The Future of Work podcast is a weekly show where Jacob has in-depth conversations with senior level executives, business leaders, and bestselling authors around the world on the future of work and the future in general. Topics cover everything from AI and automation to the gig economy to big data to the future of learning and everything in between. Each episode explores a new topic and features a special guest.

You can listen to past episodes at www.TheFutureOrganization.com/future-work-podcast/. To learn more about Jacob and the work he is doing please visit www.TheFutureOrganization.com. You can also subscribe to Jacob's YouTube channel, follow him on Twitter, or visit him on Facebook.

Jacob Morgan 01:11
Hello, everyone, thank you for joining a another live future work podcast episode. And as you can see my very special guest today, Frances Frei. She's a Harvard Business School professor and co author of this book here. Hopefully some people can see it. It's called Unleashed: The Unapologetic Leader's Guide to Empowering Everyone Around You. And you wrote it with Anne Morriss, I had the chance to read an advanced readers copy, which was a really awesome, awesome book. So thank you for joining me.

Frances 01:44
Oh. Thank you. Thanks for the kind words and it's really a pleasure to be here.

Jacob Morgan 01:47
Oh, so we have so much to talk about. But as I always like to do with this podcast, maybe we can jump in with just a little bit of background information about you. How did you get involved with everything that you're doing, you've had the opportunity to work with so many great companies. Where did this all begin?

Frances 02:02
Yeah. So I think a good plot point is when I joined HBS, 20 years ago. So that's far enough in the past. And I joined there, and was in the technology and Operations Management Unit and was studying and reading academic literature, I was really interested in operations, I was really interested in how to make things work and how to make things work better. And I pretty quickly came to the conclusion that if it weren't for the pesky humans, operations would work beautifully. And then I got super intrigued by the humans, and then realize that the humans were led. And then, so then that took me to leadership aspects, but the technology and the operations have stayed strong. So most of the companies I've worked with have some, they're either being disrupted by technology or they're digitally native. But everything I do is how to make people and organizations better. It's like that that true operations focus.

Jacob Morgan 03:16
Very cool. And so I suppose after HBS, you started getting a lot of people reaching out to you from different companies to kind of advise and help them as well.

Frances 03:24
Yeah. And that that started, you know, HBS. One of the missions is to stay very close to practice. If we are going to try to differentiate from any of the other business schools, we try to just be right next to

practice. And so through the executive classroom, and then as a students I taught got further and further up in their careers. Someone asked me to come in and be helpful, and indeed, when I went to Uber, it was a former student asked me to come and have a conversation with the then CEO Travis Kalanick. And my candidly, my response was no because I read the newspaper. And it didn't matter which newspaper it was. But she convinced me that it was worthy of a conversation. She convinced me that she thought he was a very good man trying to do the right thing, and needed help. And he was asking for help. So I said, I'll go, I was suspicious, but I'm devoted to students. So I said, I'll go spend an hour and I spent three days with him. We really just went through everything. And he asked for help in the areas where it it occurred to me that those were the areas where I could be helpful and that he also needed help. So after spending a lot of time with him, I then went and spent a lot of time with the company before joining officially on June 1 in 2017. And...

Jacob Morgan 04:49
Wow. So you were just full time so you were an Uber employee for a while.

Frances 04:54
I joined as an Uber employee on July on June 1 2017. Right I think right in the thick of it, it's hard to imagine, I guess now, but the company really could have gone either way at the time. And yeah, so I left, I went on leave from HBS and didn't know how long it was going to take, and was prepared to stay until we were done. And we were able to turn things around much, much quicker than I expected. So, after less than a year, the culture was completely transformed. We had done a massive amount of executive education and the leadership team was working really well together. A new CEO was there, and, and it felt like my work was done.

Jacob Morgan 05:38
Very cool. Yeah. And we'll certainly talk a little bit more about the Uber stuff too. But why don't we jump right into the book, because right away, one of the first things that you talked about at the beginning of the book, is the big assumptions, or one of the big assumptions that people have about leadership, which you say is incorrect.

Frances 05:53
Yeah.

Jacob Morgan 05:54
So what what is it that people think about leadership that you think is a little off

Frances 05:59
you know, So I think that for the last decade or two, we've spent a lot of time collectively we have spent a lot of time building leaders up and getting them to inspect themselves. And just really like, the metaphor is we've just put a mirror in the office of the leader, just so like, Look at yourself, and focus on yourself a lot. And Anne and I found that the limits to focusing on yourself are behind us that leaders don't need any more focus on themselves that leaders need to focus on other people. Indeed, the definition we use is that leadership is about making other people better, first as a result of our presence and then in a way that lasts to our absence. And so we're really trying to change the mirror on the wall

to a window, instead of looking at themselves. It's I want to go and look at others I want to be when I walk into a room, I don't want everyone to think of me. I want me to think of everyone else and how I can Set up other people. So it really is. It's just like a switch in your mind, but it is a 180 degree switch.

Jacob Morgan 07:07
Yeah. So leadership isn't about you. It's about other people.

Frances 07:09
Yeah. You just said it much quicker and much more briefly than I did.

Jacob Morgan 07:13
I think you wrote that actually in the book. Yeah. Or maybe I made it up. I don't know. But I love that. That's, I mean, that's kind of the crux of the argument, right? You want to be a great leader, you focus on other people, not just not just on yourself. So I'm kind of curious, if you were to look back at your career or throughout the history of leadership. Would you say that leadership has changed much over time?

Frances 07:39
I would, I think that the scope that any leader has to deal with has just increased dramatically. So a CEO today is dealing with not just the same issues that a CEO, you know, a decade ago is dealing with, but then also, I mean, we take current events also global pandemic, also racial injustice. Also shareholders from all like customers care. I mean, Uber what was an amazing to me and one of the reasons I fell in love with the company is how much of the riders cared about how the drivers were treated. I don't think 10 years ago, one stakeholder was arguing on behalf of another stakeholder. So it's, I think that the leadership of organizations that their scope has really expanded dramatically.

Jacob Morgan 08:29
Okay, so scope is changed. What about as far as like, leadership skills or how people think about leadership? Do you see things there?

Frances 08:38
Yeah, I think that you have to really be a generalist today, but having had experiences with deep knowledge, so it's impossible to be a CEO today without deep financial understanding. It's impossible without deep strategic without deep marketing. So I would it's much less usual today to have someone who came up General Manager, General Manager, General Manager, you'll see many more CEOs today where their previous job may have been a CFO. And I think that that's, I think that's less. I think that was less common in the past.

Jacob Morgan 09:18
Okay, so leadership, you definitely, and I agree. I mean, I, even in my book, I found that to be the case from a lot of the CEOs I interviewed, they would say, you know, there are some things that are the same, but there are also a lot of things that are very, very different. So things things have definitely changed. So you mentioned some of what's going on today. And by the time most people are listening to the audio version of this, it will be weeks after the the current events, but for those of you watching

live, you can see obviously it's live. But those of you listening right now the protests around George Floyd are going on, you know, the still Coronavirus, the pandemic is going on. So maybe we can touch on that a little bit. Francis and what you think that means for for leaders as well.

Frances 10:01

Yeah. So I think that this moment in time, so the, the stuff around George Floyd, which is, you know, we all saw the murder of someone. What's different about it than all of the other instances of this that have been far too common, at least in the United States is that for whatever reason we were, we all seem to be sharing the same breath, the same video screen, like all of us experienced it. At the same time, we had pretty similar experiences. I don't know if that's because we're just coming out of a, well we're not coming out of but we're in the midst of a global pandemic that is affecting all of us around the world in pretty similar ways. But for whatever reason, we were, we were ready to experience this at the same time. And so that's been quite extraordinary to me. And then one of the things we talked about in the book is that, like, we our job is to make other people better And we will win if we can make more and more varied people better. And so the more varied that was our way of making, you know, really calling inclusion and diversity as strong competitive advantage levers. And then we see this incredible racial injustice going on, and it puts even a sharper focus on it. So one of the things we talked about is, what does inclusion mean and we use an inclusion dial and it's, it goes that like, despite any difference, I represent, white or black, like if I'm black and in a sea of white employees, it's, I will feel included if I'm first feel safe, regardless of any difference I represent. If I then feel welcome, regardless of any difference I represent, and then it turns the corner to competitive advantage if I'm celebrated precisely because of the difference I represent. And then if when cherished in every corner of the organization? Well, I have to say what's different today than even when we wrote the book is that that safety part, we used to skip over pretty quickly. I mean, I, I would use a story of how I got asked from HBS if I would go and teach in a Middle Eastern country, and I said no, because it was illegal to be gay there. And I didn't feel safe. And the senior leadership at the school at the time said, Oh, you don't have to worry about that. They're gonna roll out the red carpet for you. And I was like, No, no, no, there is no amount of welcome that makes up for safety, right. Well, we are seeing like, the lack of safety, all of us today. And here's what we know. If I'm feeling unsafe, it's not up to me to fix the situation. It's up to you if you're feeling safe. And if you're feeling unsafe, it's up to me. And so when we see all of this racial injustice, I think what's we're learning now look at the amazing CEOs that are stepping up From every organization that we can imagine, all saying that we are now going to take action like this is now this is racism, not a black person's problem, gender is not a women's problem. Like it's, we are now going to take action on behalf and honestly, we're tragically sorry. And this is one of the other things that we've learned is that if you want successful change, I've only ever see it work when three things occur. And we now need successful change based on this George Floyd moment and all of the surrounding, but it's when we honor the past when we have a clear and compelling change mandate, and when we have a rigorous and optimistic way forward. Well, if we look at race in the United States, we have never really honored the past. And we don't have in the past in an organization and you'll see like somebody wants to change something, those that were here before. You are just gonna godfather like keep pulling you back and honor the past we need to do that we have a clear and compelling change mandate. And now we need a super rigorous and a very optimistic way forward. And I think this is a call to people that are the heads of organizations. If you're going to lead an organization today, you have to have rigor and

optimism, or you probably should step aside for someone else to come in and do it. A very long answer to an awesomely short question.

Jacob Morgan 14:29
No, no, I love those three criteria, maybe we can unpack those a little bit because I think those are very applicable in the business setting because all the time people are talking about driving change and wanting change to happen and I've heard so many stories of leaders who end up making change happen and then you know, maybe 1,2,3 years later another leader comes in and they want to change everything that that other leader changed. Which is non stop cycle of like, yeah, I'm you know what to call it, but it's just revolving.

Frances 15:00
Yeah, yeah. And I think and that's exactly right. And so what we have found is that if you want sustainable change, if you come in and honor the past it, it calms down people that were there before you, and I think they're going to be there after you, by the way, calms people down, that you're not just bringing this work over here. So now I'm going to apply it here because our context is different. When you honor the past, you're honoring the context. And I think that's really important. So one of the things when I got to Uber, it was you know, there were some people that were super super mad at Travis and that is like, their right. But it was no way we were going to change Uber if we didn't honor the amazing early history of Uber and everything that happened up until that really tragic blog, where Susan Fowler like, exposed to everyone that horrible, horrible Sexual harassment and mismanagement that was going on. So I don't I've never seen change, take hold without honoring the past as an organization or as a society. But I've seen lots of people who come in to your point and they want to say like, I'm like, you know, I'm a change agent. So I'm going to come in and do everything different. No, no, no. This is, again, our definition of leadership is to make people better as a result of your presence and have it last into your absence. You too, are going to be part of the past. So you know, honor the past.

Jacob Morgan 16:33
Talk a little bit about how that works. I don't know if you have any real life examples or stories of what honouring the past looks like is it you know, you call an all hands meeting and you just say, Hey, you know, I know this is what happened before. It was great. Thank you for doing that. But now we're going this way. What does it actually look like?

Frances 16:50
So I think honor looks like really sincere and really specific, detailed nuanced. Talking about the past Again and again and again, not gonna, not as a history lesson, but we're doing this. Some of you will remember that we did this before, here's what happened. Here's what the awesome people did like, it's when we honor the past, I want us to learn the lessons blame no one. And I want to celebrate individuals. So I want to credit lots and lots and lots of individuals. And if I have anything bad to say about the past, I want to it's not individuals, it's we as a collective, and here are the lessons that we learned from it. So being a student of the past, but with understanding that it is fueling progress. So I'll give you an example when we were at when I was at HBS. And we were turning around the culture at HBS. We have the HBS case method. And then we introduced the HBS field methods. So the whole history of HBS had been large group discussion, and we introduce small group experiential. Some

people working horrified that we would think of doing it. And we could have come in and been very clumsy and said, Oh, this is the new way. And, and that would have, we would still be re litigating it. If we had done that. Instead we came in, we're like, Look, this is a compliment. Turns out that we want more and more varied people to thrive. Only some people thrive on day one, if the case method if we give them small group experiential, that will help more people find their voice in various ways. And so and then that will make the case method better. Like we didn't put down anything to make ourselves look good. We just really showed ourselves as a compliment. And I think that's what we want to do.

Jacob Morgan 18:40
Yeah, it sort of reminds me of like, honoring your personal history culture, where you came from family, you know, even even some of you know family members might not necessarily be alive or the past obviously not, not the present, but you can still talk about it and you know, relive tell stories. And make it you know, relevant in today's world.

Frances 19:03
And I would say if you're trying to change, that is an absolutely necessary criteria. Because otherwise the people from the past will pull you back to the past again and again and they'll wait you out. You'll leave and they'll just reverse it immediately.

Jacob Morgan 19:18
Okay. All right. So that was the first step is honor the past. And the second step was,

Frances 19:24
you have to have a clear and compelling change mandate, essentially answering the question why now? If you want to change, why don't have to change right now, can I change later? Because no one is going to come knocking at your door under normal circumstances and say change now. That's one of the amazing thing that's going on now. All around the US. Everyone is knocking on people's doors saying change now. We should take advantage of that we have a clear and compelling change mandate. for Uber, the press provided a clear and compelling change mandate like they investigative journalists made it so like you read the newspaper, the company had to change. Normally that's the hardest thing for a company to come up with. Because if things are going well, how do you convince people that we should change right now, what I normally say is, if you can't do it on one page, with a lot of the page taken up by figures, you're not gonna be able to do it. So show me that, you know, this number used to be going up and it's now going down, of course, like, show me something that is super compelling. Otherwise, people will have other things that they would prefer to have as their top priority.

Jacob Morgan 20:33
So how would you go about doing that sort of creating that compelling vision or change mandate? Where do you begin?

Frances 20:43
Yeah, so I think that it's, listen, if Walmart opens up next door, you have it. Right? If you're a retailer, and they everybody sees it. I think right now we're having protests we saw the murder of someone in the streets, we have a clear and compelling mandate. But let's say you're a company and things are

going well, but you foresee the future. And I think this is one of the reasons that Jack Welch was so celebrated at GE, as a great CEO, is that when the company was doing well, He instituted massive change. The real amazing part of that is that he gave people a clear and compelling reason why if we weren't number one or number two in every market we serve, our future is in grave jeopardy. And he convinced people of that by talking about it in various ways all the time. So I think if Walmart doesn't open up next door, you have a bigger job to do, of doing it but if I don't walk around with like my fast paced pulse, you're not going to get my entire heart and soul into the change.

Jacob Morgan 21:49
It's funny that you mentioned Jack Welch because I feel like a lot of people have a love hate relationship with him. Where I've heard several people say he was a you know, one of the greatest leaders And then there are other you know, maybe I won't mention any names, but there are other authors out there who have called him a bastard who said he's the first one who created mass layoffs. And if it wasn't for him, companies wouldn't be doing that today. So it's, I mean, I'm, it's it's really weird to hear.

Frances 22:19
And I don't I can't add to either. I mean, those are both, I'm sure informed points of view. I'm not a student of that. I don't, I wouldn't come out either way. But here's the thing I think nobody will. Nobody will argue with He instituted change when it didn't appear like it was necessary. No question, no question that he did that and I have to tell you, when the organization was close to being on top, He instituted change. Now some people are going to say the bastard and some people are gonna say, Oh, yeah, but there isn't any question that he did it and he he created out of his mind a clear and compelling change mandate because he saw the future and was terrified for it. And then he found a way to make that effective in the present. Now again, whether or not you should have or not. I'll leave that up to other scholars.

Jacob Morgan 23:07
What does a compelling change change mandate look like? Is it a couple sentences? Is it something about fear? Or is it hope or like, if you have any guidelines

Frances 23:20
Yah, well, the hope comes in the optimistic way forward. It's okay to have a little bit of fear in the clear and compelling change mandate, which is, you know, our revenue went off a cliff, a new entrant, a new regulation, a new technology has changed the landscape. So something that is disrupting our what's going on, so we have the good old days, and then something is disrupting that because otherwise, we should just keep in the honored past. So like, why do we have to change I think that's what but if you can't describe it super crisply, then in like with one page, people are gonna really just argue for the past.

Jacob Morgan 24:03
And I suppose this is also true for individuals because you know, it's one thing to change your company, but a lot of the times leaders need to change themselves. They need to learn new things, embrace new skills in mind, or even just as individuals, we need to, you know,

Frances 24:17

yeah, in fact here's what I'd say, I don't care about the leaders quite so much as I want the leaders to help develop their people. . And so they're going to want to inject a change, a reason to change inside their people. I'm not as concerned about the leader. But the development of people is our greatest asset in any company, but convincing people why should we? Why should we learn new skills now? It's easier golly, I should probably learn how to code today, even if I'm not going to code because the whole world is based on that rigorous if then else statement, and so I should do it. So helping people realize why they should be developed, I think is a is a great is a great thing to do.

Jacob Morgan 25:03

What about just individuals who are not leaders? They because, you know, a lot of the times people are like, you know, I should do something different, I should learn something new, but they don't have that compelling, just personal dream.

Frances 25:15

And I think if you don't have the clear and compelling mandate, it's like willpower and I'm just not sure that willpower is all that generally, I'm not sure willpower is scalable.

Jacob Morgan 25:24

Okay, so you do need a little bit of willpower to be able to make change happen yourself?

Frances 25:28

I think so. I think the clear and compelling change mandate makes the need for willpower go down. It's all willpower if you don't have a good change mandate.

Jacob Morgan 25:38

Got it. Okay. I thought maybe we could shift gears a little bit. I know a lot of people are very, very fascinated with with Uber and probably want to hear a little bit more about like the inner workings of you know, what exactly did you do there? Why did they bring you in? So can you share a little bit about first maybe why were you brought into Uber And maybe you can give some context around what is it that you did to try to change Uber for the better?

Frances 26:07

Sure. And I think that so it was, we just finished doing a turnaround of the culture at HBS. And so HBS had had a long history of having demographic tendencies associated with the students that would thrive. So men had higher grades, men had higher self reported satisfaction than women, as one example. We set out to change that and we're able to close all of those gaps in a year. Importantly, it has lasted several leaders since then. So to your point, it didn't stop with the next people that came in and the next people that came in, although at some point, I think there is a statute of limitations maybe after four or five leaders like, it has to be redone. And what we learned there is that we close the gap and satisfaction between men and women, but the satisfaction of men went up as well. So there was like a 35 point gap on a scale of 100. So the women got a lot more satisfied and the men also became more satisfied. And so we had learned so I had been coaching companies how to do it, but this was the

first time I did it as a leader. And by I, I mean a team but it's the first time I participated in it, like instead of advising people, so it was that had just happened. And then the, the challenges that Uber had were on culture and different people thriving for sure on gender side. And so that's why they asked if I would come in is because I had been successful in advising and then I had done it once. And so when I got there, the first thing I did was first look to see, are there like bad people here because then I don't want to stay. And if you notice what happened in Uber is we separated from 20 people in June of 2017. There were almost 15,000 employees So the number of, you know, bad fits was like a two small handfuls, which is super unusual. Like it's not if I read the newspaper, it looks like there are going to be thousands wasn't thousand. But here's the insight that we had, of all of the complaints that came in because once the Susan Fowler blog came out, Uber and I wasn't there yet, they called me after it, but they opened up every channel, and this is what the company does after there's a crisis. You know, the hotline, the the app, the phone that asked me anything, meetings, like it just surface from everywhere, all the problems. And of all the problems that were surfaced well over 90% had to do with a person and their manager. There were 3000 managers at Uber. So they were either 3000 bad people, or Uber was doing something systematically to not set managers up for success. it very quickly found found out that it was the latter. And here's what was going on, I get hired as an individual contributor. And then the company was growing so fast that like, five minutes later, you get promoted to a manager. You didn't have any. And then five minutes after that, by the way, a manager of managers turns out that management is a skill, a skill that can be taught, but no one was teaching folks. So we had we had to teach people how to manage, like, how to give effective feedback, how to set goals, all of the basics, including then how to be inclusive how to set people up for success. So that was one part is that it was clear that managers were at the tip of the spear where the problems were, but it wasn't their fault and education would solve it. So we...go ahead.

Jacob Morgan 29:49
I was gonna say I love that. You mentioned that so I hear I have copy, I always. So this is my new book, which came out just a couple months before yours.

Frances 29:59
Oh, good. Congratulations, it's beautiful.

Jacob Morgan 30:02
Oh, thanks, I had a designer to do this one. So I found a lot of the same stuff that you found in your book. So I interviewed 140 CEOs and surveyed 14,000 people with LinkedIn. And I found a lot of the same stuff to be true. And one of the big challenges I found is that a lot of Well, a few things first, a lot of leaders thought they were doing a very good job of practicing the necessary skills and mindsets required to be good leaders. But the people who worked for these leaders said that their leaders were doing a terrible job of practicing. And then the second thing I found is that most people actually don't get into any kind of leadership training until well being in the prime in their career. Like you don't get into leadership training until you're in your late 30s, early 40s. But you become a leader at some point in your mid to late 20s. Your first time being

30:53
Yah, managers were like everything in Uber in terms of what was happening.

Jacob Morgan 30:59
Yeah Because most people think that you can only get leadership or management training for the exclusive few after you've kind of climbed up the corporate ladder, which is insane.

Frances 31:13
So if we debunk that myth in this hour, that would be amazing.

Jacob Morgan 31:17
Yeah, I think everybody, everybody should have the leadership in the management training. Like why wouldn't you want everybody to have these skills and mindsets?

Frances 31:24
But if you look at when we got to Uber, for example, it's 3000 people in like, over 100 countries. So now you have, so you can't go and like do it in person. So then here's the amazing technological thing. And this is like the amazing part of Uber and they partnered with HBS. And it's an amazing part of HBS HBS had a studio, they still have the studio, it's called the HBS live studio. And there are 60 screens in the studio. And if I as a faculty member go in there, you can log in from anywhere around the world, you get your whole entire screen, it after five minutes will feel like we're all in one classroom. Together, it's amazing. that already existed. But when I went to Uber and I was like, Oh my gosh, there's 3000 people around the world I like I said to HBS Live, look, I know you're optimized for 60 people, but we want to teach 2500 people at a time, will you and they were like, nope, we're optimized for, like, we'll take all the technological risk. HBS is so good at perfection, we were like, We will take the risk. So the tech team at Uber partnered with the tech team at HBS, which was thrilled to innovate. And then we learned how to do it with 60 people live but then 2500 people who we called in the sky deck who could observe and have their own chat, it was amazing. We did reflection from everyone, everyone learned the same amount from one to 2500. So then, now you can now education is no longer a problem. Now you can educate the frontline because I couldn't fly in 3000 people, or it would be like I'd have to turn things off but We could do this, you know, for four hours, from seven to 11 at night or from nine to 12. In fact, Uber was so committed to this, that we held every class repeated three times, so that we could do it in convenient time zones for everyone around the world. Because one of the problems Uber had had before is that they didn't reveal as much empathy as they needed to. Neither to the drivers nor to the employees and all instances and by our saying to people in Asia, look, we the HBS faculty got up at two in the morning to teach them. HBS I believe, had never gotten up at two in the morning before.

Frances 33:40
HBS faculty thought it was the most amazing group of students they were in and I still think it's the greatest learners I've ever been around. They just were so grateful. And, and the need for the language was the need for the education was so palpable to them that they soak it in and so we did leadership and strategy to great effect in that

Jacob Morgan 34:00
Okay, can you talk a little bit about some of the things that you were teaching these, these leaders?

Frances 34:04

Sure. Yeah. So listen at Uber, the first thing I saw when we got there is trust broken down with different various stakeholders. Class one, how do you build and rebuild trust? Because if you and that's also why we open the book with trust, if you don't have a foundation of trust, no amount, not nothing else I'm going to teach you and leadership is going to matter. So it's not about you, how to build and rebuild trust. That was the first thing we taught. The next thing we taught is how do you set one other person up for success? Just one person. We use stories from ancient Rome in the book, we call it love, but it's really, how do I set get the best out of you? And that's by having high standards and deep devotion? And there's challenges because sometimes we think they trade off and they don't, but it was we taught them how to set one other person up for success. So you could do each of your direct reports one at a time. Then it got super fun. How do you set a team of people up for success? What is the best composition of a team? And what we found, and I'm sure it's what you found as well with your work is that we're really good when the golden rule applies. So for the subset of the world that I can treat them exactly how I want to be treated. That's like easy leadership. But the second we introduced variation. So that the golden rule is a terrible idea. Because treat, I shouldn't treat you how I want to be treated, I should treat you how you want to be treated. So then we got into the composition and how to build a really robust team and how to bring out the best in the team. And we had Amy Edmondson come in she was like the foremost authority on teams and Sadaal would come in and she would teach about Global's it was just all amazing. So that was the leadership part and and then we taught people in leadership, okay, given our global context, at the time, inequality was the biggest thing that was going on. Like in the context of inequality, when we're in this global company, what's the right way? Like, what's the right way to lead given our context? Today, it would be in the midst of global pandemic and also in the midst of a racial injustice. So those are the specific things we taught on leadership. And also by Oh, sorry, also, how do you design a culture to guide discretionary behavior? So we spent a lot of time on how to design and shepherd a culture.

Jacob Morgan 35:13

I was gonna ask if there were was there like a specific emphasis on certain skills or mindsets like emotional intelligence or

Frances 36:40

There was, but it was embedded in these tools. So trust, too, in order to build trust, you have to have authenticity, logic and empathy. So we taught authenticity, logic and empathy within those skills. When you're setting someone else up for success. You need to create the conditions for them to be vulnerable. It doesn't mean I have to be vulnerable, although that is one technique. But I have to set the conditions so that you can be vulnerable. So we, we focused on each of these. There were emotional and logical, I guess those were the two parts. It was a set of skills, and a set of emotions that we were that we were bringing out in people.

Jacob Morgan 37:17

Okay, make sense. And these were, I guess, these were ongoing classes, I guess in person and virtual?

Frances 37:27

So we piloted in person, but then the main education because of the distributed company was all done through the studio. So here's what we did. We designed like a 30 hour curriculum, something like that. We said we're going to pilot this 30 hour curriculum over 60 days, which is insane. Like imagine like you're doing your job and then over 60 days, you're going to take 30 hours of a super rigorous curriculum. We, we thought of the, you know, between 10 and 15,000 employees, a couple hundred would sign up. 6000

Jacob Morgan 37:57
Wow.

Frances 37:58
6000. So I have made the mistake of saying, look, after every class, feel free to write a reflection, and I will respond to your reflection. I got 30,000 reflections, I was like, Oh my gosh, I thought I was going to get a few hundred reflections. So, so we piloted it, but it's now going on. And it's like third year, and we did the first year. And then there were gratulations sessions of going after that. So it's, and that's the thing. I'm really impressed with the work no matter what challenges they're going through, they're still investing in the development of their people. This is a place where they've honored the past, and they are not going to go back to learning those lessons again.

Jacob Morgan 38:36
Okay. Very cool. So I don't know if you can see on the screen, there's this this question that came in from Scott. And I'll read it because those who are not live Yeah. He says, I like to believe I am. I've always been good with change until I went from being an independent contributor to being a leader of or being a leader overnight. And one of the biggest challenges I encountered with this change was going from being the doer to leader in the ability to step back from the day to day operations and lead my team was the hardest change for me in the process. have you encountered this before? And what advice would you give to someone experiencing this issue now? How do you go from being the doer to the leader.

Frances 39:15
Yeah. So and Scott, this is so good. So when it's all about me, I might think that, well, let me do it. If it's all about you and your development, I'm never going to try to do it before you I'm going to try to develop you because I know that the collection of you can accomplish way more than I can as an individual contributor. So the first thing to do is if someone is doing something not as well as you want, resist all temptation to do it yourself. Imagine a world where you can't possibly do it to yourself. So the best the best thing you can do is develop people and help make them better so that they collectively can accomplish much more than you can. So it's he was a great doer. Pretend you're no longer a great doer and you're now the coach. You're no longer allowed out on the court. The only thing you can do is coach, the good news is it's not just five people in the basketball court, you can have more and more and more people.

Jacob Morgan 40:08
Yeah. So and I struggle with that too. Sometimes, Scott, so I have a small team of 10 people that I work with. And sometimes I see somebody doing something, I'm like, Oh my god, like, you're gonna explode.

I could just go in there and fix it. And I'm like, Alright, just don't do it yourself. Just communicate with them.

Frances 40:29
Yeah, like a 10 people, you're kind of close to maybe being able to do it yourself. But if you imagine I'm going to have 100 people, or 200 people or 500 people, and that's the world you want to imagine because as you go on in your career, that's likely what's gonna happen.

Jacob Morgan 40:41
Yeah, yeah.

Frances 40:42
Great question, Scott.

Jacob Morgan 40:43
Yes, Scott great question. Hopefully, that that piece of advice works there. So just pretend like you're, you're trapped behind a force field. You can't be the doer, you got to be a coach. Okay, so jumping back to Uber. Did you find that Or even just in general, Uber some of the other companies that you worked with? Is there some stuff that you have done for leaders, which did not work? So any anything that failed?

Frances 41:11
Yeah, yeah, I'll tell you a big one that failed, was that so when I got to Uber and then two other companies that had broken cultures, I would look at their cultural values. And these are like, these were companies that were really led by their cultural values. So like cultural value A people would do things and say hashtag that cultural value, like these are like really culture driven organizations. And when the cultural when the culture was broken, what would happen is some of the cultural values would be weaponized. So my favorite example is a is a cultural value that's default to trust, which is a beautiful cultural value, right and saying, let's give each other the benefit of the doubt. It's like exactly how a company in a society should work. When it gets weaponized, that means that people are using it for reasons other than Let's give it the benefit of the doubt. In fact, what happened was more senior people would want to stop Junior people from questioning them. And so they'd say, default to trust dude. Like, like stop questioning, that's not benefit of the doubt that was you know repurposing it for your own selfish needs what we call weaponizing. I thought in the beginning, if the cultural value was a good value, we simply needed to re re communicate its intent. So just have to remind people that default to trust really meant no, no, no, it's supposed to be used for this. It's supposed to be used to give the benefit of the doubt. Absolutely doesn't work. There is no amount of re education. Once a cultural value has been weaponized, let it go. And come up with new cultural values and this time, don't have it from the founder handed on down but develop them from everyone. So I participated a lot in the re education because I felt the cultural values were beautiful. And I was again, yeah, that shouldn't be weaponized. As soon as it's weaponized. It's on the other side of the force field to use your earlier analogy.

Jacob Morgan 43:12
When you say weaponized, what..So I guess somebody's using the value as a way to

Frances 43:18
For me to get my own way. So like, if I want if you're questioning me, and I don't want to be questioned, I would say look, just default to trust. That wasn't the intended default to trust.

Jacob Morgan 43:28
Okay.

Frances 43:30
Yeah, at Uber had a very famous one of tow stepping. And that was meant that if you have a good idea and you're being silenced by your manager, it's okay to step on your managers toes to surface the idea up in the organization because we never want to lose a good idea. Well, some people started stepping on the toes of people going down the organization.

Jacob Morgan 43:50
I see. So your recommendation in that case is if somebody is or if you find that the value is being weaponized, you just get rid of the value all together.

Frances 43:58
You can't like there's no amount of re-education. And that was that took me a long time that took me too long to learn. There is no amount of re education that will work.

Jacob Morgan 44:07
Even if people are like, Oh, it's such a great value. Like, you said default to trust. That sounds like a wonderful value.

Frances 44:13
Once it's been weaponized, there is no reclaiming it.

Jacob Morgan 44:17
Done. Give it up. Yeah. Okay. All right. I think that's a great one. I think in the book, you also have something called the trust triangle. So I thought we could talk about that, because I love that visual. And then you also have like this wobble factor, which I thought was a really great way to visualize what that is. So can you talk about those.

Frances 44:37
Sure. So what we learned is that when trust is broken, or when you want to build trust, trust as a monolithic thing is super hard to move. But when we learned that there are three component parts to trust, Authenticity, logic and empathy. What became really cool about that is not only did we know it's three component parts, but each one One of those is very actionable. So I don't know how to move trust. But I know how to overcome a challenge in authenticity. I know how if somebody is doubting my logic, I know how to overcome that someone's doubting my empathy. I know how to overcome that. So when we do this exercise with people, we ask them, we ask everyone, please imagine a time and I've

done this in rooms with 5000 people in rooms with five people. And I if you don't mind, let's do it with you live right now.

Jacob Morgan 45:30
Sure, let's do it.

Frances 45:32
So I'm going to say to you, your trusted most of the time, right, you're, you're well respected, you're awesome, you know,

Jacob Morgan 45:38
I don't know about any of those things. I hope.

Frances 45:41
So here's what I'm going to ask you to do. And this is going to be a little hard and you're doing it live, but I think I think it's gonna go well bring up into your mind's eye a recent time when you didn't experience as much trust as you were trying to. So you're trusting. But when was a time when people didn't trust you either a person People and we're gonna call them your skeptics. Maybe it was, yeah. So put that in your mind's eye, I don't even need to know what it is. But having in your mind's eye could have been at home could have been at work. It could have been anywhere. So now I'm going to give you three choices to identify what got in their way of trusting you. Was it that they doubted that you were being the real you. Because if you're delivering a message that you don't believe in, we sniff that out in a second, we don't trust you. Or do they think your idea wasn't very good? So that's why I don't trust you. Like you're not giving you the steering wheel there. Your logic didn't feel rigorous enough? Or did they feel like you were being too self distracted? This was all about you. I don't feel like you're in it for me. So was it authenticity, logic or empathy that got in the way?

Jacob Morgan 46:49
I don't think it was. It was authenticity, because I think people would say that I'm usually pretty authentic, I hope. I think usually when in I get this a lot, for example, and you probably might as well on online with like social media stuff that I share an idea, share an article put something out there. And it's very easy for people to kind of bombard you with negativity and just you know, this is garbage. This doesn't make any sense. And I think usually people critique the idea I haven't had or Yeah, haven't had so much around authenticity. I don't think around empathy, I think,

Frances 47:26
So it's the logic. Great. So let's, let's narrow in on this. If people so then in our language, we would say you have a logic wobble. That is wobble is what's getting in the way of your skeptics trusting you. Good news, we know how to first of all, we've had to overcome any of them, it's got to know which one it is for us to overcome it. So now, now we just have to double click one more time on the on logic. When people doubt my logic, they can doubt it for one of two reasons either I don't have very good logic and people are seeing that super clearly. There's a substance problem, or I have really good logic, and just communicating it ineffectively. That's a style problem. No reason to know if it's substance, or style is the

prescriptions are very different. One doesn't apply to the other. So what we would do then say is substance or is it style and then we will teach you how to overcome either of them.

Jacob Morgan 48:22
Got it? Okay. So really figuring it out. Yeah. I mean, I was thinking of another situation where this happens. So you know, one of the things that and you probably do this as well, you know, when you teach courses, so I have some like online courses that I've created over the past. And sometimes some courses will do really, really well. And sometimes other courses, regardless of how hard you try to get people to sign up for them, they don't do well. And you try to figure out is it like the messaging? Is it because the way I'm communicating the value of the course isn't there? Is it because people don't think the course aligns with who I am. So That's that happen. I've had that experience.

Frances 49:02
Yeah. And so and what I would say is, there's not one generic way to improve, of course, you have to really get down to the micro diagnose. But here's the cool thing about trust. We now know all the component parts, we know how to get to the root of all of it, and we can give you very, in fact, we do give you very specific prescriptions for how to overcome it. So we haven't met someone who wants to build more trust who hasn't been able to. But here's where we have failed. I can't create in you the desire to build more trust. So when someone says, Oh, go help that person be more trusted. I can't. I can only if somebody comes to me and say they want. I can't. It's got to be pull. It doesn't work and push.

Jacob Morgan 49:43
Got it. Okay. So the trick, I mean, you talk about all three of those of those wobbles in the book. And I suppose you can have several wobbles at the same time.

Frances 49:51
you can but we find that you typically have one in any short duration. I mean, you can and we can help overcome them. But usually if you have a logic problem, and let's say it's a communicative problem about logic, it's usually that over a bunch of that just keeps repeating itself, and we have really great prescriptions for how to overcome it.

Jacob Morgan 50:13
Okay, got it. Um, the other thing that I liked in the book, you have these, these four quadrants for leadership profile. And I thought this would be useful for people who are watching or listening, maybe we can go through those quadrants so that people can identify which area they fit in.

Frances 50:30
Yeah, so if, as a leader, I'm trying to set another person up for success, there's two levers I have to do it. I have to set high standards, very few people thrive in the absence of high standards. So I need to set high standards. I also need to reveal that I'm deeply devoted to your success. So if you imagine a two by two because this is going to be our quadrants of low to high standards on the vertical axis, and deep devotion and low devotion on the horizontal axis, here's the challenge. We all know that we want to set high standards and have deep devotion. But most of us when we set high standards, we don't

reveal that we're devoted to people. In fact, we get a little chilly, we get a little distance from people. And when we do show our deep devotion, we tend to insidiously lower the standards. So the quadrants the name of the quadrants are if I have high standards and low devotion, I'm in a position of severity. My reaction to being in a position of severity I set high standards for you, but you didn't feel I was devoted to your success. And then I get feedback that I wasn't like I was a little chilly. And so then I srambled to really deep devotion and low standards. That's the position of fidelity. And a lot of us spend a lot of our time going back and forth between severity, fidelity severity and fidelity. When I learn how to break out of that, that's when I get to justice and high standards and deep devotion puts us in a place of justice and then The missing link to your point of the four is that I have low standards and low devotion. That's neglect. And so is there anything in your life are you neglecting right now?

Jacob Morgan 52:11
Yeah, no, I mean, I was looking at this quadrant for a while actually, to see where, where I might fit in, or, I suppose not even where I think I fit in, but where other people feel I fit in.

Frances 52:23
That's exactly the question, and I

Jacob Morgan 52:25
Probably more interesting.

Frances 52:26
Yeah. And I think what we tell people is you're not done the exercise until you can fill people in your life and every one of those quadrants, all of us has the ability to be in every one of those quadrants. And a leader, we want you to be able to move into the quadrant of justice whenever you want. So you might not want to be in high standards, deep devotion for someone, but if you do we give you the tools to get there no matter what your starting point.

Jacob Morgan 52:51
Okay, got it, which, yeah, I mean, the justice quadrant I suppose would probably be the best one for people to be in. So part of this, you talk a little bit about empathy. Earlier, so I thought maybe we could touch a little bit on empathy and self awareness. Which I think are pretty important factors. I think you've talked about them in your book as well. But do you think that's essential for making any of this stuff happen.

Frances 53:14
I do. So trust is the foundation, which I think trust is the foundation. Empathy is one of the three parts of trust. So if you can't reveal your, if people doubt, your empathy, you're just not going to be able to do very much. And the way to think about whether you're going to doubt my empathy, so I went to Uber and one of the most astonishing things I saw when I was in the seat, I went and was facilitating the senior team in between the Memorial Day to Labor Day when they were, the CEOs were, weren't there. One of the most amazing things I saw is one while we were having a meeting, people were texting. That's not good. And because you're showing that you're self distracted, and you're saying I more important to you, then I found out that people were texting one another in the meeting. That's not good,

too super toxic, because now you're making it unsafe for everyone else. So we agreed, and we came up with a norm that we put technology off in a way while we're there. But go into a meeting today. And you can see this on zoom. If people are present to the present to other people, if I think if I'm here for you, and you can feel it. That's empathy. If I look down, and now you told me before this meeting that you are going to be because your multitasking

Jacob Morgan 54:33
I'm looking at questions and comments. Yes.

Frances 54:35
Yeah. So you're doing it on purpose. But let's say that we didn't know that. And each time you were looking away, we thought that you were doing something selfishly about you. The first thing to go would be trust, because we would see a lack of empathy. You can see the presence and absence of empathy in a meeting in about 180 seconds.

Jacob Morgan 54:55
Wow.

Frances 54:56
So what it means for individuals is I encourage you not to Combining extra technology into meetings, because it is super hard not to be lured into being self distracted. And self destruction is the enemy of empathy.

Jacob Morgan 55:10
And there's a you know, people always need to differentiate. And I talked about this too, the difference between hearing and listening, where hearing is just the unconscious act of letting sound into your ear. But listening is like you said, practicing empathy being there present aware, making the conversation feel collaborative, not

Frances 55:27
Definitely doesn't happen when you're also on an iPhone.

Jacob Morgan 55:30
No, I mean, we've all had that experience, right? Where you look at somebody and they're looking back at you, but you could just mentally tell that their. You know, who knows where they are in their head, but but you got the eyes?

Frances 55:41
Yeah. You got the eyes. And what I was going to say is, they're not gonna bring out the best in you. They are advocating their position of leadership.

Jacob Morgan 55:47
Yeah, yep. Yep. So we only have a couple minutes left. So I have maybe one or two questions for you.

Frances 55:52
Sure.

Jacob Morgan 55:53
So first is Do you have any advice for people who might be thinking okay, I work for or with a bad leader. What about that?

Frances 56:00
Yes. So what you do is buffer that bad leader from everyone else. So that's the first thing is that so like if they're your leader, please your choices are you can dampen their effects of badness keep them neutral, or amplify buffer like dampen how bad they are so that you can absorb as much of it as possible.

Jacob Morgan 56:21
So you have to take one for the team so to speak.

Frances 56:24
Yeah, I think def definitely and, and, and I'm gonna make it even harder, and you're not allowed to throw them under the bus as you do it.

Jacob Morgan 56:32
Oh okay. So don't say,

56:35
No, if you do that people aren't going to trust you because they're going to doubt your empathy just going to be in a different direction.

Jacob Morgan 56:40
But you also don't need to praise them to make it look like you're kissing up,

Frances 56:42
No because then you'll lack authenticity.

Jacob Morgan 56:45
Okay. Okay. So shield them from or shield their effect. Okay, so you shield their effect, but they're still a bad leader. They're still driving you nuts. They're still toxic. They're still negatively impacting you. Do you quit? Do you try to work with him?

Frances 56:59
Oh, I wouldn't. Quitting is a long way down the road. So first of all, try to diagnose Why are they a bad leader? And is it that they they don't care? Is it substance or style? Is it that they don't care or they do care, but they're having a communication problem. And then here's the way to bring out the best in someone. Give sincere and specific praise when they're being a good leader. Don't bring up when they're being a bad leader just give sincere and specific, oh my gosh, in the meeting yesterday, the

team was on fire afterwards. And it was after you said this, and this is after you did this in this give people a chance to know what they should do repeatedly. So educate them as a result of giving positive reinforcement of what you want them to do more and more of, that's usually very effective.

Jacob Morgan 57:47
Would you confront your leader.

Frances 57:51
I don't give constructive advice until I have a very big reservoir of positive reinforcement. So if you're going To give constructive advice, and that's very different than confront, I don't really believe in confrontation. But if you're going to give someone advice to act differently to get a different outcome, I think the ratio has to be at least five to one. So every piece of constructive advice I want to give, I have to already have given five pieces of positive reinforcement.

Jacob Morgan 58:17
Okay, so I like that idea of a reservoir. So think of it sort of like, I don't like a tip jar or a swear jar, where you got to wait, wait for that jar to get full before you can sort of take it out and take it in for the one

Frances 58:31
giving you positive reinforcement that's super sincere and specific. What I'm also saying is, I see you, yeah, like I really see you, if I really see you, you will start to open to constructive advice.

Jacob Morgan 58:42
Okay. So five to one ratio, good. Um, from a lot of the organizations that you work with, from leaders that you've advised, what would you say some of the toughest challenges are, is it always about trust and psychological safety is not what they struggle with the most.

Frances 58:59
I think they struggle with the most it's about them. It's not about you. Trust, you're bringing up psychological safety, which is the the fearless organization is a magnificent book written by Amy Edmondson which is just like, get that book. And then I think that your other point of delegation, like I like my job is to set you up for success, which means I'm going to take the blame and I'm going to give you the credit. So, and if you think about the leader, like look at how the pandemic has played out, I mean, like, if you look at the countries that have done well in the pandemic, and look at the leaders, you can line it up between leaders that it was about them to leaders when it wasn't about them, and their success in the pandemic. I think if you look at it, like we have the whole range going on in 2020 around the world, I think that it's hard for some people to make it not about them. For some people that's supernatural.

Jacob Morgan 59:56
Yeah, it's very weird. Alright, and very last question for you. And this is more around things that leaders can do for their people. So there are a lot of leaders who listen to the podcast. Let's say they just finished listening to this episode. They're thinking, all right, I'm gonna take some of Frances' advice. I

want to become that better leader. I want to do some of the things that she's talking about. What are some steps that they can take immediately, like things that they can do?

Frances 60:26
Yeah, do a personal trust diagnostic so that you can see where you're wobbling, so that you can consciously overcome it.

Jacob Morgan 60:34
And how did they do that personal trust diagnostic.

Frances 60:36
Exactly the exercise I just did with you, although they can read it. It's in chapter two of the book, but it's literally come up with the last time you weren't trusted diagnosis that authenticity, logic or empathy, and then we give the prescriptions for how to overcome it. So, identify your wobble and have the prescription to how to overcome it. I'll even say this to your listeners. If the book isn't sufficient contact me directly. I can contact me directly Anyway, I'm on LinkedIn. But I have I like we tried to be completely exhaustive in this. And if we're not tell me and I will help you overcome your wobble, the first thing to do is to overcome your trust wobble. The second thing I would say is that look at your organization and say, Are there some people that some types of people that thrive more than others? Are there systematic patterns of who thrives and if there are set out to begin to close those gaps, and I don't want to make thrive and amorphous thing thrive is like super easy achievement and sentiment. So the equivalent of HBS students GPA and satisfaction, whatever that is in your company, if men are thriving more than women, if White employees are like wherever it is, if you have gaps, worry and take action. If you don't have gaps. Don't worry about your culture. You're doing just fine.

Jacob Morgan 62:01
Okay identify the gaps, I suppose next close the gaps. That's where you start to do some of the investigative. All right. Well, I love that advice. I think it's a pretty actionable I mean, the trust wobble, just that one concept, I think is super clear for people to get. So I that was one of my favorite sections from the book along with the four quadrants. So I mean, maybe to wrap up, you can just let people know, where can they go to get in touch with you. You mentioned your LinkedIn, anything that you want to mention for people to check out, please feel free to do so.

Frances 62:31
Okay, thank you. So yesterday was the book launch. So Unleash that beautiful book that you have. And Arianna Huffington was kind enough that on the front of the book, it says the Definitive Guide to leadership today, it's not in your version, but it's in the new in the new version that came out. And so yeah, so I and, Anne I tried to put everything we know in here, so that's one way. LinkedIn. I i social media has scared me for my whole life. I just joined in January. I took my toe in the water in January, I'm on LinkedIn, I like it. So you can I post there and if you direct message me on LinkedIn, I respond to everything. So that's a great way to interact with me. And then if you're wondering like what's going on in my world, the leaders guide, and maybe we can, we can show this but they're the leaders guide is www.theleadersguide.com that's where we put everything. So that's like the book website and we put all of our resources there, sample chapter, things like that.

Jacob Morgan 63:35
Ok, theleadersguide.com, I'm gonna check that out, too. Okay, very cool. And congratulations on joining LinkedIn. That's a very big milestone.

Frances 63:41
It's a very big milestone. And so far, it's been since January, and I have no wounds.

Jacob Morgan 63:48
All right, I'm totally gonna add you on LinkedIn. Right. Well, thank you so much for taking time out of your day to join me and share some of your advice and work you've been doing it

Frances 63:59
It was a pleasure. And thank you for one having the podcast. And two thanks for the invitation. I really appreciate it.

Jacob Morgan 64:05
My pleasure. And thank you everyone for tuning in. Again. My guest has been Frances Frei, check out her brand new book. It's called Unleashed. And I love the subtitle, The Unapologetic Leader's Guide to Empowering Everyone Around You. And I'm sure I will see you all very very soon. Thanks again for watching.