

Melody King: 0:01

Everything rises and falls on leadership. The ability to lead well is fueled by living your cause and purpose. This podcast will equip you with the tools to do just that Live and lead with cause and purpose. And now author of the book the Anatomy of Leadership and our host, Chris Comeaux.

Chris Comeaux: 0:23

Hello and welcome to the Anatomy of Leadership. Our guest today is Cathy locona. She's an executive coach. Welcome, Cathy, good to have you.

Cathy locona: 0:32

Thank you, hris, great to be here with you.

Chris Comeaux: 0:34

So I'm going to read from Cathy's bio and then I want her to add a couple things. So Cathy locona is the president of Living Leadership Values, coaching and Consulting. Cathy is an experienced and strategic former healthcare system executive. She's a passionate mentor and coach with strong motivational and coaching skills. She draws from over 30 years of healthcare leadership experience to partner with healthcare professionals on their journey to excellence. She's driven to support healthcare professionals in developing actionable practical goals, plans and strategies geared towards achieving their career success.

Chris Comeaux: 1:08

In the past, Cathy has led IT teams and two major healthcare provider organizations during periods of significant growth and change. She developed her passion for coaching and mentoring which again is a strange combination in an IT person for coaching and mentoring. While participating as a workshop facilitator in a leadership development program at the healthcare system, where she was, she recognized this passion, so she then became a certified professional coach in 2018. And today she coaches individuals and teams using a variety of tools, which we'll talk about today, that are designed to create self-awareness and enhance emotional intelligence. When working with teams, kathy challenges them to transform workplace drama, to empower themselves and others, to focus on outcomes and to work collaboratively to achieve those outcomes. And, of course, kathy works with us when we're blessed Teleios Collaborative Network, but also Teleios Consulting Group, where she provides coaching, team workshops and emotional intelligence training and assessments to member community hospice organizations, and also she serves as our fractional TCN CIO. So, Cathy, welcome. What did I leave out that you want the audience to know about you?

Cathy Iocona: 2:16

There's very little that you left out there. I think that was pretty comprehensive. Yeah, so I have made this journey, as you've said, from the IT world in healthcare to coaching and leadership development, and it's been it's an encore career for me and it's been very, very rewarding. I get to work with you, with the members of TCN and the affiliates, and get to know some people that are really invested in caring for patients.

Chris Comeaux: 2:55

So I just love what I do. Well, Cathy, my next question to you and I started this at the beginning of the show. I left it off a couple of episodes and then actually there was a listener, and then a couple of listeners followed up and like hey, that was really cool when you asked that question, and so I begin to ask it now. It's actually one of the favorite parts of my show and the question is this what is your superpower? And then I'll make one final comment. I want to hear your answer, and it's been so fascinating, as people have kind of shared, and just one of my learning lessons is this is such a difficult question for people. Like, quite often we can see someone else's superpower before they can see it in themselves, and my guess is you're going to use that as a segue in a little bit, but I'd love to hear what do you feel like is your superpower?

Cathy Iocona: 3:35

Yeah, you're right, it's not an easy question to answer and the word I came up with is curiosity, and I questioned then is that really my superpower, or is that what I'm leaning into now as a coach? And I'm really really very focused on and trying on this journey to really have that curiosity. So why is curiosity so important for a leader? Well, it's really essential for a coach because what it does is it enables you to suspend judgment, and that has been so valuable for me as a person and as a coach to just not have that judgment. So if you're coaching in a leadership role within an organization or you're a coach, like I am, I'm just to be able to listen deeply and seek to understand. I'm constantly amazed and blessed to hear what people come up with when I just stop and listen.

Chris Comeaux: 4:55

I love that.

Cathy Iocona: 4:55

Things I would never come up with myself necessarily. So the curiosity really really helps, especially in this role, and being curious about yourself as well, I think that you know that really leads into some of the things that you pointed out in Anatomy of Leadership, especially Self-Mastery.

Chris Comeaux: 5:15

Wow, I am going to butcher this quote, but something like every person is an unread book, and I love books.

Chris Comeaux: 5:28

You and I were talking about my sabbatical. I read a stack of books that high because that is part of my love, but that metaphor has always resonated with me, like every person, is this beautiful unread book and then that curiosity. So I don't know if that resonates, but that's what comes to me whenever I listen to you talk about your superpower.

Cathy Iacona: 5:48

Yeah, it really does, and it's fascinating to me. You know I might be thinking that you might say, oh, I'm going to go in this direction and try this action, and then you go in this direction over here and it's like, wow, I never would have thought of that. So good thing to be curious as a leader, that's what makes you such a unicorn?

Chris Comeaux: 6:11

I mean the first time you and I met I think I said that because that is not typical of IT people and I'm not trying, I'm definitely not putting down IT people.

Chris Comeaux: 6:19

I love people that work in information technology. We couldn't do our work without them. But recently the Steve Jobs movie, and where his you know, I don't know if it really happened in real life, but the lady that played his wife in the movie said you know, life is not binary like zeros, and ones like human beings are much more complex than that. So again, my guess is you're going to come back to that, because it really does make you pretty unique that you've gotten involved in coaching, because IT is typically very I don't call it black and white, because there's lots of innovation, but it is a little bit more binary, so to speak. So let me set the table this way, kathy, I've been using the framework of my book, the Anatomy of Leadership, throughout this year.

Chris Comeaux: 7:00

I wrote the book as a meta framework for what is leadership, because I knew the chapters were only touch on the surface of the concept, so it's almost like a table of contents. So throughout our series of podcasts we began in January of this year we cycled through the framework. So we've gone through self-mastery, caring for others, influence, intention, cause and purpose, and then the seven M's of what leaders do mission margin, meaning

management message into the community, making people, making the organization and mapping the future. So we've now been recycled through all of the chapters. So now I'm able to be thoughtful of just certain aspects of the framework without really being kind of beholden to like the sequence of the chapters now that we've been through them one time, so that way I could provide some very just what I'd call timely and relevant subject matter.

Chris Comeaux: 7:45

And as I thought of great teachers and leaders, especially with potent tools in their toolbox, that puts more meat on the bone of what is leadership, I immediately thought about you and especially your work around the dreaded drama triangle three vital questions and just all the work that David Emerald has done, as well as, of course, your own coaching, because you're in the practical learning laboratory working with many leaders as you help work with their own emotional intelligence. So I think that'll be a good jumping off point. But first I've touched on a couple of things that I think will be helpful, kind of establishing a common lexicon. So can you introduce the dreaded drama triangle to our listeners and just kind of talk about that for a little bit?

Cathy Iocona: 8:24

Sure, sure, Chris, I love you know I love to talk about it, right? So, as you said, this is based on the work of David Emerald, and his partner, Donna Zajonc, is the other person involved with this. So I became a certified trainer and coach for Three Vital Questions, and so David wrote two books the Power of Ted and Three Vital Questions, which the subtitle is Transforming Workplace Drama. So, starting in the good place we're starting here with your question is around the dreaded drama triangle, or the DDT, and that's a concept that David expanded on from the Karpman drama triangle, which has been around forever. So the basic idea here is that as human beings, we are hardwired. We are built to react to stressors, or to triggers, if you will, and when we have those reactions, it can lead to drama or conflict. So that can come from any type of situation in the workplace. That can be something major you know I'll draw on my IT background. That can be a system implementation. An EMR implementation Causes a lot of change, causes a lot of drama and conflict, potentially or it can be something very, very small, like a pressing deadline.

Cathy Iocona: 10:01

So essentially, there are three roles in the dreaded drama triangle the victim, the persecutor and the rescuer. And I emphasized the word role or roles, because these are not identities. We're not saying this person is a victim or a persecutor. These are roles that we all take on when we get involved in a drama, so I'll talk about each one of them. So the central role is the victim, and what that really is is when we assume that role, our thought

may be something like why me, why do I have to go through this? And it's a very problem. Focus for the victim thinking about why is this happening to me? And again, it can be very simple, it can be why do I always pick the slowest line in the grocery store? That minor thing, right. Or it can be something huge. You've had a reorganization in your department. You're feeling maybe you're not valued, you're feeling like you don't have choices. So that's the victim role, the central role. But you feel like you're a victim. There has to be a persecutor, and that really is the problem itself. So the persecutor can be a person. We can be our own persecutors. How hard we can be on ourselves, right. Or it can be another person or another individual. And that question that you might be asking is let's say, you're in that role with yourself. You're being hard on yourself. Why do I always mess up? Why do I always do this? So it's like the blame game. That's the problem. Focus again in the persecutor.

Cathy Iocona: 12:10

And then the third role, and this is one that we'll probably want to talk about a little bit more, because I find it probably the most interesting of the three, and I found that my clients feel that way as well, particularly clients in the healthcare industry. So the rescuer is the helper. Whether help is needed or sought can be phrased as the unhelpful helper. So we can rescue ourselves. You know, we'll go home after a very stressful day. Maybe we'll rescue ourselves by extra glass of wine. I'm not going to think about that anymore, that kind of thing. Or we can be the rescuer to our team as a leader, by not maybe holding people accountable, by doing things for them, and what's really underneath that is, are we thinking that the person is capable of doing it themselves? And, as a leader, are we growing that person and investing in them? So I just went all around that triangle and it sounds pretty bleak, right.

Chris Comeaux: 13:27

And it just what strikes me is like what's the mindset and orientation when someone's in that vortex of the drama triangle?

Cathy Iocona: 13:37

Oh, I love the word vortex. Yeah, that's great, Chris. You always add something, always. So that mindset or that orientation is what we're calling the problem orientation and we also call it the victim orientation same thing. So it's when we are very focused on the problem instead of being focused on the outcome. So there's the alternative to the problem focus or the victim focus, which is the outcome focus, the outcome orientation or mindset. And that's where, in the wisdom of Emerald, he developed the empowerment dynamic or TED,

which is the antidote to the victim mentality or the problem mentality. It's a very, very outcome focused. So would you like me to kind of share that?

Chris Comeaux: 14:39

Yeah, let's go there in just a second. But I'm just sitting here kind of processing what it's and so I think sometimes saying things in different ways. And so when I hear you talk about that dreaded trauma oriented. It feels very disempowering, almost like you know you are stuck, you're disempowered and always you've been around me. You know I love movies and I'll find leadership lessons. We've used this one before in some training we've done at tele-ass. But the bugs, life has so many cool leadership lessons.

Chris Comeaux: 15:06

And there's this one scene where the leaf kind of floats down and the answer stuck, they can't get beyond the leaf and the leader kind of runs down and says do not panic and it's just a funny little way of kind of going wait a minute, and where am I being stuck kind of in life, or where am I letting things disempower me, and so I don't know if you'd add anything to that, but yes, I'd like you to take us now. So how do we move beyond that? How do we move to the empowerment dynamic?

Cathy locona: 15:33

Well, stuck is a great word for it, right? So when we're in that victim mentality, in that drama triangle, we do feel stuck, we feel like we have no choices or we're not in control. We're not in, we're not the driver of change. So question there, right, how do we shift? How do we make that shift? And, first of all, when I think about a problem and I'm very focused on that problem I almost feel, you know, buried in that, like it's weighing, it's weighty, let me put it that way, it's weighty. When I start to think about the outcome, I even say that in a lighter way, right, I even say that in a lighter way, right, you feel like some of the weight is being taken off of you, that you're seeking something rather than one to the other.

Cathy locona: 16:33

So the three roles are the creator, the challenger and the coach, and the central role is the creator and that's really where the shift comes in to an outcome orientation, because when you think about outcome, you may start to think what you have choices to create and you may start to look at yourself as a creator rather than a victim. So that's the center role. And the first shift involves finding out what do I want in this situation versus what I don't want, what I'm stuck in. As you said, the word stuck right what do I want in this situation? And it gives you a whole different outlook so you can look at yourself as the creator and this is all

inside-out work. Right, we start with ourselves. Look at yourself as a creator and look at others as co-creating that have the ability to create.

Cathy Iocona: 17:50

The challenger role is in contrast to the persecutor, because the challenger wants to learn where the persecutor wants to blame, and one of the problems with the persecutor role is that the persecutor often has an intention to of looking better and being the hero or making the decisions or coming up with the right answer. The challenger role wants to learn and grow and wants to see others learn and grow. You said before, the drama roles. The victim orientation sounds a little bit like disempowering right. These are the empowerment dynamic, or TED. These are the empowering roles.

Cathy Iocona: 18:42

This is looking at someone else as a challenger and saying you can do this, chris. How can you do more? How can you take the talents that you have and create solutions? And then, finally, is the coaching role, and the coaching role is the better way to the rescuer role, where the rescuer is jumping in and helping when help may not be needed because maybe they don't see the abilities of the other to create, the abilities of the other to create. The coach role is there to support. So the question might be how can I support you, not taking away the responsibility from you, supporting you and having the confidence in you that you can co-create. We can co-create together.

Chris Comeaux: 19:54

We can co-create, we can co-create together. So like in to being just more open to outward kind of focus. And we actually just did a podcast recently and I think it was Shiraz and his book on Positive Intelligence, this term of going up on the balcony of your life.

Chris Comeaux: 20:11

It feels, like that's kind of critical to like if you're stuck and you're just feeling awful about day to day, there's probably a good chance you're stuck in that drama triangle and like making that shift and I don't know that just feels when I think about my own journey, when I listened to Cathy of becoming better at going up on the balcony of my life and like why am I stuck in that victim mode and why am I stuck in this kind of negative energy, I did like the word vortex.

Chris Comeaux: 20:40

Cause I do think that the empowerment dynamic just feels like positive energy and the drama triangle feels like negative energy and like why am I stuck in this negative energy

cycle? And to go up on the balcony and like kind of observe and like, oh, that's what's going on. And what I love about this framework is it gives you a really good framework to kind of go oh, I see where I was stuck there and give someone hope and possibility to go into a different direction, which maybe is a good segue. So, because of this work that you're doing, you probably have seen leaders use this framework and what have been some outcomes and examples that you've seen.

Cathy Iocona: 21:15

Yeah, sure, and before I even go there, Chris, I just kind of want to comment on what you said. I am familiar with Positive Intelligence or Shiraz's work as a way to help shift right. We're looking to shift and another way, and being on the balcony is something going to use, something, that being able to step back and engage the thinking brain. Because what I've been talking about in the drama triangle and the anxiety reaction that we have, that's perfectly natural for us and you know I often tell or work with my coaching clients to make them aware that it's not something you can stop from happening, it's something that you can shift away from. So when we react, when something triggers the non-thinking part of our brain, the amygdala, or we get hijacked.

Cathy Iocona: 22:17

Hijacked exactly. We're not thinking. Some of the tools like what positive intelligence can, can PQ? I think it's PQ.

Chris Comeaux: 22:29

Yep PQ and do like a PQ exercise.

Cathy Iocona: 22:31

Exercise exactly. That is a way of shifting to our thinking brain and responding instead of reacting.

Chris Comeaux: 22:40

Can I make a comment to that, Cathy? Yes, yeah, I love that you took it there. And just if some of our listeners have never heard of positive intelligence, it's kind of a new body of knowledge. I mean, it's really a confluence of a couple of different schools of thought, if you will.

Chris Comeaux: 22:53

But the idea of a PQ exercise, like something as simple as rubbing your fingers or being very aware of your feet on the floor, what you're literally trying to do, they've been proven now

within our brains that that habit of when you, when you're in that bad cycle, it is literally almost you've worn a rut and that's just a habit. And if you think about a rut, like where water is going to go, no matter, every time is going to go into that rut. So what you're trying to do is you're creating a new pathway, and so the concept of going up on the balcony is like, okay, this sucks, I do. I don't like this about this part of my life. I don't like the way it makes me feel. So, okay, you're up on the balcony and how can you start to create a new pathway? Okay, so I have a new pathway. Well, what do I focused on? Or where is my focus.

Cathy Iocona: 24:01

So for a leadership team, for example I work with leadership teams in Hospice, Palliative Care, other industries even to be able to, as a team, say as a team, what do we think about? How are we focused? Problem or outcome focus? And making that shift in focus and understanding that lexicon what's the outcome we're looking for is a really important part of that. So, first vital question the second is how do I relate? How do I relate to myself, how do I relate to others? Am I perpetuating drama or am I empowering myself and others to be a creator? And the third, which is really where some structure comes in and I know from knowing you, you love structure and you really liked this structure and you really liked this. It's called a dynamic tension model, the question being how are we going to take action? So there is a model, an action planning model and a structure for doing that which really brings together the outcome focus, the awareness of drama and shifting out of it to more empowered roles, as well as taking small incremental baby steps to achieve that outcome.

Cathy Iocona: 25:27

So I had an example with a hospice organization that did a really good job of tying this together and I'm not even 100% sure that they would realize they were following the structure, but they really really were. So they recognized as a leadership team that holding people accountable was very difficult for them. Accountable was very difficult for them and they saw a link, a couple of links, to the outcomes they were looking for. They saw a link to their employee engagement and they took a deeper dive into what they could do first internally as senior leaders and what they could bring to the rest of their leadership team and to their staff. So think about their outcome focus being on their employee employee lost the word for a moment.

Cathy Iocona: 26:43

Scores employee engagement employee engagement, yes, of course, and to their patient satisfaction. Think about that as the outcomes you're looking for. So the structure is this you define an outcome. Clearly, there is a natural tension between the outcome that you want and the current state that you're in, and that natural tension is where drama can live.

So you have to recognize the current reality and then you can take action. So it's more or less thinking what do I want, what do I have now, where am I now and what can I do? What small steps can I take? Is the way I like to present it.

Cathy Iocona: 27:35

So, anyway, in order to determine the current state, they did a survey. They recognized that rescuing was something that they personally fell into in the Drama Triangle and that that had significance into whether or not they were holding people accountable for performing well. So they did a survey and you won't be surprised as to the number one and number two reasons for why their leaders didn't hold people accountable. They were asked that question why is it that you don't hold staff accountable at all times or often?

Chris Comeaux: 28:28

And the number one reason was they're probably scared they'll lose the staff because they could.

Cathy Iocona: 28:33

Exactly, Exactly. Fear of turnover. So what does that do? Exactly, Exactly. Fear of turnover. So what does that do? Well, a couple of things. If you have low performers, your high performers start to think why is that leader letting that happen, letting that go? You know the phrase that a rising tide rises all boats.

Cathy Iocona: 28:58

Right, it's the opposite of that. Right, it can bring performance down. So that was number one. And the number two reason was fear of not being liked. Yeah, and both of those are fear-based, and everything in the drama triangle is actually fear-based. Everything in the drama triangle is actually fear-based. So one of the baby steps that they took to support the whole leadership team, the senior leaders brought the rest of the leadership team in to say how can we support you? What do you need? Instead of this is what you need. What do you need? Right, I'm going to coach that need. What do you need? Right, I'm going to coach that way what do you need? And one of the baby steps they came up with was to really write some clear written performance standards that they could all support and get to get the outcomes that they were looking for, which you know they are currently tracking and monitoring and seeing how does this, how does this work out for them?

Chris Comeaux: 30:03

So, yeah, so Cathy did, because, boy, I was just on a call yesterday before you and I were taping this today and the whole. It was kind of an open forum. It was a national meeting, a

lot of peers in the hospice and pedicure space. What issues do you have? Of course, the number one issue was staffing, and so this exact subject came up of that. Just the fear of I love the term what you permit, you promote, and so like this internal turmoil of.

Chris Comeaux: 30:32

We know high quality care is so important to us, but yet we don't want to call people on the carpet because we're fearful because they might leave and go somewhere else. I don't know if you have a comment to that, but I just I see this in so many different places. That fear has people paralyzed and I love that. You, I didn't actually make that connection earlier. That fear underlies all of the three elements within the drama triangle. But could you speak?

Chris Comeaux: 30:58

to that.

Chris Comeaux: 30:59

Because this is such a big issue.

Cathy locona: 31:02

Yeah, actually it's funny. The one that's hard often for people to understand is how the persecutor role could be one driven by fear, but often it is it's fear of not being seen as capable. It's fear of not being seen as capable.

Cathy locona: 31:31

It can also look like maybe you hear the phrase sometimes imposter syndrome someone who you know really doesn't feel as if they have the goods to do it. So overcompensating for that because of the fear of that being discovered, let's say Right. And of course it's easy to think about how the victim role might be a fear. It could be fear of change. It could be a fear of so many things, you know, fear of losing your job if you make, you know, a recommendation, so you can see the environment itself maybe being viewed as the persecutor. In that case it's not an open environment where people feel free to make suggestions. And you know, I guess, the rescuer role.

Cathy locona: 32:13

What's the fear there? You know picking up on that fear of not being liked. You know, fear of not being needed and the real risks I don't think I mentioned when I was talking about that role. But one of the real risks there is when you're giving and giving and giving, when maybe it's not required or needed, you start to maybe feel resentful, burnt out. You can often result

in that you see a lot of these leaders in these very stressful environments where it's hard to find staff, it's hard to replace staff, the budgetary constraints, the regulatory, all of those things kind of persecuting right. You see people just kind of almost giving up and being afraid, fearing change, fearing change.

Chris Comeaux: 33:11

So just I'm reflecting and so is this possible. So I think I can look in my own rearview mirror and find myself in that persecutor role. And if I ask, what was I really fearful? Fearful that they actually would not make the journey, or fearful that they would not learn and grow to become the best possible version of themselves? Is that possible, and then also, like I was thinking under the rescuer, fearful they're going to drop the ball and that this major task would go undone or be a mistake or something along those lines.

Cathy Iocona: 33:56

Would that make sense? Yeah's probably an internal fear of what did I do or not doing yeah okay, yeah, I could see that yeah, maybe, maybe you know something to explore. Yeah, right, so what would the challenger role look like in that case, you know, or how can you coach them along?

Chris Comeaux: 34:19

Yeah, just the term that keeps coming to me, like um, you know I, because I am an organizer, like okay, on a day-to-day basis, like replay the movie in your head. Did you find yourself more performing your role in the drama triangle versus um, the empowerment dynamic, and which did I more perform and I love that analogy years?

Chris Comeaux: 34:37

ago, I think it was a mentor said play the movie, movie in your head of the day or the week and kind of ask yourself where did you find yourself? That in itself is a de-centering exercise, but in the moment if you're de-centered there's a better chance. You could kind of go where am I right now? Where am I? Am I on the pyramid dynamic, or am I getting sucked into the vortex? Or am I perpetrating the drama triangle vortex? At the moment I don't know if that provokes any thoughts.

Cathy Iocona: 35:05

Yeah, well, that's, you know, that's where we really look at the shift. And how do you do the shift being in tune with how you're feeling, what emotions are coming up, can have you at least figure out, like, maybe I'm in the triangle here in some way, shape or form. And the most powerful and I hear this all the time from people who practice this that the first step is

to just pause and become aware. It's all about the awareness of what is happening and also the acceptance of it. This, yeah, you know, it's just that so many people think that's unacceptable. So what are you doing there? You're judging yourself, so bring that curiosity that I mentioned before into, like thinking about what do I want here? And there's some of.

Cathy Iocona: 36:04

There's another little statement and I know I've shared this with you before that behind a complaint there's a commitment, and that's where the curiosity can come in right. So when you're feeling, maybe, as a victim or fearing something is going to not go right and you have to step in and do it for people, or you know, come up with all the ideas and direct everything. Oftentimes you're really just coming from that place of I'm so committed to this organization, to getting this right, to doing the right thing for my patients, that you know I'm going to get caught in this drama. So if you can step back and understand what am I so committed to and what do I want? And you know, going back to that structure a little bit, what do I want, what do I have, what's the current state, what are my strengths, what are my opportunities, what are the barriers? And then what can I take? What's that baby step, that tiny step that I can take to move toward the outcome?

Cathy Iocona: 37:14

not all the way I don't have to think of step 77, just one, two and three.

Chris Comeaux: 37:20

I want to come back to the baby step in just a second, but something that occurs to me just listening to you and emotional intelligence has been all the rage for a while, and rage is not the right word because it almost feels like it dismisses it. It's a big part of the journey to being a better leader, but what occurs to me is that the tool of the empowerment dynamic really helps. It gives people a very practical way to grow in their emotional intelligence. Would that be accurate or would you say that differently?

Cathy Iocona: 37:50

No, I totally agree with that, and that's why what I've introduced in the last year or so to my practice is using an Emotional Intelligence assessment. Okay.

Cathy Iocona: 38:04

Because, yes, we can do a workshop. We can talk about drama, the drama roles, the empowerment dynamic. Look at the structure If we really want to understand what's going on inside. What emotional intelligence strengths do I have that I can bring to bear? What opportunities do I have, maybe? What do I need to dial up or dial down? So I'm using a tool,

an emotional intelligence assessment, called EQI 2.0, for this purpose, and it's really been something that my clients who want to better understand why they're coming across as a persecutor, when they're really their intention is not that can use this tool.

Chris Comeaux: 39:01

So I have an example to share if you'd like to.

Cathy Iocona: 39:06

Yeah, because this is where I've tied the two things together. So the tool I use is through a company called Multi Health Systems and it's pretty comprehensive and it's an assessment tool where you can do a self-assessment as well as have a 360 that aligns with that. So I had an individual who went through the workshops the three vital questions workshops with me, with the rest of their senior leadership team, and opted to take a deeper dive through looking at emotional intelligence and I'm going to name that person Ted, because we always name people, ted. It's like the empowerment dynamic, right. So Ted opted to take the assessment as well as a 360 and work with me as a coach to tease that out. And then we related it to the work of Emerald and the three vital questions and how this individual was showing up. So I'll talk about that, but let's talk first about what showed up on the 360.

Cathy Iocona: 40:20

Well, if you've ever had one and most of us have if we're in leadership positions, the results can be extremely jarring. To see ourselves through someone else's or other people's our peers, direct reports, our leader it's our leader Through that eye, those eyes can be difficult for us. So the first step in that process is to really just kind of accept that and live with it for a bit, to try to get to a point where maybe I'm ready to really look at this and see what changes I might be able to make. Maybe I'm ready to really look at this and see what changes I might be able to make. So we did a 360, and this individual is totally committed to their organization, its mission, as very high in social responsibility which is one of the strengths and in problem solving. Then we looked at the blind spots, or the gaps from the 360. And what did we find there? Well, in addition to looking at the ratings there, what we saw was viewed as very low on impulse control, and this was a person who he believed that. You know, he knew what he wanted to do, he knew how to get the problem solved. He knew what he wanted to do. He knew how to get the problem solved and here's how we're going to do it. And what he particularly the peers were seeing was his way or the highway, doesn't want to hear from us, can't control himself from offering his opinions in a meeting. So we took that very narrow focus and we started to talk about dialing down, or dialing down the problem solving, while dialing up the impulse to solve the problem or the impulse

control. So great results which were recognized by the peers you know sitting in meetings, not being the first person to offer the idea, but actually deeply listening.

Cathy Iocona: 42:50

So how did this relate to the drama roles? So, of course, most people, when they see their 360 results for an emotional intelligence assessment, are going to feel like a victim, if not for a moment, a week or more. Right? So first step is let's have some self-compassion, let's be curious as to what this is telling us, right? While many people are seeing themselves as a victim, for example, in the workplace, thinking we're not getting this done fast enough. Why can't we get this done? What is wrong here? Others seeing as persecutor. Well, so, making that shift and in this case, seeing taking that shift, and in this case, seeing viewing himself and others as a creator and co-creating, that small change, even in meeting behavior, made a big impression and a big change.

Chris Comeaux: 44:03

So that was an outcome that he was very, very proud of. Hearing the feedback, I feel like it's a very practical example of taking the concept and putting a practical example. And one thing that occurred to me it's almost like I could see it in my mind's eye as you were talking about the self-understanding and then making the shift. An interesting brahmer, because we talk about energy quite a bit. We've used the energy bus you know that, kathy, a lot of our listeners know it John Gordon's work, and there's some people like read Gordon's work, like oh yeah, ok, you know, get rid of the energy vampires.

Chris Comeaux: 44:32

But part of the whole point of the book is what energy are you bringing? And so, more than likely, when you are in the drama triangle, that energy is not good. It's not having a positive impact on others and certainly not yourself. And making that shift is almost as you said it. I just felt a shift in energy, even as you described it, and my guess is it's probably very similar for that person, like if you are operating more out of the empowerment dynamic, that there is more of a positive energy there Now, making it probably sound a lot more binary. It probably is a little bit more of a mixed bag, but does that resonate with you and sound, because you get to observe as the coach.

Cathy Iocona: 45:13

Yes, yes, yeah it's. It's amazing how a small shift. It's amazing how a small shift, and you know the phrase I used before when I said self-compassion, how much that has to come into it as well, and how the small shift, kind of seeing how that lightens you up a bit, like you know what. It's not this huge thing that I have to do to change the perception of me.

Cathy Iocona: 45:48

One thing that's really important in the difference between doing a self-assessment and the 360, this was a person with great intentions, right? So when we do a self-assessment, we know what our intentions are and that's what we put in the assessment. When people are doing a 360 or when they're observing us in a situation there, they have no idea what our intention is. They only can see our behavior and add to that, they're putting an intention on us, which may or may not be true what it is. So, yeah, it's. You know I can't. I could go on forever and probably have about how fascinating it is to observe this and to see those tiny shifts and the impression that they make.

Chris Comeaux: 46:39

Well, there's on yourself, and I think it's Stephen M Covey that said we judge other people by their actions, but we judge ourself by our intentions. That quote is always weighed heavy on me in a good way, because it's so true. I do give myself grace based on my intentions, which is why this brilliance of doing that self-assessment as well as then the 360 is such a potent way to kind of journey and utilize these tools Well, Cathy, if our listeners want to learn more about the dreaded drama triangle and three vital questions where can they go?

Cathy Iocona: 47:12

Well, they can go to Emerald's books, the Empowerment Dynamic. And we're going to put links for both of those.

Cathy Iocona: 47:17

The Power of yes, yes, oh good. The power of um yes, yes, oh good. So the two books um exploring um emotional intelligence there are numerous assessments that you could take on your own. Um, free assessments, um, you could, you know, certainly uh, have have one that is facilitated and debriefed by a coach. There's lots of ways that you can explore that. There are workshops. There's an opportunity for online learning that has periodic team coaching. After you know, watch a few or listen to a few segments and then periodic team discussion with a leadership team. Lots of ways to pursue both emotional intelligence and three vital questions. And I can be reached at my teleosorg email address.

Chris Comeaux: 48:21

Yeah, we're going to put that also in the show notes as well, Cathy, so they can actually get in touch with you. Good, any final thoughts Cathy?

Cathy Iocona: 48:31

Well, I guess what I've been thinking about lately when you know I thought about the superpower and what it meant to me and curiosity and suspending judgment is, you know we live in a world of drama and conflict and judgment, and you know, I don't know if it's worse than ever, because this is the only time I've lived in that I know of anyway. And you know, just to practice that, not only self-compassion but compassion and starting with just being curious about the other person, and you know it ties in so well to your self with me now and then being able to see that in others.

Chris Comeaux: 49:31

Now, Cathy, thank you for the work that you're doing and again, you're such a unique unicorn because someone who's core competency and background in technology typically wouldn't go into this. I'll call it field, but my guess is probably you saw what we've been talking about in this whole show, as you probably looked at the rearview mirror of your career, I bet. Right, yeah, and you probably saw that showing up in the people that were driving the technology, implementing the technology, et cetera.

Cathy Iocona: 50:01

Yeah, absolutely, and something I thought you know looking in that rearview mirror oftentimes when I share, I share. You know I'd love to have a do-over in certain situations from my leadership role, but you know it's all about learning from it.

Chris Comeaux: 50:18

Yeah, well said, yeah, I say that quite often. John Maxwell was the first person I ever heard say that he's like. I want to go back and apologize for books that I read in the past and I put him on a bit of a pedestal in my early learning journey. But when I now, I will say that very much. But that's not like um, it's not living with regret, it's more of like saying that.

Chris Comeaux: 50:38

I'm in the learning mode and I can see it so differently now. And so if you're in that learning mode, then there's a whole lot you'll probably want to go back and have a do over on. You can't, sure, is it you? Probably you'd laugh at this, because you know I'm always a geek reading. I read this fascinating book called the Pursuit of Destiny and actually, based upon quantum physics and whatnot, you really can't go time travel backwards, but you can into the future. The time travel backwards, but you can into the future theoretically. I think that's a beautiful metaphor. Actually, you can't change your past, but you can absolutely change your future, oh yeah, so I drew that kind of corollary in this really kind of deep book.

Chris Comeaux: 51:10

So again, Cathy, thank you for the work that you're doing and to our listeners, the end of each episode we'll share a quote, a visual, possibly create a brain bookmark and a thought prodder about our podcast subject. So it'll further your learning and growth and hopefully it'll stick in your brain. Be sure to subscribe to the Anatomy of Leadership podcast so you don't miss an episode. Check out the book on Amazon. Tell your friends, family, co-workers about it. It's really easy. Cathy was just poking on this. It's so easy for us to rail against the world and be frustrated by things. Let's be the change we wish to see in the world. So thanks for listening to the anatomy of leadership and here's our brain bookmark to close today's show.

Jeff Haffner: 51:48

"Every person is an unread book. Be curious, listen deeply, seek to understand."

Jeff Haffner: 52:33

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