

Agency for Change Podcast: David Lubofsky, Author, Creative Technologist

- Learn more about David's work: <https://www.davidlubofsky.com/>
- Connect with David on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/davidalubofsky/>
- Purchase David's new book, The Search for Work Happiness: <https://findworkhappiness.com/>

David Lubofsky:

Open up your ears and conversate with your people more and I think everything else sort of falls into place.

Announcer:

Welcome to Agency for Change, a podcast from KidGlov that brings you the stories of changemakers who are actively working to improve our communities. In every episode, we'll meet with people who are making a lasting impact in the places we call home.

Lyn Wineman:

What's the secret to happiness? Some say it's surrounding yourself with loved ones, others say traveling. Some say it's creating happy moments in all areas of your life, including where you work. For leaders and managers, there's the added challenge of making sure your employees are happy, too.

Today's guest David Lubofsky wrote a book called *The Search for Work Happiness*. Wow. How many of us have been on that path? This book offers non-traditional approaches to reducing overwork and burnout, rethinking the pitch process, eliminating anxiety from timesheets, embracing employee side gigs, treating vendors like humans, going all in on transparency and trust, and other methods leaders can benefit from.

Hey everyone. This is Lyn Wineman, president and chief strategist of KidGlov, and someone who is very eager to hear more about this book and David's recommendations. Welcome to another episode of the Agency for Change podcast. David, it's so good to talk to you today.

David Lubofsky:

Awesome. Thank you for having me, Lyn. It's quite an honor. I really appreciate the mission that your company and this podcast has, so excited to be part of it.

Lyn Wineman:

Ah, thank you for that. Well, let's just start by, I'd love to have you tell us a little bit more about you and what brought you to where you are today.

David Lubofsky:

Yeah, my name's David Lubofsky. I was born and raised in Louisiana. I got into computers really early. Anyone that knows the South, there's certain industries you can make a lot of money in, computers and art is definitely not one of them. So ultimately, had to get out of the South and go a little north. I was in Chicago and San Francisco for a while. And ultimately now I'm in New England.

Most of my life has went through the design, development, UX of digital products. And it's still a super big love of mine. I've adapted some more loves like this push for human treatment as I've grown older, but throughout my entire life, taking something static and bringing it to life. And the browser's always been really neat to me. So that's what's going on. I just wrote a book and that book, I think, led me to this conversation. So that's where I'm at.

Lyn Wineman:

Absolutely. Actually, let's just dig right into that book, David, because your book started to bounce into my radar recently through LinkedIn, which it seems like all good things happen on LinkedIn. And it really spoke to me because KidGlov has this mission to make work a great place. We spend a lot of time here and it should be good. So, tell me more. The book is called *The Search for Work Happiness, Helping Leaders Keep Themselves and their People Happy and Mentally Happy*. Such a good topic.

David Lubofsky:

Yeah, yeah, so overall, I felt like human treatment in the workplace has lost its way, especially in advertising and the corporate world. So, I just really had a big heart to make an impact in that area. But you know, Lyn, to make any type of change and industry-wide change, it takes multiple attempts and trying to solve the problem at multiple directions. And so that's really what the book is, it's like my second attempt at solving some of these, not treating the employee very well type problems.

My first attempt years back, a coworker and I started an agency that was really centered around, how can we pull back some of those things that are causing employees anxiety and problems, and how can we focus a little more on their wellbeing and mental health. That went great. That agency is still moving along and doing the same good.

But last September I wanted to try to go out and attack the problem a little differently, take a lot of the learnings that I've had and put them together in this book, and some different speakings to just really try to get the message out a little further than it was. You're an agency, you have many other things that you promote and take care of. So I wanted to just devote more of my heart and energy to that. So that's what this book is, just a collection of things I've learned, different approaches, unique styles of management that I hadn't really either seen anywhere or learned from one person that I've seen in my life, and just trying to share those out with people.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah, I think it's really funny because the way our industry of advertising has been portrayed in the media, all the way from I grew up watching Bewitched, to Thirtysomething, to Madman, which really dates me, but all of those shows make it look like we're sitting around playing shuffleboard, batting ideas around, having cocktails. Some of it is that, making big presentations, but man, it is for being fun work, it is hard work. And it's also hyper-competitive and therefore a lot of stress comes along with that. I'm sure you experienced a lot of that as well.

David Lubofsky:

Yeah, and it's, these people aren't bad, it's just the pace of things. I feel like as companies, you get wrapped up in the roller coaster of it, and I just think sometimes we need a little water splashed down our face and be like, "Hey, we're all still humans here."

Lyn Wineman:

I love that.

David Lubofsky:

This isn't a big engine, even though sometimes we got to get into that mode to deliver. We're people and we got to remember that.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah. Well, I hope everybody who listens to this podcast will go out right away and buy the book, but would you be willing to share a few of your big recommendations?

David Lubofsky:

Out of the book you mean?

Lyn Wineman:

Out of the book, yeah. What are some of the big points you talk about in the book?

David Lubofsky:

Yeah. Yeah. So, everything really is centered around creating this healthy environment inside the workplace. So, there's a few chapters on that. And then being aware that your employees have lives outside the workplace as well. And there's a few chapters on that. And then it gets summed up in, what are the ways that we can support that and prop them up to be successful in and out of the workplace. Because if employees are happy at work, they're going to work harder for you. They're going to work better for you because they're happy. And that is a part of work I think that's good to transcend into personal life, is let those people go home feeling fulfilled, and valued, and valuable.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah. David, what you just said there just speaks to me so much. At KidGlov, our purpose statement is to put a megaphone in front of those who are doing good in the world, and just really wanting to truly and authentically make the world a better place. But when you think about, our employees are here, whether they're physically here or remotely connecting in 2,000 hours a year. And that's a lot of time. And if at the end of the day we can figure it out so they can go home, not be taking the stress of work with them, enjoying their families, we've done something right.

David Lubofsky:

Absolutely. Absolutely.

Lyn Wineman:

But it's hard. As a business owner, it's hard. Clients call and they need stuff. And there's an emergency. And there's a pitch, and there's always one little thing that we all agree we should go home, and we should not work too much, and then it's, but just this one time. And as you grow larger, those butts become bigger and more frequent. Right?

David Lubofsky:

Yeah. No absolutely. It's...look, there's going to be a time and a place where everyone's got to just work a little extra and band together and push through things, but that shouldn't be the norm. Working a

normal week shouldn't feel like not gladiatorial enough, and that's unfortunately, how it is portrayed in some places.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah. Did you just use the phrase gladiatorial?

David Lubofsky:

I did. I don't even know if it's a word, but it's fun to say.

Lyn Wineman:

Tell me more about it. What does that mean to you?

David Lubofsky:

I feel like at least when I was growing up in advertising, it felt like if you didn't put in... I know this number sounds crazy to some people, but like 60, 65, 70 hours at the junior level, and just throw your hat in on every new business pitch. And I feel like we're humans, and you have to almost be a gladiator to push through that type of both not sleeping and not having really an external life, but also staying on your game and really putting out good work. It's like that, it feels impossible, and it probably is. I don't think anybody is really good at their job at hour 70, no matter how good they are.

Lyn Wineman:

At some point you just hit that burnout and you're just doing it. You're just doing it.

So, if you could say, is there one key thing, one key takeaway that every leader should do to make sure their employees are happy?

David Lubofsky:

I would just say pay very close attention to who they are. And I don't mean just at the face value, but what type of task do they like doing? Is there a discipline that when they're around they glow, that you should put them around? Or what different things can you foster? Not necessarily what are their hobbies, but obviously pay attention to those, too. Create an environment where your employee feels like they can talk to you about anything, but you're not really being a little too intrusive.

And to be honest with you, one of the best ways I've found to turn up that listening is to stop using annual reviews for conversations, stop depending on those to talk about their happiness, and their development, and their place in the company. Just have conversations with them often. Talk about their development often. Listen to what they like and don't often. And truth be told that if you do that right, annual reviews become more like a celebration of what they've done over the year and a celebration of the raise you're going to give them because of their growth. So, I would just say open up your ears and converse with your people more, and I think everything else falls into place.

Lyn Wineman:

Beautiful. It really is such great, great advice. And it's nice. I have to say too, being a smaller agency allows you that flexibility to get to know your people and really lean into the things that they have interest in, or that spark that fire. Honestly, part of the reason I'm in the creative business, I'm not a creative myself, but I love working with creative people.

David Lubofsky:

I don't believe it.

Lyn Wineman:

I'm creative in different ways, not the traditional creative ways. But I love, there's nothing better than working with people who have that spark, who are just on fire for the work that they're doing. That is really fantastic.

David Lubofsky:

It's even more awesome to be able to be part of causing that spark.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah, yeah, for sure, for sure. Which is why I'm going to go out and buy your book.

David Lubofsky:

Oh, thank you so much.

Lyn Wineman:

So maybe this is the appropriate place for us to ask where can we find the book, David?

David Lubofsky:

So, it's at Amazon for print, Audible, Spotify, Apple Books for the audiobook book. But you can also go to findworkhappiness.com and all of the available different hard cover, paperback, ebook, all that stuff's there.

Lyn Wineman:

That's fantastic. Thank you for doing the Audible version because I don't think I've actually read a book with my eyeballs in quite a while, only listen, only listen.

David Lubofsky:

Yeah, definitely with the Southern accent, thought it would be nice to do it in my own voice. And it was such a great experience. I've been around a lot of disciplines in my agency career and audio's not really one of them. And so, it was really neat getting to work with some audio professionals and just seeing other people really good at their craft. It was a neat experience for me.

Lyn Wineman:

That's cool. Honestly, I love books that are read by the author because you know, you have the spark for the work. And I have abandoned many books that have a professional narrator because you just don't, it's just words then, it's just the words. So, I really am looking forward to that. We'll make sure to get all of those links online, as well in the show notes.

So, David, let's circle back and talk more about you. I'm really curious because I have a chapter in my past too, where I lived in the South, so I can relate a little bit. How did being raised in the South prepare you to live in the North?

David Lubofsky:

It both prepared me greatly and ill prepared me all at the same time. It was really unique. Like most southern homes, mine was rooted in being kind and working your tail off. And when I came to the North, those two things really pay off. Just people respect hard work in the North. And contrary to popular belief you can do really well in New York City and be nice at the same time.

Lyn Wineman:

Are you sure about that?

David Lubofsky:

It makes you stick out if you are also good at your job. And pushovers don't work well, but really nice people who do their job and work hard actually do well in that situation. And because it makes you stick out. I'm sure me being six-seven probably had a little to do with the sticking out part. But just overall, just that ingrain from a child to be kind and work hard really helped me.

The South is a little closed-minded and my area was very religiously, ethnically closed-minded. I think that was not preparing me very well for the vast size of the melting pot I would go into in the future. But my mom got it, and my brother got it, so I never really fell for all that. So, once I came north and was really exposed to just amazing people of all kinds, I realized that was all a lie. So, it was weird, it was a funny mix of preparing me and not, but if you've got really strong family, you can push through the not really well.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah, that's a really excellent point there. I'm with you a hundred percent too. I think that there's never a situation where working hard and being kind doesn't help you. It may not seem like it in the very short immediate circumstance, but it always comes back. It always comes back to help.

So, on that same note, on your website for the book, you use the phrase putting the human back in humankind. And I really love the feeling I get when I read that. Can you just tell me a little bit more about how you incorporate that into your own work, David?

David Lubofsky:

Yeah, so I really want to leave the user in any case with just a feeling of niceness or smile. You can, with a small interaction on a product, you can just leave the user with a smile on their face. And so that is the way I really try to infuse it in the actual product. I also try to build products for the better. So, whether it's investing pro bono time into building a website for a charity or trying to come up with other ideas. So in the work I do and in the granular execution of things, of just really trying to make the user's day better or make earth better.

And the reason I wanted to put it on my website very strategically by the partnership area is because I want people to know before they even contact me, this is the type of relationship it's going to be. It's going to be healthy, and friendly, and collaborative or I just don't really have time for it. So I thought if I put that in really large type right beside that contact me, I thought that would get the point across. Because I definitely just don't have a place in my life anymore for the unhealthy work relationships.

Lyn Wineman:

Going back. It's that splash of water in the face. Hey, if you are going to call me, be prepared. We are going to treat each other with respect and kindness.

David Lubofsky:

Absolutely. And we're going to make an extremely great product. So, I feel like if you put good work into the world and you accompany it with messaging that makes it clear the type of person you are, you should get the right type of projects in your door.

Lyn Wineman:

David, when we named our agency KidGlov, there were some people who said to us, "That name sounds a little soft for an agency, shouldn't you be sharks?" And it's like, no, I think I want to attract the kind of people and the kind of clients that want to treat each other well. And I would have to say for the most part, that brand strategy has really worked for us. We tend to have some of the nicest employees and nicest clients you could ever work with, but they all work really hard, very talented. It's not just about being nice, it's about the and. It's about the and, not the or.

David Lubofsky:

Yeah. Y'all have done a very good job of branding yourself that way. And it's very important in the hiring process, which I'm sure y'all do, that people quickly get the feeling and understanding of what type of place it is. And I feel like your name and the stuff that you're putting online gets that point across before even someone comes in to interview.

Lyn Wineman:

Ah, thank you for that. So, David, as someone who has written a book for leaders, I'm curious, what advice do you have for other leaders who want to make a difference in the world?

David Lubofsky:

If you're a leader, you most likely have power to move some things around. So, I would say, think about the things in your life and your team's life that everyone cares about, ways that you as a group can contribute, and then do it. And I mean, literally put some of your money in the game and do it. If your greater staff has a love for pet adoption, band everybody together and come up with the greatest app possible for pet adoption. And give a small budget to the people who really care to go brainstorm. And maybe don't ask them to only do it on their off time. Give them some work hours to do it. Actually, figure out what your people love to do and then invest with them. And as a group, you can make some pretty big impact with not a lot of money invested.

And if there's any concern at all about financial benefit from it, or any type of marketing benefit, people will see good work. If you're doing good, people will see good, and then good clients will come your way. It will all come back to you. So, if you're really wanting to make a difference, just ask your team what they want to make a difference on and just get into it. And no excuses, no wait a quarter, just do it. Just put some money into it and do it. That would be my recommendation. Yeah, provide them purpose, provide them a reason for passion and not just their paychecks.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah. I think you said a key thing there. Put some money behind it. Because I think as a business owner or leader, the symbolism of putting some money behind it means that you are really doing it. I think in today's world, a lot of businesses have CSR programs, and diversity programs, and sustainability programs, but we've had some savvy job recruits lately who have actually asked the question, "Do you

have these programs? Do you put any budget behind it? Because that's when it's really, really, really real."

David Lubofsky:

That is savvy. I know we talk a lot about corporate and advertising. Any industry can really do this. So, I would say anyone listening, if you own a roofing company, people need roofs, stock some money back and grab your team and go put a roof on someone's house. So, it's not really confined to the corporate world.

Lyn Wineman:

Good point. Good point. All right. As a writer, I can't wait to ask you the next question. It's my favorite question because I am inspired by motivational quotes, David, and I would like an original quote from you to inspire our listeners.

David Lubofsky:

I have a lot of long quotes, but I would say a fairly short one that I really love and stand behind is, support your employees' dreams or they'll dream of leaving.

Lyn Wineman:

Oh wow. That is a really good one. "Support your employees' dreams or they'll dream of leaving."

David Lubofsky:

Yes, man.

Lyn Wineman:

Good one. Good one. Good one, good one. All right, one more time for our listeners who would like to learn more about you, your work, the book, where can they find more information?

David Lubofsky:

Oh, thank you again for that. DavidLubofsky.com. That's D-A-V-I-D-L-U-B-O-F-S-K-Y.com. That is my personal portfolio. You can also find me on LinkedIn. Lyn and I are pounding the pavement there, so it should be easy to find.

Lyn Wineman:

That's right.

David Lubofsky:

Thanks for any support.

Lyn Wineman:

That's fantastic. Fantastic. So, David, as we wrap up our time here today, and such a great conversation, what would you say is the most important thing you want people to remember about the work that you're doing?

David Lubofsky:

No matter where you're raised, no matter what walk of life you're from, when you become an adult and make decisions on your own, and make a decision to do good for the world and be kind. And if you don't have a lot of money to do that, have a service. Just find a way to give back, and others around you will probably fall in line and trust you a little more. So that would be it. No matter where you come from, you can make a difference.

Lyn Wineman:

That's fantastic. David, I fully believe the world needs more people like you, more books like... I'm going to hit that book name one more time. *The Search for Work Happiness Helping Leaders Help Themselves and their People be Happy and Mentally Healthy*. So, thank you for taking time to talk with me today.

David Lubofsky:

Yeah, I appreciate it as well. Thank you everyone for listening. Have a great day.

Announcer:

We hope you enjoyed today's Agency for Change podcast. To hear all our interviews with those who are making a positive change in our communities, or to nominate a changemaker you'd love to hear from, visit KidGlov.com at K-I-D-G-L-O-V.com to get in touch. As always, if you like what you've heard today, be sure to rate, review, subscribe, and share. Thanks for listening, and we'll see you next time.