

Transcript / Anatomy Of Leadership

Making People with Julie Kennedy Oehlert

00:01 - Melody King (Announcement)

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.

00:24 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

Hello and welcome to the Anatomy of Leadership podcast. Our guest today is Dr Julie Kennedy Oehlert. She is the Chief Experience and Brand Officer for ECU Health. Hello, Julie.

00:35

Hi it's so good to have you back, and so this is your first time on the Anatomy of Leadership podcast, but last year we were on TCN Talks. Let me read from your bio here so, Dr. Kennedy Oehlert, and so she's a DMP in RN. She has over four decades of expertise and wisdom gathered from a life working in healthcare. She started her career as a nurse aide at the age of 14. That's super cool, Julie and serves in a variety of clinical, operational and consultative and strategic roles across the healthcare continuum. Her clinical practice is emergency trauma nursing. She achieved her doctorate of nursing practice in health innovation and leadership from the University of Minnesota. One hell of a healthcare program, I might add.

01:15 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

Yes.

01:16 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

She's a perpetual student of design thinking and cultural disruption and she serves as the chief experience and brand officer for ECU Health. In her role, Dr. Oehlert strategically drives experience and culture at ECU Health. This includes patient experience, patient education and patient and family advisor programs, and team member experience, including oversight of orientation, of course, onboarding of new team members, recognition and workforce well-being. She leads internal and external communications, marketing, digital social public relations for the healthcare system. When do you sleep? I? Know, it's so good.

01:50 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

So much fun.

01:52 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

Dr Oehlert has operational responsibility also for environmental services, food services, language access services and hospitality. She's also, in her free time, an adjunct faculty member for Eastern Carolina University of College of Nursing, and she was recognized in 2020 with the Healthcare Professional Innovation Award from the Barrow Institute and in 2024, it has now come out Her first book, titled "Systems Innovation a holistic approach to disrupting with love and human caring". Julie, what did I leave out of that amazing background?

02:23 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

Human caring. Julie, what did I leave out of that amazing background? I think what you left out is, I think you can tell that I love healthcare, and so my trajectory in healthcare is pretty clear. But the other thing I love is I love butterflies and bees and pollinators, and so not only am I a nurse for healthcare, but I kind of feel like I want to be a nurse for the planet too, so I'm a big pollinator lover.

02:50 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

Oh, that's pretty cool. I think I may have said this line last year. Like you know, I live near Asheville and now we have all these breweries and I have all these. It's really become a Mecca for beekeeping. And they said you'll get your buzz on one way or the other.

03:02 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

That's right. That's right. I love the Bees.

03:06 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

All right. Well, Julie, I asked this in the beginning of my podcast, the Anatomy of Leadership, and then I left it off for a couple of times and people are like you need to start asking that again, and so it's a weird question as adults, but I've just learned so much cool stuff about our guests this way, so my question to you is what's your?

03:23 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

Superpower. You know, and I thought about that because you could say a lot of things, because you have a lot of things that you think about, but I think my can I say two, Because I think my first superpower is that I am very empathetic.

03:38

So I empathy is for me how I learn, learn and empathy drives me to what I think is my other superpower is I'm very curious. So empathy, when I'm listening with empathy and people are talking to me, I'm always very curious. But I'm curious because I care about them, because I care about what they're saying, because I want to know their story, I want to know their life experience. So I would say empathetic curiosity is my superpower. So I'll put them together.

04:09 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

I could so see that. I'm just thinking of one reason why I was just drawn to you when we first worked together many, many moons ago at Studer Group, and I can totally see that Again. This is why I love asking this question, having the benefit of knowing most of the guests. One of our last guests said quite often our superpower is not apparent to us, but more apparent to other people, but somewhere in the journey someone has helped us have some recognition or understanding of that and then through the journey then you become

more aware, further honing, et cetera. I don't know if that resonates with you, but that resonated with me when that guest helped me kind of see that.

04:47 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

Well, and I was. You know cause. It was a hard thing for me to think about, cause I wanted to say that I thought my superpower was like innovation and disruption, but people wouldn't say that about me, because I do things, so you know I innovate, but I do it in a loving way, so you know, rebel joyfully, you know I innovate, but I do it in a loving way, so you know, rebel joyfully, you know. So I think people wouldn't say that about me. So I agree with that. I don't think that. I think if you ask someone else what your superpower is, they would probably tell you easier than your own reflection.

05:16 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

Yeah, that is well said, and actually rebel joyfully that you like. If you ever got a tattoo, that would be your tattoo. Yeah.

05:23 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

And If you ever got a tattoo, that would be your tattoo. Yeah, and you write it. I should have brought it, because if you write rebel, it's got be in it and joyfully, it's got joy in it, right? So you say rebel joyfully and it ends up being be joyful, oh, that's cool, yeah, super cool. I might get a tattoo with that on. Now that you said that, Chris, that's good.

05:41 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

So, Julie, I'm using the framework of my book, the Anatomy of Leadership and, quite frankly, it was an idea around Christmas time. The book came out early December 23. And I'm like you know, this book is a table of contents on leadership and I'm an accountant, I try to organize stuff. You Google the word Leadership, it's got about 7 billion hits. And so my offering to the world is this is a table of contents, but then the aha of well, what if I brought gas in the framework of the book? And I've so enjoyed this because I'm learning as much and we've gotten great feedback.

06:09

And so what we've covered so far is self-mastery, caring for others, influence, intention and, by the way, I could have chose you for any of these cause, purpose, mission, margin, meaning management, message into the community, which brings us to making people, or people making is another way to reframe it Chapter 13 of the book. And I thought, okay, who to talk to about people making? Making people, absolutely Again, but I probably could have chosen you for any of those. So we'll just keep recycling you each year, we'll just pick a different chapter. I love being here, so thank you.

06:40

So, the concept of people making, at least the way. Dr Thayer, who is really my mentor, is taking the people that you've been entrusted with and, of course, you're on the journey, because that's the journey of self-mastery being the best version of yourself, but helping them become a better version of themselves as well. Love for them, because a team that is growing and learning in that way, whatever they do, whether it's healthcare, building a widget it's going to be different because of that type of organization. So that's my attempt at defining people-making. I'm curious, how would you define people-making?

07:16 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

So, I love when you say being the best version of themselves. I also want to say that it leads them to them loving themselves and finding value in themselves, because that's the other part of that. You know the best version of myself if I'm pushed or I don't see my own value. So, I think there's a, there's a an intrinsic part of that my best value to you and your work environment, but my best value to me as feeling like I have worth, that I have value.

07:50 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

I love that. I totally love that. So, it's self-discovery in yourself as a leader, but then facilitating some type of self-discovery as well for that team member. Would you clean that up and say it a different way?

08:05 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

No, I mean, I think that's right, because I think when we develop people, when we do people making and you've had this in your leadership where someone didn't feel like they were doing a great job, maybe their team members didn't value them and through their own development and their journey, with you mentoring them or helping them, they find more value of themselves. And so, it's a I mean mentorship is a very powerful leadership, something that leaders can do. I mean mentoring someone is important, it's powerful, it changes their life, it changes your life.

08:43 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

It does Right, because you get back watching that person grow.

08:44 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

It does right, because you get back watching that person grow.

08:46 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

You just you get back so much yeah, well, I'm just giving you a shout out. I consider you one of those incredible mentors I've had in my life and, um, you know, when we did work together at Studer, I've always, in the early days, I probably, like you, always a bit of a rebel, but I had this different orbit because I was the only person in the hospice and palliative care space and there's just so many poignant moments I could think of of us interacting with each other. More often than not, it was you asking me a question and I'd take that question and at first be like what the hell is she talking about? But then keep wrestling with it and, just like you've just been a great mentor and I know that you'd probably take that everywhere you go, which is a segue to the next question, and I'm going to read it the way I originally wrote it and I want you to reframe it because your reframe was awesome, okay, okay.

09:31

So what should leaders be doing better to empower and enable those they've been entrusted with to learn, grow and become a better version of themselves?

09:39 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

All right. And so I felt like I wanted to change up that question to say what habits should leaders have? Because leadership has to have habits so that everybody gets your best you to advance and develop those they are entrusted, to learn and grow. And then I said I've tried to stay away from the word empower lately and I learned this because I work with nursing a lot is when you say you're going to empower someone, you imply that they didn't have power before, and so that's really not developmental, that's power shifting, and so I try to use that word less and use more things like advance, transform, evolve, because everyone has power if they just see it.

10:27 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

That is potent in how you just did that reframe. I'm going to chase a little bit of a rabbit. I had never heard the term lexicon before and Dr Thayer won a Lifetime Achievement Award around communication. In fact, one of the podcasts we recently released, before this one, was about meaning management and that the robust communication is not me talking at you, it's our communication is coming together and it's producing something that wasn't there before, which is beautiful, and so lexicon is around that, whereas cliché is the opposite of that.

11:02

Cliché is we're using words they have no meaning. So your reframe is like oh crap, is empower become cliché in my verbiage and vocabulary Because it's just been kind of thrown about, because it does imply this well, I am empowering you because I have the power and I love your framing. I've heard so many people you were at our national conference last year, almost a year ago, and about this power over versus power with. I don't know if that provokes any comments from you, but I love that reframing. Just from me asking that question, I'm like, oh my God, I use that term all the time.

11:44 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

Well, and you just made a good connection that I'm a big student of cultural transformation theory, which talks about power dynamics and how they change culture and change teams, and so probably I'm sensitive to empower for that very reason. And I loved what you just said, because it assumes that I have power and you don't, and that's a hierarchy, right?

That's not. You know, I'm working with you. You're already valuable. I'm going to work with you and I'm going to use the skills I have to help you do what you need to do, make you better. But that's not because I'm more powerful than you. That's because I have wisdom you haven't yet achieved. And that's the other thing I use with lexicon. Yet I always use the word yet because it's kinder. If you say you haven't done that yet, you haven't achieved that yet, because that's always very futuristic. So I use yet. That's another cultural lexicon that I use a lot. It gives people hope.

12:39 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

I love that, Julie, and I'm just sitting here reflecting. I don't think I ever told you this story. So my first internship before I graduated from LSU was at an oil and gas company, and as an intern, of course they want you to take the job when you graduate, so they really try to make a big impression on you. Well, the very first week they took us on a tour, and the first thing they take you to is the executive dining room. And guess what? In the executive dining room there were ice sculptures. And so you know the message, right. The message is you too might one day might climb this ladder, and you too can be this amazing potentate that could bestow things.

13:19

And so, as fate would have it, they fired the CEO and this amazing turnaround person came in and the first thing they did was shut down the executive dining room and one of the things and I was 19 years old, so I was really young and so the CEO would show up at your desk and he had a question, and it wasn't in an intimidating way, although I'm 19 and this is a CEO of a fortune 50 company and he'd say I'm just curious, how does your job support the mission of the organization? And I think back now on that and there's so many potent lessons in that of changing that whole power structure and that, hey, if you're here, you have worth, you have purpose. Have you identified that? Have you connected with that and are you kind of living into that is all the words I would use now. I don't know if that resonates with you, but I'm just reflecting on all that, just thinking about what you're talking about.

14:10 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

You know it's interesting. You just gave me an idea. I'm doing town halls in the next couple of weeks. I do town halls in my vertical and I was going to have people do a celebratory town hall on the things they've achieved. And I was going to have people do a celebratory

town hall on the things they've achieved. But I think I'll shift that a little to say how do you impact our mission and our vision? You know how to, so I think I'll.

14:35

I'll shift that because I think that's just the fact that he asked that he wants you to be when you were 19, understanding the mission and seeing how you contribute to the mission. And we all know how mission, vision and values which have we've got. I don't hear people talking about them as much, but I think, post pandemic and coming out of what healthcare is, coming out of the financial conundrum that we're in, I think you're going to hear more because people crave. They crave knowing that they contribute to the mission, the vision and the values of an organization. That is food for their soul. So if you're not doing a lot of that so you just made me think for my next town hall I'm going to say, okay, let's celebrate how we all made a difference to our patients, how we support the mission of ECU Health. Thank you.

15:19 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

That's a great idea, you bet. Well, I may have failed at this attempt, but what you just said is what I was after with my chapter on your mission, and so Peter Senge talked about this pretty well. He said you know, most people are like you got a pair of shoes. You got a pair of shoes. Yeah, I got mission, vision and values.

15:37

In other words, that has become cliché and it's kind of like that whole kind of what power over has done to people and it's um, it's almost perverted something very powerful which those were our ways of saying. This is really what our why is about. But then, as you know, almost like toxic positivity, mission, vision and values, words on an elevator or maybe a sheet of paper, but not really these ideals that we're espousing to that connect us as almost transcendent, kind of beyond our individual being that together. This is what we're espousing to do at a higher level, and it's like it's almost like we need to reintroduce that, which is what I love about lexicon. Sometimes it's just shifting words, like you're brilliant at, and reintroducing. I don't know if that provokes any thoughts.

16:24 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

Well, I think you're brilliant at in reintroducing. I don't know if that provokes any thoughts. Well, I think you're right when you say that mission, vision, values have become cliché-ish. I mean, I think we all should take a breath when we hear that and take stock of where we're leading, because that's the food of getting the best from people is if they're connected to your mission, vision and value. And then that connected me to.

16:45

I don't know if you've seen the current studies that have come out that said people used to say they leave their manager, but now, post-pandemic, as engagement has shifted, it's the senior leadership that people are leaving and they're leaving organizations because the more higher-level leaders are not role-modeling the mission and the vision of the organization. So the inauthenticity of this is our mission and vision. But I don't espouse that is what the millennials and the Gen Zs are saying. I'm done with you If you don't really live the mission and vision and the values of the organization. I mean we could do a whole day seminar on this, because I agree with you that when we have lost sight of that and what's in a person's heart related to the mission, we've lost some of our most valuable human capital. I think.

17:43 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

Well said, I'll give you a really cool thing our team just recently did and I was actually sitting with my sons at Christmas and they were joking around. They have social media. They were looking at each other's phone and I'm like, what are you guys doing? And said something about a meme. And you know, I'm old, I'm like what's a meme? And they laughed at me and they started explaining to me and I'm sitting there going, wow, so like a meme is like an allegory and like comedy and and also like some of them have an art aspect to them, and so, long story short, we took that back to our team and so what our team did recently is we took our mission, vision and values and they created some type of visual In some cases it's more meme-ish as a really cool, new, fresh way to reintroduce our values, and pretty soon we're actually going to have it on a wall at our new Tilly Ass offices, nice.

18:32

So as you walk around the wall you could see these pictures, and a couple of them they came up with were very edgy, very innovative, but also makes you think, like when you look at it. That is part of some of the best memes. Some of them are just very cynical but really

good. Memes make you think and there's weightiness and how the picture and the words kind of work together. So I just pay that forward to you. I thought that was super cool.

18:58 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

That's interesting. Well, I love that and I'll probably steal it. We just got done crowdsourcing our behavior standards and this takes trust. So we have a crowdsourcing tool and we put a lot of different behaviors in under each value and behavior standards are the actionable and observable value. It's like the behavior that supports the value and you know, behavior standards are the actionable and observable value. It's like the behavior that supports the value and we didn't have those, but we had.

19:21

We have values that everyone knows and loves, but we didn't have the behavior standards underneath them. So we collected a bunch of behaviors that people told us that were in our matrix, our hiring matrix, in policies, different things in our hospitality, in our quality, and we put them under each value and then, after the senior leader team had a look, we put them out into the system and people voted on them. So now I have the top three to four behavior standards that over 4,000 team members said these are the behavior standards I believe are connected to this value. In that way, just like your team making memes, then they own it, it's authentic, they voted on it. I don't have to worry about enforcing it because all my team members said these are the behavior standards I want in my environment. So we just finished that, so you can steal that from me if you want.

20:14 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

That's very cool. Actually, we don't have as large an organization. But now I reflect on it. We did something similar. I didn't actually use it, I didn't use the term called crowdsourcing, but I realized now that's exactly what we were doing. And the thing that occurs to me, listening to you, Julie, I think it was Dr Thayer, and he would ask a question and he would say where is the peer pressure within your organization? Now, today, I would probably reframe that, but I do think he's teaching an interesting lesson. If you and I aren't around, how does the culture come around people, and what is it actually reinforcing?

20:47

What is it calling us towards? Because good values and standards of behavior are ideals. Years ago, we stumbled across this and we built it into our evaluation tool. That three level says I model it. Four level is I'm a promoter of it. Five level is I hold my other team members accountable around it as well, and so you really get what that framing is talking about.

21:11

That's how's the culture coming around to other people? It was. I think it might have been our. I think it was our show on margin. The CEO was kind of apologetic because he was, he was, we were talking about influence, although he was a show on margin, but I was talking to him about influence in a part of the show and he said you know, I don't get out to conferences that much, but something I paid forward to him is your culture showed up at the conference without you. In other words, I love that your team members reflect at that and I think that's what we're kind of poking on together here, because sometimes right we're oh yeah, we did the values, check the task off the task list, but what is it really promoting within the culture or producing amongst each other?

21:54 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

Yeah, yeah, great, great, great.

21:56 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

So I want to segue us. And so, man, you talk a lot about love in the workplace, which in healthcare, and I almost want to laugh at myself saying this seems kind of revolutionary. It feels funny saying that. Why do you think we found ourselves in healthcare where that would even be considered revolutionary, ourselves in healthcare?

22:14 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

where that would even be considered revolutionary. You know, I think the further we get away from healthcare being a calling or a relationship, the more funny things like love and empathy and caring sound. When we've been evolving in healthcare, healthcare in some sectors became a business or is considered a business. Well, when you think about a business, you think of transferring of goods and services. So if that's what healthcare is to you, then love is really not connected to that. But if healthcare is a relationship, if, just like

they say in the quadruple aim, that health care is a relationship for both, if it is a calling, if it is a science and an art, then love makes a lot of sense. And I think the evolution of health care might have evolved away from health care as a relationship to health care as a business business.

23:11

I use love very intentionally because I want to evolve healthcare back to a relationship, back to a calling, back to where we love and care for each other. And when I use the word love, I use it as the definition of Dr Martin Luther King, who said love of all humankind. And so sometimes people think of love in a romantic way. But the broad scope of love that Dr Martin Luther King gave us is the love that I refer to. It's the love of humankind. It's the love of all the people, no matter if they agree with you or not, no matter if they look like you or not, no matter if they look like you or not, no matter what their circumstance. It's the love of humanity. That's how I use that word.

24:08 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

Something has occurred to me, Julie, listening to this. I've been to several conferences this year and, as you know, the advent of artificial intelligence and technology, a lot of private equity, for-profit stuff coming into healthcare and I see this gravitational pull towards apply the technology so you can produce the replicatable widget. And I don't know a better way to say that, maybe you have a better way to say it, but I see that gravitational pull to go there and it's actually a hell of a lot easier than what you're kind of poking on, which is we just did another podcast. It was on meaning management and Kevin Picard talked about I'm not selling you a widget or a transaction. I'm hoping something in this exchange that we are now better for it, like the exchange has actually impacted both of us. That's what I feel like you're talking about when you talk about love, does that?

24:59 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

resonate, and do you see this crossroads as well? That's exactly. Well, I'm a little. I'm worried about AI, but not for the same reason that most healthcare is. Most healthcare is worried about AI as it relates to electronic health records and things like that, which is a worry, but my worry is the depersonalization of healthcare interactions that will further the burnout that exists in our team members because they're disconnected to their purpose,

the work, the relationship. So that's what worries me about AI. I think that AI can be very useful to help make things easier for patients and team members.

25:42

But we have to jealously guard that relationship, because without that then healthcare is just goods and services.

25:51 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

That's well said. That's because there is probably, it's not. I know I framed it as like a crossroads, but I do see where, like the sexy package is, make it a transaction, and even where the private equity dollars seem to be going, is that it's a replicatable, high margin kind of product. But a blending of the two, where the tail is not wagging the dog, would seem to be kind of a way to reconcile that, which is probably a cool segue. I want you to tell me about your book, and so let's see, actually and I apologize, I wanted to have a hard copy and when I ran out the door this morning I was 20 minutes down the road. I'm like, dang, it left it right, but it was on my bedside. So that tells you. I am reading it. But the title of the book? A System Innovation, a Holistic Approach to Disrupting with Love and Human Caring. So what problem were you trying to solve, Julie, by writing this book?

26:47 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

So I want health care to innovate itself to its future, that disruption and innovation is seen as being something that makes people uncomfortable versus something that we do as humans, naturally, to make things better for us and for humankind. So I wanted to pair innovation with love and human caring, which is important to me, and also I wanted to write a book that encouraged people to disrupt health care and it doesn't have to be painful and it doesn't have to be. You know, when people couch change management, it's always like it's going to be painful. We're going to teach change management, it's going to be terrible and we're just going to transform you through it. You know, and I'm like it doesn't have to be that way. I always say people are like do you use Change Manager? I'm like, no, they're like what do you use? I'm like I will love you through it. I will love you so hard and make it so comfortable and so exciting. You're going to want to change. And people are like that's not even a thing. It is a thing, it's a thing. So I wanted to. Those are the two things that the book I wanted to, and making sure people understood that innovation could be fabulous and easy and also done with love and human caring.

28:04

The other thing I'll say about the book for people who reach out to read it it is a textbook, so I wanted something that other people could learn from. It is written like a textbook, but it also really every chapter talks about un-siloing health care. So really every chapter talks about unsiloing healthcare, because healthcare, as we've evolved, has developed these weird silos where somebody takes care of your lungs and somebody does your PT and somebody does your billing and somebody teaches your leaders, but that's not the same people that work in HR that help you with your leaders and that's not the same people that work in HR that help you with your leaders and that's not the same people that orient your leaders, and pretty soon you just lose your mind at the silos, which has caused us to be very disconnected. So I love relationships and connection and so I wanted to show people ways that they could un-silo their healthcare entities, their healthcare goals, their healthcare environments, so that we could all be more holistically working to create a place where everybody can thrive.

29:28 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

That is really good, Julie. That is really good, Julie. You know something that occurs to me listening to. You know that that specialization is drip was been driven by the just the knowledge, the need to, where then knowledge can be transferred a little bit easier. Because the specialization, I think. What did I hear the other day? That now in health care knowledge is doubling every 73 days.

29:50 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

Oh yeah, it used to be Exponential, exponential.

29:53 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

And so I think that's one reason why we found ourselves in this siloization. Now you're also speaking to my heart, right as a hospice and palliative care person I know that was the that was the brilliance of this model is it's it's interdisciplinary, holistic, and there's so much cool wisdom.

30:07

um, I think I I'm just so thankful that, out of all the things where I could have spent my life, people that find themselves in this work say I don't know, I kind of fell into it, like we're walking down a road and we fell in a hole. It's almost like this work found you, but I do think there's so much wisdom that I think maybe also inform this journey that you are very passionate about. So let's help our listeners. Julie, what would be five practical tips that leaders can start doing to better develop their teams going forward, based upon your wonderful reading and research and what you put in your book?

30:43 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

So I'm going to give some tips. And then I want you to give some tips, and I thought about things that didn't cost money, that you don't have to go to school to do. I thought about these are habits that you can do that will help the people around you be their best selves. And so my first one is listen with empathy and intent to understand. So I didn't just say listen because I'm gonna shout out some leaders who have gotten really good at pretending they're listening when they're not, and so we all know how to do that. So that's not it. So listen with empathy and intent to understand. So that's my first. That's my first. Doesn't cost you anything. Pause, take a breath and listen with empathy in your heart and try to understand that, whatever that person's trying to convey to you. So what's your next one? What's your?

31:34 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

one. This is cool, and we didn't plan this. So the one I would start them with is because I am not a naturally good listener, as my wife would tell you. So a practical way to learn that new skill that you just talked about would be start to lead with questions from a place of general curiosity, and that is an acquired skill. But by getting good at that, you may find yourself in what Julie just said. So what's your next one, Julie?

32:01 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

My next one is don't make decisions alone. So that comes from my partnership heart, from cultural transformation theory is as you advance as a leader, you have every right to make decisions on your own, but don't do it. Ask people for feedback, ask people what they

think, get outside lens, get diverse opinions. Your decisions will be better, your leaders will develop and everyone will be more engaged. So don't make decisions alone.

32:32 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

Oh, that's good. So, again, we didn't plan any of these. Listening to you, what then occurs to me is that wonderful quote from years ago, Steven Covey none of us see the world as it is. We see the world as we are. So, Julie, you and I could be looking at the same exact problem, but the beauty is your amazingness and maybe my amazingness together. If we figure out a way to harmonize that, we will all of a sudden create what people really will call synergy. So that would be kind of like how do you do that then, from the standpoint of do I really value that? I don't have the corner on truth, and I need Julie's viewpoint and my viewpoint to get a much better view of what's actually going on so we could come up with that better solution. So that would be my counterpoint to your. Not it actually not. It's counter.

33:20 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

It's actually building off on what you said. It's good. No, my next one is actually one of your people making components and you called it learn from mistakes. And I say reward for trying. So you have to. And I don't say reward failure, cause that gets people mixed messages. I say reward trying, so if people are trying to learn something, they're trying to do something, they're trying, then reward that, even if it doesn't have an outcome yet, even if it doesn't have a process yet. Reward people for putting their heads up and trying. And again, it doesn't cost any money. Just tell people I see you're really trying right now. You're trying to figure that out. Good job, I think you can do it.

34:05 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

That's so good and actually it was probably dumb luck on my part, but I actually. So I took our reward and recognition system recently, but someone really did put themselves out there and it wasn't a smashing success. But we learned from that circumstance. So I actually did. We call them astral awards because we love Star Wars and Yoda and all that sort of stuff in our organization, and so I sent one specifically and that was the nugget is that you know what you put yourself out there. We learned from it. Kudos.

34:34

Um, it felt weird for me to do that, because normally what we're affirming is just the so-called wins. In fact, I heard a podcast recently I love the 5am club, so it was Robin Sherma with Ed Milat and he said that virtuosos. So the best of the best and I think about you when I think of that word, Julie that in reality it's very messy. In other words, they are trying stuff and they're failing and they're learning from it and maybe one day they do a Sistine Chapel, but it's been in that iterative learn process kind of throughout.

35:06

The second thing tactics, and I'm sorry I'm doing two. You can, it's your show, because the theme of the show is this. One is about people making, but I do believe in the value of a learning plan. Now, like anything, you could make it a task, but having a learning plan of where I truly am. I am pushing myself to learn and grow in such a way, but but being deliberate about it, that puts creative tension on a person. They're like, well, yeah, I just I want to do whatever, but making it very specific and and measurable kind of throughout the year. So I would throw that one out as well.

35:40 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

I think that's good. That advances that. My next one is manage your personal brand. Now, this is about authenticity. So if you want to be a leader who's empathetic, who's calm and cool, who's thoughtful, then manage your brand and act like that. So there's so many people who have an idea of what they want to be, but they don't manage their personal brand. They seem inauthentic. Here's a classic one I want to be approachable, but I walk down the halls of my business office with my phone in my hand and my face in my phone. So I'm very strong about managing my personal brand. You cannot be the chief experience officer and not be an experience. So for leaders, they have to manage their brand and they have to have an authentic brand.

36:33 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

Okay, I'm letting that one just settle upon me this is really good.

36:37

What occurs to me is the question I asked you that I've been asking all of our guests some kind of way, identifying or no let me use a better word Coming to the revelation of your superpower is a real gift. Now, quite often it comes from a Julie might say Chris, did you ever know? And then that starts this discovery process. But if I have start to get some inkling of that, then I think I have a much even more potent and powerful chance of what that brand should be reflective of.

37:09 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

Yeah, yeah, so good. And then the last one is one I talk about in my book and it's not a, it's not advice, it's a statement that I think is true, and that statement is you will not punish into loving. And I use this. I actually had this amazing learning when I was working at a different organization and I was sitting with the food service team and the food service team was talking about how the people who delivered the food weren't addressing the patients, they weren't greeting the patients, and how they would write them up and then eventually terminate them for not greeting the patients. And I was sitting around this table with all these leaders and I said you won't punish them into loving. And everyone just sat there like they never heard that before.

37:59

And then I said you won't punish people into loving. Again, flat nothing. And finally I look to say it again. And then they just said like stop saying that, julie. And they're like we never thought of that. I said you're deteriorating any possible connection that those team members have of a purposeful why of delivering trays. You didn't ask if they were trained correctly, you didn't ask their comfort, you didn't check on their competency, you didn't see if they were having a good day. You didn't look at team dynamics, but you're writing people up for not greeting and so now they don't love the patients and that is the worst outcome. The worst outcome so that's my final one is to remind leaders that you will not punish people into loving your customers, your patients, your team members. You will not punish them into loving it doesn't work that way.

38:53 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

This is a masterclass, Julie. This is incredible. I mean, I'm just sitting there and reflecting, I wonder, my own organization. Are there places where maybe we are inadvertently kind of

doing that? Man, that's huge as far as wow, that just got me really my mind's going in a lot of different directions. I want to give you the final word, final thoughts.

39:15 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

My final thoughts is that healthcare right now is waiting for leaders to evolve it to its future. Healthcare isn't what we want it to be. For those of you who all work in healthcare, though we love it, it has gaps. It doesn't serve our team members. It doesn't serve our patients. Our team members are suffering. Our patients still suffer. America doesn't have the best healthcare, and what's healthcare is waiting for is for us to fix that, and that's why I wrote the book. Healthcare is waiting for us. Our patients are waiting for us. Our rural communities are waiting for us. Our dying patients are waiting for us to make healthcare better for them, and so we should get started on that right away.

40:07 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

I feel that's a huge call to action, but also very visionary, in a good way, I mean. I feel like that's a calling. This work is a calling, but I do think we're at an interesting maybe crossroads is not the right framing, but we know there's a lot of change that is going to occur. Is it going to be changed for the good or is? Are we going to look back and go? Hmm, um. I one of my favorite quotes, the matriarch who started our hospice. We would always use it, kind of talking about her and the founding members, and we say I've stood upon the shoulders of giants. What will they say about us?

40:36 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

Yeah, so true Perfect.

40:39 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

Well, Julie, thank you for what you're doing. Always, always, love my time with you. Again, I've got like two pages of notes just in. I'm doing the podcast here. Just love having my time with you. So thank you.

40:52 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

Well, and I want to thank you for advancing leadership with your book, which I had the privilege to take a little peek at, but advancing healthcare leadership, but also advancing our thinking. So you're a voracious forever learner, but you also share that knowledge and that advances us on the journey to take healthcare into its future. So I admire you, I'm grateful for you, so this is just joyful to be here with you.

41:21 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

Well, but the theme is love. So I'm going to have a mutual love fest here with you, because the reality is the book ended up, and so I think the two greatest compliments that I've received to date on this book I attribute, of your shaping and your challenging questions, to me, because I called you late one night in the airport and you looked at the early manuscript. The first thing is that reading this book is like sitting having a cup of coffee with Chris, which is kind of cool, right? We always joke, wouldn't it be great if we could clone Julie? Well, if you have a book, that kind of comes across that way. And the second thing you challenged me. You said you should think of writing it as a workbook, and that is another great compliment, the fact that it is written as a workbook. So, Julie, you shaped that. So thank you for the gift that you were to me. That then resulted in, hopefully, this gift of this book being to other people.

42:07 - Julie Kennedy Oehlert (Guest)

Well, it is a gift to other people, and a workbook makes sense because it's a learner's book, then, and so I was just channeling what would make the most sense for you, because you would want learners to use your book to learn. So I love those open pages, I love all those things in there.

42:23 - Chris Comeaux (Host)

There goes that superpower again, just that empathy and that ability to take that and actually then push innovation. That is your superpower. Well, to our listeners, we're thankful for you as well. Every episode, we try to share a quote and a visual at the end, and the idea here is it's a brain bookmark, it's a thought prodder about the podcast subject to just the further you're learning and growth and, of course, hopefully, your leadership, and what we're looking for is we're hoping that it sticks in your brain. It's actually really sticky, so we're going to share that in a second. Be sure to subscribe to the anatomy of leadership so you don't miss an episode. The book's on Amazon. Tell your friends, family, coworkers

about it. We're going to have a link to Julie's book as well. Please make sure you check out her book. It's so easy for us to rail against the world, be frustrated by things. Let's be the change that we wish to see in the world. So thanks for listening to Anatomy of Leadership.

43:23 - Jeff Haffner (Ad)

And here's your brain bookmark to close today's show. "Your team reflects your leadership. What are they seeing? Thank you to our Anatomy of Leadership sponsor, deltacarerx. Deltacarerx is also the title sponsor for our April and November 2024 leadership immersion courses. Deltacarerx is primarily known as a national hospice, pbm and prescription mail order company. Deltacarerx is a premier vendor of TCN and provides not only pharmaceutical care, but also niche software innovations that save their customers time, stress and money. Thank you, deltacarerx, for all the great work that you do in end-of-life and serious illness care.