Agency for Change Podcast: Matt Ley, Co-Founder & Lead Consultant, Inflection Point Nexus Advisors

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- Website: https://www.ipnadvisors.com/
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Matt Ley: 0:00

You are always enough, and you're never everything.

Announcer: 0:07

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: 0:21

Hey everyone, welcome back to the Agency for Change podcast. This is Lyn Wineman, the president and chief strategist of KidGlov. So anybody who's been around me the last couple of years knows that I have always loved Patrick Lencioni's Working Genius Model. It is really a brilliant framework for understanding how we contribute at work and where we naturally thrive. And while we're not talking to Patrick today, we are talking to someone who knows this model inside and out. Matt Ley, our guest, is certified in the Working Genius System and he brings that insight, along with decades of leadership experience, to his work as a consultant, coach and co-founder of Inflection Point Nexus Advisors. Matt is also the author of Manage your Gaps, a thoughtful and actionable guide to helping leaders bridge that space between vision and execution. It really is a must read. So let's jump in, matt, welcome to the podcast.

Matt Ley: 1:43

Hey, Lyn, thanks for having me on here. This is going to be awesome.

Lyn Wineman: 1:46

It is going to be awesome. I can tell already it's going to be awesome, and I would love to have you start by telling me more about Inflection Point Nexus. I love that name, by the way. It brings up many questions and visuals in my mind. But tell me more about IPN and the work you do with leaders and organizations.

Matt Ley: 2:06

So IPN is actually my third consulting company. The first two were Solopreneurial. Well, first the first one was called Lay Brothers Consulting, and I never convinced my brother to come join me.

Lyn Wineman: 2:17

I love that. It was aspirational that if I name it this, he will come, but it doesn't always work that way.

Matt Ley: 2:23

Yeah, and then I moved to one which is called Flip the Script, which was super fun and it's like probably one of my favorite logos that I ever had, because it's a red S in the middle with the outline that looks like F's around it. So you can flip it and it looks exactly the same and it's like, oh, this is so cool.

Lyn Wineman: 2:38

Oh, that is cool. We love a good logo here at KidGlov, for sure.

Matt Ley: 2:46

So I'll actually kick you that one over, just so you can see it at some point. But then in Flexion Point Nexus why I gave that backstories I found that I need to be in deep collaboration with people to find fulfillment personally. And so IPN is actually a co-founded with another individual named Amanda and we've been building it together. We came across each other about a year ago. We've been working together, founded the company in January of this year and it's just been such a breath of fresh air. Even though I'm doing the same type of work that I was doing before. I'm finding so much fulfillment personally.

What we brought together as to why are we called Inflection Point Nexus because it sounds like jargon, it's a mouthful, it's intentional. We kind of help in two ways that we've seen with people is Inflection Point is that whole. What got you here isn't going to get you there. And so we recognize those are really dangerous and opportunistic moments for people in their organizations because the sense, the rules of the game have changed, but nobody told you. Now this could be because you've grown, this could be because of a merger and acquisition, it could be because the environment and some of the subtle ones stagnation, just pure boredom, doing the same thing for three years and nothing's been different. Those are actually inflection points.

Where the nexus comes in is recognizing a concept I use a lot is called fulfillment ROI, and we define fulfillment as the energy we invest in things and the value they produce for us. Now that's on the personal level. It's an awesome journey to work with someone to kind of figure out what's their North Star Organizationally. That reflects two ways that people improve what they're doing. One is organizational health, which is improving the value proposition of the things that we do, and the other is operational excellence, which is reducing the energy it takes us to get it done. So the nexus for us is that brackish water between the two, because a lot of consulting companies will either help you work on your culture, but all the mechanisms that actually help you run your business they don't touch. They help you run the mechanisms, but they don't talk about your culture. So we want to work in a space in between because we want to address the whole organization and the whole human that works there.

Lyn Wineman: 4:56

Oh, I love that so much and I think you just gave one answer that I feel like we could just talk about for an hour just breaking down that one answer, right. But I remember, Matt, when I founded KidGlov, which was 15 years ago, it was under a different name. It actually was under my name. It had my last name on the door. Being a solopreneur is very lonely, very, very lonely, and I have to say, when business got fun was when I built a team around me, and changing to the name KidGlov very much represented the fact that it wasn't all about me anymore, it was about a team. So I loved what you said, and so much of what you said sounds like marketing to me. I feel like there's a little part of Matt Ley that wants to be a marketer, so I'm glad you're letting that out. I love that so much. I love it. So you talked about the brackish waters. You and I talked before. I heard you talk about the messy middle. What really inspired you to help leaders that are at this point?

Matt Ley: 6:06

Personal experience, I guess, like all good changes, is I was in a former life of my career I guess you'd call it. I worked more on the nonprofit side of things. I was a pastor for a while. I worked in Lutheran disaster response. I did social justice work in the Middle East and I was in a lot of leader roles there. I led the church, I was in charge of kind of the day-to-day, and then I at one point was like hey, I need to, I want to see what's going on on this other side. Like if I ever end up back in the pulpit, everyone who's going to be in the congregation the vast majority of them are to come from this mythical land called corporate America. They've never experienced because my dad's a pastor, my mom's a social worker, I grew up on that side of just existence and so I didn't know what. Like a nine to five environment cubicle. I watched office space and I laughed, but I had no context for why. It was funny to people, yeah. So I went in almost like a sociological experiment and found that I mean I love the fast pace, I love like churning out, I'm analytically minded and so I was like rocking at being a contributor and at one point got moved into a management position. I was like, ah, this is no big deal. Like I've been a contributor, I've been awesome there. I was a leader.

Lyn Wineman: 7:23

I've been complaining about my manager for years. I could certainly work better than that person, yeah.

Matt Ley: 7:30

And two weeks I was totally lacking confidence. I was second guessing my decisions, I was anxious, I was not looking forward and I had people that I had considered friends and colleagues reporting to. I just like what is what's going on here? Like I'm using the description, it was like I had a bridge with two solid foundations on each side of the river and as I walk closer and closer to the middle of this management, it was like I was walking on paper and I was terrified. Every step was going to land me in the cold, icy waters below and I had no idea why this had happened to me. So I spent the last 15 years of my life and career exploring that particular issue, and while I found a lot of other things that have shown up to not help organizations, like not having clear job descriptions or organizational design or process documentation or metrics of success, this whole concept of how we understand management has continued to be, for me, the linchpin for organizations that sustain success and those that don't, because management is not a gold star for tenure or standout contribution, it's not the JV league for future leaders.

It is something different. Find and articulate what that is. We are doing a disservice to all of our managers that are sitting in that middling space by either calling them like leaders but not actually giving them any ability to lead, or helping them to support their people by giving them the tools and the structure and the definitions of what that is they're doing, that helps them live that out. And so the messy middle for me is this concept of middle management, management in general. The messy middle for me is this concept of middle management, management in general, the thing that sits between leadership and contribution, and so my whole book is basically unpacking what we've gotten wrong in the way we understand management.

Lyn Wineman: 9:34

Yeah, well, tell us, let's make sure we hit that again, what's the name of the book? Because everything you've just said is kind of giving me heart palpitations. I'm glad I'm not hooked to a heart monitor. There's a part of me that's like have you been spying on KidGlov the last 15 years? Because I feel like we've gone through a lot of that. Like, tell us the name of the book and where we can find it. Let's get that out there right away for anybody that's listening. And it's like I got to read this book.

Matt Ley: 10:01

So Manage your Gaps. Reclaiming the Awesomeness of Management is the full title. Amazon or anywhere else that sells books. You can also go to manageyourgaps.com and learn more about it and also get the first four chapters for free download, just to check it out.

Lyn Wineman: 10:17

I think you got a marketing guy inside you there. So what are some of the most common gaps you see? I know you've kind of touched on some of them, but let's break it down the way you break it down in the book.

Matt Ley: 10:29

Yeah. So I talk about three gaps and there's the strategic gap, the tactical gap and the operational. So the strategic gap is really articulating the manager role. What does the manager role bring to the table, different from the leader role and the contributor role?? So leader is, I call it, the X factor of impact. The leader is looking up and out. Their job is to say where is future value? They're the vision people. They're like where are we going from here? I describe it like if you're in a speedboat, you ever been tubing before?

Lyn Wineman: 11:01

I love tubing. Yes, my husband always tries to go fast enough and turn fast enough that he knocks people off the tube, but he's a little more gentle when I'm on the tube.

Matt Ley: 11:12

Well, that's perfect, Cause that's actually one of the that's my analogy I use in the book is I say leaders are the one driving the boat.

And, if we can, let's say, the logical absurdity aside, all of your contributors are in the tube. Yeah, just describe the wake zone. If you stay within the wake walls it's a smooth ride. But if you're turning fast and furious and going left and right and changing speeds, that tube is flying like wall to wall outside the wakes. And when you're outside the wake that is a bumpy ride and you are not. Some people love that thrill, but can be it's exhausting.

Or you drive, you start throwing people off, which is sometimes the goal. But the leader, if they're driving the boat, they're going real fast in a direction, and if they have to constantly look over their shoulder to be like, how's everyone doing? Now, the spotter's job is to watch the people in the tube, be close enough to the driver so that they can relay. Hey, here's what's going on. They said they want to go a little faster, they want a little bumpier, or they want you to slow down. Hey, we just lost three people.

That's the manager. So that's the first gap is articulating. A lot of times, what we do is we don't put anyone in the spotter seat. We just either throw them in the tube with everyone, which means there's nobody talking to the leader, or we think they're supposed to be right next to the leader helping look in front of them, where are we going? That middle role is so crucial to continuing to keep that a smooth ride for everyone in the tube, which is, frankly, everyone who's actually creating value for your organization. This is not one of the gaps, but it's one of the secrets. There's only one type of individual who provides value to your company or adds value. It's all of your contributors. Now your managers and your leaders are contingent upon them, because if you fired all your managers and leaders, your people will still provide value. Now they might veer off the cliff with no one driving the boat.

Or they'll go into the shore, but that's where the value gets created. And so one of my favorite titles for talk is I'll call it the managers are zero value add non-leaders. And that first thing I unpack is how they're not the driver, they're the spotter, and why that's valuable. And then I say their job is not to add value but to multiply value, which leads into the second gap, which is the gap of what exactly is it that management is as an activity set, so if you're a manager, you should be engaged in at least some level of management.

How is that different from contribution, this adding value, and how is this different from leadership, this defining future value? And I say that it's about an 80-20 split of the skills to be a good manager are you know, we used to call them soft skills and hard skills, I now call them transferable skills and contextual skills, and 80% of the value are the transferable skills. That's like articulation, communication, understanding your why, emotional intelligence, giving people clarity, consistency, like showing them that you care. Sometimes I go down to just calling it the four C's Show people you care, give them clarity, give them consistency and communicate and then communicate, and then, when you feel tired of doing it, just communicate.

Lyn Wineman: 14:34

We have this adage, Matt, that we say in advertising is about the time. You're sick of it like you just can't stand to hear yourself say it again. That is when it's finally just starting to sink in.

Matt Ley: 14:46

Yeah, yeah. And that's uh I think I quote that one in the book as well, because when you get tired of saying it, is the moment people start to finally hear it. That's that second gap, because a lot of times

what happens, it's a typical trajectory You're an outstanding individual contributor, you get put into management, you start to struggle. Nobody gave you a roadmap. You're starting to feel a little anxious, starting to feel a little bit unsure about yourself. What do you normally do?

You double down on the skill set that was successful two weeks ago when you weren't a manager. But that's only 20% of the value add of a manager, which is to say the ability to do the job that everyone else is doing. Because if you're not increasing everyone else on the team's ability to create value and AKA being a multiplier, then why are you in that role? What is it that you're doing as a manager? And when you pull people up in that deer and headlight moment, and you don't allow them the space to be like, hey, we're actually asking you to flex a bunch of different muscles. You've been working legs your whole life. We're going to do bench press now. It's just like it feels that awkward because you haven't done it, so that's the second gap.

Lyn Wineman: 15:55

All right, and I'm going to sneak in before you hit the third one, because I think in this gap, the question I always have is where's the line between that's the way I would have done it when I was a contributor and letting you do what you want to do, right, like I second guess myself, maybe every single day, if not several times a week, between, does everybody have to do it the way I would have done it? And I know the answer to that is no. But then it's also how do I help somebody so they don't have to go through the pain I went through when I learned that lesson right? Or how do I help them catapult forward? And you're smiling, 7ou've got the answer to that.

Matt Ley: 16:38

You just touched on so many different things to take into consideration. So, like one J curve have changed. You just described it. All change in the form of a J. Yes, you dip in productivity before you come up the backside of the J and you have to accept and be okay with that before you're going to be able to let go of anything. Because, no one's ever going to do it as well as you do it to start with. That's just how learning happens, right. And then two in that space, it's recognizing to. I call it lead with curiosity, not with critique. So stepping into that and be like interesting, can you walk me through how you got to doing it this way? Ask them for their method, ask them to walk you into it before you say no, no, no, we haven't, we've never done it that way before. That's not how we do things here. So ask for some curiosity and then get okay. Maybe the end is like wow that actually does sound a lot better, and I didn't know our context was like that. I didn't know we had this new tool. I didn't know these other things that weren't true when I was in that role, or it could be like well, that's a really creative solution. There's a much easier way to do that, but it looks like we haven't done a good job of standardizing that process so let’s do it that way now. I have this model I call EPIC, which stands for Environment, performance, identity and Communication, which I go to in great detail in the book. But that first piece of environment is giving people that what's your scope, what are your processes, what are your tools and how are we going to continue to improve our efficiency? That right there. If you could lay that out, that's like 70% of a manager.

Lyn Wineman: 18:17

I love it. I love it. All right, did I prohibit you from telling me the third gap?

Matt Ley: 18:22

You didn't prohibit anything, you just opened up a fun.

Lyn Wineman: 18:25

I just opened a whole can of worms and they're wriggling all about, but I'm trying to take really good notes here because I'm taking this as a free coaching session. I hope all the listeners are also mad, but the first gap I wrote down was strategy. The second gap I wrote down is really understanding what is a manager and what is their role, and I may not have called that exactly what you call it. I didn't get a third gap down on my paper.

Matt Ley: 18:50

That's great because we haven't gotten into it yet. But yeah, the first one's I call it strategic, which is like articulation of the roles. The second one is tactical, which is articulation of the activities. And the third gap is operational, which is all about answering the question of if teamwork makes the dream work. What makes the teamwork?

And that's where rubber meets road, and it's recognizing that it's now that we have this differentiation of like oh, I know what a leader is, I know what a manager is, and oh, I know what leadership is and I know what management is. What makes the teamwork is leaders engaging in management activity and managers engaging in leadership activity.

Lyn Wineman: 19:28

OK, so people are kind of blurring the lines a little bit.

Matt Ley: 19:32

And you need to, because every role has all three of these involved. I don't if you're right out of college or right out of high school whenever it is you start your working career and you're just coming in as a contributor. You're not coming in as a blank slate Like that's 18 plus years of life experience that you're bringing to the table. There might actually be some aspect of what you're doing that you are the most knowledgeable person in your organization. In that space, it would make sense for you to take the leadership activity of helping, say, hey, here's what I know we can do within this. So maybe it's only five percent. But what's your mix? And that's actually one of the activities I do when I facilitate this with new managers or even older managers that are trying to rejuvenate their excitement for the role. What is your leadership and management and contribution mix? Are you 60% management, 30% leadership?

Because what I say is and this is actually where a lot of tenured managers have kind of struggled is no one told them what management was, and so they leaned into the leadership or the contribution side. And I say, when you first step into management the management activities of setting up the environment, helping people, set up performance, learn what success looks like, articulate your identity as a manager and start communicating with people. That's probably going to be somewhere between 50 and 75% of your time and that's about three months three to six months, depending upon your comfort with it and the size of your team. But after you get past that, I think management as a set of activities is

no more than 25 to 35% of your role, because by its very nature, its job is to optimize and make things efficient. You should be able to optimize the management activities as well, which means now you can lean more into becoming a future leader or be like you know, I love my job, so I'm going to step into being more of the contribution side of things. So it's helping people get through that.

But what I was mentioning with more tenured managers that have never really even walked through this, you still have to go through that three to six month phase and so it can be really humbling and scary to admit like, hey, I didn't do this and now I'm going to have to start rolling back some of the knocking the rust off the tires, getting into some clarity about this. So that's the work that I would do with them is to just let go and recognize this is the route forward and if they try anyone tries to fast forward through that you're going to have to come back to it. It's going to be a three to six month phase for any type of manager that's stepping into a new role or is newly minted as a manager.

Lyn Wineman: 22:06

Yeah, I love it. Okay, I have this burning question that keeps bubbling up. I'm really curious because when I talk to other leaders and other managers, one consistent topic is oh well, that's a generational thing, that's the difference in the generations. How do you see I mean, do these three gaps transcend generational differences that, hey, if you get your strategic, your tactical and your operational down Zs, Xs, boomers, millennials, they're all going to be on board.

Matt Ley: 22:45

Yes, because, at the end of the day, I think the one place that they do differentiate is only the communication piece. The setting up the environment. Only the communication piece. Yeah, the setting up the environment. The like everybody wants to know. What success looks like and how they're doing, everybody wants to know.

Do they want that in an email? Do they want that in an in-person meeting? Do they want that in a text message? Do they want it with or without emojis? Like sure, that's part of the difference between the generations. And it's more of like an analog versus digital. Although I've attended like communications, generational communications and, yeah, some of it changes for email still not comfortable. If you didn't grow up with it as a communication tool until like your 30s, you're probably not going to lean into it as your communication channel now. Every single generation still wants face-to-face is the number one form of communication that they prefer.

Lyn Wineman: 23:38

Really, I'm kind of shocked by that actually.

Matt Ley: 23:41

No, it's, it's across the board Every generation still holds face-to-face is the most valuable form of communication, and so it's all of those pieces I mean and then I'll. Then it just becomes language, like what is the terminology that we use? Do we want things long? And this is also just some innate wiring. If you have someone that's like a disk profile D that's 60 years old and someone who's 20 years old, they're both still going to want the information about how is this affecting the data and bottom line.

And I'm going to have this conversation quickly. I don't want a lot of details, just give me the highlights and that's it. And the same thing. If you're like you're an S on the far other side, where you just want to talk about how is this affecting people and give me some time to think about it, that innate wiring is going to show up the same way.

Lyn Wineman: 24:29

Regardless of your generation. Okay, fair, all right, okay, fair, all right. Well, hey, maybe you've just given all of the leaders and managers that are listening the key to helping them overcome these generational conflicts that I feel like we're all kind of it's kind of a cheap dopamine hit, I think to go, oh, that's a millennial, or oh, that's a boomer, oh, that's a Z right, like it's just too easy so I love that you've got a solution to that for us.

Matt Ley: 24:52

Well, and I would say the solution for me of all of that again into that communication space is the one-on-one, which I say is the leading drum and frankly, one of the main reasons that the management role exists. Managers do one-on-ones Management, or let's say one-on-ones, is a management activity, it's not a leadership yeah yeah, and so holding good one-on-ones and I actually have a four box that I talk about in there, about the types of one-on-ones you could do is it like, is it for me or is it for them, and what's what's the focus? The business or the person? Yeah, like all of the things that like status updates, that should be handled in some other way. Like you should have some metrics.

Lyn Wineman: 25:40

You don't need a one-on-one for a status update.

Matt Ley: 25:43

No, you should be able to figure that out. Especially nowadays, we have plenty of tools that we could leverage. Yeah, I realized there's. It was the drive version of like, I'm just going to come get you whenever I need you, I'm going to do that. Anyways, if I need something in the moment, I'm not going to be like, oh well, if the one-on-one's not for three days, I'm going to wait and hold off until the one-on-one to ask you for this information. And if someone needs something from me, they're not going to be like, oh well, my one-on-one's not for three days, I'm going to wait. The only thing that you don't do on a regular cadence in your business without being intentional about it is asking the person how are you doing like, what's something exceptional you did in the last two weeks and what's something you're really excited about in the next two weeks? I use that language intentionally because I want people to start thinking about the recognizing the value they bring to the organization and saying what it is that was exceptional. That's really hard for a lot of people because they feel like they're bragging or they don't feel like it was that good. Yeah, recognize the value proposition. And then, what are they excited about? Helps me see what it is that's drawing their attention moving forward. And also, let's say, we go two or three meetings and they can't think of anything.

Lyn Wineman: 26:53

That's a big indicator, isn't it? Yeah?

Matt Ley: 26:56

Well, is this role right for you? Is something else going on? It feels like we're not getting the joy and the work and that would bother me as a manager, because work should be joyful in the process of getting it done. Now we can have it. You can call it a stay interview, you can call it what you want, but it's an opportunity to say, hey, I care about you a lot and I tell managers you need to be 51, 49, 51% of your focus has to be on the role that you're overseeing. 49% of it has to recognize that you're overseeing a person in that role.

Now, at the end of the day, you should not create a position just to keep a person, because that does not create value for anybody in the organization and it creates lack of clarity and it just creates clutter and noise. But helping the person recognize the value they bring in the role and helping them skill up to it or to say you know what? This just doesn't seem to be a fit for you. The organization has grown, this role is morphed and who you were, you stayed consistent. The role hasn't. Yeah, what can we do differently? Like let's give some really great severance packages and let people find out what's going to provide them value in the future, because we become an albatross around each other's necks that weigh each other down and we don't set people free, and so I was like we don't let people go, we set them free when we do.

Lyn Wineman: 28:13

Yeah, yeah, yeah, it doesn't feel it did. It's hard in the moment to make it feel like that, though, right, it's so painful. All right, I want to flip. I want to. I want to move on a little bit. I love what you're giving us here. I really do feel like this is. This is a podcast coaching session here, courtesy of Matt Ley. But, Matt, you mentioned fulfillment ROI. Can you just give us a brief overview of what is it and why should leaders be thinking about it?

Matt Ley: 28:43

Yeah, in the work I was doing is like I just want people to feel fulfilled. But how? It's such a unique personal journey. How do you support people in that without it being an intimate, deep conversation with every person every time? Because my drive was if you can't pour from an empty cup so so drained in the work that we do. We're not coming home to be the partners, the parents, the members of society you want to be

Lyn Wineman: 29:12

I love that you say that because to me part of the way that KidGlov gives back to the world makes the world a better place is by sending people home at the end of the day happy, healthy, fulfilled in as much as we can in a in a work role.

Matt Ley: 29:26

And I think, and I think we can do a great deal. Like that's part of I mean, I'm an I'm an assessment nerd. In part, because I think what assessments do is they're like they're descriptive, not prescriptive, which is to say they're the start of a conversation, not the end of it, but they're a conversation. And then how that fits in with this whole fulfillment ROI thing is recognizing that really what's going on in fulfillment is

a pretty simple exchange of the energy we invest in something and the value it produces for us. And so if I had that employee who came in and was just like I didn't do anything exceptional, I'm not excited about anything. You're probably not very fulfilled right now.

Okay well, are there things we could do to reduce the amount of energy it takes to get things done? Or are there things we can do to increase the value proposition of the things that we're doing? Now? Epic model for management environment, performance, environment is a lot of reducing the energy it takes to get things done and performance is helping people understand the value of the things that they do. So if you will carry this out and put it into practice, it helps you to level up people's fulfillment ROI, to maximize it. And then you do that for every person in your organization. You can do it at an organizational level, which is to say operational excellence and organizational health. It just continues to grow with the size of the organization.

Lyn Wineman: 30:47

I love that. I have never really thought about that. How can I help you reduce the energy it takes to perform a task? How can I increase the value proposition for that work? Am I help you reduce the energy it takes to perform a task? How can I increase the value proposition for that work? Am I summarizing that properly?

Matt Ley: 31:00

Yeah, perfectly. And one other thing that I'll say and I talk about it in the book a little bit is we tend to measure the wrong thing, which is time. And the thing is time is a bucket, but the thing we should be measuring is what we put into that bucket, which is our energy. And so for some people let's say writing process documentation, because I've done a lot of that in my career there are certain aspects of that that I could do for 40 hours a week and it wouldn't even lower my energy level at all.

Lyn Wineman: 31:31

Because when you say that like, I instantly feel like I want to crawl under the desk. Writing process documentation.

Matt Ley: 31:39

Yeah, there's certain aspects of that. I love process exploration, process definition, process, like reworking. I love that front end. But writing SOPs, process maps, quality gates, technical writing, I can do it and that's one of the spaces I call a zone of excellence. I have really good skills there. I really articulate, I can help people, I ask the right questions to get to the right level of depth. But, man, I could do two hours of that a day.

So you can't measure it in time, you've got to measure it in energy, because now I got six hours and the danger of this, especially for people that step into management, where the management activities aren't their joy. They can still be good managers, they can even be great managers, but they have to be very intentional managers because you cannot add it up, you can't say you know what? I don't really like, that aspect of writing job descriptions and doing one-on-ones, so I'm just going to put them off and I'm going to do double tomorrow, because it's not time, it's energy and you've exhausted yourself in two

hours. You can't do 200% energy exhaustion the next day and that's what happens, because what we do is we ignore the stuff. Usually that's a bigger energy lift, not a big time lift and then we feel guilty about it, which doubles it.

I call it the Bobby McFerrin principle, otherwise there'd be trouble. When we worry, we make them double. Yeah, yeah, let the worry go. Be happy. So it's being intentional about the things that are the energy drains, and if you can't articulate what the things are and be honest about which ones are the energy drains, it's really hard to choose what to be intentional about, and so all I'm trying to do is help people have the right language and the conscious understanding of activities so they can have the right conversation.

Lyn Wineman: 33:25

Yeah, Matt, it occurs to me that what you are talking about are really some great tools and techniques that are going to help leaders identify what's really driving or blocking people from doing their work right. Then there's so much psychology involved and so few of us are really prepared for it.

Matt Ley: 33:48

I will call it is a fair statement and I mentioned I love assessments. One of my continues to be my favorite is the Working Genius by Patrick Lencioni's group, the table group.

Lyn Wineman: 34:01

We love the Working Genius at KidGlov. I'm an I and a G with a W-E frustration just putting it out there.

Matt Ley: 34:09

Well, I'm a W-I genius with a G-T frustration.

Lyn Wineman: 34:13

Oh, interesting. Well, you know what? You and I would either not be able to work together, or we would recognize that we each bring strengths to the table that the other one doesn't have. Yeah, and we would really work great together if we were aware.

Matt Ley: 34:25

That’s one of the when I do the Working Genius, one of the questions I'll ask a group is like what takes a friction and turns it into a compliment. I'll sit there and they'll throw out ideas and all that. The answer at the end of the day is just trust.

If you can learn how to build trust, which again feeds right back into Patrick Lencioni's five disfunctions of a team model, which trust is the foundation of. That's where I bring in the four Cs. I say if you could show people you care, you give them clarity, you give them consistency and you communicate with them, you are feeding trust. And the last one we talked about earlier is when people step outside your expected norms, where reality and expectations diverge, fill that space with curiosity.

But if you can do that, you start to build trust and then all of a sudden the fact that you and I are not wired the same becomes a strength, not a friction point.

It's a compliment because it's like I know what you could bring to the table and I would never want to do that. But you love it because that's who you are and how you're wired and, frankly, as managers, that's another piece of what makes the teamwork is understanding your people, so that you can assign tasks based on joy, not just competency, and help people build that skillset out the two things I'll say on my working genius soapboxes. It helps us with what I call the golden rule burnout, which is treat other people as you want to be treated, which is say, oh, I'm a wonder inventive. When a wonder inventive project comes across my table and I think Lyn's doing a fantastic knock it out of the park job, I should give her my wonder invention project to celebrate her. No, because you're not wired like I am, you're going to dislike that project and I'm going to be sad because I'm probably going to give it to you and take some GT work on myself and be like, oh, this is so heavy.

The platinum rule like treat other people the way they want to be treated. Articulate that language, not only do you spread more joy, but you're actually way more efficient with the energy that you're putting into the buckets to get things done.

Lyn Wineman: 36:43

I love it so much, Matt, if you could give leaders just one piece of advice to help lead with more clarity and purpose. What would that be? One tip, hot tip.

Matt Ley: 36:57

The hot tip, I would say honestly, is articulate what management is within your organization versus leadership and who's doing it.

So, use something like the Epic Model or whatever it is that works for you and then, if I get the bonus extra because I continue to talk, I would do the Working Genius Assessment. It is the most articulate, easy to understand, frankly valuable for team dynamics, of any of the assessments I've ever used. It will tell you where your gaps are, where you're over leveraging and the pain points are going to show up. It's very easy to understand and in four hours or less you're going to have some real big moves for your team.

Lyn Wineman: 37:33

That's what I'm going to tell you right there. I think the elegance in the Working Genius system is in its simplicity. We use it wholeheartedly here at KidGlov. We talk about it all the time. We all have the map in front of us. We're starting to do facilitations with new clients. So when new clients come on board, we will do a Working Genius facilitation with their key team members. That we're going to be working with our key team members.

It really helps us understand. This is how we're going to ask for information. This is how we're going to present like people who are in wonder and invention, they like to be involved very early, rough concepts. Let's pull them in brainstorm together, people who are more on that DET side. They're like don't bring it to me this loose, I need it tightened up, I need to know right, and so just that basic

understanding makes us so much more productive and it strengthens our relationship. All those good things happen. So I'm I am on board with that. I think that's 100%, and I wouldn't have ever thought about being so good, the need to be so good and definitive about that management role. Who's doing it? What does it look like? I think that's just a key new piece of information that you have given to me today, so thank you for that.

Matt Ley: 38:57

You mentioned some of that stuff. It's like, have you been spying on us for like the last 15 months or 15 years?

That's one of the things I talk about, especially around management is when you start any enterprise usually it's like one or two people you have leadership, which is to say you have vision. You have something that you see out there in the world that you're going to create that doesn't exist. And how do you do that? You do it through contribution, by having a service or a product that doesn't exist, and so you build a value proposition. Well, guess what happens? Either you burn out and it just dies on the vine and it doesn't become a thing, or you find some level of success. And when you find success, what do you do? You tend to grow. Well, the thing that happens is, in between the cracks of leadership and contribution comes this thing called management that you did not have to be any good at whatsoever when you started the business.

That's where I say the boiling point of all the management activities start to creep up but you don't have anyone. That's articulated as a manager as a role, and that really really feels painful. And that's why I a manager as a role and that really really feels painful. And that's why I think at three, five and 10 years we have these precipitous drop-offs in the success of small businesses is because if you've been around for three, five or 10 years, you've probably had some level of success and you've probably tried to grow at some point, but nobody told you what management was. And that is what they think kills so many businesses is. They either screw that up or they don't realize that it's not a competency of theirs and they start to burn out and it's no longer fun. So if we can understand what management is at those inflection points, we could save small businesses from the heartache of going through all that burnout and shutting down.

Lyn Wineman: 41:13

That is so beautiful. I love it. Matt. Where were you 10 years ago?

Matt Ley: 41:18

Freaking out as a manager remember.

Lyn Wineman: 41:22

I love it. You've learned from your own experiences, which is the best way. So, Matt, what's next for you? You've got this great new intentional collaboration. You're helping businesses. You've written the book. What's next?

Matt Ley: 41:34

So, okay, I'll do two things. One is building out the roadmap of helping people onboard. So it's like you're not ready for a full-on strategic partnership. What can we offer you that allows you to start into this space to get some value? And then so we do one-on-one coaching through, we create courses, we have facilitations, we do programs, we differentiate like facilitation is sort of like a taster. It allows you to get a taste of what it is. A program is like we're going to help you put a full new thing on the menu. We're going to help you make this part of who you are. And then strategic partnership is like hiring us to be your executive chef. We're going to make sure you stay healthy long-term. And in the midst of all of that, I would love to start hosting an annual, just management-focused two-day retreat where we just talk about management, apart from leadership and apart from contribution. So when my feet are a little bit more underneath me, that's my go-to. So I hope, if anything, you could be my accountability partner. And now I'm not ready to follow up with me like in six to 12 months that hey, when's the conference?

Lyn Wineman: 42:40

I tell you what I'm going to put this down, because when you have that conference put together, we're going to have you come back and tell people about it, cause I bet we have a lot of listeners. You know who are in that space. We have a lot of and honestly, I think sometimes people don't realize. You know this podcast in particular and KidGlov as a business. We serve a lot of nonprofits. Nonprofits have these same issues as they grow. I talk to a lot of nonprofit founders who've just been doing everything themselves for so long and all of a sudden they're growing and they've got organizational dynamics and people issues and management issues and it just adds so much complexity so we'll have you come back and talk about it

Matt Ley: 43:21

Well, and I will say that's actually especially with the Working Genius. I do quite a bit of work with nonprofits and the fact of passion is such a part of the formula there that it sometimes actually becomes counterproductive.

Lyn Wineman: 43:30

Yes it does. Because you're so passionate about delivering the mission to people that you forget to think about yourself. Organizationally, at least, that's what we experience. Like you know, your people have kind of come on board and maybe they've agreed to work for less because they believe in the mission. You're putting every ounce of energy into the mission, which means that you are neglecting the other aspects, such as the organizational dynamics, the growth, the purpose, the clarity. We see that all the time.

Matt Ley: 44:08

Yeah. And so you get afraid that if you get focused to that you're doing a disservice to the passion. And you also, if you start to measure it, you actually you're scared because you're like what if the measurement comes back and tells me we're not doing the right thing or we're not having the right thought.

Lyn Wineman: 44:21

That is the scary thing about measuring. It is right yeah.

Matt Ley: 44:24

And it's like oh well, now you know, so you can stop throwing bad effort after bad effort, Like we can change, we can do better, and that actually is what's going to move the needle more for the thing we actually care about.

Lyn Wineman: 44:35

Yeah, I love that. So, Matt, people who've been listening, who are really intrigued by everything you're saying, how can they learn more?

Matt Ley: 44:44

IPNAdvisors.com, you can learn about the work that we do, as I mentioned earlier. Manageyourgaps.com If you want to learn more about the book, download the first three chapters. And I'm constantly active on LinkedIn, just trying to drop little tidbits about the stuff that we've talked about here to give people something to help drive the mission, drive the purpose, drive the clarity.

Lyn Wineman: 45:09

Sounds good, Matt, we will get those links and, for everybody listening, we'll get those links in the show notes on the KidGlov website. Also, I have to mention I think I met you on LinkedIn, I think a friend of mine, a mutual friend of ours, Christina Amagomi from SIAMO, one of my favorite people and I know you were on their podcast too reposted something from you and I was like that is really interesting, I have to meet this guy. And so somehow we connected. You jumped right in and started a conversation and here we are. So, all right, Matt, we've talked a lot about business, leadership. We've talked about strategy, tactical operations. I want to ask you about marketing, being a marketer, I'm going to ask you a marketing question because I have recently published this book. It's called *Untangling Spaghetti* and it's a brand fable. Whereas I think you untangle leadership, I untangle branding. So I'm curious what you think about branding and how a strong brand might help close those gaps between vision, strategy and action that you've been talking about.

Matt Ley: 46:19

Yeah, and I think what makes a brand strong is the intentionality and the consistency in it, and that's what feeds into that space. It's the clarity, the consistency. It's being intentional to show people you care and then you just got to communicate it, because what it becomes then is like the beacon and the North star that why do you, why are those things so valuable is when people know they're cared for. They don't put energy into wondering.

People know what clarity that they have clarity they're not going around looking around every corner being like is something going to pop out. They can put their energy into the forward momentum when they have consistency. It's not a well, who's going to show up today. Is it a manager A or manager B, dr Jekyll or Mr and Mrs Hyde? It helps them put their energy into what's going forward. And when you communicate with them, you move question marks into either periods or exclamation points. It's

forward progress and a solid brand just becomes that beacon that allows you to start moving towards that and it's frankly, at the end of the day, it's like a good mission vision statement. You just turn it into a question and it becomes the guardrails of progress. It stops you from going over the cliff and says wait a minute, why are we putting energy into this? Does this help us achieve X? And if the answer is no, it doesn't then it's not in alignment with who we're trying to be right now.

Lyn Wineman: 47:33

I love that so much. There is a marketing person inside of you. I love that answer so much. That's exactly why we wrote the book, Matt, is to help people understand that level of clarity, that your brand is so much more than your name and logo and pretty pictures. It is really an expression of who you authentically are deep down as an organization. All right, I'm asking you my favorite question next. I've asked it on every single podcast since we launched in August of 2020. But, Matt, you are a very inspiring person and I'm inspired by motivational quotes. I would like a Matt Ley original statement to motivate our audience.

Matt Ley: 48:17

I just said it to my kids this morning. So I'm going to go with this. I'm going to tweak it a little bit, but you are always enough and you're never everything.

Lyn Wineman: 48:29

Oh, wow, that sounds like the perfect thing you could ever say to a child. You are always enough and you can never be everything. Amen, that's a good one. Thank you for that. I feel like I need that on the wall behind my head, in front of my face. That is really a good one, and I might use that with my own kids who are grown. I might use that with my grandkids, I think, coming up. I love that. All right, Matt, this has been such a fun conversation. As we wrap up our time together today, what is the most important thing you would like our listeners to remember about the work that you're doing?

Matt Ley: 49:07

That management is and should be awesome.

Lyn Wineman: 49:11

I love that. Management is, and should be awesome. Fantastic, Matt. I fully believe the world needs more people like you. I'm so glad you were able to make time for this conversation today.

Matt Ley: 49:25

Thanks, Lyn, it was a pleasure.

Announcer: 49:28

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.

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