

Transcript / A Whole New Mind with Daniel H. Pink

Melody King: 0:01

Welcome to TCNtalks. The goal of our podcast is to provide concise and relevant information for busy hospice and palliative care leaders and staff. We understand your busy schedules and believe that brevity signals respect. And now here's our host, Chris Comeaux.

Chris Comeaux: 0:23

Hello, I'm incredibly excited because our guest today is Daniel Pink, the New York Times Best-Selling author. I'm going to read from his bio. Daniel Pink is the author of seven best-selling nonfiction books on a range of topics, from human motivation to the science of timing, to a graphic novel career guide. His books include the New York Times bestsellers of the Power of Regret, when and my personal favorite I have here for those who are actually looking A Whole New Mind, as well as the number one New York Times bestsellers Drive to Sell as Human.

Chris Comeaux: 0:56

His deeply researched works have been translated into 46 languages, have sold more than 5 million copies around the world. That's incredible. Over the years he's also hosted a National Geographic television series, given one of the most popular TED Talks of all time. I just re-listened to it this week. It's awesome about motivation and incentives. Written a regular column for the Sunday Telegraph and Washington Post, served as a speechwriter to Vice President Al Gore, and he's been a clue on Jeopardy. I thought that was a pretty intriguing part of your bio. So welcome, Daniel. It's so good to have you.

Daniel H. Pink: 1:27

Thanks for having me. It's great to be with you.

Chris Comeaux: 1:29

So, Daniel, I've started this at the beginning of the podcast and I left it off and asked our guests what is your superpower? It's always an interesting question and adults kind of wrestle with it, but I'd love to hear your answer what's your superpower?

Daniel H. Pink: 1:46

I think if I have a superpower, I'm not going to do the lawyerly thing and reject your premise that I have a superpower. So, I'm going to concede the premise and say that if I have a superpower, it's probably that I'm able to work across disciplines, and I find that that is somewhat unusual. So, for instance, I know a huge amount about sports and I'm very, very interested in sports, but I also know a fair amount about art and theater and science and you know, and those kinds of things, and so I think my ability to work across disciplines might be my superpower.

Chris Comeaux: 2:17

That is such a cool superpower and one of the things I was so astounded that you agreed to be on our podcast. But you know hospice and palliative care. I have 30 years now. I don't know if you

know that, but that's actually part of the essence of what makes hospice so different is the interdisciplinary team of people and they rub off on each other and the term is transdisciplinary, which sounds like your superpower.

Daniel H. Pink: 2:38

Yeah, yeah, I mean, I do think it's interesting. I do think it's interesting and again, as you know, I'm interested in hospice and I'm interested particularly in the ways that Americans in the last basically during your work time, in the last few decades, have been rethinking their relationship with death, with passing, and the rituals and practices and even the medicine that surrounds that.

Chris Comeaux: 3:02

That's cool. Well again, however, I could be helpful to you as you do that research Well. I've been so looking forward to the show I can't tell you how many people if I got a dime for every one of your books a whole new mind that I've recommended. Actually, I had them in several of our team members' learning plans. I've reread it three times. It was on my reading list for Christmas over 2024, because I feel like what you lay out in this book is so profound and timely, especially given the fast-moving pace of AI and this application to every aspect of our lives. So, first off, maybe to kind of set the table, you share an incredible framework in the book A Whole New Mind and I think that framework is probably a great takeaway and also just a framing to our discussion. So, can you share that?

Daniel H. Pink: 3:45

Sure, I mean again. I appreciate the kind words about the book which is now getting you know a little long in the tooth there. I wrote this book, you know, nearly 20 years ago and the argument there is that the skills that used to get you the business skills, economic skills, professional skills that used to get you into the middle class were characterized metaphorically by the left side of the brain Logical, linear, sequential, analytical, spreadsheet, sats kinds of skills. And my argument is that those skills are still absolutely necessary. You got to have them but they're not sufficient. More characteristic metaphorically of the right brain artistry, empathy, inventiveness, big picture thinking that those are becoming the most important skills in a whole range of work.

Chris Comeaux: 4:31

Wow, and again, this framework. I actually have a sticky I actually keep on my window of my big screen where I zoom all day long and actually keep that framework right in front of me. Interesting, dan. You may not know, I'm an accountant, so there's another reason why this really spoke to me. It's kind of interesting. I'm not your typical accountant though.

Daniel H. Pink: 4:49

No, obviously not.

Chris Comeaux: 4:50

So, I think my own journey I guess I saw in your book because I kind of feel like Dorothy in Wizard of Oz. I came from KPMG Fortune 50, and fell into this nonprofit hospice in Pensacola and they

didn't talk about things like financials and data. Profit Hospice in Pensacola and they didn't talk about things like financials and data, but they're like this care is just unlike anything else. I go out and visits with nurses and kind of fell in love with it. So, I think it's just a lot of interesting corollaries.

Daniel H. Pink: 5:15

I mean going back to your point about transdisciplinarity it's that you know financials are important and care is important, and those two realms can be compatible. And what we want are people who are bilingual in those two worlds or who are ambidextrous, and those two worlds should be working together. This book, a Whole New Mind, is not an argument against math not at all. It's not an argument against financials. It's not an argument against analytic rigor not at all. It's not an argument against financials. It's not an argument against analytic rigor not at all. It's saying that it's essential. What it's also saying is that the way to be smart today is to be more than that, to have that other side as well, and that other side is becoming much more important. And that other side sense of art, care, is a great example of it. Care, artistic sensibility, big picture, thinking that those kinds of abilities, especially here in America, have been overlooked and undervalued and now they're becoming much more important.

Chris Comeaux: 6:16

That is just so on point. Well, that kind of gets me to my second question. So I love how you talk about the rise of the conceptual age. I think it's a great way to frame this and just the importance of these right brain qualities empathy, storytelling. How do you see those things being challenged as we just move more and more? I imagine you probably agree. I mean the acceleration, and the acceleration is going to actually probably get even beyond exponential here. As you know, we get like quantum chips and things like that.

Daniel H. Pink: 6:45

You're exactly right. And again, let's go back to this. Let's go back to this book that you like and let's be intellectually honest about it. And let me tell you some things that I might have gotten wrong or that I you know. Again, I wrote this book before. Well, I wrote this book well before any kind of AI or large language models or anything like that.

Chris Comeaux: 7:07

I did not know that. That's incredible.

Daniel H. Pink: 7:10

Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. This book came out when George Bush was president and I was looking at the tech trends at the moment, that is, the idea that software could do a lot of this left brain work faster and better than we could. It looked at the fact that it's easy to outsource some of this routine left brain kind of work. It said that the demand curve for products and services in a world of incredible abundance was going to shift toward more things infused with like meaning and beauty and so on and so forth. Now, but let's go back to this so. So, I wrote this book way before large language models and because those have only been around for the in in consumer use for

for two years now. Yep, um. And I think one of the things that I got wrong was that I let me be specific here I argued that empathy was going to be an important skill in the world of work, and the reason for that is that it was very difficult to outsource or automate empathy. And the example that I gave was that at the time, software could barely recognize a face, let alone understand the emotions in that facial expression. Well, now software can recognize faces really well, and you know what Software can recognize the emotion in faces really well, and so it is possible to automate some kind of empathy. And what we see also with the large language models and there've done research on this in the last six months or so is that in medical care, large language models actually sometimes demonstrate greater empathy than human physicians. And so you know this is just echoing your point that the world is moving at this incredibly ferocious pace and it is hard to keep up.

Daniel H. Pink: 9:07

And so, the way to think about this at the individual level is what can you do to augment machine intelligence rather than necessarily compete with machine intelligence? In the same way that I don't want to do long division in my head or on a piece of paper, I'm going to use a calculator for that. So, I'm not going to compete with a calculator to do long division, but there's a huge amount of value in that I can provide. It's like why am I doing long division? Why am I doing this problem in the first place? What kind of analysis do I bring to this thing that requires long division? And so, what we need to be thinking about is what can we do to augment machine intelligence when machine intelligence is getting better and better and better, and better, and better and better and smarter, and smarter, and smarter and smarter. And it's happening, as you say exactly correctly, at almost a blistering, almost unfathomable pace.

Chris Comeaux: 10:02

I didn't get to share with you before pre-show, but my mentor was a guy named Dr Lee Thayer. He actually was Stephen Covey's mentor and I worked with him, I studied under him, et cetera, and that he died at the age of 96 during COVID but he actually said probably two years, so it would have been 2019, somewhere in that ballpark he actually wrote a blog. We kind of co-wrote it, but it really was his brainchild and it was the robots are coming, oh my. And one of the terms that Dr Thayer would. He was really big on virtuosity, which I know you're probably very familiar with. That term it's like the best of the best, especially in the realm of arts, which reminds me of kind of your framework.

Chris Comeaux: 10:39

And here was the punchline in the blog you should do your job so well that there's no robot that could replace you, because you're doing it at such a level of mastery. And I wonder if that resonates with you when you say augment. I just did some incredible stuff the other night, kind of using ChatGPT, going back and confluence, kind of two worlds of thought that I've been reading about and feel like, okay, now we've got this really interesting thing, we could move forward that I'm not sure. Two people have put these parts together. Is that kind of what you mean when you say augmentation?

Daniel H. Pink: 11:12

That's part of what I mean. I mean virtuosity is a better word than augmentation. You know, I'm just I'm looking at it in a much yeah. I mean I think that's better. I think that the that if we aspire in everything that we do to virtuosity, if you're a professional and you're aspiring to virtuosity in your profession, you're probably going to be fine.

Chris Comeaux: 11:33

That's awesome. And he said if you can be replaced by a robot, you really should. In other words, you're not going to virtuosity.

Daniel H. Pink: 11:40

Here's the thing. There's something to be said for that? There truly is, and we're going to have a reckoning coming because we, especially white-collar workers, said well, of course that's the case. If a robot can put together a car or some kind of item on an assembly line faster and better and cheaper than a human being, then of course that's what we should be doing, and that has and has had costs to it in human suffering and in economic dislocation. But now the robots are coming for white-collar workers.

Daniel H. Pink: 12:21

This is what I was suggesting in A Whole New Mind. It's coming in part for accountants. Robots are coming for white collar workers. Out basically what I would do with a lawyer and say hey, I need a contract. Here's what I'm doing Ask me the questions that you need in-order to write a contract and we'll ask you the questions, you can respond to it and it will write you a contract and it'll cut out the lawyer entirely. And so this is you know. So, the robots are coming for certain kinds of things, but if a robot, if a large language model, can write a contract just as well as a human being, go for it.

Chris Comeaux: 13:15

Right, I have a really cool example for you. This actually was my first huge ahas with AI, because we're always trying to push the envelope and being more innovative, and so what I would typically. So, I was on the phone with an attorney. I had kind of a place where I wanted to get to, but when I had ChatGBT open, I was asking ChatGBT to download to me the law. So that way I had a framework to ask the question of where I really wanted to get to. So, what I normally would probably spend an hour paying the legal fee. I got to within 10 minutes.

Chris Comeaux: 13:45

You got it and I had this robust, so that was a perfect example of what I think you're talking about.

Daniel H. Pink: 13:49

Exactly, exactly. And if you're a lawyer charging by the hour and I now need you for 10 minutes rather than 60 minutes, then you just have a 83% drop in your billable hours.

Chris Comeaux: 14:05

Well, you know, it's interesting. Actually, I had that attorney on a podcast and we were talking in the green room. I think I had shared with her that example and one of the things she was lamenting was just the transactional stuff. She loves the creative stuff. She's a real unicorn of attorneys. She makes her own jewelry and things like that, and so what I heard her actually say is and here would be my interpretation I'm okay with that, Daniel, because now I could get to the stuff that I just love, which is to create with my clients and do something awesome. Right.

Chris Comeaux: 14:33

Well, let me kind of segue then. So, hospice is, as you can imagine is so deeply human-centered. So just speak to some of the leaders in that field?

Daniel H. Pink: 14:50

How do they embrace automation and AI but don't lose that relational essence that defines end-of-life care? I mean, again, I don't want to take something like end-of-life care and reduce it to a pure problem of economics, but... we can. And so, we can go back to this idea of comparative advantage. Where do machines have a comparative advantage and where do humans have a comparative advantage? And I think that machines have a comparative advantage in these very routine types of things.

Daniel H. Pink: 15:15

We wouldn't, you know, if you have a monitor to check somebody's heart rate or any of their, any of their vitals. That's better than having a human being sitting there with their finger on their pulse, counting right. So, we want the comparative advantage, and I think the comparative advantage in this and in many things are things like listening, giving people, not only the person who is in the end-of-life care, but that person's family. Listening, trying to help people derive meaning from this moment, giving people listening to stories, collecting stories, giving people a sense of purpose, allowing them to look back on their lives with a degree of joy and love and transcendence. Again, I still think that humans have a comparative advantage in those kinds of things.

Daniel H. Pink: 16:07

Also, the other thing where human beings have a comparative advantage is when the machines are wrong. So, if you have, you know, a physician who looks at, or a nurse who looks at these vitals that are being taken and say you know what, something is just not right here, I got to investigate, that's a great physician, that's a great nurse, that's what those sorts of that's a great nurse. That's the sorts of things that they can do. I think that if you have somebody who's listening, who's part of the care team, that's listening, and the family is saying one thing and the person in hospice care is saying another thing, and there's a disconnect there, an emotional disconnect, then that's something a human being can pick up on that a machine is unlikely to pick up on. And so again, you have to think about where is the comparative advantage. And, just like

your lawyer friend is saying, if the machines can liberate human beings to do these more transcendent things, then I think everybody wins.

Chris Comeaux: 16:58

Boy you are so dead on. I have such a cool story to share with you. So we had this hospice experience where the team just could, they felt this barrier with the family and our music therapist happened to just it was almost a passing comment of a child that they lost and this was nowhere near the narrative and the music therapist was so attuned and said I'm sorry, can you say that again? And then all of a sudden, they realized it was a tragic loss. They hadn't shared this with anyone. All this suppressed anger and hurt, but it unlocked all of this stuff the husband and the wife and it ended up being what we would call a beautiful death. So much beautiful reconciliation. And you're so right. It was almost like a passing comment, and they talked about that.

Chris Comeaux: 17:42

The other thing I wonder I've hypothesized about this, dr Thayer was like a modern-day Socrates in the Socratic method. I wonder if one of the superpowers of the future is asking questions, because listening like you're talking about there's something about presence and listening and then how to ask a question feels so important and maybe we can teach the AI to do that. But there's something about empathy and soul-to-soul connection and then a tool of asking questions. That gives you what I would think would be a competitive advantage compared to an AI.

Daniel H. Pink: 18:14

I agree with that. I agree with that, and we have, I mean, I'll give you a more. Let me just analogize to a much more mundane example. What we see in some of the research on dating is that one of the most attractive qualities in a prospective romantic partner is asking questions, but a certain kind of question, a follow-up question. Right, not coming in with a list of questions, but actually asking follow-up questions, which suggests that you're actually listening and you actually are curious.

Daniel H. Pink: 18:44

And so now here's the thing AI is decent at asking questions. It really is, and so one of the ways that I use AI sometimes is I'll give you an example so I think that we can enlist AI as a question asking partner. Okay, so one of the ways that I use AI right now would be something like, let's say that I read a complicated piece of scientific research or something like that, and I read it and I'm like, okay, I think I got it, but I want to make sure I will give the paper to AI and say test me whether I know the concepts, Ask me a set of open-ended questions and evaluate my answers how good they are, and what we know from other kinds of research is that that's the best way to deepen learning, and so that's another way that, again, this AI can be a partner, that the software, that this technology can be part of the care team essentially for everything that we do in life.

Chris Comeaux: 19:42

Oh, that's rock-solid good. That's like a master class right there. You've also written extensively about motivation on purpose. I love your TED Talk. How actually sat with a nurse for like an hour. She was showing me this interesting electronic medical record and after 30 minutes I looked at her and said how do you not lose the patient in this? And she sat back, and she goes oh, my God, you're right, it's just all the chutes and ladders and the task. Yeah, so I'd love to hear your perspective on that.

Daniel H. Pink: 20:23

I mean, again, you know we're we're playing, you know, a similar tune again, and it just in a slightly different key. Here's, if you look at, if you look at medicine, again, one of the things that, one of the things that we've all had the experience to say of going to a physician and in certain kinds of physicians, they're asking you a set of questions and they're actually. I remember going to one physician and she was asking me questions and she's barely looking at me because she's typing my answers or recording my answers into a laptop. Okay, so again, as a patient, you don't feel like you're getting great care. You might be getting good care because she's asking the right questions and she's logging the answers, but now, what you have now is you have AI scribes, where she just turns on the AI transcription system and she asks me the questions and the AI does that, and she can ask follow-up questions and she can look me in the eye and she can understand whether I'm nervous or not nervous or whether I'm actually getting what she's talking about.

Daniel H. Pink: 21:19

And so I think that's a case where having that AI can liberate those more humane aspects of being a physician, whether you're being a caregiver at large, whether you're a physician, whether you're a nurse, whether you're someone else who's part of the care team, and so, again, you know, one of the things that I have discovered about life in general is that too many people look at the world or their situations as zero sum.

Daniel H. Pink: 21:51

That is, there's a fixed amount and you're essentially vying with other people to get your slice so that they don't get your slice. And that's true in certain realms, but in most realms it's positive sum, and so you look for ways to expand the pie, and I do think that AI can, if we treat it right, expand the pie. It can create new opportunities, it can make us better at things, it can open up new kinds of avenues and in some ways, that is the history of technology and the history of human beings. It's not perfect, there's all kinds of bad things that can happen along the way, but it offers a form of liberation of human capacity.

Chris Comeaux: 22:36

That's so well said. You know there's so much research about Dr Burnout and they call it. You know the great resignation, or you're actually resigned but you're sitting and a lot of it is because

the things that we're kind of poking on, like if you're heads down document it's not why you went into health care. You went into health care because you want to help people.

Daniel H. Pink: 22:54

You go into health care because you want to care for people and help them get better. You don't do it to spend three hours a day on paperwork, which is what a lot of these physicians are doing.

Chris Comeaux: 23:02

It's interesting, my son's in. He actually was in the Secret Service but now he's in a different area of law enforcement and we were talking last night and he's experiencing something very similar in law enforcement and he was talking to a friend and almost said exactly what you just said, just in terms of I didn't come to law enforcement to basically be a paper pusher. I want to help people, I want to solve crimes, I want to actually make the community a better place, and so I think what the picture you're painting gives us a huge possibility for the future.

Daniel H. Pink: 23:30

Yeah, and I'm glad you put it as possibility, because it's not an inevitability, because we have choices. We have choices and we will shape that.

Chris Comeaux: 23:40

Well, maybe that's a segue to this next question. If you were building a training curriculum for hospice leaders to future-proof their organizations, what skills or mindset maybe from your book, a Whole New Mind would you prioritize and how would you impregnate our staff with them?

Daniel H. Pink: 23:57

Okay. So, for one thing, I would encourage you to hire somebody else for this job, because I'm not qualified for it, particularly if it comes particularly on the realm of impregnating people. So, I guess what I would do is I guess sort of how I would approach that problem might be instructive in that the first thing that I would do is I would ask the people on the front lines that very question Ask can we ask everybody who's working there, what can we do to future-proof these organizations? Have a set of conversations with them, because the people who are in those care rooms every day, the people who are talking to patients, the people who are talking to families, they know the answer to this question, and they might be sitting on it. So, I would go with them. I would also go with sort of like sort of being very clear by talking to people.

Daniel H. Pink: 24:48

What are our values here? And chances are the values are things like care, love, respect, dignity and just make sure that those values are exemplified in essentially everything that we do. Essentially every moment that a patient or a family member is there, that every moment, every encounter, every interaction exemplifies those values. Even mundane things of walking into the building does that exemplify our value of dignity or care, and so that's what I would do. But I think

the main thing was that the people who are working there know the answer to this question, so I'd ask them and save my exorbitant consulting fee.

Chris Comeaux: 25:30

Well, but I tell you what this podcast is a blessing to them, because I think there's so much wisdom in what you said. I was 25 when I actually had my first hospice job. I came from corporate America and I didn't know I thought I knew a lot because I came from the business world but at least I had enough of a common sense that I just went out and actually shadowed nurses, yeah. And so I never lost that lesson, and of course it's codified in Business America as the gimbal walk Toyota production system. Go see for yourself. But, man, the wisdom in what you just said.

Daniel H. Pink: 26:00

Exactly, yeah, going and seeing for yourself, that's part of it. Yeah, going and seeing for yourself, that's part of it, and the other part of it is asking the questions of the people who are doing the work, rather than thinking you know better. By viewing it from afar, I mean, you might be able to offer perspective on it because you're not involved in it every day. But the people who are involved in it every day also have something really powerful to add.

Chris Comeaux: 26:22

That's just very well said. Well, maybe this is a good follow-up. Then. What advice do you have for leaders who are hesitant or just overwhelmed by the concept of AI and they're committed to the things you just talked about? Human dignity, relationship, empathy is at the core.

Daniel H. Pink: 26:39

You know I understand why it can feel overwhelming. I mean, I feel overwhelmed, you know. I think that the way to deal with feeling overwhelmed on this or on anything isn't to try to tackle everything at once, but to do one small thing today. If you ask yourself, what am I going to do to contend with the inexorable rise of AI If that's the question you're asking yourself then you're going to feel frustrated. But if you say what's one thing, I can do today to learn you're asking yourself then you're going to feel frustrated. But if you say you know what's one thing, I can do today to learn a little bit more about AI or to use AI to make things in my own realm a little bit better, then I think you'd be start making progress, and if you do that every day, you'll make even more progress.

Jeff Haffner / Dragonfly Health / Ad: 27:18

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Chris Comeaux: 28:06

One interesting thing I heard on another podcast recently that to me was a gift. You know, just I'm thinking of just the exchange you and I. Right now, my mind is popping, I'm taking notes here. Quite often, leaders, we get into meetings, and we get that exchange, but yet there's not enough hours in the day. But interestingly, if you engage AI as a thought partner, sometimes, like you know, if you're stuck at writer's block that's a beautiful way to utilize it.

Daniel H. Pink: 28:30

Absolutely. I use AI a lot for that, so even on very, very mundane things. So, I'll give you an example. I was writing something yesterday and I said I won't go into the full details of it, but I basically had to say, like, what are the kinds of rules that might be posted at a, a community baseball park? Ok, now I can think about that myself. And it's like OK, no littering. And it's like, and. But I just asked AI that question and they give me a list of 47 things that might be listed there. And I'm like, okay, great, now I got it. Okay, so out of these 47, you know 42 of them I had a kind of stupid, but these five are pretty good and I can use three of these things and tweak them a little bit. And now I've overcome this block in what I was writing.

Chris Comeaux: 29:21

That's so good, well. Well, let me, as I sit here, and kind of reflect in man, I had no idea that when you actually wrote the book. So, if you look ahead five to 10 years, you use your superpower, because I do think you're a bit of a futurist. How do you envision AI changing the landscape of things like, you know, compassionate care of hospice, and what role should leaders play in shaping that evolution? Intentionally and I chose all those words very intentionally- yeah, yeah.

Daniel H. Pink: 29:48

So I'm not sure, because, with AI in particular, if you look at something like OpenAI, OpenAI is the fastest adopted consumer technology in the history of humankind. Wow.

Daniel H. Pink: 30:01

It went from, you know, from zero to 100 million users in like a few months, and so if that's the scale of adoption and if you look at the way that these technologies have advanced, then five years is actually not five years, it's like five decades. And you know, if you would talk to me or anybody five decades ago and said, what is life going to be like in 2025? If you go 1975, all right is that 50 years ago. Yep.

Daniel H. Pink: 30:31

Is that right? Yeah, 50 years. Okay, so 1975 is 50 years ago. If you sat around in 1975, Jimmy Carter is President, right, disco is ascendant and said what is life going to be like in 50 years? Nobody would imagine that you and I would be recording a podcast. That word doesn't exist. We're doing it over Zoom or over Riverside, which is a video technology that allows people to communicate in real time. Okay, that seems a little far out. It's all based on this thing called the Internet. What?

Daniel H. Pink: 31:10

And we're talking about artificial intelligence, which was a term around then, but this idea that you could Um, you could um, speak into your smartphone and get an answer to any question. What's a smartphone? You know it's like. So, you know there is a certain kind of um poverty to our imaginations in the present, and we don't, we can't, envision how things are going to be going. So, I'm.

Daniel H. Pink: 31:34

I am consciously, intentionally trying to duck your question, because I don't know, um and you know. And also, the other thing about it, though I mean, I am consciously, intentionally trying to duck your question because I don't know, and you know. And also, the other thing about it though I'll give you two other things about it is that it's not as if it necessarily is going to happen to us. We have a role in shaping it. This is why having AI with some kinds of safeguards and some kind of values built in can be helpful. And also, you know, leaders being conscious of explaining to people who you know, as things are going on, about what they know and what they don't know.

Daniel H. Pink: 32:02

I mean, five years from now, I don't know. Have me back on the podcast. You know, we'll see, we'll see. I'm curious to know the answer to that question Because here's the thing Five years ago, we wouldn't be talking about AI, we wouldn't be talking about ChatGPT, we wouldn't be talking about clock, and I think I heard recently in another podcast that right now AI is learning at a rate of five years in a 12-hour period.

Chris Comeaux: 32:22

But with the quantum chip it may be 100 to 200 years in a five-year period. I mean, I'm sorry, in a 12-hour period. So, 100 to 200, that's just like. That's mind-blowing. It's like the progressive commercial yeah, yeah, commercial. But when I think then back why I thought your book was just so brilliant and profound, then the framework gives you something that you can put your energy and imagination into. Then how do I become virtuosic in these areas? Because then I can shape where it goes. My guess is, that's what you were after is like I don't know where it's going but at least let me give people a toolbox and a framework to move it forward.

Daniel H. Pink: 33:01

Exactly.

Chris Comeaux: 33:03

Well as so, then, as this grows, you know, what does it mean to be human is going to become even more and more important. Do you think there are certain, maybe, values like empathy, presence, intuition, that leaders should prioritize, and maybe even I don't know if protect's the right word. Maybe protect is maybe the right word Because, as you really wrestle with, well, if I was this amazing attorney, people sought after me all over the world because I knew stuff, and now AI could match me, I imagine, as a male or well, maybe male, female, doesn't matter. I'm

going to go. Well, what's my purpose in the world? Where's my value? So how do I then protect and prioritize those values and things that are most important?

Daniel H. Pink: 33:48

I think you make them explicit, and you talk about them outright. So, for instance, yeah, empathy, if you look at some of the lists that you give empathy, I I'm less keen on intuition, uh, because our intuition is often off um so um. But and we can use some of these systems to check our intuitions, I think having that intuition, having a hunch, is great. Uh, it can be very helpful. It's a helpful human thing, particularly if that intuition comes in the form of a question rather than a certainty and you can check it. But empathy, kindness, progress, excellence, virtuosity, those kinds of things aren't going to go out of style.

Chris Comeaux: 34:29

That's really good, and I also love the way you said like I caught that framing of hunch intuition, because I do think people think, well, my intuition is like certain, but maybe it's just more of a hunch that you need to be a lot more curious about. So, then it puts you in this really cool rabbit trail and you may get new skills, new learning et cetera that you can deploy.

Daniel H. Pink: 34:50

Right, right. I mean I'm a big fan of like listening to your hunches and but also testing your hunches in the same way. You know it's essentially scientific thinking. You know, scientists have hypotheses and, but they don't say, oh, I have a hypothesis that this is true, and they don't go forward and move based on that hypothesis. They test the hypothesis. So have a hunch, have a hypothesis and test it, and I think that that way of thinking is going to become extremely. You know that way of thinking has always been important. The scientific method has been transformative for humanity and once again, ai offers a kind of rocket booster on that way of thinking.

Chris Comeaux: 35:29

Boy, that's another key pearl. I hadn't even thought about it from that angle, but that's so right, because then you have this amazing simulation lab sitting at your fingertips. Right, because then you have this amazing simulation lab sitting at your fingertips. That's well phrased and also thinking, especially for our healthcare leaders. Daniel, efficiency just got to get cost out of the system. That tension between efficiency, maybe empathy or mission and compassion how do leaders hold space for both as we go into this artificial intelligence age?

Daniel H. Pink: 35:59

I think that's really hard in health care in general, you know, because there is a value and it's, in some ways it's an irreconcilable problem, because we're putting the burden of efficiency on individuals when the inefficiencies are coming from huge systemic problems, and that, you know, and at some level that's irreconcilable, it's unresolvable. I mean the way that we finance healthcare, the way that we organize healthcare, the way that doctors are compensated, based on RVUs rather than on keeping people healthy. I mean there's so many deep systemic problems

that at some point it's simply not fair to say to an individual physician, nurse, hospital administrator, care team leader you're in charge of making things more efficient, because you've inherited a system that is woefully inefficient and messed up.

Chris Comeaux: 36:53

That's so good and just in that spirit. Just know, if you can help us? We did a podcast with TR Reid. My guess is you, if you can help us. We did a podcast with TR Reid. My guess is you may know TR. He wrote a great book.

Daniel H. Pink: 37:01

I don't know him, but I read his book about health insurance. Yeah, that was like 20, 15 years ago. Yeah, and one of my takeaways from that book is the absurdity where I mean it's really stuck with me where he interviews somebody in another country, I don't remember what country it was and he's like well, he's like doing his good reporting. He's like well, how many people you know declare personal bankruptcy because they can't afford their health insurance, their health care bills? And they're like what, what are you talking?

Chris Comeaux: 37:26

about Yep, yep, exactly, and actually he maybe boy in a quick moment. He was basically you know the idea of Medicare for all, and I looked at him and said TR, you've used words your whole life. I'm not sure Medicare for all is the right framing and branding. He goes, you know what You're right. And I said so how would you brand it? He said AmeriCare and I said that is brilliant.

Daniel H. Pink: 37:48

That's better. I mean, here's the thing. It's like you want to have a revolution in this country, take away Medicare for people over 65. You will have people roaming. You'll have elderly people in tanks going through the streets, and so what's kind of strange. And we're sort of getting there in a patchwork way, because we have some very positive laws passed under Clinton first and then Obama that provides something close to universal care for kids below a certain age, and so we're sort of you know, it's all the people in the middle who are getting lost out and believe me, Medicare is messed up.

Daniel H. Pink: 38:31

Medicare is a norm. It can be messed up. Medicare reimbursements for doctors are sometimes not fair. Medicare is an enormous part of our federal budget, but I think it becomes more efficient when we move to a system that has a basic level of coverage for everybody and then people can also have a private option if they want to go on top of that.

Chris Comeaux: 38:57

We're going to send you that podcast and just let you check it out. It really was a fascinating conversation. And then, realizing the time that we live, there's another interesting lady named Rita Numeroff, who we're going to bring on the podcast. We actually take that show next week, and so the Venn diagram of both of them, I believe, is the true solution, because I love what

you're poking on. It's hard for people to navigate. It's like rearranging the chairs on the deck of the Titanic, because the system is fundamentally flawed, absolutely, and that's why we lose a lot of people in the process of that. But let's not lose people here, because we don't want them to kind of throw their hands up. What is one right brain habit? Maybe storytelling, reflection, design, thinking that you would say, hey, right now, begin to integrate that more intentionally in your practices, spend some time on it, maybe each week. Get those tools in your toolbox.

Daniel H. Pink: 39:45

So, one very simple thing that I would recommend to people to do is particularly for leaders or even people working in the teams is to have more conversations about why. More conversations about why you're doing something. What you see with leaders and even people working in teams is they have a lot of conversations about how you know. So, if you're a leader, hey, here's how you do that, here's how you deal with that unpleasant person. And I think having a few more conversations each week about why is a good way to surface a sense of purpose and actually can we have some pretty good evidence that it can actually improve performance across a range of tasks. So that's one thing that I would. That's one thing that I would say.

Daniel H. Pink: 40:27

The other thing that I would say is that you know, as you mentioned, music therapists. I actually think that leaders and everybody should expose themselves more to the arts. We have a lot of good evidence that, say, reading novels can help you become more empathetic, that we have practices in some medical schools where they're taking young physicians to art museums so they can learn to see more effectively, more compassionately, more universally, in the way that artists see. So I think that exposure to the arts and again not in a dutiful way, but in a joyous way can be really powerful for people.

Chris Comeaux: 41:07

And I love what you just said too, in a joyous way.

Daniel H. Pink: 41:12

Yeah, I don't want people to feel like they're kids being dragged through a museum because it's supposedly good for them. You know it should be freely chosen, and it should be done. You know there is. You know, if you look at people who love the arts, people who don't love the arts should talk to people who do love the arts and try to understand why that is. And I think that in many cases, certain aspects of the arts have been a little bit sort of elite and off-putting, when in fact what they should be is sources of invitation and joy, and when it's that way, I think people can actually begin to think very differently.

Chris Comeaux: 41:52

You know that feels so profound. Years ago, I can't remember the author, but he said that the two things that seem to pierce everything is beauty and affliction. And affliction, you know, grief through death were hospice, but there the arts is. To me it's about that beauty. It's like it's transcendent. You can't possess it, um, or it's like, and so there's something about that, that the

transcendent nature of it. And affliction is like, well, death is something that's beyond us. And what do you do with that Right Interesting?

Sona / Ad: 42:20

Good employers know that health benefits can make or break your business. But while employers are looking out for their employees' best interest, who is looking out for theirs? Sona Benefits is an independent pharmacy benefit manager who partners with employers to optimize their pharmacy benefits while supporting their business goals, but by offering no spread pricing contract, guaranteed rebates and the Sonamax program. Clients are regularly able to save 20% to 35% off their total drug spend. The result Pharmacy benefits that improve employees' well-being and employers' bottom line improve employees' well-being and employers' bottom line.

Chris Comeaux: 43:01

So maybe one final question as we think about what does it really mean to lead? What does leadership look like in this age of machines and artificial intelligence as we go forward?

Daniel H. Pink: 43:13

At some level, it means the same thing that it's always meant, which is do you have a vision of the future? Are you making that vision clear to the people who you're leading? Are you taking care of the people you're leading, and are you yourself exemplifying the values that you're espousing? I mean, that's been the case for leaders forever and I think it's going to be the case for leaders forevermore.

Chris Comeaux: 43:36

You know I was thinking something you said earlier. I remember whenever Microsoft first started coming out with laptops and the commercial was like sitting on the beach, like that was the promise, although I look over my 30 years it doesn't quite feel that way. But maybe this is the possibility through artificial intelligence, that if we do it correctly. But I do think there's an interesting. You know the Frost poem the two roads diverge in the woods. Which one shall we take? So maybe that's my way of kind of setting just what final thoughts you have, because it is a really interesting time to be alive.

Daniel H. Pink: 44:09

Yeah, yeah, I think I would give the same advice that I would have given five years ago and that I'll likely give five years from now, which is be curious ask questions, be a good person and then, at a personal level, don't try to solve every problem, just try to make progress today.

Chris Comeaux: 44:29

That is so good. Well, Daniel, you're a treasure. There's so many masterclass pearls in almost everything you've said today. We're going to make sure we pay this one far and wide, and we hope that you do as well. So again, thank you for the work you're doing.

Daniel H. Pink: 44:40

A pleasure. Thanks for having me. I enjoyed the conversation.

Chris Comeaux: 44:43

Well to our listeners. At the end of each episode, we always share a quote, a visual. The idea is to create a brain bookmark, a thought prodger about our podcast subject, just to further your learning and growth and thereby hopefully it sticks. We're going for a brain tattoo with this. Be sure to subscribe to our channel, the Anatomy of Leadership we don't want you to miss an episode. We're going to have a link to Daniel's books, just anything he would like us to share. Also, his incredible TED Talk. We're going to include all of that in the show notes, and so it's 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. Here's our brain bookmark to close today's show.

Jeff Haffner / Brain Bookmark: 45:24

"If machines can liberate human beings to do the more transcendent things, I think everybody wins. By Daniel Pink.