More Conversations than You Thi...

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SPEAKERS

Ginny Bianco-Mathis, Mitch Simon, Dave McKeown

M **Mitch Simon**   00:10

Welcome to another episode of team anywhere where CEOs, leaders and experts at building teams, companies, organizations, and amazing cultures

G **Ginny Bianco-Mathis**   00:22

share how to lead from anywhere in the world. I'm your co host on the East Coast, Jim Bianco Mathis,

M **Mitch Simon**   00:28

and I'm your co host on the West Coast, Mitch Simon. And we invite you to join us team anywhere. Today Jimmy and I interview David McKellen, author of the self evolved leader, hybrid and virtual has caused us to go to a place where we truly don't know what the best solutions are. Because for most of us, we've never been here before. The self evolve leader says I don't have the answers but together asking the right questions, getting clear on what is important to each individual and to us as a company. We will get through this. The self evolve leader looks at not knowing the future as a growth and development opportunity for the leader and his or her people with a recognition that the unknown is the best environment to grow, and being involved enough to take the opportunity to

reach out, ask questions, challenge his or her people and grow together. It will only be the self evolved that will be successful in leading any team from anywhere.

G Ginny Bianco-Mathis 01:33

Welcome to another episode of teen anywhere. And I'm Ginny Bianca Mathis on the east coast. And I'm here with my partner Mitch Simon on the west coast. And we are so excited today to have a very accomplished a person in our field and writer Dave McCune. And Dave is an expert in helping individuals teams organizations achieve excellence by doing the ordinary things extraordinarily well is the CEO of outfield leadership, and the author of the self evolved leader. Wait for it. This is a what this goes on a while. Elevate your focus, develop your people in a world that refuses to slow down.

M Mitch Simon 02:24

Hello, Dave. Hey, Jenny. Hey, Mitch, great to be here with both of you. Good to have you here.

G Ginny Bianco-Mathis 02:30

Yes. Wonderful. So, as I said, the author of the self above leader, so please share with us what you've learned and how you previously evolved, and personally evolved during these events in the last 18 months?

D Dave McKeown 02:47

Gosh, wow. Yes. What a journey it's it's been for, for all of us over these last 18 months. You know, I think for me, my journey has been about two things. One, stripping away, I think, some superfluous and unimportant aspects of my life that had sort of accreted over time. I think that when we, when we live in a really busy world, we we start doing things and things glom on to us. And then it becomes, you know, routine ritual habit. And then, you know, when you get to a period of relative slowness, you look back and go, I don't know why I do that thing. I don't know why I chase after that, but at work. And so just a stripping down of what's truly important for me. And then just also intentionality being really clear and intentional about what I am saying yes to, rather than just saying yes to everything, and then figuring out what to do.

G Ginny Bianco-Mathis 03:44

Oh, totally identify with that. It's almost feel it feels like getting clean out. In a way does it?

You know, what do we really want to focus on love it? Very much. So? Well, I know for a fact because I have been reading your book. And there are a lot of wonderful themes in there. But could you share with us what you think are the major three or four areas that you want people to know, this is what here's what you're going to get out of this.

D Dave McKeown 04:14

One of the main reasons that I wrote the book was, I do a lot of leadership training and working with with teams and I was finding that there are some hangovers from some of the older ways in which we used to view leadership and effective leadership, and particularly this focus on this need for certainty that a strong and a good and effective leader, you know, knows where we're going and has certainty and is leading from the front and all it takes is for you to fall in behind me and follow me and I will get there and even before the pandemic that was starting to creak at the seams because the world that we live in is just far too complex for any one individual to really be able to lead with true certainty and also Whenever you show up as a leader like that, there's not as much room for the people underneath you to grow and develop. And so one of the big lessons within the book is, how do we translate for more turn that thinking on its head, to actually show up as a leader have a degree of uncertainty that says, I'm not 100%? Sure where we're going, here's my best guess here's where I think we should, we should go and hard to engage in a much more collaborative process of visioning and goal setting with your team. So that it's much more a cohesive unit that's, that's moving in, in a shared direction, rather than just one person out of the front that everybody else falling in behind.

G Ginny Bianco-Mathis 05:42

And, and so now, that's brings us into this hybrid world that seems to be going into. So with that, and there's a couple of concepts in your book, if you can speak to, I really like when you talk about team flow and creating a symbiotic conversation and shared responsibility. Can you give some specific behaviors? What What would that look like?

D Dave McKeown 06:11

Sure. So, you know, I think the overarching context of moving in a hybrid world is a is further pressing home the point that we need our leaders not just to be focused on achieving our goals and where we're going, but but also focused on helping and ensuring that the people underneath them are growing and developing. And that's tricky. I mean, it's it's difficult in a in a completely face to face world is very difficult in a virtual world. And now we're beginning to learn what that's going to be like in a hybrid world, and you know, left to its own devices, we can very easily move into this place where we've got this

two tiered workforce in a hybrid world where the folks that are like always coming into the office are the ones where that's, they believe that that's where the real work gets done. And the rights that are that are that are remaining remote, or certainly have got a bigger spread from for remote, are just not involved in some of those longer term, more strategic conversations and relationship building. And I think our leaders need to be much more intentional about ensuring that they are not just lead, they're not just returning to the office, and then tagging on virtual workers as the add on but that it's a whole new paradigm, we've got to we've got to redesign almost our how we work together to incorporate both of those, we can't just lump on virtual to in person work. And you take the first point that are on facilitating team flow. That's all about asking the question, How can I empower and encourage my team to work on the things that they really can add value to, so that those things can get off my plate. And I can focus on those things that that I really, truly bring value to, which is often the medium and long term direction of your team and the development of your people. And getting into a position where you're able to and there's an exercise I go through with many leaders is if you're looking at your to do list, saying to yourself, what do I need to do to streamline streamline this dondo by 20%, of what's here, so that I've got my team focused on the things that they really can bring value to, and I'm left with the top 20% for me. And you know, you do that, quite frankly, by asking yourself for every item on your to do list is there somebody on my team who even if they needed a little advice, guidance and support could do this thing, then you got to take the time to do that to delegate it, I'd give them that advice, guidance and support so that they they grow and you're able to elevate your own particular headspace to the to the more strategic. Now, managing that in a hybrid world is going to call for a couple of things, one greater degree of intentionality that we just said that number two, you've got to ensure that you've got good tools and systems at at your fingertips. It's no longer enough for us just to all rely on email for getting stuff done. We've got to have a dedicated project management spot dedicated file sharing even to talk about really granular stuff, methods by which work can flow and be distributed around your team so that it doesn't just glom up in the in person discussions, but that it can move between this in person and virtual world.

G Ginny Bianco-Mathis   09:37

Absolutely. Folks are getting into trouble now. And Mitch and I both have seen where they just aren't. Some of them are still using the old fashioned lists. Alright, yeah, they may be on their computer, but they're just lists, right? And the tools now where there is just real decision making happening. On these virtual meetings and the sharing of the hubs and spokes of a lot of applications, right,

D Dave McKeown 10:12

and, you know, I think we're moving more and more, I think this is one step in an even greater movement, that the, the work, the work has to be executed or be able to be executed. And, and, and talked about and looked at, in an almost ephemeral perspective, it's got to be available for anybody to look at at any time, in any way. It can't. It can't, it can't live in a file cabinet, we know that much. It can't live on somebody else's desktop. But you know, it's got to live in a in a in an in a place that we can all access, whether we're collectively together in an office or dialing in and, and managing and leading through that is going to be tough for a lot of people. Because for for some, at the beginning of the pandemic, it was just look, we'll get through this virtual working nonsense. And then one day, we'll all be in the office together, we try to the way that it was and figure it out, we'll figure it out. And I think a lot of people are going great, we're going to be back in the office. And I'd like our shoot, we're going to deal with this hybrid stuff. It's just a pn. Like, truly organizations have to retool their perspective on how you show up as a leader and how you manage your workflow with your team. Because it's just it's completely differently.

G Ginny Bianco-Mathis 11:27

Yeah, yeah. And I remember getting so excited when the light bulb went on for me when I was talking to a senior executive, and he had been brainstorming on something that he had shared, he was going to do so. And then he goes, Well, let me show you what I did. And he puts on the screen, all his thoughts in clusters, you know, using an online tool. Oh, my God, we had an hour discussion about this in a very focused way. Right, that otherwise would have been all over the place. Right? For sure. Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Yeah.

D Dave McKeown 12:04

I think another big thing that leaders are gonna have to adjust to in a hybrid setting is how do you successfully facilitate a meeting where you've got half of your participants in a room and you got half of half of your participants dialed in from, from somewhere else? Because the tendency will be that the discussion will start in the room. And then at some point, somebody will go, Oh, we've got some folks that have dialed in what what do you guys think, and then you'll get their perspective. And but then the discussion will come back into the room and the decisions will will ultimately be made there without intentionality of saying, okay, there's got to be an ebb and a flow like we can't, we can't meet the locus of decision making where most of us are gathered. That's how we're gonna want to do it. But that's, we can't do that. It's got to be the decision making power has got to be distributed amongst us, regardless of how we're accessing that particular discussion.

Ginny Bianco-Mathis 12:52

That's excellent. And that means a different tool. Right? Right. That means I'm, you know, splitting everyone up immediately and say, What are your three or four ways that we can deal with this, and then having that all posted on a white screen, and then the decision making discussion happens?

Dave McKeown 13:10

I absolutely not at all know, for sure. And even things like even things like smaller breakout sessions, the tendency will be to like, have a breakout session to folks that are gathered together. And then to have a breakout session of the folks that are virtual, I think the folks that are doing this successfully, will have a number of workstations set up in different rooms, and you'll say, okay, you know, Person A, who's in the room, go on, go into that room and have a virtual breakout session with those folks. Just try to be a little bit more intentional about it does requires new tools and new mindset.

Ginny Bianco-Mathis 13:43

Totally, totally. Well, I know another thing that you have been getting excited about is how to deal with these hybrid teams, and rebuilding growth plans in a world of uncertainty, right, making decisions for future that just keeps moving. Yeah, what's what's your advice?

Dave McKeown 14:04

It's to keep, if you haven't already started to re imagine what your organization or your team is going to look like. Post pandemic noise, the time to do it. as we as we just touched on at the beginning of the of the call so much has changed and shifted for us all personally and individually. And some teams and organizations are starting to have that conversation about what's shifted for them what truly is still a core value, a core aspect of our mission and our vision and, and or what's shifted to have those discussions and begin to cast a longer term net, begin to plan out for the next 18 months or so. Because that's the only way that you're going to ensure that you're on the front foot of of growth out of it. But also to have a ruthless focus on the next 30 to 90 days at all times for at least at least until the World Health Organization on declares this a pandemic because, you know, we're seeing in literal real time, anything can shift at any time. And even though we, we believe that we're emerging, and I hope that we are, it may well take longer than we think there may be some ups and downs and squirrels and, and roadblocks. And and so those organizations that are going to be successful in this is he is managing those tool to jewel perspectives. Where do we want to get to over the next 18 months? And what are the

warning signs that we need to keep a handle on in the next 30 to 90 days?

G Ginny Bianco-Mathis 15:34
All right, so here's, here's a scenario for you. So I'm a leader, and I've got this hybrid environment, and I'm struggling a little bit, I want to keep making sure I'm doing the things that you just said with with engagement. Um, what kinds of things would you do with this leader to have that person be self evolved?

D Dave McKeown 15:58
Well, one of the, one of the cruxes, of being a self evolved leader is a continual push for growth and development from from from your within. I'm one of the reasons that I wrote the book was, I think that too often, leaders we are wrong to be developed by their organization. So they're gonna get put through a training program, or they're going to put in a stretch assignment. And actually, those leaders that are the most effective over the long term are the ones that have that internal desire and push to, to grow and develop. And part of that process is about constantly asking for feedback, both positive and negative on whatever is happening at the moment. And moving to a hybrid world is good is clunky, and it will continue to be clunky. And and not being afraid of a saying to your team, hey, this this, this is new, it is different. And it isn't just in person with virtual tygon. We've got to think about this in a different way, involving them in a discussion that says how do we facilitate team flow, ensure that the work goes to the right places? How do we ensure that we're continuing to connect with each other on a personal level? How do we ensure that we're holding each other accountable in this hybrid world, rather than feeling like you, as the leader have to develop that all on your own, engage your team in in in in solving that problem? And then have short term feedback loops that said, that says that asked your team what, what worked well about what we did? So you know, let's say you've you've switched your monthly review meeting from completely virtual to hybrid, we'll at the end of it, see of 567 minutes is okay, what worked well about this process? What didn't work? Well, what should we do differently next time to improve this so that you can incrementally get better at those at those at those things?

G Ginny Bianco-Mathis 17:45
Wonderful. Now, in terms of folks that you have worked with, can you give an example of Wow, this person did it right? You don't have to name names or company. But here's the kind of thing he or she did.

Dave McKeown 18:00

Yeah, I'm working with a president of a high end men's fashion retailer at the minute. And one of the things that he is wrestling with is a group of employees that are finding more and more what's true and valuable for them means that they don't necessarily all want to come into the office and or the store all the time. And so he's engaging in conversations with his best people that says, okay, rather than you go find a job elsewhere, how do we create a work environment that is going to work for you long time, but also serves the interests of the organization. So it's part of that notion of the symbiotic conversation, which is approaching tough, difficult conversations in an adult adult way that says, hey, there's a way in which we can create a solution that that values both of us the values and honors us an individual and the organization. And so he's coming up with with his team, some really inventive ways for how people are going to deal with hybrid working environment. And it's, you know, some people are moving away from the home office location are given the opportunity to come in once twice a week or a month and work virtually in other ways. But it's not a one size fits all. Yeah, it's it's Yes, it's really getting down in saying to the individual, and what's important to you, what do you value? What about your work life do you want to maintain? And Hi, can we support that rather than Hi, can we make that more difficult for you?

Ginny Bianco-Mathis 19:33

Right, right. And then I would assume, and maybe he's lucky enough that this hasn't happened, but I assume there might be some folks who say, you know, I don't think it's going to work out. Yeah. And However, because we've had this discussion, it's it's being done in a respectful way for sure.

Dave McKeown 19:55

And the outcome of any conversation between a leader and somebody on their team If the outcome is I don't think this is going to work out, it's not necessarily a bad outcome to get to sometimes it's the best outcome to get to, so long as the process that you've gone through, is in a way that honors and respects both parties. And that's handled and handled out of the way. And, you know, I think there's, there's nothing wrong with saying, hey, this isn't going to work out. But you know, what, I wish you all the best. And, you know, let's, let's ensure that we do not lose contact and, you know, then you've got lifelong relationships there that at some point, may or may, well come back. And you know, that I think the other thing that is important in in thinking through this is just the sheer nature of the labor market. And the difficulty that folks are having in hiring at the minute is, is requiring more and more of a bespoke approach to how you're going to help support potential employees in in this whole area of hybrid working life balance, you know, it's no

longer enough just offer people huge sign on bonuses to have them come work for you, if they're gonna have to come into the office five days a week or six days a week. It's got to be more than that.

G Ginny Bianco-Mathis 21:03

Yeah. And and a lot, I can't wait to start making this master list of what was the creative approach here? What was the creative approach there? Right, we can guess. And I'm hoping there's some some Oh, my gosh, I've never thought about that. As a way to do it.

D Dave McKeown 21:22

Absolutely. I think that the shift towards hybrid is is the other thing, I do think that some leaders think, well, it'll only be hybrid for a while, and then it will go back to in person. It's nice that you can open that genie in the bottle. You know, we're, we're at some point going to be all living in in the metaverse where, you know, I've got an avatar and we meet in some world somewhere else to have this discussion and somebody else's in the office, and we got to deal with that. Like, we just got to go with it. We got to keep moving that direction, you know?

G Ginny Bianco-Mathis 21:50

Yeah, totally. Totally. Well, I think I didn't mention this at the beginning. But as our listeners have most most definitely figured out David's from Northern Ireland. And but I just as you said, it's almost right there on the border, right in terms of a lot of Scottish in there with there's a there's a very

D Dave McKeown 22:16

shared lineage between folks in Northern Ireland and Scotland, we come from very similar ancestral backgrounds. And so we share a lot in terms of perspectives of the world and the way that we view things. Yeah,

G Ginny Bianco-Mathis 22:29

that's fabulous. That's fabulous. Well, Dave, how do we get in touch with you? How does the audience get in touch with you?

D **Dave McKeown** 22:38

best place to go if you want to learn more about me is to go to Dave McCune comm if you're interested in the book, go to self evolve leader calm there are links to Amazon and other places that you can pick it up more so pretty active on LinkedIn and Twitter at David McMillan happy to connect with anybody there as well. Oh, fabulous.

G **Ginny Bianco-Mathis** 22:55

net, you, you have just seem to have been sitting there listening like crazy and taking notes. Do you have any final words for us?

M **Mitch Simon** 23:04

You know, what I really enjoyed about this. This podcast was really the the encouragement to have more conversations. And in fact, I think, I think if we would maybe maybe, you know, this is maybe our 50th podcast, you know, maybe the the key to hybrid is, is actually being more real, being more communicative. And, and asking people what, what they really need? Yeah, but it really goes back to you know, when I think our first podcast, which is really, I think we were talking about what they're finding with, with engagement, engagement scores are going up, because leaders were saying, we're asking the question, how are you? So these three are very, very, very technical question. So I'm really walking away from this podcast thinking that, you know, what hybrid is going to allow us to really explore we've been exploring into people's rooms, I, you know, we hear I can see, you know, the books behind Dave's desk. But it's really to just kind of ask people what they're interested in. And, you know, I was listening to a radio show yesterday talking about how there's several companies have gone towards a four day workweek. Yeah, I want to start to handle and, and the the gentleman said, Look, you know, you'd have to pay me at least 50% more, for me to leave my four day workweek to go to a five day workweek. I think the same thing is gonna happen here is, you know, you're gonna have to pay me a lot of money to leave a company where they ask me what I'm thinking. They come up with solutions to really support me, and to demonstrate that they care about me. Yes, and

G **Ginny Bianco-Mathis** 24:52

I can walk my dog whenever I want.

M **Mitch Simon** 24:55

Yeah. And if I if I really feel that the leaders and team members are real genuine, then I

won't be leaving in droves. Right. And I think it's one of the original questions we were asking as we started is, you know what's gonna keep people with your company versus another company? And we thought it was culture is culture, but I think a lot of it is humanity. Very much it goes really back to your you know, your book, being a self evolve leader is to be self evolved is to really I don't know, the answers, I'm always learning. And it's one of those things where I think as he started out this podcast where there's the old form of leadership, which is I need to know what the future is. Follow me. And in this new form, which is, I don't know. Really, no, no, let's go find it out together. There's the the courage to put that forward, makes you a leader. And so I've really enjoyed this podcast. It's been great.

G **Ginny Bianco-Mathis** 25:49

Yeah. Thank you, Dave, so much. Thank you both for having me. It's been a pleasure.

M **Mitch Simon** 25:57

Great. And if you're looking for Dave McEwen, her it's it's MC k EOW, n. And with that I want to thank you, Dave, want to thank you, Jenny. thank all of our listeners. If you really enjoyed this episode, please share this with your friends. Please, please give us a nice five star review. And we look forward to seeing you next time on our next episode of team anywhere.