

From Crisis to Collaboration, Learn How Dan Helfrich Drives Success at Deloitte

Jacob Morgan 00:00

Have you ever wondered why vulnerability seems to cripple some leaders, but other leaders seem to tap into it as a superpower to unlock the potential of others to drive business performance to lead through change and to create trust? How do they do it? How are they approaching vulnerability in the right way? Well, to answer that question, I interviewed over 100, CEOs at organizations around the world. And I surveyed 14,000 employees in partnership with leadership firm DDI. And what came out of this is the most in depth and fascinating book on leadership and vulnerability that has ever been written. And I'm excited to share that it is now officially available for preorder. That's right, my brand new book leading with vulnerability, it is coming out October 3, and you can pre order it now by going to lead with vulnerability.com. And if you preorder a copy of the book, and you'll get instructions on that website on what you need to do, you're gonna get access to a couple of bonuses, including some exclusive CEO interviews, you'll get a sneak peek of the book. So we'll send you a couple of chapters of the book before it's even out. And I'm also going to be hosting a private exclusive webinar where I will be sharing some of the concepts and ideas from the book, again, this is all going to be happening before the book even comes out. So you will get a sneak peek ahead of everybody else. The stories in the book are completely fascinating, never seen before never heard before. And I'm answering some very, very important questions, for example, is vulnerability for leaders the same as it is for everybody else? The answer to that is, of course, no. What happens if vulnerability is used against you? What's the ROI of leading with vulnerability? What makes leaders feel most vulnerable at work? And why? All these questions and a lot more are answered and covered, backed by data. And also some fascinating stories, again, head over to lead with vulnerability.com to preorder a copy of the book and get access to your bonuses. And now let's get right into the show. Do you remember what your first leadership role actually was?

Dan Helfrich 02:08

My first leadership roles were probably in charge of teams or business units measured in the dozens to hundreds

Jacob Morgan 02:15

I view it as sort of like stereotypical leadership versus the new way of leadership.

Dan Helfrich 02:20

I think of those two things as coach versus Captain coach, directive, positional authority captain, there's both a natural style of a leader on that spectrum. What's more natural to you. To me this command and control versus influence discussion, hybrid work is one of the most unique places to observe different leadership behavior.

Jacob Morgan 02:48

Hey, everyone, welcome to another episode of great leadership, my guest today, Dan Helfrich, the chair and CEO of Deloitte Consulting LLP, and he is responsible for the lives of over 85,000 employees. Dan, thank you for joining me.

Dan Helfrich 03:01

awesome to be here.

Jacob Morgan 03:02

I was trying to remember you were a guest on the show wasn't like three years ago. For me, it was definitely before the pandemic. So quite a lot has changed. Since since the last time we talked. And to give people some context, today's conversation is really going to be focused on this idea of leading with influence versus leading with command and control kind of the new way of leading versus the old way of leading. But before we jump into that, why don't you give people a little bit of background information about you, what you do, how you got into this role, what your day looks like, and then we'll jump into the topic.

Dan Helfrich 03:38

Oh, boy, well, a little bit about me, I identify probably most of anything as a brother. I'm the oldest of seven, six boys and a girl from a really cool family. And I'm a dad and a spouse. And yeah, I'm the captain of a 85 to 90,000 person Deloitte Consulting team that keeps me on my toes and inspires me every day. I am sort of at the beginning of year five of this journey. And indeed, it's been a whirlwind of economic cycles. It's been a whirlwind of business cycles. And it's been, to be honest, a ton of fun. Now, amid the amid that complexity, I will try not to give you a lot of classic consultant it depends answers today, but on what my day looks like. It's an It depends. I would say you're seeing me from my home office in Virginia, if we'd been talking for years ago, I would have been in this home office three or four days a month. I'm in this home office 10 or 11 days a month now. So that's one pretty fundamental change and Um, but every day has a little bit of operations. A little bit of external client market sales alliance partner, and a lot of people, partners and culture.

Jacob Morgan 05:16

Yeah, it's a good mix of things. Yeah, it's funny, you kind of made a little consultant joke. I don't remember the joke, actually. But there used to be. How many consultants does it take to change a light bulb joke? I don't remember what it is. Somebody's gonna have to look it up. But

Dan Helfrich 05:32

I remember now of course, the answer. Now of course, that joke is zero because generative AI will do it.

Jacob Morgan 05:39

I like that we got the new jack shit as Chet GPT. How many consultants does it take to change a light bulb? You know, you forgot to mention the most important thing that I think that you do you do soccer commentating as well, don't you? I think I saw something you put on Twitter. I couldn't tell which voice

was yours. But somebody, I think it was Jacob, somebody scored a goal. And somebody was very, very excited in that commentating? I'm gonna assume it was you? It was.

Dan Helfrich 06:02

Yeah, I don't know of any other CEOs whose side hustle is played by play broadcasting. But I have continued to broadcasting mostly of soccer for the last 20 years. And it's a really important part of who I am, I actually find that it is beneficial to my career. And my career is beneficial to it. I mean, if you're going to be a play by play broadcaster, you're going to figure out how to be prepared. But then the let the moment sort of unravel before you and be the voice of it and not be scripted. And you know, all that stuff helps in my in my day to day job. So yeah, on. On fall, Tuesdays at 2pm. You are far more likely to see me in a press box than in a boardroom. Do you

Jacob Morgan 06:54

ever find that the coaching makes its way into the boardroom at your company? Are you ever just you know, you guys win a deal? And you just go crazy? You're like, yeah,

Dan Helfrich 07:03

no, doesn't have absolutely not. In fact, it's the opposite. When people at Deloitte or my clients hear a clip of me going crazy after a goal call, they almost have cognitive dissonance, that it's me, because I'm pretty. I'm pretty measured, when I'm not in the broadcast booth.

Jacob Morgan 07:23

So like, that's not you, Dan. That's a fake. That's a fake Dan.

Dan Helfrich 07:28

And I that high pitched adolescent cracking voice after a goal couldn't be made. But yeah,

Jacob Morgan 07:33

of course, no, no, that can never be the CEO of our company. Well, I love that you're involved with a lot of really cool stuff. So let's jump into what I wanted to talk about today. And it's it's this theme of leading with influence versus leading with change. Obviously, you've been in an executive level role, not just CEO, but in a leadership role for many, many years. If you were to think back when you first got into leadership, do you remember what your first leadership role actually was? Did you get any formal leadership training? And at that time was very much about you know, leading with command and control, telling what people telling people what to do, you know, the stereotypical leadership that we talked about?

Dan Helfrich 08:18

Look, I consider my first leadership roles, Captain roles of really significant athletic teams. You know, I played soccer at a high level, and I was always a captain. And I actually, when I think of the foundations of me as a leader, I think of them in that in that context, professionally. I, you know, my first leadership roles were probably in charge of teams or business units measured in the dozens to hundreds, right now. Leading Teams measured close to 100,000. So the context can scale is different. Did the training I receive, at that point, feel more about directedness? And more about command and control and more

about how to navigate hierarchy? Yes, than it does today. But I will tell you, if I look at the business world and the government world that I interact with today, including in our own organization, I think there are plenty of leaders who remain products of a more commanding control, leadership mentality and leadership Foundation, as well as some who embrace the idea of influence. Yeah. Well,

Jacob Morgan 09:42

so let's talk about the difference between them. I mean, I kind of tell you how I think about it, and let me know if you agree. I mean, I view it as sort of like stereotypical leadership versus the new way of leadership and you know, kind of the command and control was more, I guess you could call it like the Jack Welch Days, where you know, I'm the leader, I tell you what to do, you know, I don't want to be questioned, like you should be doing what I tell you to do, because I'm in the position of power and authority and you're not. Whereas today, it seems like leading from influence is almost the equivalent of getting employees to do something, not because of your role of being in a position of power or authority, but because you are able to inspire them, motivate them, get them along, you know, want them to participate in go along this journey and buy into your vision. And that I think it's a very different way to lead where people want to do something, not because they have to do something. Would you say that's a fair way to distinguish and characterize those?

Dan Helfrich 10:46

I do. And I think of those two things as coach versus captain, coach, directive, positional authority, you shall, Captain, I understand I have a important set of responsibilities. But I view myself as a peer, and I'm gonna lead through earning respect and through inspiration, not through direction, the part I probably quibble with, is you sort of teed it up as Group A, the directive or in my words coach used to exist. And now it's been, you know, replaced by the captain influence model? I don't see it that way. I think there's plenty of both A and B. Yeah. alive and well in organizations.

Jacob Morgan 11:40

Yeah, no, that's that's very fair. And I agree, because and the follow up question I was going to ask you is, it seems like we still do need there are times when you do need that command approach. And there are times when you need that influence approach. So yeah, you're right. It's not that one necessarily has replaced the other. But we've just seen the emergence of this other type that now needs to blend with that first type. And you kind of need both. Can you give me an example?

Dan Helfrich 12:08

Yeah, and what I was

Jacob Morgan 12:11

not gonna go ahead, go ahead.

Dan Helfrich 12:12

Sorry. What I was gonna say is the, there's both a natural style of a leader on that spectrum, what are you more, what's more natural to you, it's also roles themselves, can tend to be more influence versus command and control, right? So just simple example, a chief operating officer role will tend to inherently

be more of a directive command and control type of role versus a Chief Strategy Officer type of role will tend to be more of an influence role.

Jacob Morgan 12:51

Oh, that's interesting. I didn't think about that. Can you give an example of when, when both of those types of scenarios would be beneficial? So when do you need that command, that directive approach? And when do you need the influence, or leading with influence approach?

Dan Helfrich 13:10

You need the command directive clarity approach, when there is a pandemic occurring? And there is information and misinformation flying around. And people don't know where it's safe to be if it's safe to be together, whether offices should be open or closed. ambiguity and influence is not your friend in that situation. And so I think that's an example of when, regardless of what your natural instincts are, as a leader, the moment demands, command control and directedness. So what did I think they are? Go ahead?

Jacob Morgan 13:53

Oh, I was gonna say, so building on that. So when, um, obviously, it seems like you're referring to COVID. There. So what when that happened, I guess you could have had two different approaches, right? One, you could have said, hey, you know, this pandemic is happening. You know, I'm not going to tell you what to do. Let's talk about it. Let me tell you my vision. And but it seems like the right approach was, hey, this pandemic is happening. Here's what we're doing. shut this down. Do that everybody stay home? Like that's it? Is that kind of what you're alluding to? Yes. Okay, fair enough. And then sorry, you were about to make another point. Well, and

Dan Helfrich 14:28

then you asked for an example of sort of the the inverse, the inverse to me and, you know, I'll use an example that we've been going through right now is, you know, debates about in discussions about what's the right form of hybrid work in going forward. Well, that to me is a time to put out some guiding principles to to engender some debate, to say, here's what we're trying to accomplish, what do you think, to say we'd love to see Team A and Team B experimenting as to how they want to work, what the rhythm of work is. That to me is an example where you influence them brings more voices into the conversation and eventually creates a more coherent strategy. Now, of course, there are some people right now who believe that command and control as it relates to hybrid work, is the right answer, you know, uniformly without showers like that thou shalt work in this exact way for this exact set of days in this exact set of circumstances. So to me this command and control versus influence discussion, hybrid work is one of the most unique places to observe different leadership behavior.

Jacob Morgan 15:57

Yeah. So I guess, besides a pandemic, I mean, is it safe to say that during times of crisis or tragedy, slash uncertainty, the command approach as a general rule is more effective? Or is was COVID? Sort of just a unique scenario? Like where? Where else? Would this kind of an approach of command and directive make sense?

Dan Helfrich 16:24

Well, the the more time sensitive the decision or topic, the more that someone or some group of people been willing to say the time for debate is over. And the time for choice is now that becomes incredibly important. And so does that situation happen more in in crisis? Yes. Now, uncertainty, I actually think uncertainty is a is is a broad concept, I think there are moments where in uncertainty, if there isn't a time sensitive thing that goes along with uncertainty, that's actually a great time for influence. Because for me, uncertainty means there's debates to be held and different perspectives to be considered. And I think leaders who are comfortable with influence, actually are willing to invite that debate and invite those different perspectives to be shared. And I think influence can be really powerful in certain moments of uncertainty.

Jacob Morgan 17:36

Is there another constraint, besides besides time, that lends itself more towards that command and control, for example, but what if the constraint isn't time but its resources? Its money, its people, its, you know, something of that nature? Would you say that that also might warrant more of a traditional approach towards leadership? Or is it specifically that time component that is really the key driver?

Dan Helfrich 18:02

I think time component is the key driver. Now, I think in any decision that ends up being a black and white decision. Even if one uses a set of influence tactics, to create conversation, there still is a decision to be made. So you know, take a topic like m&a, you might engender a bunch of different conversations about whether you as a company should make an acquisition or not, and do it in an influence way. But there's a choice to be made. Are we going to pursue buying this company? And how much are we going to offer for it like that, that requires clarity, and direction?

Jacob Morgan 18:51

Okay, that makes sense. It's funny, one of the stories and people who listen to the show might remember the story I shared from a US Cellular, the CEO there, Lauren Caravelle, who I had as a guest on this show, too. And he shared actually this really cool story that I think distinguishes those two quite well. And he was at a previous company before he was CEO. And he was brought in to turn around this organization, which he did and successfully and he was brought in, and he came in with this plan this vision, he told everybody what to do kind of command and control my way or the highway, and the company turned around, they avoided bankruptcy, they ended up going on to becoming successful. And then so one day the board calls him in to a meeting and he thinks he's going in there and they're going to be celebrating and they're going to be toasting and champagne and this and that. And they bring him into the room. And they say you're fired. And he's like, What the hell are you talking about? Like you guys brought me in to turn around the company? I did that. Why are you firing me? And the board basically said because you lost everybody in the process. You lead with command. And although you achieved the kind of the business goal, you alienated everybody at the company, like there's, you've, you've killed the culture, nobody's buying in to the vision, and you've, you've hurt kind of the long term future of this organization, even though you were able to kind of achieve the goal that you set out to achieve. And he told me that story. And I thought that was kind of a very powerful distinction between what happens when you don't lead with influence, and you only focus on kind of leading with that come in approach, you might still be able to get to that desired outcome in the short term. But

ultimately, there are a lot of other things that are still important, right, like getting people to move in that direction, the culture, all that sort of stuff.

Dan Helfrich 20:37

It's a great example. And I think one of the most important things for any leader, but particularly leaders who tend to have more of a natural trait of command and directedness is, what's your sensor network, amongst your various stakeholders so that you're getting really honest information back and forth, challenging etc. Because if you have both a command instinct, and a set of sensors, then you're in the ivory tower, you're feeling proud of what you're accomplishing and what the operational scorecard set is getting done. And you are absolutely losing the big picture, culture part of the movie that's incredibly important. So that set of honest sensors, human sensors in the organization is immensely important. And the bigger the organization you run, and the more distributed or decentralized it is. And you know, mine, for example, is very distributed, very decentralized. The value of those human sensors is, it's hard to put into words. So when

Jacob Morgan 21:50

you say human sensors, do you actually have people on your team who act as that role? Like, can you give an example of what that means?

Dan Helfrich 22:00

It? Yeah, it means so let's say I have an 85,000 person team. And there are a set of a couple 100 people that I am in routine contact with, who are providing feedback. And sometimes it's they're providing feedback, because I asked for it. But if the sensors are working really well, they're actually providing it when not asked. And so in those couple 100 people are of all levels in all geographies. And so there are 23 year olds in India, who are in the first 18 months of their career. And there are senior Deloitte partners who are in the fourth decade of their time in their career, who are part of that sensor network. So it's not just people on my team. And then it's also spending time with what the outside world often tells me, is random people that I view as representative people. So anytime I'm in a new city, new environment, I'm having tons of 15 minute 20 minute conversations with people I've never met before. And asking them, you know, probing questions about how things we're doing are impacting their day to day life. So those two elements of sensing to me, can actually help you if you tend to be a more command centric leader. protect some of what your vulnerability might be.

Jacob Morgan 23:36

So I guess when you say sensors, you basically mean people who are giving you feedback based on the things that you do or say or implement and stuff like that people who are going to give you the candid feedback like your to your trusted advisors, almost.

Dan Helfrich 23:49

Yes. But again, the distinction as I process and I help a lot of senior leaders as their consultant is, it's not just people who you would find on an org chart. It's people strewn throughout the organization.

Jacob Morgan 24:08

Yeah. Yeah, I think it's important distinction. I think it's pretty obvious, right? When you lead with command and control and with authority, if people don't listen, you have a very simple recourse, right? I mean, you can fire them. But what happens if you try to lead with influence and it doesn't work? Do you switch to command and control? Do you fire I mean, what what happens if you're influencing is just not, you know, it's not connecting people aren't going in that direction that you want them to go in?

Dan Helfrich 24:38

Well, I think it's a little simplistic to say firing is your only mechanism. There's obviously a bunch of different techniques that you have. If you are someone who has positional authority to influence people, you have performance evaluations, you have bonuses, you have you know, all those all those kinds of things. Um, And so I think that you absolutely build credibility over time as an influence based leader, that you respect people, you care about a diversity of opinions, you're willing to say, I don't know. And I'm wrong, you're willing to change your mind, like all those things as an influence based leader accumulate credibility over time, so that if there is an instance, where your style of influential leadership is not resonating, and is not compelling the behavior you want, then you can absolutely pivot and be clear that I'm moving you off of this assignment. And which, which, as you frame it might feel more command and control. But if you built up that reservoir of influence over time, then you haven't suddenly become a command and control leader just because you made that choice.

Jacob Morgan 26:04

Okay, that makes sense. What do you think is required from leaders to be able to influence? You know, I mean, some things, for example, that come to mind are obviously being able to communicate effectively, being able to tell a story, being able to paint a picture or a vision, maybe having some charisma, passion, right? executive presence, like all those things seem to be relevant to be able to get people to lead with influence. Is there anything else that you think is important that leaders need to master in order to be able to influence others?

Dan Helfrich 26:39

Self awareness, okay. Empathy, and per sort of my sensor comments, stakeholder awareness, because if you're seeking to lead in an influential way, then you better have a really accurate perspective of your influence meter, in any particular stakeholder group or with any particular person at every point in time. Otherwise, you're guessing, relative to the effectiveness of your influence. And so that's what that in addition to I think you well described, you know those attributes, and then I think there is real power in being willing to say, I don't know, and being willing to say, here's on this topic, the wide range of perspectives and the wide range of alternatives that actually all have merit. So many leaders, and particularly those who are command and control leaders, try to isolate the debate to behind the scenes and try to have this really strong conviction that we've decided this and this is the only way, I actually think really effective influence leaders have this incredible capacity to say, there's actually four or five different ways that a reasonable person could go about making this choice. We've decided that, you know, alternative four is the right one for us. But I acknowledge all the other ones had merit. I think that's a really powerful skill, and I don't see it being practiced by enough senior leaders.

Jacob Morgan 28:26

Remember, my brand new book leading with vulnerability is now available for pre order. It's coming out October 3, and I want to share another endorsement that I received this one from famous celebrity chef, Robert Irvine, also host of the show restaurant impossible. And he says, leading with vulnerability meticulously lays out how to do the very thing that can transform companies. But which leaders are too often afraid to do, I hope you decide to preorder your copy by going to lead with vulnerability.com.

28:59

Its willingness to let people know who you are showing vulnerability and emotional intelligence is a strength and the idea of vulnerability is just who you are as a human.

29:10

I think it's a good trait of a good leader, knowing what you know, is great and leading what you don't know when

Tiger 29:17

you ask questions, it reveals your ignorance when you reveal your ignorance, you actually become vulnerable.

Jacob Morgan 29:26

So what what would you call that is that, like, in my most recent book, The future leader, one of the things that I talked about on there is this idea of the skill of the futurist. And the skill of the future is to somebody who's able to look at different scenarios and paths instead of just picking one and going down it. So somebody who's able to kind of like a chess game, right? If you've ever played chess, you think about different scenarios and moves that can be made. Instead of just like I can only move my rook and my opponent can only move their pawn. It seems like that's kind of what you're referring to is and I totally agree. When when I interviewed these 140 CEO As they said, that's the number one most crucial skill for current and aspiring leaders. And also one of the ones that leaders struggle with the most.

Dan Helfrich 30:07

It's I think it absolutely is embodied by your skill of the futurist. Comment, there's a tangent to it that I think is really important, which is the humility to say, I don't know what's going to happen in the future. And we're going to have this debate, we're going to be prepared for a bunch of different scenarios, we have to make a decision right now. But I'm telling you, if 18 months from now, we discovered that the decision we made was the wrong one. You know, we'll we'll pivot and adjust, I can think about Jacob discussions, we had, I don't know, seven 810 years ago, where we're really debating should we change the campuses from which we recruit? And, you know, we used to have concepts of tier one schools, and, you know, you might find that former lists that look pretty much like a US News, you know, report etc. And then we had a bunch of debates about the value for untold dimensions, including diversity on in many ways of expanding the way we think and thought about where we access talent from. And it was a reasonable debate, because there were some people who were worried that if we changed that set of schools, we would lower the quality of the people we were getting into our firm, and obviously, in a services, professional services, organization, that's our lifeblood. So you have the debate. And you say, Well, okay, we're gonna make a decision. In our case, the decision was, we're going to pretty

significantly expand the waterfront of the places we recruit, because we're confident we can get great talent from the set of schools that don't match some traditional definition of a tier one school. And guess what, it played out that we were absolutely right. And that the, the, the people from the broader set of schools have done exceptionally well in our firm. But if we were wrong, we teed it up in a way that we would have, you know, pivoted a couple years later, and that would have been would have been fine. So that's just yeah, that example came to mind as one that's pretty vivid for me.

Jacob Morgan 32:34

Yeah, that's a good example. And it's funny, you mentioned like humility. And even I think you mentioned vulnerability, which I, that's the subject of my next book coming out in October called leading with vulnerability, which kind of speaks to some of what you're talking about there. So we're hitting all the book topics here. This is great. So in those types of situations, again, you mentioned self awareness, you mentioned humility, and vulnerability, and empathy. Why are all these what a lot of times we refer to as soft skills or human skills? Why are those so important for leaders? Because it also seems like a lot of this stuff wasn't taught, right? I mean, if you think about your first leadership role, you know, anybody who's listening and watching who went to an MBA program, you're never taught, like, empathy, or self awareness, or, you know, heaven forbid, you say vulnerability and an MBA, like you don't, these aren't things that are taught, why are they so important for leaders in today's world?

Dan Helfrich 33:33

Because humans, are increasingly important to the success of any organization. And the way that a leader interacts with compels frustrates or motivates humans, is essential to the success of any enterprise. Yeah, and it's that simple. And, you know, there's lots of talk as there should be about the transformative potential of technology and Lord knows our, you know, much of our business is, is based on helping clients adapt and implement, said technology, in my mind, that puts the premium on human leadership and in human savviness even more, and, and that's why but it's, it's a hard thing to teach in the sterility of a classroom. It's, you know, the school of hard knocks the, the real life experiences with humans, not in a laboratory, but in the context of things that happen every day. That's where one learns. Yeah,

Jacob Morgan 34:59

no Couldn't agree more. What about creating an environment where other people can lead with influence because there's something to be said about, like what you, as a leader are doing. And actually, maybe we can even take a step back before we we get to that piece, and talk about what leading by influence actually, like how that manifests and what that looks like. So kind of the first command, you know, more stereotypical approach is very straightforward and common, a lot of people know what that looks like, Hey, do this, or we're doing this, you know, it's very straightforward. What does leading with influence actually look like? And do you have any stories that come to mind for you?

Dan Helfrich 35:42

It looks like guiding principles versus policy memos. Just to it, you can think about a lot of examples where a command and control approach would be a policy memo that says, for this topic, expense management for travel, I'm making it up most companies, we're going to the following six approvals are required. You can only do this up to x dollar amount, you know, etc. A more influence approach is, hey,

for these reasons, we need to be really thoughtful about where we're traveling to, and how much we're traveling to. So we want you to ask yourself these questions before you go and, you know, make these choices relative to travel and expenses. Yeah, that's the ladders and influence approach. The former is a, you know, command approach.

Jacob Morgan 36:49

Yeah, like, and I suppose even for, like the strategic direction of a business, you could do the same thing, right? Where the strategic direction is, hey, this is what we're doing. Here's what we're investing in. This is what we're acquiring this is what's going to happen, versus leading with influence is kind of like, here's the vision, the opportunity, the potential that we have, and you know, together we like, it's just different and how you communicate that. But how do you get other people to lead with influence? Because leading with that the command approach, I think, is easier. Everybody knows what that's like, and everybody knows how to do it, especially if you get put into a leadership role. It's just you tell people what to do. But leading with influence, I think is a lot harder for people to figure out. So how do you are there any steps, any tips that people can implement to actually lead with influence and make that a real thing?

Dan Helfrich 37:43

Well, the if you are in a position of authority that gives you a big platform, then the first thing you can do to help other people leave with influences to model it, the second thing you can do is back to this point of, you can set cultural norms that lead to more influence oriented leadership. So for example, if you set cultural norms around, you're going to debate in a very open forum. True tricky topics, will then as new leaders come in to new roles, there's actually some cultural norms that have an expectation that that's going to take place. And so if that leader becomes more command and control the antibodies, the cultural antibodies of the organization, are going to attack that, you know, are going to attack that a little bit. And then the final thing is, this, this point of identify your human sensory network, is something I spend time with every new leader on. Because if you take this idea of a human sensory network really seriously, as a leader, you are by definition, giving yourself a bunch of the nodes and dimensions of influence, because you're going to be getting feedback all the time, about how your approach is landing. And there's going to be some implied accountability from those sensors to change your behavior if certain things aren't landing well. And so that's a pretty effective technique and some more command and control leaders will say, yeah, yeah, I have my sensors in there. You know, these four people. And my advice and direction to any new leader is no, those human sensors have to be a lot of people you've never met in your life. Because that is going to create a more authentic human sensory network.

Jacob Morgan 39:57

Interesting. So it's kind of like um, So you need that that group of people to lead with influence? And it seems like a big part of it is the the human element like you can't, you can't fake leading with influence, like you genuinely, genuinely need to have that that connection, understanding your employees as human beings getting to know them the empathy, the self awareness. Like it's, it's not, you can't avoid that you can't fake that stuff.

Dan Helfrich 40:24

Yeah, you I think it's really hard to be a successful high influence leader, who, every time there with a group of people is reading off a teleprompter. I think it's really hard to be a high influence leader, if the email messages you send to your practice are all from, quote, The Office of a leader. And it's formatted in highly corporate structures, language, fonts, etc. I think those are small things. But I actually think they add up. Yeah, relative to the ability to lead with influence.

Jacob Morgan 41:09

Yeah, it almost seems like leading with influence is, is just kind of leading with humanity. It's almost like the same thing. Yes. And it's also kind of hard to, like tactically break. Like tomorrow, for example, if somebody shows up to work, and they say, you know, I was command and control today, when a leader with with influence, what do I do? It's kind of hard to tactically pinpoint specific steps that Today's my first day leading with influence, what do I do? Probably the best place to start with would be to kind of get to know your employees get to know your people, and what they care about and what they value and build relationships with them first. And then you can kind of go from there. I mean, would you say that that's an effective first step or something else?

Dan Helfrich 41:57

I would, and I liked the connection you made between leading with influence and leading with humanity, that resonates a lot with me. But, you know, again, some of the things I just described to me are, in some ways, tactical. So if you're a new leader, and you're thinking about your first 30 days in that role, you're thinking about the first townhall call, you're going to have you think about the first email you're gonna send to your team. I think some of those techniques can help set you on that path. And then the other thing I'd say Jacob is leading with influence equals leading with humanity. The really interesting thing, and it's certainly been for me is leading with influence in humanity at scale, because then you're trying to influence people you will never meet. And that's a really interesting thing that I don't hear people talk about a lot. If you make a transition from leading with humanity and influence, but it's based on relationships, because these are people you see or talk to, every day, you know them personally, you know, their motivations. Yeah. Well, at certain levels of scale. That's impossible. And so how you become a leader of influence and a leader of humanity, with a population that includes 10s of 1000s, of people you will actually never meet is a really interesting thing to unpack.

Jacob Morgan 43:36

Yeah, it seems like that's a challenge, right? I mean, it especially in a large organization, like like yours, it's probably an interesting thing to try to figure out. Maybe one more question for you before I jumped to something else. Do you see any common pitfalls or mistakes that leaders make when it comes to leading with influence? For example, one that popped into my mind is they tried to fake the authenticity. Like, I can imagine that being a huge mistake where it's, you know, I'm going to pretend like I care about you. I'm going to pretend to be authentic, pretend to be vulnerable, but really, your employees can tell that it's BS, like we're very good at that kind of stuff. I would classify that as a big mistake or a pitfall. Any others come to mind as far as where leaders might fail and fall when it comes to leading with influence?

Dan Helfrich 44:24

Yeah, they're there. Over time, their network that started off as expansive and gets really tight. And so the their ability to actually influence and dissents the quality of their influence erodes over time. Because what started off as the right sort of guiding principles around leading with influence, the circle closes really quickly and you're back to you know, or really small subset of people that you're getting advice from and to your to your other point yet leading with influence in authentically is a sport that should not be attempted. Yeah. Because you will be found out you will be discovered. And in today's world, there's many more outlets for people to, you know, to discover that and share it.

Jacob Morgan 45:28

Yeah, I couldn't agree more. So last 15 minutes or so I want to focus on maybe something unique, a little bit more personal to you. And I thought it would be fun to look at how you structure your day for optimal success. So maybe you could walk us through what does a typical day look like for you? And are there certain elements of your day that you really think through and plan that you know, any, any rituals or things that you do to really set yourself up for success for the day? Or is it just kind of like a wake up and see what happens? my conversation with Dan continues, and you won't want to miss it, where we talk about how Dan structures his day for optimal success. We touch on again, this theme of the coach versus have a captain leadership hack. And also, he gives me one of the best pieces of career advice I've ever heard, which is don't be too structured in your career path, and we unpack what exactly that means and why this is so dangerous. This bonus episode only available for subscribers of the show, on Apple podcasts or on Spotify. When you subscribe, you're gonna get a bonus episode every single week from one of my amazing guests. It also really helps support the show so that I can bring in more amazing guests like Dan that we can all learn from. Thanks again. I'll see you next week.