Leveraging Vulnerability to Promote Change

[VIDEO TRANSCRIPT – July 12, 2023]

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Anne Dabrow Woods: I think, Michael, you bring up a really important point, though. You know, in order to change, you have to be willing to be vulnerable. And everyone hates to be vulnerable, right? Because you're putting yourself at risk to realizing you do some things really well and you do a lot of things that can be improved upon. I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about how do we encourage people to be vulnerable so they can assess, you know, instigate change within their organization?

Michael Bush: Well, you know, Anne, so if you think about, you know, I can talk about, you know, myself and a person who runs a company that does employee surveys all around the world and a company that runs its own survey every four months. I get feedback every four months and I usually get it on a Friday. I don't look at it until Sunday night because if I look at on Friday, it wrecks my weekend. There's nothing worse than seeing reality every four months from the experience you're creating for the people who are working for you. 2,500 people around the world.

And so it's no fun. I heard people say, "Oh, I love feedback". Well, God bless them. Okay, I don't like it, but I'm so committed to the purpose of what I'm trying to do. That's why I look at it. And I believe this is where leaders have to be. They have to know that creating a place that's respectful for all, for everyone, regardless of age, regardless of how you identify, regardless of how long you've been in the organization, regardless of where you went to school or didn't go to school, it should be a great place. Regardless. For all means 'all', every single person. It should be a great place to work for them.

Well, that's a lot to ask of a leader. So a leader has to really feel like that's important, which means if you've got a thousand people, 2,000 people, 6,000 people, 100 people, how to create an environment where they want to give everything they have to the organization to fulfill their purpose through the company.

It requires this kind of leadership that is willing to look at reality and be committed to get better. You know, I just talked about trust means respect, credibility and fairness. Trust means diversity, equity, people getting the same pay, doing the same work at the same level of proficiency. Equity in terms of representation: I should be able to see myself at all levels in the organization. Equity, meaning equitable opportunity for promotions that I should be able to see myself getting promoted in the organization. Equity in terms of well-being that everyone cares about me and my family's physical health, mental health and financial health just like anybody else in the company.

Putting those things together is what's required to be great. And so it means I got to look at some data and I got to start changing. And I can't change everything. There's like one or two things that are going to make a big difference.

Usually where you're getting the lowest scores. A leader just focus on that one thing. You know, there might be a demographic group age 25 to 35. You know, males for some reason aren't having a great

experience in working for you. It's good to know that. And then you could ask a few more questions and start to work on that.

There's always something to work on. A leader who feels like, "hey, I'm successful, I'm executive vice president. I obviously don't need to change." That leader is not going to create a great place to work for all. That leader is going to create a great place to work for some. And I know a lot of those companies. So we're talking about, you know, about something beyond that.

And I think we all get how much better this is for people. I think we all get we have tons of data on it. How much better it is for the organization. And it's pretty easy to know that especially in this crazy society that we have in that we're treating people in this great way, they will say, "hey, I get treated better at work that I do in society."

Because for many people that's true. They're not treated fair and equitably soon as they leave the workplace. But what we can control is the workplace. And I'm just you know, I know this is what we all want, but it takes work, it takes effort. And but the reward is not only as a person, the reward that you feel your organization's going to do much better.

Organizations in healthcare that are doing what I'm talking about have half the involuntary turnover from healthcare organizations that do not. Half the cost to recruit half the use of temporary workers. Half the use of agencies, half. So we already know, even at this tough time in healthcare, there are organizations delivering in this way, Right. And organizations who are not all in the same industry. And the difference is the leaders.

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