

# Audio 45min - Kate Duchene - WITH ADS

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

leaders, organization, employees, people, vulnerability, talent, world, understand, kate, learning, companies, vulnerable, jacob, create, ceo, question, values, shift, thought, responses

## SPEAKERS

Jacob Morgan

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00:00

How do we as leaders empower you? How do you build teams that can deliver when I was growing up, it was a lot of individual performance. You know, today, you can just look at the curriculum of our colleges and universities, so much of how people learn today is in group settings and team orientation. And that translates into what's happening in the work environment as well. And, and the ability to collaborate, to communicate, to negotiate to influence. Those are all really important skills and a leader today.



Jacob Morgan 00:37

My interview today is with Kate Dushane. She is the CEO of a company called RGP, which is a global consulting firm with over 4500 employees. Kate originally started off her career as a litigator, where a part of her job was to know everything. And as a leader, when she got promoted to that role, she had to shift from knowing everything, to knowing who to go to when she needed help. And this, as we know, is something that a lot of leaders today really, really struggle with. So in our conversation, we look at what is going on in the world of work today. Specifically, if people even want to work anymore, if we have lost our respect, and drive for working, we also look at the role that vulnerability plays at work, the changing stereotype of leadership, and the big trends that Kate is paying attention to. In the bonus episode with Kate, she shares one of her big business failures and what she learned as a result, the top skills that leaders need to practice and how to go about practicing some of them, and she shares her greatest leadership tip, you can subscribe to get access to this bonus episode on Apple podcasts for ad free listening weekly bonus episodes and early access to new content. And it is your way to support the show so that I can bring in more amazing guests like Kate why don't we start with just a little bit of background information about you and the company in case people are not familiar with it?



02:16

Okay, well, Jacob, thanks for the opportunity. My name is Kate Dushane. I am the CEO of our

GDP, our GDP is a modern professional services firm. And as we continue to evolve with more tech enabled delivery, we really are the home for on demand, agile talent. These are knowledge workers who are helping companies execute some of the most important initiatives, whether they be operational in nature or transformational in nature. So if you think about, you know, the old paradigm was if you were a professional worker, or a knowledge worker in the consulting space, you joined the Big Four, our platform is really something new. And what differentiates us is the ability to offer flexibility control and choice on what our consultants work on when they work on it and for how long. Okay, this is all a project based approach. Okay,



Jacob Morgan 03:20

and how many employees do you guys have?



03:22

About 4500? globally?



Jacob Morgan 03:25

Wow. Okay, so big size company. Alright, so let's jump into some of the tough, tough questions I have for you. I think they're tough. Okay. So one of the things that has been coming up in some of my interviews lately with CEOs and this is one of the questions that I've been asking a lot of people just because some of the trends that we're seeing in the world of work, do you feel like in the current landscape that we're in, do employees still have that same desire and drive to work the way that they did, let's say 510 1520 years ago, like I'm even imagining when I was younger, and even when my dad was in the workforce, it used to be that the work itself was the incentive to get the job. And in other words, the work, you wanted to have a job so that you could save up, start a family buy a house, you know, that was incentive enough for you. And today, one of the conversations that I think we keep hearing a lot about is we're trying to incentivize employees to go back to work, which is kind of a weird thing to think about, right? Because, again, for me, it's almost like the work should be the incentive. Or do you agree with that? Are you seeing any changes and how we think about work? Do we still have that same desire and passion to work that we did years ago?



04:47

I think the answer is yes, there is still a strong passion to work but the social construct around work has changed. And I believe it's changed fundamentally. And when you really look at What the demographic worker, you know, the different demographics of worker care about, you can really answer the question differently. So I'm a baby boomer. Okay, I was born in 1963. And so, you know, the, what you described about your dad, it probably applies to me is my guess. And the fact that work was an end all be all to fast forward to today, and what Millennials or Gen X and Gen Z, and now the generations to follow are caring about is very different. So it's not about fitting life into work. It's about fitting work into life. And that social construct is very different. And today's talent is not willing to give up the things that we gave up in the past. You know, they've had very different foundational experiences than we did growing up. Yeah. And I

think that's changed us forever. Now. I think the work is still real, I think people still have a desire to contribute and to make impact. But how they do it is different today. And so we need to understand that I think in order to, as leaders attract the best talent to our organizations,



Jacob Morgan 06:23

well, part of me even also wonders like at what cost, because a lot of times, it almost feels like the balance of power has shifted a little bit like there used to be a time when organizations had this complete balance of power, they kind of set the terms and they could do whatever they wanted, right leaders could do whatever they wanted. And now it seems like the balance of power has shifted very much in the hands of employees, where employees have high salaries, they have high benefits and perks, packages, they want equity in the company, they added on top of all of that they don't even want to show up to work to show their face. And I talked to a lot of CEOs. And they're they're kind of surprised or shocked in a way that the balance has shifted so much to the other side, that it's almost, it almost seems imbalanced now. And part of the question is, well, first, do you agree with that? And if so how do we get a little bit more of a, of a level playing field?



07:25

Right. So I do agree that the pendulum is swinging, and that the balance of power has moved in favor of talent. I think with any pendulum, you see behaviors at the extreme, and then things moderate, a little bit, I really believe that things will moderate, but that the world has changed forever. And so as leaders really need needing to think about how we engage talent, and not just using a one size fits all approach. But to really understand what different demographic of worker what they want. The fact that you maybe don't need to own all of the talent that you need, you know, by borrow it talent, depending upon what's the work that you have to get done. I actually think it's a very optimistic time because we're asking talent to be more creative, to be more problem solving. And the way you get best, the best work out of people is when they're really engaged, and happy in life. So we shouldn't view this as you know, dammit, the world is different. We should view it as an opportunity to say what's next and what can we create? Because that's really what's ahead of us. And, and not bemoan what's, you know, everything's moving forward. You know, in order to be successful, we have to be change ready. So I think as a leader, you can't bemoan the fact that the world is different. Understand what the opportunities are, because the world is different.



Jacob Morgan 09:03

Yeah, I think that's a good way to reframe it. But you know, speaking, going back to this theme of the balance of power, at least one of the things that I worry about or think about is that if employees have so much power, and if the pendulum has swung too much in their direction, then what's the incentive for them to show up to do good quality work? If they know they have the power, and this is one of the reasons why I think maybe we have seen so much of that quiet quitting because employees had so much power inside of organizations that the in the pendulum has swung so much in their direction. That part of it was I can just kind of chill and I want I can coast because I know how much power I have. I know how much leverage I have over the organization. So I guess we're kind of where I'm going with this is trying to figure out

what do we do as a result and if it's a bad thing, or an unstable thing that employees do have So much power. And if they do what's what's the incentive for them to still show up to work each day to serve his customers in the best way to bring forward their best ideas? If they know they have so much power that they're wielding?



10:12

Well, I don't buy in to the belief that people have become lazy. Slacker IDs. Yeah, I know that a lot. I don't believe that. I believe that what they want is to work in new ways. I think one of the most important aspects of bringing your best work to an organization is that you have a strong sense of belonging, you understand the mission, and you share values with the organization. And if that happens, and if you're respected as part of the ecosystem, I still believe that people are truly good by nature want to have impact and want to do good work? Yeah.



Jacob Morgan 10:57

No, and I agree. So so let's



11:01

go from that premise. I also don't believe that every organization is experiencing quiet quitting. And I think a lot of it ties to how do you deliver that sense of respect and control that people want? I mean, COVID really shook all of us to the core, you know, what's happening now with layoffs will continue to do that. And so therefore, the social construct between employer and employee is again evolving. And so really understanding what that means, and then how you formulate your social construct going forward, I think is really going to matter. So for us, for example, in our business, we really found everything we do on giving talent, choice, transparency, and control. So we don't, for example, run a bench model where I say, Jacob, on Monday, we need you to be out at x client, who's part of this industry. And this is the kind of work you're going to do. Instead, we say, Jacob, we have these two opportunities, what do you want to do? And guess what if you say neither one of them is pretty interesting to me, I want to wait for what's coming next. Guess what, Jacob, you get to do that. I mean, you're really in control of your professional career development, within a safety net, and community that matters to you. And I think more companies that really understand how we have to think more broadly about it. That's where you really win and get the talent that we need, because every organization is facing a skill shortage right now, you know, a report from Wiley just came out. I think today, highlighting that almost 70% of CEOs believe their organizations have a skills challenge. I mean, that's up almost 10% in one year. So these issues aren't going away, you know, we may not be at the height of the great resignation. But we're still seeing tremendous churn in the talent environment.



Jacob Morgan 13:06

Yeah, I wonder if that's part of what's going to help rebalance things, like get things back to normal a little bit is when we go through this massive round of layoffs. And a lot of these employees need to enter back into the workforce, if that will help. Almost I don't want to say

put reality back into the workforce, but just kind of realize that maybe we can't. As employees, you know, the power dynamic has shifted now kind of organizations are getting back a little bit of that, in part of me wonders, if this employee layoff that we're seeing, especially in a lot of the tech sectors, I think Google today announced 12,000 employees that they're laying off, might rebalance things a little bit.



13:47

Well, I think it will moderate I think we'll start seeing like the crazy fringe behavior, yeah, whole way, like I need my nanny to be paid for and I need groceries delivered. I mean, those are the kinds of things we're going to see. But fundamentally, what I'm talking about in terms of how we need to think about the intersection of life and work differently. I don't think that changes. I don't think that moderates, I think that's here to stay. And the, again, the companies who understand that and design, their workforce strategies accordingly, moving forward will be the winners.



Jacob Morgan 14:31

One of the challenges and I don't know if you think this is a challenge or not, but with this kind of integration of work in life, you know, one of the I guess the benefits of having these two separate in the past is that when you showed up to work, you worked and then when you went home at the end of the day, that's when you know you're, you're different values and beliefs came into play. And now as a result of kind of the integration of both of these, we're seeing a lot of personal values and beliefs make their way into the organization, whether their political beliefs, whether their beliefs about what's going on in the world, whether their beliefs about injustice, regardless of what they are, they're making their way into the organization, because like you said, there's this integration going on. And I wonder if that poses any challenges, specifically for leaders of organizations, because all of a sudden, you're dealing with not just employees as workers, but employees as individuals that have all these outside beliefs that you may or may not agree with? Is that something that you're finding leaders are having to grapple with and make sense of in some way?



15:39

Absolutely, the answer is an overwhelming, yes. But that's why it's really important that as an organization, I mean, culture has always been important, but the culture of the organization is more important than ever, and if your employees can't describe your culture, why you exist in the world, and what the organization cares about, you're going to have a much harder time navigating this scenario that you just laid out that we live in today. You know, technology, access to information has made this blending accelerate at a pace that, you know, I don't think any of us were really ready for. But that's the world we live in today. And that's why you've got to be really clear about what are the values of your organization and be able to articulate those, and attract the people that share those values, and the people who don't share the values probably shouldn't be a part of your organization. And that's not to say that you can't have differing views on a political issue. But one of the values has to be, you know, respect, I believe, an understanding of different experiences. I mean, we're doing a lot around DEI as lots of companies are right now. And, and one of the foundational sessions that we did that I

thought was so great in our organization, is to go through an unpacking of what, what are we made up of as individuals? So like, where do I find my identity? Where do you find your identity? And to really map what matters to you and find common ground, it was such an incredible experience, where, you know, I might look at a political issue slightly different than a colleague. But when we understand where I don't, where our identities come from, there's a much greater level of understanding and then willingness to have a dialogue about topics. That's what's wrong with this world. We're too polarized and we can't find common ground. Yeah,



Jacob Morgan 17:45

no, we're very,



17:46

probably more of an answer, then you want to Jacob but



Jacob Morgan 17:48

no, no, no. I mean, that's exactly right. I mean, I think we are very polarized. And it's funny, because you see, I think the blending very much of politics, and business, and some people are for that, and some people are against that. You know, there are some commentators like Jordan Peterson, or like Vivek, Robert Ramaswamy. And there's, you know, several folks out there who say that politics should have no place in business. And then there are other people who say no, Politics does play a role in business, and it's making its way in there, regardless of what you do. And you get these very polarizing arguments and debates. And it's like, it's hard. And I, I would imagine, I feel empathy for leaders, because we're also in this world of canceled culture, where if you say the wrong thing, people might come after you where if you even make a mistake on a, you know, with good intentions, people can come after you. And it's just a very hard thing for leaders to navigate, like, how do you lead in this kind of a world? And I don't know what advice you might have for leaders out there. But, you know, it's, it's almost like we're walking on on landmines, and just hope that one of them doesn't blow up.



19:00

That's true. But you know, we could probably think Twitter and some of these other social media platforms for creating the environment we're in, I do think employees want to know what their leaders stand for, and that you live the values of your organization. So I mean, the one guiding principle I've always lived by is is to make sure I understand those values and then to be authentic in my response. So, you know, that's the advice I give to leaders. We can't get everything right. Yeah, no one can get everything right. But if you are values based and authentic in your communication, I think it serves you well. And there are some topics where I won't I won't dive into the conversation because I believe there are some boundaries where I'm I'm not going to engage as the lead leader of an organization and those require judgment calls. Yeah.



Jacob Morgan 20:03

So how important are those boundaries? Because I think that's something very important for leaders to understand. So is it okay, as a leader to create boundaries? And to just be upfront with people around? These are the things that I'm happy to address? These are the things that I'm not comfortable discussing. How do you create and communicate those boundaries to your team to your employees?



20:26

Well, I think there have been a couple of examples in our environment where there were different perspectives I could tell developing in our organization. And, and the one thing let's, let's take the Russian invasion of Ukraine, for example, yeah, that's a good way. And, and what I said is, this is a very sad event in the world, we are going to have different perspectives in our environment, because we have people who are of Russian descent, who have family and loved ones there. And we're going to have people from Ukraine in the same but let's be open to dialogue, let's be respectful in our exchange. And let's understand that the world is hurting I mean, so you know, we didn't pick sides in that one, we we really tried to address the fact that there is going to be dialogue, and we need to be we need to be listening. I think organizations that listen more are better off and try and learn from one another.



Jacob Morgan 21:33

Yep. I think that makes sense. Well, what are some of the big trends that you're paying attention to? Because it seems like overall, you're pretty optimistic. You're not very concerned with this shifting of, of power from organizations to employees? Is there anything that does worry you or scare you a little bit or some trends that you're paying attention to that you just think have a large potential impact on your business? Around the World?



22:01

Yeah. So you know, this, this topic we're talking about with talent transformation, and that's both you know, how talent wants to work and and how clients are getting work done is something that I follow very carefully, along with, what are the trending skill sets that organizations need that, you know, what are the skill sets that match the C suite agenda for today, to ensure that we continue to be as relevant a provider as possible, I mean, really, the idea of keeping your core full time team as lean as possible. And then in sourcing the right kind of skill sets you need for project execution is something that is what our business model was built for. Back when Peter Drucker was the management guru of the day. Now, I thought it would happen sooner than it's happening today. But COVID has reordered the world in that regard. And so we really understand we also understand that consulting talent is global now and really borderless. So, you know, with the advent and and the continued advance of technology, how work gets done is, you know, lightened day. I mean, I started as a lawyer in my career, Jacob, and when we did our first set of strike papers, I was an employment lawyer. We did it on an old, you know, mimeograph machine. So you think about it today, right, everything gets electronically filed with the court. So how much technology is advanced, how we do what we do, and paying attention to those trends, I think is is really important. And, you

know, caring a lot about what attracts the very best people, I mean, and again, it goes back to what we've already talked about, which is how companies need to care about culture and be able to differentiate themselves. Because the dance ahead of us in the next, you know, stage of industrial revolution is where humans and technology really find that dance, you know, more and more, it's the human it's this soft skills that are in high demand, as we move repetitive tasks, to, to software to ml to AI, etc. And that's not changing. But then what do we really need from the humans in the room? To both analyze and to resolve, I think is what companies need to pay attention to.



Jacob Morgan 24:42

I'm curious kind of shifting gears a little bit. When you were coming up the ranks when you when you first became a leader? What was the stereotype of leadership then? And has that stereotype changed over the years now that you're CEO



25:00

Yeah, so the stereotype for me and it could be the profession I grew up into was very much one of commanding control. You said something once people needed to pay attention and go execute today, and I've always considered myself more of a servant leader than a command and control leader. So I think that style fits what the world needs today. And certainly what you know, newer, generational talent is looking for. And that is, how do we as leaders empower you? How do you build teams that can deliver it's, you know, when I was growing up, it was a lot of individual performance. You know, today, you could just look at the curriculum of our colleges and universities, so much of how people learn today is in group settings and team orientation. And that translates into what's happening in the work environment as well. And, and the ability to collaborate, to communicate, to negotiate to influence. Those are all really important skills in a leader today.



Jacob Morgan 26:11

Do you want to learn how to create an amazing corporate culture, while avoiding the pitfalls that make for a toxic one? If so, I created a brand new eight part training video series just for you. In total, it's around 30 minutes in length. And you can get it right now by going to help my culture.com Go there right now, before this training series disappears forever. Again, that is help my culture.com and get access to this free eight part training series on how to create an amazing corporate culture. It's funny, I was talking to another CEO yesterday or day before and I was not aware of this. But I guess there used to be a list by Fortune, where they used to have the world's toughest bosses, and they used to rank them. Do you? Are you familiar with that list? Did you ever come across that? Yes. So again, I didn't know this existed. And so I went and I started Googling some of these things. And it seems like this actually used to be a type of badge of honor to be considered this tough boss. And these were the command and control that tough, you know, don't question me, I know what I'm doing. I'm not going to show you emotion, no weakness, I know everything. And it's weird to think that this was a list that a major publication would create, that we would distribute and that would be used, you would want to



be on that list as a leader. And I can't imagine something like that existing today, where a fortune came out, and they said, We're gonna create a world's toughest boss list. And it's great to be on there. Like it's such a different world.



27:43

Yeah, such a different world. And, you know, I think it's safe to say it was largely male in orientation, too, because it was all of those kind of traditional male stereotypes that were valued at the time. Again, I don't think that's what's valued today. I think that there are very different kinds of skills that are valued. And what I hear from employees to and from other CEOs I network with that, you know, your employees want to know. You authentically, they want to know some of your vulnerabilities. I mean, it it creates bonds that exist in different ways today. So, you know, it's just a very different world. Yeah.



Jacob Morgan 28:32

Well, it's funny, you mentioned vulnerability. So my next book that's going to come out later this year, October, November is around leadership and vulnerability. So I have a couple of questions I wanted to ask you on on leadership and vulnerability as well. And I guess the first kind of opening question on that would be, have you ever had to be vulnerable with your team, either now or in the past? And can you share what the impact of that was? And the way that I think about by the way, vulnerable leadership in the way that I define it is a leader who intentionally opens themselves up to the potential of emotional harm, but with the hope of a positive outcome. So with that definition of mind, have you ever really had to open yourself up to your team? And can you share a story around what happened and what the impact was?



29:21

Sure. So the answer is yes. And I think, you know, what, I'm as leaders we we need to model behavior that we want in our organization. So I'll tell you a couple of behaviors that I really value in our organization is, is to develop a growth mindset to be willing to try and fail but instead of being paralyzed by that really understand what I can learn to do better next time. I really want us to be a learning organization. And that ties to growth mindset to in in moving Come forward, I think I want us to be a change ready organization. And that's not easy for everyone. I mean, especially some of the demographics that I'm talking about we, you know, we grew up believing that we were exceptional, that if we tried once that we always got it right. And and we could never fail. That's a very dangerous mindset to bring into what is a fast paced disruptive world today. If you have that fixed mindset, you're going to be lost. So I think in order to model those behaviors, there are moments where you have to be vulnerable, because none of us are going to get everything right. And so I'll give you an example of story in our environment we did, we completed a acquisition of a business that at the time, fit our strategic vision. But a couple years later, we came to realize that we were going to pivot in a different direction, and that no longer fit. I mean, I had to go to the executive team and said, I think this one, we have to cut bait on this one. I'm the one who led the m&a strategy. I'm the one who thought it was a good thing. But in hindsight, I think we need to pivot and go a different direction that was vulnerable, because some people could have said, that's a failed acquisition. And you know, it, it wasn't it didn't take us where I thought it would. But I had to show

vulnerability that no, it didn't pan out the way I'd hoped. And we were going to go a different direction. I think what showing vulnerability does and being transparent about it, is it deepens trust. And trust is really everything, whether it's with your own employees, whether it's with your family, whether it's with your clients, your applicants, you know, Trust is everything. And so I think those moments of vulnerability can deepen trust, as long as you know, you're not trying to hide the ball, and that you're really transparent and clear in communication, and then exchange.



Jacob Morgan 32:15

What does vulnerability physically feel like? So I've been asking this question to a lot of CEOs and I've gotten a variety of responses, some have shared that they've had panic attacks, some have shared that they didn't sleep, their heart starts beating, they start sweating, they get the pit in the stomach, everyone has different manifestations of vulnerability. So for you, when you when you feel vulnerable, have you ever thought about like what's going on in your, in your head, your body? What does that feel like for you?



32:45

Sure, I mean, when you're vulnerable, you're you're also you know, you have some fear response. So people have fear responses differently. I mean, my heart might race. My complexion, I have a very red complexion anyway, you know, my complexion might get a little bit more red. I think my language might get a little more emotional than not. And so sure you have physical manifestations. I don't have anxiety attacks. I'm not prone to that. But certainly insomnia, worry. I have those responses. And you know, what, what, like a athlete, you know, your game plan, your game plan, and then you scenario plan. And so you feel like at least in your mind, you've experienced this before you've seen how it plays out, and you're prepared for different responses. And I think that's what has always helped me is to really, scenario plan, in my own mind, what might happen and listen, as you get more senior, as a leader, you realize you'll live through anything, you might have some tough moments. But you know, most of business is not life and death. And if you keep things in perspective, and be willing to answer questions and and just absorb the feedback, sometimes you do get through it.



Jacob Morgan 34:25

Is it easier to be vulnerable, as a leader or as a non leader, where you are not in a position where you are responsible for the lives of others?



34:38

I have to think about that for a minute. Easier. You know, on a personal level, there are people who are willing to be vulnerable and people who aren't no matter what the context. Okay, so I think vulnerability is very personal. So you have to under Stand what you're capable of yourself. Either one, I mean, you know, probably easier when you don't have other people relying on you as much. But you can also have a greater impact being vulnerable when you're a leader. So kind of have to decide what's more important.



### Jacob Morgan 35:22

Yeah, might be easier when you're not a leader, but it has a greater impact when you are a leader. Exactly, you know, so vulnerability doesn't seem fun. I mean, a lot of people who are listening to this, and a lot of people who have been vulnerable know that it's not, it's not a fun experience. Nobody. You know, when I've interviewed CEOs, nobody ever said, Oh, my God, I'm vulnerable. It feels great. I feel empowered and happy. It's always these negative and sometimes scary, physical and emotional manifestations, which would make a lot of people question, why the heck should you do it? If it's so uncomfortable, and it can be so challenging and scary, and you get insomnia, and this and that, why? Why are you doing it? Why are you putting yourself through that torture?



### 36:03

Because I think you again, you deepen trust with others, and you create bonds with others that you can't in any other way. I mean, employees today, I think, want to know, you're human, that you, you know, if I'm going to model the behavior of a learning, really a deep learning person, I'm not none of us know, everything, none of us are going to make every right move in life. I mean, I challenge you to find the person who's never made a mistake. It's really what I've always said, even when I was, you know, the company's first lawyer, I always said, how we deal with a mistake is a better indicator of who we are in front of a client or consultant. It's not when times are easy. That's not when you form the deepest bonds. It's when something went wrong, and you have to address it, you have to own up to it. And you have to figure out how you're going to move forward productively. That's where people remember who you are. And people often remember more than any data point you can tell them is how you made them feel. When you make them feel connected to you. They remember that. Yeah. And sometimes it it's at your own expense. Yeah. We as leaders have to sign up for that in today's environment.



### Jacob Morgan 37:23

I remember I interviewed Frank Blake, he's the former CEO of the Home Depot. A little while ago, and I can't remember if this is for, if it was for, I think it was for my podcast. And one of the most profound things he shared with me is he said that a lot of leaders forget that when they get into that position, part of their responsibility. And their privilege is they have to give a part of themselves to their people. Meaning that you do more and you care more. And part of that means that if you have to make yourself uncomfortable, so that you can create trust, so that you can empower others that you can grow the business. And guess what, that's what you have to do. And if you're not prepared to do that, you shouldn't be in a leadership role. And I thought that was a very, very powerful thing, because one of the things that he told me he did is he used to give up all of his Sundays and do a bunch of handwritten notes to his employees. I said, Frank, you're giving up your Sunday, you know, why? Why would you do that? You need to go enjoy yourself. And he said, No, I have to give some of myself to my team, because that's what I signed up for. It's my responsibility and my privilege. So I think the same thing applies with vulnerability. One of the themes, one of the things that a lot of people are scared of when it comes to vulnerability is obviously judgment. And I think you touched on this earlier, people are scared to be judged, they don't want to be perceived as being weak or incompetent. If I

asked for help, people are going to think I don't belong in my job, or I'm not good at this from stupid or I mean, you insert whatever negative description you want there. How can you be vulnerable, especially if you're a leader, without being perceived as being weak?



39:02

So my response is, some people will view you as weak, and you probably can't change that. But the majority, I believe, will view you as trustworthy, accountable, willing to connect, willing to learn and so you can't be paralyzed by you know, the reaction of the few to the reaction of the many and and you got to be really centered on what is right. Yeah. So listen, leadership is is both a you know, it's a privilege. Yeah, it really is a privilege. I agree with that. And I think that if you're going to do it, then you have to understand you're not going to make everyone happy all of the time. And so as long as you really have Your Own, I think compass and you can you know, I use this all the time, I'm the only one who looks in the mirror first thing in the morning. I'm the only one who sees that reflection, and am I proud of it? No matter what I'm about to do, am I really centered and proud? And in in what I'm going to do? And if the answer is yes, then do it. And so sometimes being vulnerable, it's required, because again, none of us is going to get everything right all of the time. And I think that instead of being viewed as weak, you could say, I didn't get that right. So next time, I'm going to do these three things, or next time, I'm going to empower the expert in the room, I think one thing you have to learn as a leader, you don't have to know the most about everything in the room. What you need to know is who to go to, and be able to delegate some of that expertise to get the best out of the team.



Jacob Morgan 41:00

Yeah. Is that something that you've had to learn during the course of your career? Did you start at some point thinking that you, as a leader needed to know everything? And was there? Yes,



41:09

I mean, I started as a litigator. So we're trained as litigators to know every answer to every question on the on the topic that's to be asked. So I got some very good advice, when I moved away from that, you know, individual professional career and moved into general management, you know, I had a mentor who said to me, Kate, you've got to let go of being the smartest person in the room, because your job is different. Now. Your job is to get the most out of your team. And if you're doing it, right, they're going to know more than you about certain topics. And that's okay. I mean, that's really what you want.



Jacob Morgan 41:49

I think that's a hard shift for a lot of leaders to make. Because, you know, a lot of leaders get promoted, because they're really good, individual contributors. And then they get promoted, because they're doing so good at their job. But when you make that promotion, you also need to make a mental shift, because you're no longer focusing on the task or the project, you're focusing on the people who are responsible for the task or the project. And so you have to shift your mindset from, I know how to do this thing really well to how do I empower my people so

that they can do that thing really well? And not everybody's capable of making making that shift? And I think maybe that's why we get some managers who are command and control who are micro managers who are just they're not able to live in in the past, and they can't let it go, they got that old workforce trauma.



42:36

Right? You know, I like to describe it, Jacob is once you take on this job. It's not about you anymore. No, it's about the enterprise. And it's about your empowerment and development of others. And if you don't understand that, you probably will not achieve everything you want to achieve, because it's not about you as an individual anymore.



Jacob Morgan 43:00

Yeah, and I think that that, too, is part of that shift that I think a lot of leaders are struggling with. Before we jump into the last part of the show, I'm going to ask you some specific action items and things that maybe some leaders can apply. I thought we could just quickly touch on your your development, right, so So you're obviously the highest that you can get inside of an organization. I think you mentioned you have around 4500 people. What do you do to still stay on top of leadership trends? How do you develop yourself? How do you make sure that the things that you're doing inside of your organization are correct? Like how do you, you know, I mean, because we live in such a world that is changing so quickly, that it's very easy to fall behind? Do you have your own routine, your own ritual that you use to make sure that you're still staying on top of everything?



43:56

So I wish I could give you like the five greatest things I do. And you know, I've been a CEO for six years. So I still feel like I'm learning but I'll tell you, one thing I do is dedicate part of my day every day to outside reading, which sounds simple, but a lot of leaders don't do that. And and I think that learning from the outside in is something that's really important. I network a lot with other leaders to just hear what they're doing. And how are they facing similar challenges. So I'm and I'm not afraid to ask for help. I'm part of the boards of some other entities both in the nonprofit and the profit environment. And I think learning you know how other companies govern themselves, make strategic decisions, organize their talent and a line there talent towards strategic objectives, all of that, I think, goes back to just learning devoting part of the job to learning. And if you think that once you become the CEO learning stops, then that's where I think that you're in trouble. So yeah, I try and, you know, every day spend some time learning. And I also think that bringing in speakers to talk to our company so that they're not just hearing from me, they're hearing from others that might be leaders in our industry, or leaders in other verticals that we serve. Leaders in the talent sector. I mean, you know, good ideas come from lots of different places. And then learning from our own environment, you know, asking every level of our organization, what can we do better? Yeah. Because I believe great ideas come from all levels of your own organization.



Jacob Morgan 45:57

Hey, Ken, I couldn't agree more. And I love that organizations bring in speakers because if they didn't, I wouldn't have a job. So that's always good. Well, let's talk about some, some action items that organizations can or that leaders can apply. by Congress conversation with Kate continues, and you won't want to miss it, where Kate shares her big business failure in what she learned as a result, the top skills that leaders need to practice and how to go about practicing some of them, and also she shares her top leadership tip. Again, it's for subscribers on Apple podcasts. And when you subscribe, you'll get a weekly bonus episode ad free listening and early access to new content. Most importantly, it allows me to bring in more amazing guests like Kate, I hope you decide to subscribe and support the show and I'll see you next week.