

Agency for Change Podcast: Matt Poepfel, Vice President & Godfather of Talent Optimization, The Predictive Index

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Matt Poepfel: 0:01

Beliefs break down barriers.

Announcer: 0:05

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: 0:35

Hey everyone, this is Lyn Wineman. Welcome to another episode of the Agency for Change podcast. So I want to start today with a fun fact, and this is for anyone who's wondering whether it's important to take great care of your team members. So here's the fact: Organizations with optimized talent see a 22% increase in profitability. And now who wouldn't want a 22% increase in profitability or productivity for our nonprofit friends? So I grabbed this nugget of information from the book *Expand the Circle* written by today's guest, Matt Poepfel. In addition to writing the book, Matt is the Vice President and Godfather of Talent Optimization at The Predictive Index and he is the host of the *Lead the People* podcast. Matt has absolutely dedicated his career to transforming talent and leadership practices. Matt can't wait to talk to you today. Welcome to the podcast.

Matt Poepfel: 1:34

Lyn, thanks so much for having me.

Lyn Wineman: 1:36

I am so eager to talk with you. You and I have talked before, and every time it's been so much fun. But let's start by having you tell us about Predictive Index. A lot of us have heard Predictive Index. Maybe we've taken it, but tell us more about the company.

Matt Poepfel: 1:54

Yeah, a lot of people have heard of it because it was created in 1955. We have more than 10,000 clients around the world. Longstanding history. But for the first 60 plus years of its existence, it really was known for a behavioral assessment that really tells us about our work preferences and these things. But

in the years after I joined, I joined in 2013. In the years after that, it really started to come down to how do we morph into what is now the world's leading talent optimization platform. This is all about talent optimization, all about how we start to help organizations achieve their business goals by improving their people practices.

Lyn Wineman: 2:32

Really, I love that.

Matt Poepsel: 2:34

A lot of times people say, oh, I know PI, but they might know the old PI. So it's been quite a journey.

Lyn Wineman: 2:39

You know what, Matt? We see that that's a challenge for a long time, well-known brand. People hear the name and they go oh yeah, I got it. I know that. But companies, organizations, are continually innovating, and so what I hear you saying is hey, if you know the old PI, maybe you want to check out the new PI because you have updated with the times.

Matt Poepsel: 3:02

Yeah, that's exactly right, and it's true for people too, right. So we go through our journeys and we change and we evolve over time, but sometimes people know us from before, and the same can happen with organizations, so it's time for a refresh. Maybe get PI a fresh look.

Lyn Wineman: 3:14

I love that. I love that. I do think that brand personalities have a lot of similarities to human personalities as well. But there's something I want to ask you about. You have one of the best titles, maybe besides my friend Helen Fagan, who her title is Chief Mischief Maker. You have this title of Godfather of Talent Optimization. Tell me more. How does one get a title like that and what does that mean?

Matt Poepsel: 3:43

Yeah, so in 2018 is when we codified the talent optimization discipline. It's actually a written out kind of way of approaching how to get the people part of organizations right. So this was a central role that I had played in helping bring that forth, and so I wanted to really figure out how you can make a big splash. We were trying to make sure that we had a lot of momentum and energy behind this talent optimization movement and I thought, well, I'm going to do something silly here. I'm going to refer to myself as the Godfather of Talent Optimization. I was thinking about James Brown, the godfather of soul I love it.

Matt Poepsel: 4:18

And I thought it'd be funny for about a day or two. Well, it stuck. People were like man, we love this, it's like glitzy, but a lot of people interpret it to be the Marlo Puzo godfather, right.

Lyn Wineman: 4:37

Yeah, I am wondering about you in a dark room threatening people to get their acts together. That's not you at all.

Matt Poepsel: 4:38

Well, what's funny is now, as you start to see different godfathers. I saw somebody the other day who was the Godfather of Artificial Intelligence.

I think I'm not the only one who understood there was an opportunity there, but I'm really glad that it did stick because it is memorable. It's a little bit kind of grabs your attention and I think that's what talent optimization should do, because it's kind of right there in front of our face. How do we get better business results? By having better relationships with our people, like for the reasons that we all see every day critically important.

Lyn Wineman: 5:06

I love that. I bet too, Matt, that if your title was Chief Talent Officer, I bet nobody would ever ask you what you do. But having a title like Godfather of Talent Optimization. I bet people all the time give you that invitation to tell your story, don't they?

Matt Poepsel: 5:23

Yeah, they do, and it goes away really quickly because as soon as you start talking about talent optimization itself, people are very interested in saying, well, I've seen those challenges, or I've got struggles to retain Gen Z workers, or I want to have meaning and purpose in my work, and now we're having the real conversation I want to have. But you do have to be noticed, there's so much noise in the marketplace and it wasn't sort of a kitschy brand exercise as much as it was really just saying let's have something a little bit, not mainstream, that kind of catches the attention well enough so we can talk about the thing we really need to be talking about.

Lyn Wineman: 5:56

I love that. I love that so much. It's like you have an elevator statement and a title all in one. So, Matt, in the intro I mentioned to people and I grabbed this statistic from your book: organizations with optimized talent see a 22% increase in profitability. Like, who wouldn't want a 22%, who wouldn't want a 12% increase in profitability, quite frankly? But even just beyond that, can you talk to us about the concept of talent optimization and why it's so important right now?

Matt Poepsel: 6:30

Yeah, I think there was a time in business history, for example, where we didn't have to treat people all that well. If you think about the industrial revolution, you know people were basically playing the role that machines play today, and so it really didn't matter so much if you got the people part.

Lyn Wineman: 6:43

Because they were replaceable right. Like one drops off the line. Another one drops on right.

Matt Poepsel: 6:48

Yeah, they were kind of painted button anyway, and you know so it's one of those things. But that's totally different today. You know now, when you start to see, even manufacturing organizations are full of collaborative, innovative changemakers. Certainly the service economy, the knowledge economy, people play a central role and all of a sudden, when that happens, what we recognize is we have to make sure that they're having an optimal experience, because when they don't, and if the level of engagement is low, or if their well-being takes a hit, or if they're not growing their skills and they're not investing as heavily as they need to, then things like collaboration, creativity, innovation, discretionary effort, all these things that show up on the bottom line the way you talked about with 22% profitability those things get impinged if we don't make sure that we're treating people the way that they need to, all within the confines, obviously, of a profitable business.

Lyn Wineman: 7:41

I love that. Impinged will be the word of the day. None of us want to be impinged in any way possible. That sounds just so painful, doesn't it?

Matt Poepsel: 7:50

It feels that way.

Lyn Wineman: 7:51

So, Matt, it feels like I should ask you. I mean, I have you here, you are an expert on talent optimization. If we've got people out there and I'm sure we do that are like I really want to have a great culture, I want to do the right thing. I want my people to be happy. I just can't quite get it together. What advice do you have for people on a high level, for helping them with their cultures?

Matt Poepsel: 8:16

Yeah, one of the things really is to be intentional. What is the culture that we need to create and is it a real match for our strategy? I'll give you an example. One time I was talking to a CEO of a community bank and he was talking about how they were going through this rebrand and they were going to come back as this big, innovative company and it sounded great. And I'm looking around and I said, sir, I got to tell you, I see nothing but dark wood, closed door offices. I don't see a single whiteboard and basically, if you're not willing to change your interior design, how are you really going to change the culture of the company. He didn't take my advice and isn't there now.

Lyn Wineman: 8:57

It's probably one of those things where they probably had a velvet rope too, for customers to stand behind that's always one of my pet peeves with a community bank.

Matt Poepsel: 9:00

Yeah, and that's one of the things like we talked about a little bit earlier. It's hard to let some things go as far as our perceptions of companies. It's hard for companies to let their own habits and practices go too, and so the starting point there is being intentional. If we really want to make sure that our strategy is sound, we want to make sure that the culture matches. If we want to be innovative, we'd better be okay with giving people a lot of latitude to make mistakes and to celebrate their failures as opposed to punish them. So it's easier said than done for a lot of times.

But that's the one place I'd start is let's be intentional about it. The other is, I would say, let's educate ourselves and recognize that the entire world of work has changed fundamentally. The reality is that now I talk to healthcare CEOs, for example, and they say we're not competing with other healthcare systems, we're competing with Amazon and Instacart and DoorDash. What kid wants to make 14 bucks an hour working with sick people when they could set their own hours and drive for DoorDash? And so the entire landscape for those employers has changed fundamentally and they have to offer something different than they did in the past. So this is where we're saying that top talent has always had a choice. Right now, because of the digital landscape, entry-level workers, post-pandemic workers, everybody has a choice and we have to honor that.

Lyn Wineman: 10:11

You know we can see it, being a service business based in the Midwest, we see it from two directions. One is that we can now reach out across the country and hire talent from any state and in some cases, other countries and we can acquire clients in other states and other countries, but then on the flip side, we need to have our act together because we've got agencies from outside of our market coming in and poaching talent and poaching clients that we once thought were pretty much ours for the taking. So it really is understanding, as an employer, what you have to offer that's differentiated on this new competitive landscape, I think is really really huge.

Matt Poepsel: 11:05

100%. And this is where we say that no business gets to pass from their strategy on paper written out all nice, straight to the business result without going through the people part. People are the only remaining competitive differentiator for business, and so when we treat them like we're still in the industrial revolution with our hierarchical org charts and our defunct performance management systems and all this outdated management practices, not only is it a disservice to the human spirit, but it's also a hurts your profitability, because when absenteeism spikes or when turnover happens and you have to do retraining and all this stuff, these things absolutely cause devastating business results. So it's scary to let go of the past, I get it, but the reality is that a talent optimization approach says that we must. We have to put the business needs and the people needs on equal footing, and that's what I love so much about it.

Lyn Wineman: 11:58

Yeah, you know it's interesting, Matt, because I was recently talking with somebody else who's in a similar space and I asked them I said how do you measure culture? Because as a small business, it's very easy to measure your sales, your profitability. It's easy to measure how many sales calls you're making. And I said how do you measure culture? And she said well, is your company doing well? Are you meeting your goals? Because chances are, if you, from a high level, are meeting your high level strategic goals,

you got something going in the right direction with your culture. But I bet Predictive Index has some other tools we could use to help us measure our culture. And I'm just really. That just takes me to my whole next question. I mean, when we think about the new Predictive Index, what are the tools you have to kind of help address and propel businesses to success in this area

Matt Poepsel: 12:46

Yeah, there's really four main buckets or categories of talent practices that we really need to get right, and the way I summarize them, Lyn, I say we have to design winning teams. The most important work in any organization is team-based work. It's the most powerful and it's also the most dangerous, because the reality is we invite competing styles and competing goals whenever we get groups of people together.

Lyn Wineman: 13:16

You're right, one of the worst disservices you can have is a room full of yes people.

Matt Poepsel: 13:21

Exactly.

Lyn Wineman: 13:21

Nobody's stopping you from making the big mistake, yeah, or nobody's sharpening the sword yeah.

Matt Poepsel: 13:28

Right, exactly so. When we design winning teams and we recognize the fact that the most important work is team-based work, that's a great start. And then we have to hire top talent. We know that a growing organization needs to bring people in. You mentioned how do we bring people in who might not be in the same location as us, they're in a different state, but still make them feel a part of the culture, like they're attached and tied here. That's all part of the hiring process and it all starts with the candidate experience. So we have to focus on that for sure, because, again, top talent has a choice.

But then we move to the third one, which is around inspiring people to greatness. When you think about their privileged relationship between a manager and their direct report, how do we make sure that they're fully engaged and motivated in the work they do? And then the last one is diagnosing people problems so we can get them fixed. We have to constantly be monitoring performance, yes, but also the level of engagement, the level of well-being, and make sure that if we find anything that is off, all it means is we've skipped steps somewhere earlier in the process. There's something out of alignment, something that we've kind of lax on a little bit and we can get those things fixed.

Lyn Wineman: 14:30

Matt. I want to recap that because I think those four points are absolute, pure gold. But what I heard you say is design a winning team, hire top talent, inspire them to greatness, amazing point, and then diagnose the problems. Wow four really great points.

Lyn Wineman: 14:51

You know, honestly, those four points probably also are evidence of why and how you wrote a great book called *Expand the Circle*, all about enlightened leadership, and I got to tell you I'm reading the book. Actually, I'm listening to the book. I have the hard copy to refer to but I'm a book listener and as I was going through the book, you know you hit on servant leadership and I went through a leadership forum years ago that taught us all about servant leadership and I was like, yeah, right on, I'm a servant leader. And then you got to, I think, authentic leadership. And it's like, yeah, right on, I want to do that. But then it's like whoa, the whole thing takes us up to enlightened leadership, which is even another level. Can you just talk a little bit about the book and the key messages you hope people take away from it?

Matt Poepsel: 15:45

Yeah, I had a lengthy career. If you're listening you can't see my gray whiskers, but believe me, they're there. I've been around a bit and you know I started off with military service in the Marine Corps and I thought that was great. And then I joined the civilian ranks and I was able to study business and software, product management all these things, awesome. Did my PhD because I was so interested in coaching and leadership and psychology of success. Awesome, loved it. Everything was going so great, Lyn, right up until 2020.

Lyn Wineman: 16:14

Oh yeah, 2020 changed a lot of things for a lot of us.

Matt Poepsel: 16:18

I don't know, I don't recommend this, but having a midlife crisis during the middle of a global pandemic not a great idea, not a great idea.

Lyn Wineman: 16:25

At least you could kind of hide out while it was happening. Perhaps.

Matt Poepsel: 16:28

True, true, but what was happening to me is that I was like I was losing my grip on the role that work played in my life, because I was so work oriented all the time and I love work and I love hearing about people's work. I'm fascinated.

But I felt the same sort of value reprioritization so many of us had and still do and so, as that happened to me, I was sitting there trying to feel like why do I not feel myself when I'm showing up at work, and why am I having these questions? At the same time, my father got a call from his oncologist that he had been diagnosed as having a cancerous tumor on his kidney and he's fine now, but at the time it reminded me. It was bad and I was like, oh, here I am thinking we know how this movie ends. And so I kind of left myself scrambling a bit to say not only am I having these questions about work, I'm having these questions about life. And so I had had this interest in Buddhist meditation, but I hadn't thought

about it in 15 years or so. So I went to the bookshelf and I pulled out this book, the Tibetan Book of Living and Dying, and it had a line in it that said, when the time comes, in order to die well, we first have to learn how to live well. And I thought, man, that is not me, not right now. So I got interested in resuming my meditation practice and I'd sit there on the cushion and I'd think so badly at meditation.

Lyn Wineman: 17:48

It's so hard, isn't it? It's so hard.

Matt Poepfel: 17:52

But thankfully something interesting happened. I'm sitting here learning about all of these concepts, these contemplative practices and all this great stuff, and at the same time I hit on this technique where you wish wellness for yourself and then can you expand that circle of compassion out a little bit to maybe your spouse and your kids, can you go to friends and coworkers, can you keep expanding that circle of compassion out to strangers and maybe even enemies, and out to just the entire universe. And I thought, oh my gosh, that's exactly how I had to approach my leadership journey.

I had to learn to lead myself before I could lead others and lead a team and lead an organization. So I had this happy collision of Eastern contemplative philosophy and Western psychology-driven leadership and I saw this powerful connection. And the reason it's so powerful is because of all that has transformed in our workforce. People are wanting meaning, they're wanting purpose in their lives, they want a sense of belonging and they're not getting it because our historic industrial revolution-based ideals about how management's supposed to work and how we're supposed to remove the human elements is failing our people and therefore failing our profitability and our success. Yes, so to me, it led me to exactly what you found, Lyn, which is saying that how has leadership evolved? We went from authoritarian leadership. More recently, like in the 60s where you mentioned, for example, we had servant leadership. Authentic leadership in the 90s came into four, and there's many of them.

But I thought each one of these is missing something and it goes back to Maslow and his hierarchy of needs, where he went past self-actualization at the top as the pinnacle, as being a little bit more me-centric, and he moved into something called self-transcendence, which was all about how do I serve something even bigger than myself? And that's where I recognize that an enlightened leadership approach is one where we reduce the emphasis on ourselves and we focus that much more on the mission and on the welfare of those in our charge. So it's a more selfless form of leadership that we're starting to see corollaries to, for example, with conscious capitalism movement, B Corps. You start to see ESG. You start to see a lot of the stakeholder capitalism, which is saying that any business entity can't be solely about its own single agenda. That's too limited. We have to serve something bigger and broader in our community, in our society, etc. That's exactly what an enlightened leadership approach aims to do at the individual level.

Lyn Wineman: 20:27

That's amazing, Matt. I love a good happy accident, by the way, and I love your story about how all of that came about, and I think you and I are from a similar generation, but I remember, in the beginning of my business career, knowing that I wanted to be a leader and I wanted to, you know, move up the ladder, and feeling like the way to do that was to be very polished, very, as a woman in business, be very

tough, like to have kind of a hard outer shell, to not be pushed around, to outwork everyone else, and that is really not the formula anymore, right? Not the formula for all of the reasons that you have shared, and I love that you have come upon this whole idea and framework. And once again, I'm going to give you a plug for that book *Expand the Circle*. I'm about three-fourths of the way through, to be honest, but almost done and will keep reading. It's really a great framework and I'm curious then how did you leap from the book to the podcast, or did the podcast *Lead the People* come first and then the book?

Matt Poepsel: 21:33

Yeah, the podcast actually came first. I knew that I had wanted to interview very important guests, people who had novel things to say. It was just something I'd always wanted to do. So a couple of years ago I started it and I had a guest on one time and he had just written his book and I said, you know, after the recording was done you always have a little chit chat and I said it's great that you wrote that book. I think I might like to write a book someday. He goes oh, you should absolutely write a book. And he told me about the program that he used to kind of write a book as a collective, with a bunch of different people working on your respective books, but almost as a cohort together.

It's a group writing process and it was a fabulous fit for me. So when I had the opportunity to write the book, I didn't know what I wanted to write about, and this was pretty early in my journey and the director of the program, Eric Custer. He said you know you're going to have to be authentic. I said, man, I'm into some pretty interesting stuff right now.

I'm like, are you sure? He's like you got to and I'm so glad that I did so the podcast predated the book, and now what's interesting is all I see is that, as I've gotten older, the greatest gift that I've been given, Lyn, is that I'm tired.

I'm tired of erecting walls between all the parts of my life. When I started to break down these barriers and started to allow things to really get integrated, I have people from *The Predictive Index* who come onto my podcast. I have other people I meet on the podcast that I'll invite into *Predictive Index* world, the book world, people like yourself and myself having conversations about B Corps because of other types of networking we've done. It's all just beautifully intertwined and it's so much more powerful than when I, like you in the beginning of your career, thought I have to be very professional. Everything has to be very compartmentalized, everything has to be.

Oh, what a load that was. And it's just, you couldn't even maintain it. So, as I started to make myself vulnerable, tear down these walls, stop beating myself up, stop carrying the baggage, stop judging myself so harshly all the time. Things I learned through contemplative practice, it actually made me a better leader, even in the Western sense. Wow, to me it was this beautiful interplay between these more enlightened principles that go back 2,500 plus years, but things that are happening fresh, when things like generative AI or the nature of the layoffs that are taking place in these massive tech companies, like every day, a new headline comes and it just reinforces to me that this is exactly the movement that we need right now.

Lyn Wineman: 24:04

Matt, I love this. I can't wait for people to listen to the podcast and hear you say that. I think about a time in my life where I was really trying hard to compartmentalize everything right, and it got to a point where, when I was at work, I felt like I was not doing what I needed to do for my family. When I was with my family, I felt like I was missing out on something at work and I was just trying so hard to compartmentalize them. At some point, somebody gave me this advice that that compartmentalization is just a total myth and then once you start to find the flow between it and stop feeling guilty, stop beating yourself up and just be who you are and realize that you're enough, that is a life changing thing and it's too bad that people have to get to a point where maybe they have gray hairs and wrinkles to character lines for that to sink in, and so my hope for the younger generations and I actually feel like it's coming to fruition is that they learn these lessons much earlier than we did.

Matt Poepel: 25:14

I think there's quite a bit of evidence to that. But also a caution. The evidence comes in the form that a lot of times when I think about Gen Z a lot, because they're the most recent generation in the workforce and Gen Z is going through what I call a quarter-life crisis.

Yeah let's just keep the math even here and say 25 in 2025. That Gen Z person grew up in a post 9/11 world, post economic recession twice so their parents would have been imprinted with that. And now post-global pandemic at a very formative time of their lives, and they've never known a moment of safety. This is all after TikTok itself was created in 2016. So they've had the world in all of its glory beamed back to them on screens for as long as they can remember effectively, and so this takes a toll. And so we've never seen a generation with as much promise having their head screwed on when it comes to, like, wanting work-life balance, doing work that's meaningful. They come into the workforce with such bright ambitions, but also riddled with anxiety, riddled with student loan debt, high rents, like it's rough. At the same time, the old guard is trying to condition all of that out of them. So when we start to say you need to be like us because we were Gen X or boomers, or-

You need to pay your dues, all this stuff. What we're finding is that there's some evidence of some slippage, if you will, gen Z feeling like they have to give up their ideals and not have the types of meaning and purpose that we really should be advancing toward as a society to make sure that we're having these successful businesses that are also benevolent in some way. But instead it's almost like sometimes the attitude is well, I didn't get to have those things, so you don't get to either, and we would never talk to our children. In some cases, the way we talk to our Gen Z employees and to me it's like what's the doggone difference? Let's figure out again. I will say this every time Having a successful business is non-negotiable.

If you don't have a successful business, we have a big problem. But that can't be the sum total of that's it. That can't be the only thing that we care about. That's too limiting. So don't misunderstand when we say we need to treat our people right, it's not at the expense of our business. It's actually in order to have a successful business, because everything has changed.

Lyn Wineman: 27:40

I love that so much. So, Matt, earlier you gave us some great insights on what we can do for our team. I'd love you to take that a step further. What advice do you have for leaders who want to move more towards becoming an enlightened and effective leader?

Matt Poepsel: 27:58

Yeah, I recommend starting at the beginning. For sure, I think that in the book, when I had laid out, for example, how we have to learn to lead ourselves before we can lead others, there's never been a better opportunity to do that. Even if you find that you've been in a leadership role for 20 years, you can still start with the beginning, which is self-awareness. The reality is that so few of us have an accurate self-awareness. For all of the understandable reasons, that is the absolute best place to start. So many leaders I talk to don't know their values. They don't know what makes leadership itself meaningful for them. They don't know some of the most basic, fundamental pieces about themselves.

And very quickly, as I had laid out in the book, after developing some level of self-awareness, you enter the next step, which is self-acceptance where it's like you're going to find some things that you just don't love about yourself and you and I have shared some examples of that from before but you have to have that acceptance to say it's okay to not be perfect. You're not going to be the perfect leader. I know thousands of leaders, I don't know any perfect ones and you find ways to take some of those things and incorporate them in your leadership in a way that doesn't make you less or make you vulnerable. It actually makes you more powerful and it makes you more magnetic to people who also have their own chinks in their armor, so to speak. So that's kind of where I begin is begin at the beginning. Don't skip steps. Don't try to lead an organization when you don't even know what your own personal values are. It takes some contemplation, but it doesn't take a lot of time to go through the steps. But I think when we skip steps we end up with a leadership that's hollow, and right now that's the word I get played back to me a lot is people say well, I just feel hollow at work and we're looking for wholeness, and there's only one way.

Lyn Wineman: 29:57

I think the younger generation is pretty good at also knowing when a leader is feeling hollow, or knowing when a leader is inauthentic, like even if you're communicating in a digital format, I think people are really picking up on that in such a fast and big way and finding it so distasteful at this point in time.

Matt Poepsel: 30:08

I'll give you an example is like when you go through and we're all going through things, I mean we are still reverberating with the effects of the pandemic, we just are. It's changed the way we work. It's changed so much of our lives. You had mentioned earlier, for example, like we're working really hard to recruit people in other states, or maybe other states are now encroaching on our territory. So there's a lot of new stuff to deal with which can be a little bit exhausting. If the leader comes in and says I'm just going to muscle through this, I'm not going to show any weakness, even though they're really struggling, it's not going to be authentic.

But if they come in and they say team, I got to tell you, you know, I'm going through some stuff at home right now. Don't need to get into it, but I'm going to take the afternoon for myself, because self-care is never selfish and I would want you to do the same, so if you could help me out, that would be great. What do you think of that? Leader? The answer is more.

You don't think less of them because you say, oh, you'd rally behind that person and say, hey, what can we do? Let's help out. You know, all of a sudden it's not as if the old leadership model where everything had to be perfect and which was total fallacy anyway. It's like this is actually a much more authentic way of being and you're actually modeling proper self-care for people who absolutely need it.

Lyn Wineman: 31:17

That's what I love about that so much, Matt, because when your employee hits burnout or they take another offer, it is too late to have this conversation, and so how do you model those good behaviors? I mean, I have to admit, a few years ago I was having a conversation with the leadership at KidGlov and I said why is it that our people feel like they can't take vacation without working? And a very brave person on my team said Lyn, when was the last time you took a vacation without working? It was like oof, all right, okay, I'm modeling to people that this bad behavior is what's required here.

Matt Poepsel: 31:56

And that's where they say I should speak louder than words, and you don't want to be that leader who says, well, don't do what I do, and it's like that doesn't quite work either. So yeah, and I think a team that has that level of psychological safety to say, well, you go first as leaders, we have to go first. So if we want to have high levels of mental wellbeing, then we have to demonstrate that ourselves and all those things.

Lyn Wineman: 32:19

Amazing. So, Matt, people who either A want to find out more about Predictive Index, B want to find out about the book, C want to find out about the podcast where do they go?

Matt Poepsel: 32:31

Yeah, the easiest place for Predictive Index is just go to predictiveindex.com. Great information about talent optimization, about all the solutions we have to help drive business results through better people practices. For myself, whether it's the podcast, the book, the best places to find that is at my own website, MattPoepsel.com. Hopefully maybe have a link in the show notes.

Lyn Wineman: 32:50

We'll have a link in the show notes, because Poepsel is not spelled the way you think it is. It's not spelled the way you think.

Matt Poepsel: 32:55

And the other thing is on LinkedIn. I love engaging with people on LinkedIn, so I'd be happy to answer any questions or make any connections and just be of service in any way that I can.

Lyn Wineman: 33:05

That's fantastic, Matt. I can't wait to ask you this next question. I've asked it on all of our Agency for Change podcasts. I feel like your book was just like a running 150 pages of quotes, but I'm going to ask you this because I'm inspired by motivational quotes. Could you give us a Matt Poepsel original to inspire our audience?

Matt Poepsel: 33:27

Yeah, the one I've been thinking about the most in my mind. Beliefs break down barriers. Beliefs break down barriers. What I'm finding in my current research is that we have these barriers that prevent us from evolving in our business. We have a trouble going from transactional to process to systems, for example, and what I always find is that we have not adopted the next level of beliefs that can free us up to make the progress we need. And so when you see an organization, for example, whose profitability and growth has stalled, if you will, and I start asking about the human path and we think about engagement and well-being and purpose and things they don't believe those are important, well, beliefs are going to break down that barrier and all of a sudden, growth can be resumed. So that would be my quote for you, Lyn. I'm enjoying it very much and researching into its implications, but I fundamentally believe that beliefs break down barriers.

Lyn Wineman: 34:22

Wow, Matt, pure gold. I'm going to take that away with me and I think maybe even use that in a meeting I've got this afternoon. So thank you so much for that. So I feel like I could talk to you all day, Matt, because I love your energy, I love the topic, I love your research. But we're going to have to wrap this up because you know people on podcasts have time limits. So, as we do wrap up this great conversation, what would you say is the most important thing you want people to remember about the work that you're doing?

Matt Poepsel: 34:55

Yeah, I would say that a lot of times. What I find is that the level of self-interest and fear that we feel as leaders is absolutely what holds us back. So, respectfully, I would say get over yourself and remember that leadership isn't about you, it's about the mission and it's about the welfare of those around you in pursuit of that mission. If we can get that right, that is an enlightened leadership approach that we can absolutely put to work for our organization's benefit, for those around us and for ourselves.

Lyn Wineman: 35:28

That is so good. Leaders get over yourselves that is such good advice, Matt, I fully believe the world needs more people like you, more books like *Expand the Circle*, more podcasts like *Lead the People*. Thank you so much for talking with me today.

Matt Poepsel: 35:46

Lyn, it's been a pleasure. Thank you for having me.

Announcer: 35:49

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.