

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.

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**Jacob Morgan 00:04**

Hey, everyone, thanks for tuning in to another conversation. Today I am joined by Kate Johnson, she is the president of Microsoft US. And we actually did a podcast together for the future of work. It was a couple months ago now, so Kate, thanks for joining me again today.

**Kate Johnson 00:20**

Thanks for having me, Jacob. Good to be here.

**Jacob 00:22**

Yeah. I'm glad to speak with you again. So really curious to get your perspective specifically around leadership, because a lot of people who are going to be watching this are either current or aspiring leaders. And I wanted to start off with why, why do you think you became a leader? Because I'm assuming you were surrounded by a lot of very smart and talented people, people who could have easily have taken the role that you have taken on as president of Microsoft US, but for some reason, you got the role and not anybody else. What makes you so special or unique?

**Kate 00:56**

Oh, wow, that's a you're starting with a PhD level before we even get the warm ups. How about you know, like,

**Jacob 01:03**

what's your favorite color?

**Kate 01:04**

What's your favorite color, yah. Gosh, um, so couple... That's a really complex question, because it's not like it's my first job. It's not like it's my first role. You know, I'm, I'm sort of in the back on the back nine, as they say, of my career. So it's a combination of experiences that I think are really well suited to the role of leading commercial transformation at Microsoft, you know, Satya, Judson Althoff, Jean-Philippe Courtois, they needed a leader of the US business that had a combination of things, big deal making, leading large teams, driving change, all of these things I've done in in different parts of my career. And so I kind of had the portfolio.

**Kate** 01:55

I think I'm also the first female president of Microsoft US. And so I think that having a diverse candidate was also important to them. So that's why I mean, the existential question of why are you a leader at all, I go all the way back to this notion that leadership does not necessarily mean managing people. Leadership is a kind of a state of mind. It's, and it's an important distinction, because I tell everybody in our organization, like I expect you to lead every day, I don't care how many people actually report in to you. And there are certain characteristics that we're looking for for leadership. And you can start demonstrating them whether or not you have other people, depending on you for performance reviews, if you get my drift.

**Jacob** 02:43

Yep. Well, to give people a little bit of context, can you share a little bit about, so how big is the team that you manage? And how much are you responsible for?

**Kate** 02:54

So it's, it's \$45 billion. It's across all of our products and services across all customer segments, private and public. And it's a team of 10,000 people. So we do, you know, the marketing, the sales, the service and the operations associated with generating that revenue, which is close to half of the enterprise revenue for Microsoft.

**Jacob** 03:18

Wow. Yeah. So definitely, considerable size team.

**Kate** 03:22

I have a few nights where I kind of stare at the ceiling going, gosh, it's a lot of revenue we got to get.

**Jacob** 03:29

Yeah. Well, let's talk a little bit about how this position came about. So what was your experience? I mean, did you live in a lot of different parts of the world? Were you part of different teams and different roles and functions?

**Kate** 03:46

Yeah, that's a great question. So the answer to that is, yeah, I've been, you know, in a bunch of different places in companies. But I think it really all started, I got an engineering degree, wasn't the best engineer, and I was in a lab Bell Labs at the time, which, you know, for those of you that are old enough to remember was this super great place to be if you're an engineer, you know, part of the research facility of AT&T, but it just wasn't a good fit. And I needed more interaction with people with customers. And so I went into sales and AT&T was kind enough to help get me there. But then I realized really quickly that I needed an MBA to sort of augment or round out my my education because I was so deeply technical, but I didn't have a lot of the other pieces of marketing, finance, you know, and all the things that you need in order to, to lead from a business perspective.

**Kate** 04:38

And, and the reality is, it was the job that I had after getting my MBA that kind of opened my mind to who I wanted to be as a leader and I went into management consulting at Deloitte and I spent six years going across industry, across functions, basically helping large scale enterprises. drive change. And I fell in love with that as my thing, you know, everybody kind of has a strength or a superpower or whatever. And from my perspective, this huge passion towards leading and driving change projects. And that led me from, you know, consulting into banking and then onto the IT side. And then, you know, as a CIO, and then over to technology companies on the commercial side selling into enterprises, because I used to be a buyer, and then I became a seller again, and, and so it's that compliment of capabilities that when I was working for General Electric, I'd been asked to help drive commercial intensity at the company, particularly around selling their digital capabilities inside their services organizations.

**Kate** 05:53

When Microsoft reached out, it was kind of like, we, we like your background, because you've done so many different things. And because the one common theme is change, and we need to change, and we need leaders who understand how to do that. Because as we all probably know, by now, Microsoft was not in the greatest place seven years ago, in terms of being thought of as a growth company. Satya Nadella has completely changed that by really focusing on building a change program, bringing in talent that could lead that change. Right. And so so that was probably the thing that resonated the most with, with the people who decided to hire me.

**Jacob** 07:15

So for people who are watching or listening to this, who want to become senior leaders inside of an organization, maybe not president, maybe VP, Director, SVP, who knows? How important is that working in different geographies, in different teams and getting access to all aspects of the business? How crucial is that?

**Kate** 07:35

Um, so from my perspective, the the learning is so interesting, because I was just having a conversation this weekend with a friend who's an executive at a large health company. And we were talking about generalists, right, who, you know, a lot of companies kind of grew generalists. And you go, and you went in, you ran different functions, and then you ran different parts of the business and pnls. And then you made sure that you ticked off the global box and, you know, moved your family for a couple years, and then you came back, and it was almost like moving across was the most important thing.

**Kate** 08:13

Now, I really think that the pendulum is swinging back. And we need people who are deep in certain things. And I always tell people I'm working with, you got to pick--are you going to be that generalist or are you going to be somebody who goes deep in one thing, whether it's a function like finance, and you want to be a CFO and you've always known that? Or, you know, is it something horizontal that you're picking like change? or, or, you know, something like that? And I don't think there's a right answer, I think the world is going to continue to be hybrid. Because we need both, we need the deep experts and

then we need, you know, the people who can kind of be a utility player and pinch hit, I think it's getting harder to get the big jobs as a utility player, you know, that hasn't at least gone deep in certain things, and owned the implementation of the changes that they've dreamed up.

**Kate** 09:13

The days of doing something for 18 months and moving on or I think are gone. I think that's fairly, very deleterious to your overall experience. I think you need to own what you've built, and prove that it works before you move on to the next thing. And that's not 18 months. That's three years, in my opinion. And then global experience, you know, I've lived all over the United States, and I've traveled all over the world spending, you know, no more than five months I think is the longest place that you know, I ever did a project I was it just happened to be in South Korea. But I've pretty much been to, you know, dozens of countries and spent an enormous amount of time because proximity is super key.

**Kate** 09:53

So if you want to be a leader in a global company, you're going to have to show that you've learned about the different cultures that are gonna be on the hook for buying whatever it is that you're selling. And you can only get that with proximity and partnership from the people in those geographies who are willing to teach you about the nuances of those cultures. That can never replace, you know, a few years of assignment in those those different gios, which I'm a huge proponent of, but I personally never actually relocated my family to another country.

**Jacob** 10:24

Yeah, so that different exposure, it sounds like is important to different..and different people as well. Right? I mean, different backgrounds to learn as much as you can. Do you think COVID, his changed of leadership much?

**Kate** 10:39

Oh, heck, yes. Yeah. I mean, where do you Where do you start with that one? Right. Yeah. So the first thing is crisis management, it reminded us all that that is a core capability that every leader needs to have. And that there's this moment of surge capacity, where you're responding. And how you handle that with a with optimism with calm with organization to give all of your people comfort, that, hey, we're in this together, we're gonna get through it. That's like, one whole area of expertise, that I think we were all reminded of how important it is. And I'm particularly proud of the executives at Microsoft and, and how they kind of not just, they didn't just bring that game to us inside the company, but we brought a lot of that to our customers.

**Kate** 11:28

The second thing is the agility of your portfolio and your go to market. And okay, the world just changed overnight. For Microsoft, you know, how did, how do we take our existing technology capabilities, which so many companies were slow to adopt, and make it easier for them to adopt so that they can do yours a digital transformation, in hours and days, says just so they could stay in business. And that was a whole different sort of crisis management, you know, in response that we needed to do. But then there's the you run out of search capacity, Jacob, I think we all realize that whether we're an individual contributor, or a leader of large teams, it's, it's been monotonous, and I don't know about you, but you

know, I see the fatigue and myself and my people, I see days where we're overwhelmed and days where we think everything's gonna be fine. And and there's no telling which day it's going to be when you wake up. It's really kind of interesting. And so this notion of employee experience, and employee wellness, has become of paramount importance, which is fascinating, because it always should have been. But I think today, you know, now we realize it's almost existential, that we have that forefront in our mind.

**Jacob 12:47**

Well, what do you personally look for in a leader, so somebody that you want to promote inside of your company, to be a senior member of your team? What are the qualities you look for?

**Kate 12:57**

Yeah, you know, I liked it when I arrived and learned what the principles of leadership were Microsoft, because it resonated so much with what I had always kind of emphasized. But I think that the notion of laying out what that is for teams is really important. And it's a leader is somebody who can generate clarity, so that we all know where it is that we're trying, we're headed, right? It's about generating energy, right? Because you got to get people excited and motivated to go chase, whatever that goal is. And then it's about knowing how to deliver success, and being able to define it in a way that resonates with every single human on the ground.

**Kate 13:40**

And so those three kind of notions of clarity, energy and success, are the fundamentals of what you need to have in order to be a leader, you know, certainly on my team, but I would say on on any team, those qualities are really important, even, like I said, at the individual contributor level, because if you have somebody that that can demonstrate that just as a collaborative member of the team, then you know that they're going to be pre qualified to be a great people manager. So we look forward to it individuals. And then as you sort of advance through the ranks, we're looking for more and more intensive examples of how you bring that to bare.

**Jacob 14:20**

What do you think of -- I hear this sometimes I'm curious if you come across this. So people who are very, very excited about leadership, but sometimes they feel like they're leaders or the organization is kind of clipping their wings, so to speak. Do you think it's important for a leader who feels like they're not able to unlock their full potential to move elsewhere? Or to try to figure it out within the company that they're already a part of?

**Kate 14:46**

Yeah. Again, great question. And so you look at my past, I've worked for six companies. So you go, Oh, well, you know, from one perspective, you bounced around from another perspective, I have had kind of a long career on the back end. But I always went to a new company because of the opportunity that was there. And, and so I'm a strong believer that it's okay, you don't have to work for the same company for 30 years and go from the bottom to the top every time. That's just not. It's not, that's not the reality that we live in, right. However, I do think there's this notion of organizational patience, I've had to actually develop some of that myself. Because you can't just peel out and go get a better offer

every time something's not going your way. And I mean, we all know we're going to bump into leaders that don't necessarily bring out the best in all of us.

**Kate 15:41**

And I think developing this notion of, you know, resilience and how to deal with that is super important for the longevity of a career, but also develop the empathy for those people that you start to manage, of what are the things that you need to avoid? Because they didn't work for you, you don't want to repeat history and make the same mistakes that you know, your bad managers made? Right? But all of that requires a growth mindset, you got to be totally in the game to learn. And you have to realize that the pace of change of the market that we're living in is also putting pressure on the pace of change in our leadership styles, our organizational frameworks, etc. So the bad boss that you're working for today, with the exception of if I'm on the senior leadership team, reporting the CEO who's not going anywhere, you know, I always tell middle management like it's literally anywhere from 90 days to 18 months could be the time that you have to deal with this. And that amount of time is, is not that long, you can almost hold your breath for that long.

**Kate 16:47**

So muscle through it and see what you're going to learn and how you're going to apply those learnings as the takeaway. That being said, if you're being demeaned, or if there's, you know, real issues with how you're being treated, you know, emotionally, you got to fix that you are you work with peers, you work with other managers or mentors to address it. And of course, you have open and transparent conversations with your managers.

**Jacob 17:12**

Couldn't agree more. What do you think the biggest difference is between mid level leaders and senior level leaders? I mean, not from a functional perspective, but as far as skills or mindsets, what is it that the senior leaders can do that the mid level leaders, they're not quite there yet.

**Kate 17:30**

So there's this notion when you're driving change, it's called the frozen middle. And the frozen middle is like this phenomena, you can read about it in you know, Harvard case studies and things like that. It's this notion of human behavior, you know, we are we all pivot towards the things we're most comfortable with. So when you're trying to drive change, you kinda lean into, well, I like the idea of change, but I don't actually want to change the things I do every single day, because that's uncomfortable. It's the comfortable stuff that I'm going to stick with. And one of the things inside of that frozen middle that we're learning about as a team is this, this kind of notion of implementation, versus ownership. So and I can tell, I can spot the difference with like, a three minute conversation now with anybody in my organization. And if, if a middle manager is implementing change, there's huge risk, okay. And the risk comes from the perspective of, you know, they read, or they hear about whatever it is that they're supposed to get their teams to do. And they attribute accountability to the leader, like, Kate wants us to drive culture change. So we're going to have to do X, Y, and Z, you know, box ticking event that's a middle manager who's kind of implementing, and will immediately fall back to what's comfortable for them, and will kind of represent that frozen middle, if you will.

**Kate 19:13**

A middle manager who owns the change themselves and says, here's what we're trying to do at Microsoft. Here's our role in that story. And they bring passion and clarity to it. And it's theirs, and they're telling their people, we have to do this because here's the outcome that we're seeking. And this is this is the role that we can play in that and they get excited about that. That is the difference between somebody who can run the place versus somebody who can't.

**Jacob 19:45**

I love that.

**Kate 19:46**

And by the time they get to be you know, on the executive leadership team, I'm looking for ownership left to right of everything Satya Nadella has laid out for us and he has laid it all out. All we got to do is excite our people to get through that. But but it's hard, you know, and finding, finding managers who understand the nuances between those two things and have the courage to be vulnerable and get it wrong. That's, that's night and day.

**Jacob 20:17**

Yeah, I love that distinction between implementation and ownership, because there's a fine line, but but it's also very, very clear who's implementing versus who has some sort of stake in it. Leadership is also one of those things that's changing all the time, do you do anything special to keep up to make sure that you're still relevant current?

**Kate 20:42**

So it's a great question. Um, look, we all are on the hook, to continue to improve our game and to learn and to figure out, like, what's a new technique, or a new methodology or new inspiration that I can use to fill up a work and get everybody excited about, you know, as I owned these changes, right, and I think we're on the hook to keep reading, there's, there's, you can't get around that there's, there's blinkist, and things like that, that maybe give you a little bit of a shortcut where you get the nuggets. But the reality is, you got to stay fresh on the theory, I adore the works of Brene Brown, Adam Grant, I'm starting to read more from just leaders that, you know, I knew or had, you know, sort of a passion for what they were doing. And always keep one or more of those by my bedside. You know, as, as my inspiration.

**Kate 21:39**

I will say that, you know, as leaders today, with all the information that's available, when I wake up in the morning, I'm expected to know, everything that's going on in the marketplace, everything that's going on in my country, which is my territory, you know, the latest and the greatest management techniques. And so it's, it's super hard to do that. And I, I kind of use my own way of, of, you know, doing shortcuts, like for example, I follow every new source on Instagram. So, you know, talking about like, NPR, all my favorite journalists, the BBC, you know, various global networks, etc. And I have it on a separate channel, and I fly through it. And I can get most of what I also follow the Wall Street Journal and The New York Times on that as well. And I'm getting the highlights, and it gets smarter. As you know, the more things I dig into plates up some stuff, so you have to be careful about that.

**Kate 22:42**

But it's a fabulous way, in 15 minutes, over a cup of coffee, while I'm warming up for the day to make sure that nothing breaking had come through that, you know, I wasn't sort of on and then and then I exercise a lot. So I'm super into podcasts, because that's also a way where you're not just sitting there page by page or digital page by digital page. And you get these sort of characters in your head talking about all the things that we need to know. So I guess there's no one magic bullet for me, I'm kind of looking for it everywhere.

**Jacob 23:15**

How do you since you were talking about coffee, when you're warming up your day? How do you plan or structure your day?

**Kate 23:23**

Well, so I have a lot of help. So, you know, I mean, personally, I I'm one of those people that needs a lot of sleep. So I shoot for eight hours, which is a highly unusual, I think for my peer group, I know, a lot of my peers are like, hey, if I get five, I'm good. If I get five, I'm close to death. So I make space for that. And that actually requires a huge amount of discipline. So my family understands that I'm doing that I kind of opened up the 10 to six area for I'm either sleeping or trying to sleep during during that time, that's super important to get out of the gate.

**Kate 24:02**

I get out of the gate with all the reading and the coffee. And then and then the day is kind of balanced. I spend probably about 20% of my time on my people, one to ones learning about them or even community events, making sure I have proximity to what's on their mind. I spend another, you know, quarter of the time on deals and the business and making sure that you know the context of what we're doing is right. I spend, you know, another quarter of the time meeting with customers to make sure that I'm talking with them pretty much every day we used to do it before COVID I used to do it in waves like a week a month, I would immerse in a week of customer stuff and then we would process it all. I don't need to do that anymore because I don't have to fly there. So I do it every single day instead. And you know I have an expectation of how many customers I can talk to every single day.

**Kate 24:56**

And then the last quarter is like you know the emergency of the day. You're always getting something coming in hot that you have to kind of rearrange. But that's sort of how we try and structure it. So I can be with my people and customers. And you know, think about the scorecard and the nature of the business, but then also leave some flexibility for whatever it is that's happening that moment.

**Jacob 25:18**

Is there's something that you think you do on a regular basis that makes you a better leader, like, I don't know, your personal leadership tip, hack technique strategy that you do.

**Kate 25:31**

I'm going to just use that word proximity. I learned it from Bryan Stevenson, you know, the, the author of Just Mercy, and just this incredible leader, who spent his entire, you know, career after Harvard Law, dedicating his life to serving those that weren't properly served by you know, all of our, our, you know, processes in the country. And I went to visit him in Montgomery, Alabama, and I said, hey, look, how are you doing this whole empathic leadership thing? And how do I, as somebody who has a 10,000 person organization, how do I show up in that way? And how do I drive it at scale.

**Kate 26:13**

And he gave us this formula for it, you know, empathy requires proximity, and then you got to, you know, be a great storyteller and create a narrative, you have to be hopeful, you can't be negative all the time. And then you have to learn how to actually action, everything that you're doing. I honed in on this one thing called proximity and said, How close am I to the things that matter most, customers our people and our business itself. And I took a good long look in the mirror, and I was like, you know, I don't think I'm nearly close enough, I spent a whole lot more time in corporate, you know, headquarters, metaphorically than I should. And so I, I really worked with my leadership team, and with all of the extended leadership team to change that, and created a quarter of the time for one to one with people at all levels in the business and a quarter of the time, you know, for one to one with customers at all levels in the organization. And I think it's made a really big difference. That's not to say that I'm like, this perfect leader or anything. But if there was one thing that I would say, has helped me improve my game over the past couple of years, it's everyday waking up and saying, how close to the things that matter most am I or am I just counting on filters all the time, the story of the story of the story, the story, by the time it gets to me, do I really do I really know the details. You know, you can't micromanage. But proximity is a very, very, very powerful tool.

**Jacob 27:51**

How important is the relationship aspect of being a good leader, because sometimes, we can get very caught up on you know, closing deals, making a lot of money, process, delegating, but you've mentioned several times that you make a lot of time for people, for one on ones for customers. Is the relationship aspect, still very crucial for your success, or for anybody's success as a leader?

**Kate 28:16**

I think it's everything. So we have to unlock people in order to unlock the path to performance, right. You're gonna get performance if you can unlock your people. And the only way you can unlock your people is if they feel deeply trusted. If they feel like they have everything they need from you and the company, and if they don't have it, if you're trying to get it for them, it keeps them in flight for a really long time. You know, if they feel like they can be successful, like there are all these things, that if you can unlock a person, you just be so excited by how far they can go. And it's the people that drive this business at scale.

**Kate 28:59**

And that's, again, it's kind of like another thing that I've learned is that I can't be everywhere and do everything. I can't micromanage this, I have to do this at scale. And the way to unlock the people is to get close to them to understand what it is that they need to be that evangelist, right, back to, you know,

the the leaders of the company to say, Okay, guys, this is what it's going to take for us to be successful. You're not pointing fingers or blaming anybody. You're saying, here's what great looks like and here's what your role in that in that great story is, you know, help me help our team deliver customer success. And all of that, I think is relationship basis. People based.

**Jacob 29:43**

Yep. No, I, of course I agree with everything you're saying. If you could go back in time and give yourself some advice, what would you tell your younger self

**Kate 29:58**

Probably stop listening to the voice inside your head. First of all, first of all, this whole thing is like, it all seems so important every day, every mistake you make every win you have seems so big. And then. And then when you start to have a couple decades under your belt, you realize it's, it's a marathon, it's not a sprint. So you probably should think that way from day one. But you don't have enough context to understand that that's the first thing.

**Kate 30:23**

The second thing is, most of us are, are competing more with the voice in our head, than with any external factor. And that voice in your head can keep you from learning, it can make you feel ashamed when you make mistakes, you know, it can really be deleterious to your growth. And one of the things that even just at this phase in my career that I'm learning to do, is to make it quiet, and to have the voice in my head, give me a break. I'm working hard, I'm trying to do my best, and I'm gonna keep skinning my knee. But you know that that I think is the most important thing.

**Kate 31:02**

I think the other thing is the practicing. So there's one thing to learn something theoretically, you read that book, you listen to that podcast, you, you know, you acquire knowledge, somehow, I find that if I don't practice it, in every day life, that I haven't actually gained that learning. And you have to be very intentional about how it is that you're going to grow, and what you're going to apply in order for it to be super tangible and translatable to your people and codified in a way that you can put in your performance review, for example. And so those are the two things the voice inside my head and get more intentional about what I was going to learn how I was gonna practice that on a regular basis.

**Jacob 31:21**

The voice inside your heads interesting one, because I feel like a lot of people struggle with it. Any tips that you have found to be effective to either quiet it or maybe turn it into a more positive voice instead of maybe one that can be more negative or critical?

**Kate 32:04**

Yeah, you know, I said that I was a huge fan of Brene Brown, we're rolling her training, dare to lead out to you know, all 10,000 people we're in week two of rolling it out to the individual contributors now. And there's a section called rising strong. And rising strong is all about resilience through failure. And the techniques that you use. And the thing that resonates most with me is this, this idea that if you're quiet about something, you know, embarrassing, or humiliating or shameful, or whatever, it tends to balloon

and grow and keep you up at night and overtake aspects of your life. That's certainly true with me. And that's the voice inside your head that's negative that saying, Wow, you really screwed up. And you know, it can wake me up out of a dead sleep. And, and we talked about how much sleep I need in order to be healthy and productive. And so I took that chapter really seriously, and said, I want to kind of conquer this thing. And the first step to it is actually addressing it and writing it down. Like what is your biggest fear, what that you look like an idiot?

**Jacob 33:15**

Like actually writing it down?

**Kate 33:17**

Yeah. Like, like, and so you go on you actually, you know, it's really funny. I have this book in my desk here. And it's, it's, it's a workbook. And there's a section in here for the voice inside your head. And when you're going through an embarrassing moment or a failure or setback of some kind. First step is you write down what that setback was. And the second step is, you write down every fear that you have associated with it. Now, I'll give you a great example when we're talking about learning and trying to practice. So I'm doing this right, because I'm asking everybody to do it. So I've got a, I've got to demonstrate that I had this moment in an SLT meeting with Satya and staff couple weeks ago. And I asked a question that many interpreted as, you know, not the smartest question that anybody's ever asked. And I immediately felt that hot face and embarrassment and I was kind of like, oh, shoot new in a virtual world. When the conversation moves on, you can't, you can't bring everybody back and clarify, especially if it's just to address your own humiliation. Well, so you know, that night, I'm like, staring at the ceiling, you know, imagining in my head that this was 10 times worse than it probably really was. And so the next day, we're at breakfast, my daughter, my husband, and I'm like, Guys, I got, I gotta, you know, do something and they're like, okay, I said, I gotta tell you what happened yesterday, and what is going on in my mind, everything you name it, and that big, fat shame bubble turns into this tiny little molecule that you just toss away.

**Kate 34:52**

They actually said, honestly, I don't think that was a dumb question. And I was like, well, you weren't there. And they're like, No, no, listen to us. I wasn't a dumb question. You know, and then and then when you get this sort of third party opinion, and you've actually put it on the table of how you feel about something, you start to realize 99% of it is your imagination. And the reality is, as Eleanor Roosevelt said, Stop worrying about how people what people think about you, because the truth is, they're not. Right? And if that's like one of these moments where like, Oh, my gosh, you know, they're not thinking about me, well, am I relieved? Or am I kind of disappointed about that, which is a whole other set of issues. But it's a really important thing is like, if you can quiet the voice inside your head with these tools, it is breakthrough, it's gonna give you a lot more runway to learn.

**Jacob 35:42**

I love that. I think it's a fantastic I love the analogy of like the shame bubble to a tiny molecule that you just throw over your head. I know we have a couple minutes left, so maybe just a few last questions to wrap up. First one is what is the best piece of advice that you have for aspiring leaders, so people who are not in a leadership position yet, but who want to get there any advice for that group?

**Kate 36:08**

Demonstrate it, now, be the leader, the people, manager, the people leader that you want to be, be the person right now use whatever your role is to create clarity, generate energy and deliver success. Because those are the muscles that you need to lead people. And you can practice it no matter what your job is, literally, if you're, if you're you know, customer call center, and you're sitting on the desk, you know, taking calls, you can do it there just like you can do it if you're leading a 10,000 person organization.

**Jacob 36:42**

Yeah. What about advice for seasoned leaders, so people who have been in leadership, but they want to get better, they want to keep improving, they aspire to get to your level? What advice do you have for them?

**Kate 36:55**

I think it's seeking that, that learning that kind of the idea that your game is not fixed, right? That it's got a can constantly get better, no matter who you are, you can get better and better and better. But you have to open yourself up to it. I think that I think the kryptonite for leaders is hubris, thinking right? thinking you know, the answer, deadly, and especially when you're in the middle manager, you know, trying to go up to the next few levels. It's super deadly, because you're perceived as being narrow in your thought and, and showing up to the boardroom to prove your right instead of showing up to the boardroom to get it right, is all the difference in the world. And I think something that a lot of times leaders, I you know, I know for the past couple of decades, before I started really understanding what my role is, I thought I was supposed to be right and being right was how I got promoted to the next level. That is not the role of a leader. The role of a leader is bringing everybody together with diversity of thought and perspective to try and figure out the best answers to the problems today, which may be different than tomorrow. So you have to be agile on that process.

**Jacob 38:13**

Yeah, and you actually answered the next question. I was gonna ask you that was the most dangerous trait that a leader can possess, but you already said hubris

**Kate 38:20**

Hubris started with the Romans right now look at the downfall of every single he knows sort of leader or organization, whether it's in corporate or whether it's government or you know, it doesn't matter. Hubris is the kryptonite of leadership.

**Jacob 38:36**

And and a couple people I've interviewed actually said that same thing, so I couldn't agree more. And maybe one of the last questions for you, is there a resource that you think leaders need to be aware of whether it's a book, a podcast, anything that you think is important for people who are watching or listening to this to check out to become a better leader?

**Kate** 39:00

Again, I'll just tell you my two favorites, and I typically listen to their podcasts and read all their books is Adam Grant and the and Brene Brown. And by the way, there's there's overlap there. You know, I started with Carol Dweck with a growth mindset of being the single most important source for leaders and working on that every single day. And then I kind of fell in love with the next step being Brene, you know, and her I the idea of vulnerability in the context of learning. And now Adam Grant is taking it to a new level where I think he's bring bringing some fresh context and connecting it to the corporate world, really, with a great amount of facility. The other thing is, John Levy is writing a book or has written a book is coming out soon. He's the founder of the influencers. And it's this notion of creating relationships, and taking all of these things that these social scientists and behaviors have created and taking it to the next level in terms of applicability to to sales, which is just happens to be one of my passions, right? So, I don't know, every year I kind of try and glue the next thought leader on to that trajectory. And so those that's kind of the sources that I love to point people to because they've inspired me so much, but I think everybody can come up with their own list, right?

**Jacob** 40:21

Yep. And very last question for you. Is there something that you think I should have asked you but didn't about how to become a better or more effective leader? Anything else that you want to share that with?

**Kate** 40:34

You know, other than forgetting to start with my favorite color? I don't I don't think so. I think we covered a lot of things. And, you know, like I said, it's, it's the this notion of growth mindset, that's the most important thing. And how do you actually get that, I think is the fundamental question for all leaders. How do you get to the point where you can learn and grow every single day and I think all of your questions kind of ladder up to that.

**Jacob** 40:59

I hope so. Well, Kate, thank you again, for taking time out of your day and sharing your insights. I really appreciate it.

**Kate** 41:07

It was my pleasure. Thank you for inviting me.

**Jacob** 41:09

Of course.