

Podcast Recording: Leading with integrity - Dave Bates & David Hatch (2024-02-09 13:12 GMT) – Transcript

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Attendees

David Bates, David Hatch

Transcript

Introduction

David Bates: You have to create that culture. You have to be the kind of leader who says, I want you to come and tell me if you see me making a mistake. And that's really hard for people, especially for people who have lots of confidence, who feel like they know everything they need to know. I mean, you can imagine going and talking to Steve Jobs and saying, Hey, Steve, I think you're wrong.

Like that would, that would take a lot of courage. And that's okay. So guess what? If you value that, then maybe courage is a core value and you train around it and you say, Hey, be courageous. And here's an example of what courageous looks like. If you see me telling a customer a lie, I want you to put your finger to your nose.

And when I see you put your finger to your nose and then to your ear, I'm going to step out into the hallway with you. And you're going to tell me, I think you are violating the core value of integrity

David Hatch: As leaders, we can so often get stuck inside our own brains, going around in circles, obsessing over the wrong thing, mishandling a difficult conversation because we're not concentrating, you know, And so on.

We can overthink ideas. We can hold out for the perfect solution instead of the good enough. And then at the other end of the scale, some leaders are so action oriented that their teams just end up drowning. In changing priorities and constantly chasing the latest shiny objects while never really following through on the last half a dozen of them.

And this can be just as true for experienced senior leaders as it is for new managers still finding their feet. My guest today, Dave Bates, is an executive coach who understands those daily struggles, those challenges and the opportunities involved. He's been a solopreneur, he's been a chief operating officer, a chief executive officer, and almost everything in between.

Those clients today experience relief from that pressure of feeling alone at the top of their growing business. He works almost exclusively with chief level executives, and he is of course very well placed to give us some great insights today into the challenges I've just described and others to do with leadership, and I've no doubt that you're going to find this conversation useful wherever you are in your leadership career.

And before we start, just a quick reminder to check out www.leadernotaboss.com to sign up for my newsletter. Never miss an update and you'll also receive an invitation to join my online integrity leaders community to the leading with integrity podcast leadership talk for the modern manager with your host David Hatch.

00:02:58 - Welcome

David Hatch: Dave, welcome to leading with integrity. It's great to have you on the show. I'm really looking forward to our leadership conversation. As we said, two days talking about leadership, what could possibly go wrong? What could go wrong? I'm grateful to be here. Amazing. Well, it's great to have you. And we'll kick things off by handing the reins to you, really, to introduce yourself, tell listeners a bit about your background, your career history, what you do today and why you do it.

Dave Bates: Thank you. It's a long story, so I'll make it short. Well, as short as I can I started out in my life academically trying to figure out what I wanted to do and I got some really

great career advice from my dad after I was getting close to the end of the parental scholarship in college, like that means you can't take any more general ed classes because we're not paying anymore.

And I was really struggling with what to do. And I was talking to my dad and he said, well, what do you like to do? And I said, well, I like to talk and I like to write. Okay, and he said, so do that. So that's what I did. Went and got a degree in communications and professional writing. And then I went off and started my career at IBM as a technical writer in a PC company here in the U.S. And one thing led to another. I had an opportunity to be trained as an executive coach by IBM's first sort of internal executive coach, the lady named Jane Creswell, who started the program. She trained me and at one point she told me, Hey, Dave, God created you to be a coach. And I said, thank you very much, and I'm going to go off and spend the next 20 plus years being an operational guy. And so I have worked in startups, funded startups and one of the then largest raises here in the Research Triangle Park in North Carolina back in the early 2000s. We raised 55 million in series A funds and got a lot of leadership experience there.

Lots of opportunities. Learned some really powerful lessons. And then the dot com bubble burst and our our IPO filing went with it and that started a series of many years of doing a lot of different things, and I've worked in solopreneur kind of capacities. I've worked in small startups and early-stage companies and also sort of large companies.

And a couple of years ago, I came to the place where it's kind of like, okay, well, maybe I'm ready to, to lean back into being a coach. And so about five years ago, I started a company. It's just me as an executive coach to really leverage 30 years of leadership experiences, right, right out of college.

My first job, it was less than a year before I was in a formal leadership position. And I'm really haven't been in anything else since. So really gained a lot of experience learning from folks over that time. And now my company is called Paravelle and it's called that on purpose. It's about walking together with leaders through their leadership journey.

And so I'm one part coach and one part consultant and ICF folks probably shutter here. I do follow a lot of the ICF coaching practices, but there are some times where I've found that sometimes the consultative skills are, are helpful to really senior leaders. Mostly I, I work with the C suite leaders and founders of technology companies and services companies.

It's a great job. The why the why is because I think God put me on the planet to walk alongside of folks and to share what I've learned and the perspective that I have.

David Hatch: Well, fair enough. Yeah. And it's great to talk to someone who's found their purpose and then they found a way to actually follow it.

That's always g to see. And I love hearing stories like that. Your career so far, you know, you've, you've done it all really. You've, you've been a business by yourself. You've been in the C suite of various types of roles and different kinds of companies as, as you've just described.

00:06:57 – Company Similarities and Differences

David Hatch: I mean, what would you say are like the biggest similarities and differences between all those different types of entity that you've worked for?

Dave Bates: It's a good question. I think the similarities are that we, the only way we get anything done is with other people, right? Like, even as a solopreneur, we have, we have our clients, we have partners that we work with. We have suppliers, right? Like people we depend on. And I think that that is the thread that is the same across all of them.

I think the other thing is, it's important to know what your purpose is. Like, there's your personal purpose, and then there's your business purpose. And how do we get there? How do we leverage the resources that we have available to us? I was reading a book recently called *The Outsiders*. It's written Thorndike and he talks about the CEO's number one job is capital allocation and that's human capital and financial capital and that's true whether you are a solopreneur or whether you're a mid-level manager or whether you're the CEO of you know, a FTSE company, right?

It doesn't, it doesn't matter. You have to allocate capital. As a solopreneur, that's your time and your attention and the maybe limited money that you have available and make priority decisions. And that's the same regardless. And we have to do that with the people. So we can't alienate people. We can't count out people. We've got to find the right balance of how to inspire people towards the objective and to be human and support them in that process. So those are think are the key things that I would say would be similarities.

David Hatch: It's hard to disagree with that. Yeah.

Dave Bates: Yeah. There's differences, right?

David Hatch: Yeah. I'm sure there are. We could, we'd be here for the rest of the week, probably.

Dave Bates: Maybe there'll be a time for another.

David Hatch: Yeah. Very possibly. Yeah. But, you know, I think that the common theme is always going to come down to the people, isn't it? Whether it's, you know, even if it's people you're working for as clients or, you know, People you rely on as suppliers, even if they're not directly in your employ, you know, it's still, as you say, it's still matters.

00:09:14 – The importance of communication in leadership success

Dave Bates: Yeah. And I think that, I think that among those things that the leaders that are most successful are the ones who committed themselves to understanding how to communicate with other people. That's a, I told you I have a degree in communication so by default, I guess I'm biased, but I think it's critical.

It's the one skill we all share.

David Hatch: Yeah. And It's one of those kind of the common skills, if you like, that so many other things rely on as well. I mean, leadership is pretty much impossible if you can't communicate effectively. So yeah, in fact, I've had conversations with other communications coaches probably enough now I think about it.

Maybe there was a bias there, but we had a very interesting debate around could you actually just replace the word leadership with communication or are they interchangeable even? I'm not sure where I sit. I'm probably back on the fence again.

Dave Bates: Yeah, I would say that you can't and I think, but I think that they are communication is a, an important and supporting skill.

And a lot of people talk, and this is a personal bee in my bonnet, so we'll be on a rabbit trail if you let me, and we'll come back off of it really quickly. A lot of people talk about communications as a soft skill. And they do that because they think hard skills are things you can learn in the classroom.

They're things you can test for. Well, I have a degree in communications, it means I went to a classroom and I was tested on my understanding of the body of knowledge, right? So that can't be, can't be the test of whether there's a hard skill or a soft skill.

00:10:46 – How “soft skills” are like tires on a car

Dave Bates: And I laugh a lot. I say for car people, you want to get in your car and you want to go from point A to point B.

If I take the soft tires off, how will you get there? It doesn't matter how great your car is and how great the sheet metal is. Without the tires, you can't get there. And so I think in leadership and communications is a similar way. Because the communications are the tires that attached to the road that take your leadership skills from point A to point B.

It's not the only one. You have to have the technical skills as well, but I think it's really important and that's why I don't think it's a synonym, but I think they're super, super tied.

David Hatch: It's a good analogy. I like it. Yeah, I don't know. I've always kind of been a bit skeptical about the whole soft skills definition.

It just felt always felt to me like almost a thing for a manager who doesn't want to invest in trainings. They just say, Oh, well, it's a soft skill so you don't really need training in it. You just have to practice.

Dave Bates: Yeah, I can talk for a while about about how that label came to be what it is. And and I really encourage people - it's what I love about Seth Godin's approach to it. He calls them real skills. And I think they're all real skills. I think the communications is just as real as, you know, an engineering skill, way different for sure. And one's, well, one's mathematically more complicated than the other, you know, think about the human equation and the variability that we all have as, as people and how we think and how we talk and how we interact and how we feel. Those things are pretty different.

David Hatch: Yeah, I think I'm with you.

00:12:36 – Surviving high pressure leadership challenges

David Hatch: Tell us more about some of the really high pressure leadership challenges you face and what were the key things that they taught you?

Dave Bates: The thing that comes to mind first when you ask me about that is about a time where when I worked at that startup I mentioned to you before. I got on a plane -we bought a, we bought a company - it's a good thing to do with investment funds, right? But we bought, we bought a company and I got on an airplane and I flew out to meet a customer. Never talked to these folks before. And when I got there, I went into this beautiful conference room. It's a home builder out in Southern California, and I walked in this beautiful conference room, this beautiful building. All these really angry people were sitting on the other side of the table. I have no idea. This was literally just, you know, I thought I was going to meet this customer and just understand what was going on. And they essentially basically told me they were going to fire our company.

I mean, like today, like, thanks for coming. You're fired. You know, I was the director of technical services. I had a field service team that worked for me. I had some trainers that worked for me and call center and just a whole bunch of different kind of technical service folks. Like in that moment, like it's a big challenge, right? What do you do?

Like nobody prepared me for, that moment. So I guess I was a little plucky. And I said well, did you call me all the way out here just to fire us? Or do I get a chance to hear why we're being fired and what's been done? They're like, okay, well, since you asked that, here's all the, here's the litany of problems.

And so I sat there and wrote down a bunch of stuff. And then I said well, what next? And they said, well, fix it or you're fired. We want an answer today. I just learned about this. What am I supposed to do? And this is like a, like hundreds of millions of dollars a year company. They're not a small builder out there.

And so I just asked him for some time. I said, look, I need to go talk to my team. I need to do a little bit of investigation. But here's what I'll commit to do before the end of the day today. Five o'clock California time. I'll give you an update. I will not have an answer. But I'll have an update and then within 24 hours, I'll have a plan. That was good enough to not get fired that day, but I might be fired the next day.

I don't know. Right. And so, so I left and I went and visited the field service team and then I called back to my folks here in the Raleigh area. Put together just sort of a preliminary sketch. I went back and I talked to him the next day and I said, I don't have a full solution, but here's what I did and here's what's coming next.

I need 24 more hours and by 24 more hours - so now we're about 48 hours in - we have a plan and they're happy. We made all the money back that we were supposed to make back and we solved the core, the core underlying issues, and basically kept the account and grew the account and all the kind of stuff that comes with that.

I wish I could say that was the only time that I had been surprised. I had another experience of working with a major pharmaceutical company here in RTP. Same thing. My boss asked me, Hey, could you just check in on how that project's going? And I walked into an absolute hornet's nest. And, that, those things are challenging, right?

Nobody prepares you for that, like to go in all by yourself. You know, I'm not the CEO. I'm just like the director of services, right? In one place. I was just a project manager. The idea of coming alongside somebody - understanding what the pain point is that they're describing and then asking, what can I do?

How can I take responsibility? I don't own it. I didn't make the mess, right? So I couldn't sit there and say, hey, that's not my problem. I didn't...what do you want me to do? That's beyond my pay grade, right? Or you can say, okay, this is a challenge and I'm up for the challenge. So what can I do? And you take the next logical step towards finding a solution that puts you and that person on the same side of the table.

So those are just two examples of some pretty big challenges that I faced. There have been lots of other ones, but those are those are pretty much, pretty impactful ones that come to mind when I when I hear you ask that question.

David Hatch: What I like about that, particularly in the first example, there's I think a lot of people in that situation you hear, well, we're going to be, we're going to be letting you go kind of thing where we're going to seek alternative suppliers or whatever, you immediately get defensive, you probably make it worse and you're going to just walk out of there and that is the outcome.

You don't think any further. But what you've demonstrated there by the power of just asking a question and communicating, you went from you are definitely being fired to you might be fired by the end of the day. It might be tomorrow, actually, or the day after. And you did that within the space of one meeting.

00:17:49 – The leadership power of staying calm and asking the right questions

David Hatch: So, I mean, that's, that's pretty, pretty impressive example of the power of just staying calm and asking the right questions.

David Bates: Yeah, it is. And that's, I'm glad you mentioned that because the, your mindset is really what drives it, right? It's, and it's - I wish I could say now that I knew the why it was just survival for me at that point, right?

But now looking on, you know, 20 years on, I can kind of see how. Understanding my personality and the way I work made a difference. Like, so I think as a leader, one of the biggest investments you can make in yourself is learning how to keep your emotions in check doesn't mean you can't be emotional, right?

But it means that you know what's happening inside your head and you can prevent your mouth or your hands or your face from, from doing things that are, are not what you, what will help the situation, right? And it doesn't mean you just have to be a poker player. It's good for people to see emotion, to know that you're not some robot, right?

Being able to be aware of sort of your instincts and being able to ask is that helping me or is it likely to hurt me - don't want to get paralyzed by that but, but being aware right investing in knowing who you are and how you're made and then how does that manifest itself in your, in your leadership work that's a really important investment to make

00:19:23 – Emotional Intelligence in Leadership

David Hatch: yes we hear a lot about Emotional Intelligence these days that way, and not just in the field of leadership, but obviously it's relevant here, and I think one overlooked aspect of that that a lot of people miss or forget is it's understanding your own emotions as much as it is of those of others sometimes that that self awareness piece and then the self regulation as well as you said, and I think, yeah, I mean, we can all think of examples of leaders we've worked for or with I'm sure who were really bad at this in one respect or another who were just, you know, I mean, heart on their sleeve kind of person who they just react immediately and usually make it worse.

And I think at the same time, though, there is that line to walk between regulation and then being authentic. And as you say, not just being a robot and it is, yeah, I think that's one of the most difficult things about leadership actually,

Dave Bates: You know, you're gonna, you're getting ready to let somebody go, right?

Like you can, you can break down in that, like I've fired a lot of people. Some of them for cause and some of them because we had to lay them off. And there's not one of them, like even the worst performing person that I've had to let go. Like, you know, there's a part of you, oh man, this is not fun, right? But you can't let that get in the way of effectively, you know, doing the work.

You know, great. You got a box of tissues. At some point, it's okay to be human and you still have to do the job.

David Hatch: Absolutely. Yeah. That's quite a difficult example as well, of course.

Dave Bates: It's one of the more difficult ones for sure. There are surely others that are even more difficult than that, but but yeah.

Everybody can kind of understand that that's that's where it is.

David Hatch: Yeah, I know. I guess at least it has the finality to it. So, you know, it's gonna be a one difficult conversation and then not an ongoing issue. Hopefully.

00:21:25 – Leading for Return On Investment, not just Return Of Investment

Dave Bates: Yeah, well, the same thing happens. Like I wrote a letter to a team once. I was really, really frustrated with them.

It had a lot of conversations that put them through some group coaching and just weren't performing and the situation was such that I couldn't just, you know, replace the team, even though that was my recommendation that the, you know, the folks that I work for - you talk about a challenging situation - you got an underperforming team and you can't do anything about it. So I wrote them a letter. I still have it somewhere around here and it was about three pages in which I explained to them how frustrating it is to be a leader who's in the middle. This is middle management challenge, right? I have managers and I have a manager and I wrote them a letter about return on, on investment in which I explained to them why I was so frustrated because I am managing a budget. I am a steward of a budget. And I need to return something to the people who gave me that budget and I told him, like, I'm not looking for a return of my investment if I spend \$100, 000 on salaries this month, I don't want \$100, 000 back I want \$120, 000 back, or at least \$100,000 and 1 cent I need to get some kind of return on my investment because we're not here just to give people money, right? We're here to we're here to achieve stakeholder values that include the operating capital that we need to keep the lights on and to expand the team and to serve more people.

And so there was an example where, as I thought about it, right, I can express the frustration in a different way and it actually worked. The managers finally got the picture and they

started doing it was a little too, a little bit too little too late. And we ultimately only had to let go of one of those folks in that particular timeframe.

So it was a good outcome, but they knew I was frustrated, right? I didn't hide that I was frustrated because I, I was, they were actively preventing me from being able to do my job as the director. So I think there is a place for that emotion and we just have to know when and how to use it.

David Hatch: The thing that stands out to me from that story is that there was some, some bad leadership elsewhere in the organization.

Dave Bates: Well, with empathy, they had they had a tough spot, right? And, and I, I would say also that, yeah, that, that, that's a decision that in hindsight, especially now having occupied their chairs and other chairs, I would say was a bad call.

00:24:23 - Addressing toxic performers and toxic workplaces

David Hatch: Yeah, yeah. Well, yeah, as you say, with hindsight, I suppose it's a lot easier, isn't it? But I don't know. I think I'm having been through not quite at the same scale, but a similar experience a couple of times as well, where you've got what I would call the, the toxic high performer, or even just the toxic performer.

You know, the sales example comes up quite a lot in the social media articles about this kind of thing, about even if they're your best salesperson, if they have an active negative effect on everyone else in the team. It doesn't matter. You've got to solve that issue.

Dave Bates: Yeah, and this is the leadership lesson that I think people miss a lot.

That's what we call total cost of ownership. So we think about that when we build software, when we buy an asset, or something like that. But we don't always think about that in the team concept, right? I'm sorry, the team context. So, what is the total cost of ownership of having that toxic person? And it's hard.

It requires some really, really hard leadership decisions.

David Hatch: It does. Yeah. And I think, you know, I mean, it's easy to just say, just fire them, you know, they're, they're harming us, the team, get rid of them. But I think, again, you know, if we apply a bit of empathy to that situation then maybe they don't realize the impact their behavior has, or they've got something else going on in their life outside of work that is just filling up their capacity and they just, they can't be anything else at work right now. So, yeah, I mean, the knee jerk reaction to just get rid of them or start the performance management that dreaded phrase might not be the best solution.

And I always like, if I can start with a conversation first but yeah, you know, again, it's hindsight, isn't it? It's not easy in the moment,

Dave Bates: Right. Well, and I think you're on a good point there. What is going on? Right? That's the manager's responsibility is to figure out what is going on. And you have to be very careful with that, depending on where you are in the world, your legal and regulatory construct allows you to do some things prevents you from doing other things and we don't want to make assumptions, but there's so many roots here. One of the one of the challenges is like in is actually in job design. It's actually in culture. Right. The culture includes the behaviors that we, that we say we want, but it also includes the behaviors that we tolerate. So we have somebody who's in this toxic way.

Well, now we got to ask the question, is it actually toxic or do I just feel like it's toxic? Right. How do I know that it's toxic? Like, okay, if I can really see and observe that it is in fact toxic, now I have to take the next step of figuring out why, what is the root of this toxicity? So let's say they're, they're delivering the results that they need, that the organization needs them to deliver. But it's, you know, use the popular phrase. It's a dumpster fire, right? And nobody wants to come to work and engagement is dropping and other people aren't getting their work done. Great. Now, how do we have a candid conversation. I'm reading Radical Candor right now by Kim Scott and she defines it as both caring and being willing to have the hard conversation, right?

It, the caring doesn't prevent you from having the conversation and you don't just go off and, you know, beat on the table with somebody. It's, it's both and right. And so sometimes we have to think about job design. Like, hey, if, if, if you can't bring yourself to work in this way, we, we may be able to accommodate you by changing your job, right? So that you can have the cycles in the space you need to take care of whatever issue it is that you need. And maybe there's an employee assistance program that needs to get brought into play or maybe it's just too stressful. And there's a different job that that person can be in and reduce their stress. Sometimes there's not. And then we have to go through that process of you know, performance improvement.

00:28:02 – The right way to use a performance improvement plan (PIP)

Dave Bates: I actually don't think performance improvement is a dreaded word, because it's supposed to be restorative, right? It's a dreaded word because it's been abused so much. But when we, when we say, look, there is a gap between what we expect of you and what you are delivering, that's a generous thing to tell somebody.

Because what if they didn't know? What if they thought they were doing great, and they were just kind of clueless about it? And now we've set in motion a very clear set of measurable things that put them on a restorative path. And at the end of that, and hopefully even before the end of it, they're back where they need to be and everything is going great.

A lot of times with an improvement plan, what ends up happening is that person gets an improvement plan and they pull the, they pull the ripcord and they're out of there, you know, because they think they're doing a great job and that's an okay outcome of a, of a performance improvement plan because we did our job as managers to put them on notice about the expected behavior and they chose to separate. And the organization is going to be healthier for it.

So I think part of it has to do with our perceptions and, and, and challenging the assumption that because I've always heard of a performance improvement plan as being a negative thing, that it is a negative thing. But as a manager, you get to choose. You get to choose what your organization is like, whether the whole company above you is toxic because everybody hates them, but there's this little pocket where everybody's like, wow, what's going on with that team? I want to work on that team. Right, because you've created this culture, even within the larger culture, which is I'm here for you to be successful. That's the job of a manager to create the conditions.

00:30:01 – Leadership is cultivating the conditions for people to flourish

A leader - I say this all the time - it's a leader's job to create the conditions for the people to flourish.

I can't make them, I can't motivate somebody, I can't make somebody engage, but I can create the conditions, I can cultivate the soil around the plant, the plant still has to grow, right? But I can put some fertilizer in, I can look at, oh, it's a little bit, you know, it needs a little bit of water. Oh, it's too much water, right?

Like, that's my job as a leader is to pay attention to what's going on in the organization and make sure that I've created the conditions in which you can flourish. And, sometimes, my plant is growing in the desert. And so I got to adapt and adjust. Sometimes it's growing in the rainforest. Well, I probably don't need to give it water every week if it's growing in the rainforest, right?

So paying attention to the season in which your plant, your organization, your team is growing is the job of the leader, paying attention to all of those kinds of things. So I'm getting up on my soapbox. I'm gonna step down from it.

David Hatch: No, I think you're right, though, Yeah, I mean, I quite often say something very similar.

It's, you know, the leader's role is, it's not to go around and do all the work for everyone. It's not to micromanage. It's not to just shut your office door and only talk to people once a year at an appraisal or something. Your role is to create the environment in which others can succeed. That is what a leader is for.

Terminology with manager as well. You know, there's maybe other connotations to manager, but definitely with leader, a hundred percent with you there. And I think, yeah, I mean the whole performance improvement thing, I don't know what the rules are like in the States, but certainly in the UK, there is a perception that it's a negative because in a lot of cases, not always, but in a lot of cases, it's not really being used as an improvement tool.

It's being used as a compliance tool before they can fire someone.

Dave Bates: Yeah. And that's, and that's how it's used a lot of times, probably more often than not in the, in the U.S. as well. And what I'm suggesting is this is a show about, you know, leaders and how to lead. And like, just because that's the way it is, doesn't mean that's the way it has to be.

So as you're an emerging leader, what would happen if you, when you hired somebody, you said, Hey, this is how it works. These are the outcomes that we're looking for you to produce in this role. And if, if you're not producing, and we're going to find that out in our one on ones, the goal is to never end up having to do an improvement plan.

But hey, we do them because sometimes that's what it takes in order to really clearly understand the nature of what's expected. So if you ever get one, know that our, our goal with this, is to be restorative. Like again, the manager and leader thing that you can be a manager and you can be a leader and be the same person you can be an individual contributor and a leader and be the same person there's a positional leadership role and then there is a behavioral leadership role - and some managers are not leaders. So and some CEOs are not leaders.

It's important to understand that distinction. If you aspire to be a leader of people, you have to understand that it's a behavioral and mindset role, not a positional one. And sometimes they they overlap each other. So if that's true, then I have the freedom to be the leader in my department, regardless of what my company is doing.

Now, again, I have policy. I have to pay attention to those kinds of things. But the way I position those things within my team and within my organization that I happen to be the manager of, I have an option there and I can choose to do. Explain that I can choose to help people understand that my goal is to restore people to robust good performance if they're not there, and that shows that I care about the people that I'm leading. So, it's a hard thing, though, because so culturally, like we've grown up generation after generation after generation of like this is the tool used to bludgeon people when they're not performing, and so we grow up and people like, well, that's the tool we use when we bludgeon people for not performing.

And nobody stops and says, what if we didn't bludgeon people, what if we help them instead?

David Hatch: Yeah, maybe if we change the name of it, call it something else, something a bit more optimistic.

Dave Bates: Who knows? Let's imagine a world in which that's that's a different way. It's a challenge for sure. Labels and words matter. If, if no other point to what we were talking about earlier, right? The words matter.

David Hatch: Yeah. And I think you're spot on with what you say is all about the setting and then managing the expectations. And I think that's quite an important thing to do in both directions as well. But if you get that right, and then you're having those regular one to ones, you're right. I mean, the goal is you never have to use that performance improvement, whatever phrase we can use to describe it. But that thing. The ideal world, that thing that shall never be mentioned, won't have to, won't have to be used. But, you know, I agree with you. I mean, it is the right aspiration, definitely, to see it more as a restorative, as a, helping people improve genuinely, like what the actual word literally means, as opposed to what it has come to be understood as.

00:35:34 - Why are Core Values critical to leadership success and not just buzzwords?

David Hatch: And I think all of this feeds quite nicely into the next question, which is about core values. So values again is another buzz phrase, isn't it? In the world of management speak, what do you think is the right way to use core values in your company then?

Dave Bates: Yes. I will tell you a story. About the wrong way to use them and then I'll talk a little bit about what I think about values. I worked in a company once in which the top core value of the mission, vision, guiding principles – the top core value is integrity. Our integrity is never compromised. And I was in a project and I was expecting somebody to show up and they didn't show up.

And I, I got on the call and it's critical, a critical role right for this client. And I got on the phone and I said - this was a video call - and I said, Hey, where is the guy? And they said, Hey, he's not coming. Why isn't he coming? Well, because we had to send him over to some other project. Okay, well, did anybody think to think to tell me that before you know, 9 30 in the morning when the client's asking, where is the guy? Oh yeah. Sorry. We messed that up. Like, okay, well, what am I supposed to tell the client? And, and they said tell him his grandmother died. What? Are you serious? You want me to go into that guy's office and tell him this guy's grandmother died?

Yeah. And he won't, he won't worry about it. I'm like, let's stop and think about this for a second. If I tell him his grandmother died and he says, Oh, that's terrible, where should we send flowers? What would I tell him? And now I have to go and tell all the other guys on the team, Hey, this guy isn't coming we're supposed to tell the client that his grandmother died and he's at the funeral.

And they're going to ask me, did his grandmother die? And I'm going to say, no, he's over at this other client. And, but I need you guys to tell the client that. Like, what part of Mission, vision, guiding principles - what part of our integrity is never compromised - is that? And their answer was, good luck, but if you don't want to say that, go figure it out.

So I went into the guy's office and I said, hey, this guy isn't coming. And he got really upset and I, and you know, I said, here's, here's the problem - talk about these situations that happen... - I don't, I don't have a plan yet. I didn't go hide out and try to figure out what the plan was. I just went in his office and I said, here's where, here's what I know. And here's what I'm going to do next. And I said, he said, well, why isn't he coming? And I said, because we sent him to a different client. That didn't go real well, except that after he got his emotions out, I said, Hey, listen, if your project was in the situation that that project is in, we'd be taking people from that project and bringing them here.

So the good news is our project isn't in that situation. We just have to adjust for the speed bump. So let me have some time. And by the end of the day - you notice the pattern here? - by the end of the day, I'm going to come back and tell you what I found. I might not have an answer, but I'll tell you where I am.

And it, it was great. And I got on the phone with them at, you know, 4:30 in the afternoon. They're like, well, how'd it go? And I said, Oh, it went great. They said, Oh, good, so he bought it? And I said, no, I told him what actually happened. And they went - you didn't. Yeah, I did. And what'd he say? Oh, he said he was glad that we would do the same for him.

What's the problem? I think the problem's obvious.

00:39:16 - The role of core values and how to define them

Dave Bates: What's the role of core values in your business? You have to actually live them. Like you have to know what they are and they have to be clear. I was just having a kind of a workshop session with a client this week in which they showed me their core values.

I'm like would you fire somebody if they didn't do that? No, I wouldn't fire them. Like, okay, well, that's probably not a core value then. Like you, it's not the only test for a core value, but it's a really good one, which is if you lie to me, I'm gonna give you the opportunity to not lie to me again. But if you lie to me a second time, you don't have a place here. Well, then that's probably a core value.

So and I think a lot of times we, we conflate management practices with core values. Core values are beliefs and they are statements that are unambiguously clear and they are well understood and they are lived out. We hire based on them. We hire employees and contractors and suppliers and customers using them and we fire those people using them.

They're part of a job interview. Here are our core values. Tell me about a time when you demonstrated this, in this way. Right? I don't really have one of those times. Okay, well, pick a

different core value. Tell me about a time, right? If you can't show me that you know how to live this value based on this definition, we probably don't have a place for you and you shouldn't hire them no matter how technically skilled they are because they're a bad fit and you're going to end up one of those toxic workplaces.

So it starts at the very top with the leader and saying, these are the core - organizations don't have values, they're not people. People have values. And so what we say is, these are the set of beliefs that we agree we will use to govern our decision making and they will permeate what we do as an organization.

They're not just things we put on a business card. It's great to put it on a business card or a poster on the wall, but if you don't live it, it's not a core value and you're just checking the box and being buzzword compliant.

So we look at these things and if you have a whole lot of them. You probably need to shorten the list. And if you have a cute little acronym for your core values, it's possible that the acronym drove the values, not, not you, not what you actually believe.

It's not that acronyms are bad. It's that sometimes we can be like, look: we have five of these and we need one more. And if we just use this letter, it will be really cool. And, and we end up with this core value that's kind of, not really core.

And so I think that's how we use core values. We define them early. They support the mission that we're on. They are not necessarily only my behaviors, but they're the ones that allow us to accomplish the mission. And then we train on them and we evaluate people on them. We say like, hey, that behavior was not in line with the core values. You need to change that or we have to have a different discussion.

And that's how we use core values. So we, we invest heavily in getting them right. They don't change over time. And then we communicate them. And we make decisions based on that, and that's how we use core values to our advantage to the result that we're looking for, for completing the mission for the purpose that our organization exists.

David Hatch: I like that you mentioned buzzwords because I think one of my pet peeves, one of the issues I have with the whole concept of values, as it is so often misunderstood. I'm going to preface this by saying I have absolutely no problem with people who work in PR and marketing. It's a very important part of any business and most of the people I've encountered who worked in that have been really good at their jobs.

However, I don't think that the core values of a business should be written, driven by PR and marketing. It should come from leadership, hence my liking the word buzzwords. Is buzzword a buzzword?

Dave Bates: Yeah, probably. And that's okay. I think that this is, this goes to the mechanism of core values. And and it's, I'm working on a presentation right now about culture at work

and in the early days of an organization, when it's just getting started, those core values are synonymous with the founder's core values.

00:43:59 – Core Values and Company Culture

Dave Bates: And ideally they're aligned with the mission so that, so that over time they don't really have to change. And if you think about your culture as a seedling, when it's being, when it's being founded, right? When the company is being founded, it's a seedling and it's really small and it's not really viable.

You could step on it and kill it whatever. So the, the founder invests heavily in that and then, then it kind of grows into a sapling or, or maybe a young tree. You've, you brought in a couple of key players been really careful - or you should have been - about who you bring in maybe it's a co-founder maybe it's these three or four strategic hires and you made sure that they understand these core values.

So one of the tripping points is, we forget to do that because we're so into caring for the plant for the for the mission that we just say like hey you have this set of skills and I need it come on it. Right and we don't really pay attention to the causes. This is what causes founder fallout a lot of the time - topic for another conversation - but that that founder and CEO own that vision, that mission, that purpose, that and the core values that support them. And then as it grows and matures and you start hiring managers and hiring department heads and key leaders and stuff, the CEO is still responsible - or the managing director, whoever it is, is still responsible for keeping that vision and the mission and the core values all aligned with each other.

And the board, if there is one, is providing support for that and accountability for it. And so that's what keeps it from being a buzzword. It's not any, it's, and we don't build it by consensus. I'm going to write a post here soon about the difference of building by consensus and building consensus.

We don't ask the people in the organization, what do you think our core values should be? We say, these are the core values, and they are tied directly to the mission that we're on. And that mission is tied directly to our purpose, our vision, right? And so, if that's true, we don't do that by consensus, but we build consensus around them.

We say, like, these are our core values, this is how we define them. Is it unclear to you? Oh, okay, we can make it more clear, right? And so I think your point is well taken that it is a leadership job, but it is the job of the most senior leaders to, to both define and guard them over time. And that's what keeps our organization mission true, right?

On task with the mission.

00:46:44 - Living Core Values and Leading By Example

David Hatch: Yes, one of the other practices I really like, which I've rarely, if ever, I think, seen used effectively, is you empower everyone within the organization to call you the leaders out if you fall short of the values, which can lead to some pretty unpleasant confrontations. Hence why I've not seen it done well, but...

Dave Bates: yeah, well, I think that's the whole premise in Kim Scott's book Radical candor - is that you have to demonstrate that and you have to enable it. There's some really good stories - I'm early in the book - but some really good stories that she, she lists there about about how people do that. And her language choices are not always consistent with my language choices in the, in the book, but that the truth that she's communicating in there is relevant and you have to create that culture.

You have to be the kind of leader who says, I want you to come and tell me if you see me. Making a mistake. And that's really hard for people, especially for people who have lots of confidence, who feel like they know everything they need to know. I mean, you can imagine going and talking to Steve Jobs and saying, Hey, Steve, I think you're wrong.

Like that would, that would take a lot of courage and that's okay. So guess what? If you value that, then maybe courage is a core value and you train around it and you say, Hey, be courageous. And here's an example of what courageous looks like. If you see me telling a customer a lie, I want you to put your finger to your nose. And when I see you put your finger to your nose and then to your ear, I'm going to step out into the, into the hallway with you. And you're going to tell me, I think you are violating the core value of integrity. I want you to do that.

And then when you, when they do that, you don't beat them up. You say, Thank you. That's what I asked you to do. And you did it. And I know that must have been really hard for you. This is difficult for a lot of leaders to do. And it's a practice you have to cultivate.

David Hatch: I think for me, it just always comes down to the pretty simple concept of leading by example. If you're not living those values, if you're not demonstrating them, then why should anyone else?

But then at the same time, you know, everyone's human, we're all imperfect, we're all flawed, we all make mistakes. So having that mechanism whereby others can point it out to you and help you get back on course is also really important. And I don't, I don't think those two things necessarily have to go, have to be at odds either.

Dave Bates: False choices are everywhere.

David Hatch: Indeed.

I just realized the time we've been going nearly an hour that it's been flying by. So I'm going to skip over a few questions because I think we've covered them anyway.

00:49:24 – Great Leadership Examples

David Hatch: Here's an interesting question for you. What has been your own best experience of being led?

Dave Bates: Ah, another great question. You have great questions.

I have two of those and for the sake of time I'm trying to decide which one to tell first. I'm going to tell them both and you can clip them out of here if you want that's what editing is for. So I had a manager who was a fantastic manager a guy named Mike – I'm even going to use his last name, is that alright? Can I use his last name? Yeah, I'm gonna use his last name – Mike Yamarik - he was he, he worked with me. I worked for him at a consulting company for many years. We got on this project and it was a, it was a bit of a bonfire. And a couple of us were working up in New Jersey. And Mike - the reason that Mike is such a great example of a, of a leader is because he, he asked this question - what can I do? How can I help? And we're like, hang on, Mike, there's really not a lot you can do. I mean, it was arguably Mike's fault that we were in the situation that we were in. Not the root problem, but the, but the fact that he had asked us to get involved and, and, and we were there and he was constantly asking if we were okay. What did we need? How could he help?

And I will always remember one time we were in a conference room up in New Jersey and in walks Mike. Now, New Jersey is not far from Baltimore. It's a couple hours drive, but Mike walked in. He's like, I'm here. What can I do? You need me to make some copies for you?

Like, wow, you know, here's this guy that leads the practice and he walks in and and he's, he's like, I'll go get you some food. You know, we didn't have Grubhub back then, maybe Pizza Hut would deliver to your to your office or something, but that was just the kind of guy that Mike is, and and so he's asking for what would be arguably an unreasonable task.

But he's empathetic and understanding enough that we're humans and that, you know, we're doing our best. And it's one thing to direct the troops from a long way off and another thing to get on your horse and go out there on the battlefield with them. Sorry for the military reference, if any of the folks listening are not comfortable with that. But I think there's something about being in the thick of it with you.

And then the second example I will give is a lady named Anne. And I think she might've gotten married or, or had a change or whatever. I don't know what her current last name is, but but Anne was a, was a really senior leader and in the first job that I had at IBM she was like my third line manager and I walked in the door the first day clueless, you know, I'm at IBM and she walks down the hall and she's like, Hey, Dave, Hey. So I get in my office and ask Who is that? Oh, that was Anne. What's she do here? Oh, she's in charge. She knew my name on the day I started. Right, it was a small thing. Probably not a big deal to her, but, you know, it's really impactful to me.

And so fast forward we got in a, in a room all of us as sort of the leaders who had to deliver some things. And she had this really crazy request that she wanted to make - I'll spare the

details, but there was a, there was a, a line of products that we needed to produce that was mandated by the corporation and Anne sort of instinctively knew that this was a mistake. And she had done her best to sort of push up and say, this is a mistake we shouldn't do this. And the answer she got was do this or else. And so she brought us all into the room and she, I remember like it was yesterday and it was 30 years ago.

She said, listen, I need everybody that's here. I need to know that, one, what we're talking about here isn't going to go outside this room, except on a strict need to know basis, and every one of us had to go around the room and physically say yes, just like being in the exit row on the airplane. I need a yes. Yes, I got it.

And she said, the problem is that if I take this into the channel, the channel will reject it and we will be out of business. But, the executives are requiring us to do it. So, here's what I propose we do, but I can't do it unless we all do it. And that is, we have to, we have to make a second set of products that goes along with the first one. That's a huge amount of work and a big, big risk for her. And so we all said yes, and we all went in, we did it.

And they went and they sat down with some of the biggest names of, you know, consumer electronics distributor channels that you would know from the mid to late nineties. And they said, Hey, that's a really nice product line, and we don't want any of it. And, and all the executives are like, well, you have to take it because it's, you know, it's... No, we're going to give your shelf space to compact and HP and Dell. And so, you know, we aren't going to take it - or we'll take your machines, but we'll put them in the back and then we'll ship them back to you because they didn't sell.

And so, Anne said, well, would you consider a product lineup that looked like this? And they said, oh yeah, we'll take that. We'll take all of them. How many can you give us?

And so, Anne - just that, that demonstration of leadership was so powerful. She created the challenge for the executives. This story we all told was that she had to go and, and, and pay her, pay her dues for violating the the, the corporate overlords directive.

But then she popped out as a, like an executive VP somewhere a couple of years later, we, we literally had no idea what happened to Anne. But, but the thing that was, demonstrative about good leadership was she understood that the business problem that we had to solve. She registered pretty much an existential threat to the livelihood of 120 people.

And she said, here's the plan. I can't do it by myself. But if we do it, I think we could be successful. The results are not guaranteed. We might all be out on the street. Who knows? I need you. I need your personal commitment. David, I need your personal commitment that you will help me make this happen. And, and then she supported us all the way through.

She gave us cover fire. She did all the things that we needed to have happen in order to pull that off. And we actually, we actually delivered on the promise that we had made to both the company and to the market. And it was all because she led with courage and transparency. She built consensus. She didn't lead by consensus. She built consensus for the leadership

decision that needed to be made. And that was just such a powerful leadership experience. And I love Anne. She's great. She's fantastic.

David Hatch: It's, yeah, I mean, it's quite a good example of integrity as well, isn't it? Really? It's, you know, backing, backing the right choice, even when it would be very easy to just say, well, that's what the boss told me to do. So it's not my fault if it goes wrong.

Dave Bates: Yeah. Or sitting in there with all of those folks, all those buyers and saying, see, I told you so. Right. What good did that do?

David Hatch: Yeah. And of course, the other way of doing it would have been just not doing what the bosses wanted and only doing what you knew was right. But I think that would have been politically even more dangerous. So, yeah, I really like that example.

Dave Bates: Well, the reality is, if she had taken that path, she would, should would have never been sitting at that table to offer what the market actually wanted. They would have taken her out way earlier and put somebody else in and then, and then we would have been done.

So that she did avoid those extremes. I hadn't really thought as much about it from that perspective. I think that's a good insight.

David Hatch: Yeah. I mean, it's, it's politically very canny as well in the way she's handled that. So, yeah. Interesting. Great example.

And I love the first example as well, because it, it triggered a memory for me as well from my first or second ever job, like 20 years ago now it was a temp job. I was doing counting data entry in this tiny little office, local office of a huge multinational company. And very similarly to you, we had, there was, I think it was like the end of the accounting year coming up and so everyone was working late, it was a big panic and the usual accountant was out because that's why I was there as a temp and I wasn't an accountant, I was just typing in the numbers without knowing what any of them really meant, as you do when you're a student doing a temp job, right?

And then the, the, the global VP of finance, or I forget his job title. I forget his surname even, but his first name was Kent. And I remember him very well because he was in because of that accounting period was coming to an end and he, he was over to help us finalize it all. He knew my name as well before I'd even met him, despite the fact I'd been there less than a month.

He sat down with me, he worked through a lot of spreadsheets with me, explained things and why it mattered and what it was for. And then he helped me actually do the data entry as well. This is like the international VP of a 10,000 person company. And he was sitting down, typing data in with a temp. I told him to me about my, what are your, what are your career plans, David?

You know, what, what, what have you got in mind for your personal development? Is there any training I can help you with? Do you need a reference. Do you need an introduction to someone? Let me know. I mean, really powerful stuff that - and he even said at the time, it's my job to ask you these questions. So, you know, don't, don't feel put out or anything.

And I just thought, I mean, that had an impact on me as well at that such an early stage in my career in a job that I was only going to be there for two months total. He was taking the time to have that conversation as though I had like a really long-term future with this company. And that's just, it's a very similar, hopefully you can see why it reminded me of that story.

00:59:51 - The power and benefit of leaders who help others feel seen

Dave Bates: Yeah, it's so, it's so powerful to be seen, to feel like you've been seen and actually to know that you've been seen. Like there's one thing to feel like you've been seen and another thing to know that you've been seen. That is so powerful in leadership.

And I think it's, you know, it's so hard for people. Hey, you're a person that, you don't look like me. You don't have the same background as me. You don't have - whatever, right? And it can be a barrier. And I think we don't realize the value of just being human as, as, as people at work, right? Like we're people at work and, and as leaders, even more so, we have to be more attuned to it because we have so many pressures as managers or leaders that that when I got to deliver this by this time, and it's gotta be at this level of quality, and there's this bonfire that popped up over there with that person. You just, you're constantly being pulled in so many directions, and it's easy to lose the humanity of it because there's so many measurable things that we're accountable to deliver, and we forget that there are people who are trying really hard. Some of them aren't really trying hard. We talked about those folks, but the people generally are trying really hard to do a good job.

And. And if we, if we have gone back to that earlier conversation, if our job is to cultivate the conditions in which the team can flourish, we have to remember that the people matter and we have to do the things that help them be seen and help them accomplish the objectives. And I think that's really the key thing that that guy did for you - is like you probably work, I don't know, maybe your fingers went faster on the 10 key after you had that conversation with him because you're like, you know, this is great. I appreciate that. I've been seen right. It actually has an impact on the quality and speed of people's work. If they know they've been seen.

David Hatch: I don't know if I'm any faster, but I certainly went longer.

I didn't leave the office until the work was finished. So I was there like three or four hours later than I would have been. Maybe that was his ulterior motive.

01:02:02 – The leadership trap of seeking “discretionary contribution”

Dave Bates: It might have been. But I want to - I know we're running short here - but I want to say something really important here because there's a trap.

There's a trap with this. And and you see it a lot these days. It's all over in HR and all over in business owners forums, how do we get more of that discretionary contribution from our employees? It's another one of those buzzwords, right? If you are a leader or a manager that is focused on getting more discretionary effort, you are losing the battle of leadership.

It's not a thing to be extorted from people. Corporate donations are not things that good leaders look for. It's one thing to ask for an unreasonable request. Hey, this customer is in bad shape. What can we do for them? I know it's going to be a lot of extra effort. How can I help? That's a totally different thing.

A totally different conversation, a totally different mindset than how do we get more discretionary contribution. That's basically saying, I don't want to invest in my business the way I need to invest in it, so I will get the people - I will extract that from the people. And that's not what we're looking for as leaders.

We're not, we're not helping people seen so that we can get more from them. And I know that's not what you were describing. And my point is that yours is an example in the positive, which is you felt motivated, you felt seen, you made a choice as opposed to somebody else being manipulative and saying, I'm going to make this person feel seen so that I can get more.

It's a totally different environment. And I think it's important that as, as we lead well, as we are all on our journeys, like I want to be a better leader. And just 'cause I got 30 years of leadership doesn't mean that I can't improve as a leader. So I want to make sure that we're clear about what our motivations are as we lead.

Why do we lead? Why do we aspire to be a manager or a person in a leadership position? We aspire to be a person in a leadership position because we believe that we have a set of skills and a set of mindset – uh, and we have a mindset that will benefit the people that we serve. And if that's why we're going to be in leaders, we don't have to worry so much about the traps.

And that's really who, if, if we're looking to elevate leaders in an organization, that's who I look for when I'm trying to figure out who's going to be the next leader. Are they, are they squeezing the blood out of the turnip? Or, or, or are they creating conditions in which somebody can thrive?

David Hatch: Yeah, I know exactly what you mean.

And again, you know, you've triggered the memory there as well. Like three or four years later, two jobs later, completely opposite circumstance really where it wasn't even about me. I just happened to be in the room and overheard a conversation. Where one, I won't give names or titles, but one boss was talking to another boss. I was just talking about, oh, so and so you know, his work's all right, but you know, he's always out the door at half past five and you know, I don't really feel like I can pounce on him and you're just like, oh, when you're having that conversation in front of employees, and so that is an immediate impact on the culture, isn't it?

And the expectation you're setting there, maybe it was deliberate, right? Right. Maybe it wasn't. Don't know. Either way, like it's, it's the beginnings of a toxic environment, isn't it? When you start bad mouthing people behind their back in front of others. And yeah, yeah,

Dave Bates: We've got to watch what we say. Words matter.

David Hatch: Indeed. Yes. And on that note, I'll stop complaining about former bosses.

01:05:52 – Keeping the balance of learning from negative – and positive - examples

Dave Bates: Hey, look, I think that there is so much to be learned from people who don't do it right. Like, we definitely want to orient our minds towards the good things, right? We want to hold up the examples of the folks that do this well. But it is also instructive - like, there's a reason that when you go to driver's school here in the U. S., they don't show you pictures of shiny new cars on the car lot, they show you the mangled wreck, right? Because they want - they don't dwell on it - like, if you looked at percentage of time where you look at the mangled wreck versus that you learned the proper way to do things, it's a really small percentage of the time, but it's so powerful.

All right, like don't be that - be this instead. And so we don't want to dwell on it. But the fact is that we've we've learned a lot in our in our lives based on things that have gone well and things that have not gone well. And it's the sum total of those things that allow us to bring along the next generation of leaders and say, like, hey, do these things, don't do those things.

David Hatch: Yes, yes, I, I tend to think there's more to be learned from mistakes as well. I don't know, maybe, maybe I'm a pessimist at heart, I'm not sure.

Dave Bates: Well, let's not label things. Let's have just a brief moment, if I may. So, you have a - for people that are just listening and don't necessarily see the video - you have a, a picture behind you of a line of World War II Spitfires.

Very cool airplane. And one of the things that, that aviators learned during World War II, and again, apologies to the people who, who might be listening who have difficulty with the, the military construct, but this is instructive. One of the things that they learned is that when

those flyers were going towards their objective they were, they were flying towards maybe a bridge they had to take out or something like that.

Very often the pilot would fly into the target. They would release their ordinance or maybe they wouldn't even release their ordinance. They would just fly into the target and they didn't realize they were doing it. And it came to be known as target fixation, where you fly into the thing that you are looking at and all of the other processes - you know, pitch and yaw and attitude and altitude and all that kind of stuff - they don't, they fade into the background because we're so stuck looking at the, at the target. And what we learn from that, from a behavioral standpoint, from a brain standpoint, is that we go toward the thing that we focus on.

So, if we focus on the, the things that we're learning from the bad examples. We're very likely to begin to, to become the bad examples that we have consumed. So what we want to do is we want to, we want to - the target is the target, it's a fundamentally important thing and we want to keep our eye on it - but we don't want that to become the primary focus.

So, if we can learn what we need to learn from the negative examples and we offset that with an appropriate amount of positive examples - These are the people that we want to emulate - we will become more like the people we want to emulate than the people that we don't. So there's value in both and balance is the key.

David Hatch: I agree with you. I see what you're saying. I see your point. I think maybe it's a psychology thing as well. But the reason I think you learn more from mistakes is because you want to, if that makes sense. So that's gone wrong. I need to understand why so I don't do that again. And so, whereas with a success, that's gone brilliantly. Most people won't think about why did that go well? They'll just be like, oh, that's done. You're done. Move on to the next thing.

Dave Bates: Yeah, and my goal here is not to say that there's nothing to be learned. The forensic analysis is super critical. I mean, if you want to find out how to not build buildings that fall down, you should examine buildings that fell down.

Right and do something different than what happened there. And so I think my point that I'm trying to make is not to say that it's bad to look at them, but if, if we, if we consume an equal diet and one of the things that you said is like, it's hard to understand what went right. And I agree with that.

And one of the things that leaders do is things that are challenging. So why did it go right? How can I learn from what went right? Right? And you know, you can, I've listened to some podcasts and people love Charlie Munger and, you know, he's Warren, it was Warren, but he just recently passed away, but he's Warren Buffett's right hand guy.

That guy saw the world a particular way and he was very liberal in sharing how he saw it. So if we want to know how things went, that went really, really well. Like, there are ways to study people who've gone really, really well. And so I think it's an, it's an invitation to keep a

balanced diet of what went wrong and how can we not do that? How can we make it better? And where are the people who are doing things differently and well. And what can we also learn from them? And by keeping it in balance, we become the most powerful leaders of the next generation. I think that's really the key thing that I'm trying to get to.

David Hatch: Yeah, I think we're on the same page.

And I was going to say, I think the important thing is in that that root cause analysis, isn't that true? But where people go wrong quite often is they'll only apply it to the failures. Whereas, as you say, it needs to be balanced. You need to look at doesn't matter what the outcome is, figure out why the outcome happened.

Dave Bates: Yeah. And a lot of times I think we can wallow in the pain of the thing that didn't go well. And that's a really easy thing. That guy was an idiot. Well, maybe he wasn't an idiot. Maybe he, with empathy, maybe he was doing exactly the right thing. He just wasn't qualified. Okay. If he wasn't qualified, where am I not qualified?

Where am I not paying attention? Like that's the value of doing it. So, a hundred percent, it's valuable to look back. It's just critical that our mindset be in the right place so we don't fly into the target and become the we don't want to be.

David Hatch: Yep. I'm with you.

01:12:15 - Learning from famous leaders or ones you have context with

David Hatch: There's a load of questions that I've not had time to ask. There is one question, one left that I have to ask you because everyone gets this question and it's called leadership heroes. So the question is if you had to pick one person and it could be anyone alive, dead, past, present, real or fictitious, who in your opinion would perfectly embody leadership, who would that person be and why?

Dave Bates: Well, I have to tell you that I've already answered that question and I would put Anne person who I would say is the leadership hero.

There's all these famous people, right? You can talk about all these famous people who did amazing leadership things. But the problem is, I don't have any context with those folks. Right and so again I think I would go back to Anne. I would say in my personal experience Anne just embodied for me what it means to be an empathetic leader who does challenging things - and brings people along. She brought the level of everyone of those people up.

In fact I just had lunch with two guys that I worked with thirty years ago just earlier this week I had lunch with them. And we're talking about we're talking about the place we worked thirty years ago. Right? And that's the culture that Anne created. I don't know what the, I don't think we had core values on the wall or we, you know, we had Thomas Watson's

“THINK” slogan. Right. And we had, we had this rebus behind me - the famous Paul Rand designed IBM logo with a eyeball and a bumblebee and the eight bar.

And we, we, we were trying to think differently, right? And that culture that Anne created of camaraderie and teamwork and sense of purpose and mission and dependence on on each other and like – Anne’s probably like, wow, that is not - I don't know if that's what I had in mind - but that's what I took from it that she was she was out walking around.

She she was present. She was seen. She was listening. She was inspiring and encouraging. Those things to me are are, are what we what leadership is about is helping people to be the best version of themselves in, in that time and for that purpose. And so that's why I would say I'm returning to Anne is the most impactful person that I that I feel like I've, I've been led by and this would be a leadership bureau.

David Hatch: Yeah. And it is a great story as we've established. So, yeah, I love that. I do agree with you as well. Like there's, there's so many historical figures, there's like an infinite number of fictional ones we can choose as well. And they're all really interesting. And I love talking about them. But they're not as powerful and as meaningful as the personal connections, the ones where you've actually worked for them. You've directly experienced their leadership and, you know, the impacts that had on you, the way that made you feel. You still remember it and talk about it 30 years later. You know, that's the real thing. Excitement, the optimism, the power of leadership. And I love hearing stories like that. Thank you.

Dave Bates: Thanks for the chance to celebrate those folks.

David Hatch: Absolutely. Celebrate. That's the right word. Definitely.

01:15:25 - Closing

David Hatch: Well, Dave, it's been wonderful talking with you today. Thank you so much. You've been very generous with your time and your stories and experiences as well. Last thing. I'll ask you if any of the listeners, and I'm sure many of them would like to learn more about you, perhaps get in touch.

Is there a website or similar that you could point them towards?

Dave Bates: There is they can connect with me on LinkedIn David-C-Bates or they can go to the website. It's www.paravelle.com. It's P-A-R-A-V-E-L-L-E.

David Hatch: Excellent. And I'll pop the links for both of those in the episode descriptions. People can find it easily.

Well, that's it. That's what I was going to say. That's what we've got time for. We've gone over time. So that's what we didn't have time for, but yeah, have a great rest of your day and a lovely weekend.

Dave Bates: Thank you. It's been fantastic to talk to you.

David Hatch: Likewise. Thanks, Dave. All right. Take care.

Outtro

David Hatch: Thank you again, Dave, for your time and your thoughts today. Really appreciate your contributions. I'm sure the listener does too. And we're having such an interesting and in-depth conversation there that I barely covered any of the questions that I had for you. But the ones we did get to led to really interesting conversation. So yes, thank you very much.

Listener. If you would like to learn more about Dave and what he does, have a look in the episode notes and you will find the links mentioned just now. I do encourage you as always, take a look, reach out to him. I'm sure he'd love to hear from you. Are you new to leadership? Are you having difficulty with that sole contributor to team leader transition?

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And thank you for being with us today. Tune in again next week and until then, keep on keeping on and be a leader, not a boss.