

# Successfully Leading Dispersed Teams Requires Compassion

Wed, 6/9 10:37AM 46:06

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, compassion, linkedin, leader, friend, companies, team, pandemic, years, stories, life, work, employees, home, big, called, talk, workers, mindfulness, meditation

## SPEAKERS

Ginny Bianco-Mathis, Mitch Simon, Scott Shute

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- M** Mitch Simon 00:10  
Welcome to another episode of team anywhere where CEOs, leaders and experts at building teams, companies, organizations, and amazing cultures
- G** Ginny Bianco-Mathis 00:22  
share how to lead from anywhere in the world. I'm your co host on the East Coast, Jim Bianco Mathis,
- M** Mitch Simon 00:28  
and I'm your co host on the West Coast, Mitch Simon. And we invite you to join us team anywhere. Today, our guest is Scott Shute head of mindfulness and compassion at LinkedIn. Yes, you heard that title right, the head of mindfulness and compassion. He's also the author of the full body. Yes, Scott's vision is to change work from the inside out. And his mission is to mainstream mindfulness and operationalize compassion. For the 3.3 billion workers in the world, you will discover the mindset and practices of companies that are 14 times more profitable than the standard s&p average by spreading mindfulness and compassion at work. This is truly a gem of an episode to be listened to contemplated, and shared.

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Ginny Bianco-Mathis 01:28

Hello, welcome to another episode of team anywhere. And I am Jenny Bianca Mathis on the east coast. And I am here with my wonderful co host, Mitch Simon. And we are very excited today to have a guest, who is very much on a journey that we all are, I think have been on for about two years now. And that is Scott chute, who is going to talk to us about his new book. That is a very powerful welcome. Thanks very much. Thanks for having me. I appreciate it. Yes, terrific. So we're going to begin with asking you what we've been asking most of our guests, which is, what have you learned from the last two years? The last two years? Only two, huh? Yeah, yeah.

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Scott Shute 02:18

Sure. Well, I guess there's pre pandemic and post pandemic, right, this is exactly the big thing that has happened. And, you know, I guess I'm learning a little bit about detachment. And what I'd say is I'm, I'm still learning, right? We're all works in progress. I'm no different. There was a bunch of stuff that was about to happen right before we got shut down that I was super excited about, I was giving a big presentation at a conference. Both my kids were graduating, we were going to take a trip to Africa, which we've been talking about for 10 years, you know, one graduated from college, the other from high school. And, you know, during the pandemic, when it first started, I'm a total optimist, right? So I thought, oh, two weeks, three weeks, we'll be back in office, like, whatever, this is not a thing. Let's just do our thing. And let's get back. And then slowly, life started slipping, right. So I'm watching my daughter who was in high school. First, it was a well, I'm sure you'll still have prom, or I'm sure you'll still have your lacrosse season, or I'm sure you'll still have a graduation. And one by one. Each of those things were taken away. And I got to watch the suffering that happened. For her. And for everyone else, you know, whether everybody had some sort of issue, whether they were big or small. And even in my own life, just learning to let go a little bit right. And really connecting so what what I see in my own self and see and others that yes, we've had this big challenge as a people, right, the whole globe went through all together. But what I see is when I ask people, what's most important to them, it became really clear, what's most important is our health and our connections, our relationships. And everything else took a little bit less importance over this past year. And I think that's wonderful, right? Not to discount any of the, quote, bad stuff that happened or the challenges we've all been through. But I think that's actually been a really big gift of the pandemic is getting us back to closer to center of what's really important.

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Ginny Bianco-Mathis 04:22

So let's get into the, into this wonderful book. It's called the full body. Yes. Change your work in our world from the inside out. Want to write this book? Sure.

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Scott Shute 04:35

Well, it's something I've been thinking about for a very long time. Like starting in ninth grade. I always knew that I would write a book. And every time I would, you know, sit down to write it or think about writing it. It just wasn't there. Just wasn't time but I always there's this impatience like, well, I am supposed to be writing a book right. And I was coming home with a friend from a speaking engagement in December. 2019 and my friends driving and he gets this funny look, and he looks over at me and goes, the universe has told me to tell you, it's time to write your book. And, and I kind of checked in, I'm like, does that feel right? And it did for the first time in my life, it felt like it was the right thing. And you know, I'd never written a book before. But I have all these stories that I tell when I deliver workshops or do speaking events. And so I found an editor. And, you know, she helped me turn 100 stories into 40 stories, and I had this outline. And then as soon as I had this outline, the pandemic hit, and I was at home. And so is perfect timing, because then I was at the university to work, right? Yeah, the universe is ready. Yeah, I traded commuting time, for I'd get up every morning at the same time. And instead of commuting, I do my morning practice, I do my meditation and then immediately go right, for half an hour or sometimes twice an hour. And then then I'd be done. And it just flowed. It just came right out. So part of my answer is it was time. And, and part of my answer is, you know, I have this role. My role is I'm the head of mindfulness compassion at LinkedIn, after a career as an executive at LinkedIn and other places. And I wanted to write a book about compassion, like, what does it mean? How, how can we be compassionate? And I realized my answer to that is like, it's 99%, our own development, our own getting out of our own way. And so this book is the story. It's like, it's all of our stories, like, we all have the same challenges guy, same thing, even though the flavor, our individual stories and flavors are different, but what we're going through is the same. So I wrote it as a as a playbook, essentially, for how to be compassionate and, and just like every good startup, I wrote it for myself. These, these are the challenges that I've gone through and some of the lessons that I've gone through.

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Ginny Bianco-Mathis 06:55

Exactly, and they come out so loud and clear. So why don't you share some of those what what do you think are the three or four main message? Oh, sure.

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Scott Shute 07:05

Sure. Well, there's a lot in there. So we start, I talk about kind of four parts to this journey. And I'll start from the back and go front. So if we think about compassion, I defined

compassion as awareness of others, a mindset of wishing the best for them, and then the courage to take action. So those three things, awareness, mindset, and action. And those are really the first three parts of the story. We do those things for ourselves. So first, be aware of ourselves to know ourselves, to have a mindset of kindness towards ourselves, or loving ourselves, and then the courage to take action. You know, so maybe we'll start in the middle here, one of one of the stories I like, I'll tell you about my main friend,

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Ginny Bianco-Mathis 07:51

please do my main friend.

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Scott Shute 07:53

So one of the things I do is I play guitar, I write music. I come from a musical family. And every year we have a block party here, I live in San Jose. So we have a block party. And there's a cornhole tournament and barbecue and sitting around and hanging out. And once every 20 years when we're not in a drought, the firemen will come and turn on the hydrant for the kids to play in. That doesn't happen very often. Not at all, as you might imagine. But there's also music. At the end of the night, my friend and I will set up a little stage on my friend's porch, and we'll play music. And this last time, you know, not doing COVID but the year before a different friend, my main friend came over, he was hanging out, I was getting ready for the block party. I was like, doing a Google search for party songs on acoustic guitar, you know, you could sing along to and my friend comes over and he's like, so are you. Are you playing music again? For the blood party? I was like, Yeah, he's like, Huh, like, What? What do you mean? Hmm. It's like, oh, man, I don't know. I mean, last time when you guys played, like, a bunch of people just left, like they left where you were, and they went to go play beer pong, or hang out in some area and do trade whiskey shots or whatever? Yeah. Okay. My friend. Was it done? He's like, honestly, you know, I'm not sure. Not sure that you're that good. Like, oh, cheese. I can start to feel like the heat rising, you know, in my chest, I can feel my face get red and the little beads of sweat around my, you know, receding hairline. And I don't feel very good about the block party anymore. Like I'm trying to think of reasons to get out of it. Where before I was excited, but my friend was not quite done. I mean, friend, this friend said, and seriously, like, Why does it have to be about you all the time? Like, why? Why do you have to be on stage all the time? Like, look at me, look at me. And I was just feeling like, oh my god. Like I'd been kicked in the stomach and all of a sudden my life got very small. I didn't want to do anything, right. Oh, now this you might ask like That's a terrible lie. Why would you keep this friend around?



Mitch Simon 10:02

Yeah. Why would you keep this friend around?



Scott Shute 10:06

I mean, we don't let people talk to us like that. Why would I keep this friend has been with me for a very long time this friend. You know, he thinks he knows me better than anyone else. Like, he'll tell me things that he thinks are keeping me safe. Like, tell me the truth. Well, this friend, quote, air quotes, friend, is me. That's the story in my head.



Ginny Bianco-Mathis 10:30

Oh, I love.



Scott Shute 10:32

And we all have that friend, Arianna Huffington calls it the obnoxious roommate? Yeah. Right? That friend? Just like when and why would we let this? Why would we let that happen, we would never let a real person talk to us like that, we would never, we would fire that friend immediately. But somehow, we have this inner critic that we just allow to run rampant inside of our heads. Now, part of it is we've evolved this way, right? Just like our amygdalas. And our bodies are constantly looking for danger. And we trigger the fight or flight response whenever we see that danger. That's not great in our physical bodies, right? Because it used to be, we needed that to run away from a tiger. But now our bodies are triggered in the same way when the kids are fighting in the room next door when we're trying to do a zoom call, or we're triggered by an email we get. Now, in the same way, our minds work the same way, right? We we tend to focus 99% of our energy on the 1% of our life that is hard or wrong or Yes. I call this pothole management right? 1000 miles of perfect road and one pothole, you know and we spend 99% of our time on the one pothole and not any percent of time on the 999 miles of perfect road. So the counterbalance to this, and this is in this section of you know, love yourself. Is are things like gratitude, or self care. Or, look, I asked I love this question. What else is true? Right? So if we go back to my guitar example, okay, maybe people did leave that area to go play beer pong. But what else is true is a lot of people really enjoyed it. What else is true is a lot of people that's their favorite part of the night. And if, because they want to sing along, and if I don't go and play and sing, they don't get to sing either. And what else is true is Look, if Paul McCartney and John Lennon themselves along with Ed Sheeran, and Jimi Hendrix, and whoever else showed up, there would still be people who went to go play beer pong, right, and trade with us, because that's what they do. So when we look at our lives in totality, and really, really know ourselves, and then really, really care for ourselves,

then we're much stronger to deal with the hard things.

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Ginny Bianco-Mathis 13:00

Totally. I love it. So let's take that the knowing oneself, and then loving and compassion and taking action. Yeah. What kind of meaning does that have for a leader? Sure. Especially now in the hybrid environment?

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Scott Shute 13:20

Sure. Right? Well, what we're finding is, well, let's take a trip down memory lane to talk about the history of work first, to talk about why this stuff is so important. Let's, if we think about the agrarian age, which is lived in for 1000s and 1000s, of years, and we rewind to the times when we were building pyramids. Yeah. So essentially, you had kings and slaves, right. And so slaves were not very highly valued workers. And over time, you had land owners and serfs. And again, workers were not super highly valued. And then we graduated. Well, actually, I don't know if it's graduating, we moved on to the industrial age. And you imagine big factories where everybody's making widgets, and probably workers are still, in that time, is viewed as not super valuable interchangeable. But here we are in the information age, and a company like LinkedIn, which is where I work. We don't have hard assets. We don't have a manufacturing line, we're not selling a physical good. We're selling information.

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Ginny Bianco-Mathis 14:27

Mm hmm.

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Scott Shute 14:28

So the only asset, I mean, we have intellectual property, but the most important asset we have is our people. Right? And so what we know is when our people are at their best, the company is going to be at their best. Alright, so now with that as a frame of reference, now let's talk about leadership because now we see how critical it is to be a great leader. Because these people can go wherever they want, right? They, they're very powerful as workers more powerful than any time in history because the workers are in control. Roll of their own careers now to a large extent. Hmm. So it's really important to be a great leader. So in that context, what can a leader do? Well, we've really realized the value of emotional intelligence. And it's all fits the same things I'm talking about. First, we deeply know ourselves so that we can know other people, we can be aware of them, right? We love ourselves, or let's say that we have a mindset of kindness or wishing the best for ourselves,

so that we can have a mindset of wishing the best for others. And then I have courage to take action for myself, right, I'm going to do the hard things for myself, which allows me then to do the hard things for others. Now, when I am vulnerable, as a leader, a lot of people are scared of that. They're like, that seems counterintuitive. I need to have I need to project this confidence and have fear in by employees. Yes, that thinking is actually outdated. That's the old thinking of the agrarian age, where I just told you what to do, and you shut up and just do it, or I'll find somebody else. That world is gone. Or it's evolving towards this world where, no, I can't just tell you to do it, or I'll get somebody else, it doesn't work like that. The best people write their own tickets to the best companies, right? So if we want to be successful, we need to treat those employees as the super valuable resource they really are. Which means I as a leader need to up my game. So this is, this is the why and some of the how,

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Ginny Bianco-Mathis 16:29

yes. All right, now I'm going to push you further. Do it. Yeah. What's the action? So now I'm going to try to win this team, with a group in front of me a group two or three groups all over? Sure. How do I create that engagement, that feeling that comparison?

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Scott Shute 16:48

Let's talk about in a couple different ways. First, me as a leader, but also as a team, there are a few really powerful things I can do as a leader. One is to be human. Right? So the strengths of a leader are to have a clear vision, right? A clear purpose, like where are we headed, because the whole organization, like the shape of a pyramid is relying on the CEO or the leader of that particular group to say, here's where we're headed. So clarity of purpose, then clarity of values, like what's really important to me, but also the organization. And being really clear about that, and never deviating from that. And then the third thing is clarity of communication. This over and over, like, here's where we're going, here's why here's what's important. Now along the way, because people want to work for those three things, they want to work for someone who has great values, who has a great purpose, and who communicates clearly, along the way, some of the tips are be human. Because people don't want to work for a robot they don't want to work for what they want, is to be able to see themselves in that leader, the good parts, right? Because that's really inspiring when you see someone on stage virtually on stage these days, who has this clarity of purpose, this clarity of values, that's really inspiring. And if they themselves, those leaders can be human and also be vulnerable, then that really allows this connection to happen for the employees to say, oh, they're just like me, right? So instead of having this separation, where I can't identify because this person's too perfect, or whatever has this facade of being perfect, well, I can never, I can never achieve that as

a as a worker as an employee. But if this person shows me vulnerability, they admit how hard it is sometimes, then it gives me license to have a real conversation for myself about how hard it is sometimes. And we end up getting so much more from each other. So that's just a little taste of about leadership. Let's talk about teams because you asked about teams. So we know from Google's project, Aristotle, five or six years ago, they went searching for, what are the factors that make up the highest performing teams? Like if we were just to try and build one, what would we do? And I'm not sure what they were searching for. I'm guessing that this was a surprise. But it turns out the number one factor in building a high performance team is not IQ, or where you went to school or the grades you got or the diversity of the team, even the number one factor is psychological safety. Yeah. In other words, can I be myself in front of you guys in front of my team and know that they have my back? Can I lose? Can I fail in front of you, and know that you have my back? And here's the thing, I think even harder Can I win? Can I succeed in front of you and know that you have my back? So imagine we're a sales team. Right, and we're three quarters of the way through the quarter and I'm already at 220% of quota. And my friends are at 85% of quota. Are they really going to have my back Are they going to try to bring me down with everybody else. So, as a leader, there's some really simple practices that we can put into place to build that sense of cohesion and that sense of psychological safety. And it starts with the simple This doesn't have to be complicated. So let's say we're having a team meeting every Monday at nine o'clock. Before we just jump into the to do list. Let's take five minutes or seven minutes, and just go around who everybody what everybody wants to talk about. If they have something to share, what's a personal professional when or maybe something you're grateful for? And in the beginning, this sometimes feels like Oh, man, are we just wasting time? Like we have started? Let's get to our to do list? Yeah, no, because what we're doing here is there's several things that are at play. One is we're moving people from their head to their heart, right, we're moving them from just being task oriented, to looking at each other as humans. Yep. And when we look at each other, says humans first as people first and then as workers or partner second, or later down the road, we build this connectivity. And then we're much more willing to be our full, authentic selves, we're much more willing to see them to celebrate them as their full, authentic self. And back to our point of why does this matter? Because the only thing we have as a company is our people. And so if these people feel comfortable at work, they feel safe with the people they work with. And they feel like they can bring their full their full body. Yes, there. Everything about them to work to bear. Wow, over the long term, we are going to get so much better results.



Ginny Bianco-Mathis 21:38  
Right?

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Mitch Simon 21:39

I'd love to know, I love everything you're saying. And I love the the Aristotle project. And and and just, you know, knowing that deep down, it's about psychological safety, it's feeling free to express myself. What have you seen, that have been some best practices at LinkedIn? For people who are you know, isolated, you know, in their homes? Sure. I think like, I can't remember. But LinkedIn isn't, you know, demanding people to come back right away.

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Scott Shute 22:10

Right, when we're slowly starting to open some offices, and for sure, we're not demanding people.

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Mitch Simon 22:15

Yeah. Yeah. So I'm wondering, I'm wondering, you know, whereas, whereas, whereas we were asking a year ago, you know, the question, you're, you're home alone, and everyone's home alone. And now what's going to happen? Is, there will people be home alone, there'll be people that are home alone, that's great movie, there'll be people that are home alone, there'll be people that are that are home sometimes, right? And so just to talk about your mean, friend, you know that, you know, the mean friend would be saying, you need to be at work, when actually what I need for myself, my full Yes, would be to be at home right now. Right? So how are you going to? How would you advise people to deal with, you know, gosh, I need to be at work, I need to be at home because those options will be there. She helped me understand that a little bit.

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Scott Shute 23:06

Let's talk about it from the team perspective, like what can managers or teams do? And then we can talk about it from the inside out, like what a person could do love that. Thank you so much well being? Yeah. So from a team perspective, I don't think it's that different than it was before. Now, the mechanics will be different, right? Because as you say, we're going to be in this hybrid environment. And nobody knows what this is going to be like, this is a grand experiment. We're all living it. And we all might have ideas, but nobody knows until we go live it further. So it's the same things, awareness of others, a mindset of wishing the best for them the courage to take action. What does that mean? Okay, let's say that we're all in a meeting. And all of a sudden, Jenny goes real quiet for 20 minutes, when we normally see her as being, you know, bubbly, all of a sudden, she goes quiet. And so maybe it's just saying, like, we're in the middle of conversation, like, Oh, actually, I'd like

to stop Jeannie, I'd like to hear from you. Because we haven't heard from you from Well, I'd really love to know what you have to say about this. So this, again, what we're trying to do is build connectivity. And it requires again, awareness of others, the courage to take the action mindset of wishing the best for them. And, and we don't have to have technology get in the way. Right. So here's the thing, here's what this requires. So we had this, we had this meeting back, you know, about a year ago, when the George Floyd racial stuff was happening. We had this meeting, we had a town hall in my work group, I report into learning and development. So there's about 40 of us, and we scheduled an hour just to kind of, you know, give people a chance to vent or give people a chance to tell their story. And in this particular moment, you know, everybody's now lived through 1000s of zoom calls, but in this moment, it was so intense. You know, people were sharing their story. And everybody was making eye contact with the camera. Right? You could You could just see that everyone was fully present. Everyone was respectful, super respectful of each other in this conversation. You know, when our, when our black colleague was telling about her stories, we were right there with her, we were crying alongside her. Because we were fully present. We were doing all the right things, we weren't shopping on Amazon, we weren't, you know, doing email while sort of listening to everybody else, we were fully present and committed to connection. Now, what was supposed to be an hour long meeting turned into two and a half hours. And at the end of it, somebody said, Wow, this is the first time I feel like the technology didn't get in our way. Right. And in fact, the technology enhanced it, because there was no way that we could all be in the same room looking at each other in the same way with that amount of people. So it's this level of commitment to connection and to being present that is going to be required, regardless of the technology or, or how many of us are physically at work versus physically at home or some hybrid in between. Now, as a person, I think this is a really great question. There was an article I just shared today, I think it was from the BBC about the cult of work, or the the, basically our addiction to work. And it was a nice piece on like how we got here. And it's rooted in this fear, it's rooted in this fear of, well, if I don't do this, you know, bad things will happen. Or if I work really hard, good things will happen. And, and my happiness depends on either of those things, right. And what I'd say, and this is kind of what my book is about. My book is about my own journey, because I grew up super competitive. I'm the youngest of five. And I think what was trying what I was doing was trying to get the attention of my parents by achieving. Alright, so I worked really hard I achieved, I achieved, I achieved and I was so focused on my own winning, which is essentially saying, I was focused on external validation, to tell me that I was enough. Right. And so and I think that to some degree, we are all have that piece of us, we all have that inner critic, or that part that saying, you need to do X, and it's driven out of fear. Because what will people say about us yet? What will others say about us if we don't, or if we do. So the true path to happiness starts from the inside out through the things that we just talked about. And what I would say my advice for people is, just realize that you are in charge, you have choices. Nobody's forcing

you to do anything, mostly, right? Like you could quit your job, you could quit your relationship, you could not go to that meeting or go to that meeting, every one of those things is a choice. Every one of those choices have consequence. But you are in charge of the choice. So what do you need right now? Do you need to be at home for two days? Because your kids are at home? Or do you need to work harder for three days? Because there's a big project? There's no one right answer there was there will be some seasons in your life, where you need to invest a little bit more in your career, and that's the right thing. Or there'll be some seasons in your life where you need to invest in your own health, or the health of your family or your family period. And that's the right thing. But you're the only one that knows the right answer in that moment.

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Mitch Simon 28:26

Yeah, and I think, I think Scott, what, what is, what this time has allowed us to do, hopefully, is, is to get a better understanding of ourselves, you know, for those of us who have taken that time, yeah. And to have the courage to, you know, number one, know what I need right now. And then number two, from a team perspective, be able to communicate that and feel it's okay. What I need right now,

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Ginny Bianco-Mathis 28:56

that's really fine. It's okay.

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Scott Shute 28:58

And that's why the role of the leader is so important. Because if the leader is openly talking about their own challenges, not all the time, right, because nobody wants to hear you. Nobody here wants to hear about your messy divorce or you know too much about your sickness or whatever, but a little bit to show us that you're human, then that gives us license to have that conversation with each others like, wow, you know, I'm struggling right now, and I need your help. I'm sorry, I just, I I'm gonna have to take five days off. And I'm sorry, but there's I just this is what has to happen. The role of the leader and the rest of the team is to say, yeah, so your health, the employees health, and your mental well, being is the most important thing. So do what you need to do. The work will be there when you get back and we'll figure it out together.

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Ginny Bianco-Mathis 29:46

Yeah. Love that thing. Wow. Yeah. And so as the leader you need to create the space for all of that to happen. Yeah. Now, what do you do when you're up against a lead? Are who

doesn't get it?

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Scott Shute 30:04

Well, there's a few things. So let's say I'm in an organization and somewhere above me, CEO, or whoever it is my manager directly, somebody above me doesn't get it. There are a couple things that are most obvious. You know, it's kind of the same thing. Like, when I teach workshops, or when I lead a meditation, sometimes what will happen is somebody will say, this was amazing. How do I get my husband? Or how do I get my spouse to come do this? Because they really need it?

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Ginny Bianco-Mathis 30:31

Yes.

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Scott Shute 30:36

The first part of that answer is you don't, you don't, you can't force anybody to do anything. So the most powerful thing you can do is model this behavior. Right, you can model this behavior. The second thing you do is to realize that you have choice, right? So if you've gotten to the point where you've modeled the behavior, and maybe you have the courage to provide that person with feedback about how they might benefit, but really, we're talking about our own experience, like, here's what this practice or this type of thing has meant for me. And here's how I see it change. And if you say that three or four times and they still they don't get it, you have a choice. No one's forcing you to work there. Right. And maybe your talents would be better served at a place or at a manager with a manager that does get it.

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Ginny Bianco-Mathis 31:24

Yeah. Yeah, that's so true. And a lot of folks, and you might hear this too, that I've shared that with, they'll say they reached a point where they could sit themselves down and say, I have a choice. But that doesn't happen in the early years. Yes, it's a hierarchy of needs, right? First, I need to pay check to

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Scott Shute 31:51

eat for sure. For sure. And this goes back to our values, when we're really clear about what our values is, right? Our right. And sometimes our values are, I am 26. And I have two little kids, I need to make money right now. That could be the value. But don't be bitter about it,

like realize that that's a choice you're making. There, you are in charge of that choice. That's right. And there's so it goes back to the seasons of our life, there are some seasons where we have a little bit more flexibility, because maybe we have more resources in that moment. There's, there's times when the resources time, we're taking care of kids, we're taking care of a parent or taking care of ourselves, and we just don't have time to invest in our career, whatever that is, it's learning to be okay with the choices we've made, after we've prioritized our choices and take an action toward those toward

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Ginny Bianco-Mathis 32:45

that awareness first, then allows you to step back. That's right. I make this choice, though. It's not great. Ah, I'm living with it now. And I'm aware of that. That's right.

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Mitch Simon 32:57

I wanted to ask, because I think for the listeners that, you know, are just really keen on this podcast right now is okay. How did you become the head of mindfulness and compassion? I mean, that's the that's the big question. Right? You know, there must have been a either you and or a personal transformation for yourself, because you said you were very competitive in fifth child. Yeah. And B, as well as LinkedIn must just have an incred incredible appreciation for the importance to even create a position like this.

S

Scott Shute 33:33

All of that is true. So I'll try to give you the shorter version. So my career has been as an executive in customer operations or customer service roles. And that was my gig at LinkedIn. For the first six years at LinkedIn. I led this team that was 1000 people's essentially all the customer facing stuff that's not sales. And in parallel, I started a meditation or contemplation practice when I was 13. I have been teaching since I was 19, or 20. And college, I am a member of the clergy outside of work. So it's been a big deal. It's been it's been a huge part of my life. And about two years into my LinkedIn experience, I realized like, wow, this place is really open. Maybe I can finally bring some of that to work because it's something I've never talked about at work, right? Just just never, I've always covered that part of me. And as such, there's this big part of my life that was not able to be expressed. And so two years in, I realized our CEO is talking about his own meditation practice through headspace. He's talking about compassion in leadership. I was thinking, wow, this is a place where I could bring my own practice. So I started by leading one session on a Thursday afternoon at 430 in the get this the heavenly conference room, of course, very auspicious. And that first time there was one person there, there's one Guy, and I'm sure that he was just as terrified as I was, I never saw that guy again. Next week,

there was three, and then there was five, then it became a regular thing, then I would do bigger events, because people knew I did it, you know, the marketing team would have an off site with three or 400 people, they'd have these breakout sessions with 80 or 100 people, they'd have me lead a couple breakout sessions, you know, or the CFO would have a big meeting with three or 400 people. And I'd lead I'd kick it off, you know, with a 20 minute meditation for three or 400, finance people. And it just became my identity, which was, that was the point because that's who I am outside of work. And then for me, the typical time volunteered like this for three or four years, I led our mindfulness program as a volunteer, we didn't have one, you know, my volunteers, and I created one. And then for me, the tipping point was our CEO at the time, Jeff Weiner gave the commencement address at Wharton. And you know, in a commencement address, you have 15 minutes for the best piece of advice you have in your whole life. Right? Right. Right. And his message was, be compassionate. If you're going to be successful at work, if you're going to be successful at life, be compassionate. And then the next the next day, he's on TV, and this is all the reporters want to talk about, like they have one softball question just to get out of the way about business, and 20 questions about compassion and leadership. And I'm watching all this thinking, okay. It's time it's time for me personally, because I've been in my ops role for six years, I was ready to do something else. But it's also time for LinkedIn, because we just told our 15 or 16,000 employees, that compassion was the most important thing that they could do, and sit them back to their desk. And that was it. Like, what does that even mean? Right. And so I made a pitch to Jeff in our head of HR. And we essentially created this role with a blank sheet of paper three years ago. And so my, my purpose, my mission, My vision is to change work from the inside out. And I mean that for 3.3 billion workers, and the How is the mission, it's to mainstream mindfulness and operationalize compassion. So that's how I got their



Mitch Simon 37:08  
story. Oh, God,



Ginny Bianco-Mathis 37:10  
I know, I know. What are we doing here? match?



Scott Shute 37:15  
Essentially? Yeah. So I'm trying to then model what I just talked about, right? Yeah, I got to use the full body. Yes, I got to use every part of me. But it took me I'm 51. Right. It was 48. When I took this role, it took me and I was 23. When I started working, it took me 25 years, to closer and closer and closer and closer and closer get to the center point of my values

of who I really am.

G

Ginny Bianco-Mathis 37:40

Well, I love that piece. And I think having a few folks in my family in their 20s they need to hear that. Because they expected all at once.

S

Scott Shute 37:54

Yeah, right. Right. And I felt it too. Like I when I was 27, I wanted to leave that job and go, whatever. But that's hard. And there is so there's two parts of this. There's the practical and there's also the inner, like when I when I would ask inwardly like hey, should I leave my job and go whatever do this thing? The answer is like, No, no, you're good. Stay where you are. And the inner part. It's like, seriously, like, I don't, I don't want to stay where I am like, what? No, no, no, stay where you are. But if you fast forward 25 years, I'm not as I'm going to air quote this, I'm not as powerful or I'm not as constructive to the world without those 25 years of leadership experience right ago. This was all for a reason. And there's there's another part of it, which I think is useful. There's this Japanese concept called achy guy, which some people familiar with, it's the Think of it as four circles, a Venn diagram with four circles. And this is the purpose in our life trying to get closer and closer to the center point and the four circles are the following. One is what I love to do to what I'm good at. So that's our hobbies right? what I love to do what I'm good at three is what the world needs. Sometimes that's our hobby. And four is what someone will pay me for. Right and so if I can get to the center point where I can line up those four circles, then I've gotten closer and closer to my my full body Yes, this place where it really feels good.

G

Ginny Bianco-Mathis 39:30

Oh, this is fabulous. And thanks for sharing the the metaphor and the symbolism because that just helps all of us connect with it. I do

M

Mitch Simon 39:43

and I love I love because you know we are we are God Willing coming out of this pandemic, right? I know here in California. We are. I know my cousin's in Canada or not, unfortunately, We could all still use this time I love, you know, be, you know, what is the center point of my values, you know, the center point of my values is a center point of who I am. And I think your your message really rings true for me is, you know, we do have this time now, and I just have already to prognosticate. That's a long word, there would be I would see a lot of great companies saying, you know, what, if you come to work every

single day and work 20 hours a day, again, you're, you're never gonna get to the center of your values, right? You really do need some time, to be at home to be on vacation to actually and I think you would profess as well to, to spend some time and some time just with yourself. That's right.

S

Scott Shute 40:43

Sometimes doing nothing is something worth doing? Yeah, just to stare up into a tree. So here's the here's the counterintuitive thing. There's a book called firms of endearment. And later the same folks wrote conscious capitalism. And the research that they did showed that companies who take care of all of their stakeholders, not just their shareholders are more successful. Alright, let's, let's tease that apart again. Okay. So if I'm if it's just shareholders, and all I care about is top line and bottom line. And this is often what we think of some people actually think this is the only purpose of business is to think about top line and bottom line. And so I'm going to rule and every decision will be made with this filter, their thinking this value of top line and bottom line, shareholder value. But turns out that when a company on purpose takes care of its employees, and makes it a great place to work, a place where they can be their best selves, and on purpose, takes care of their customers tries to solve their customers problems. Really, again, compassion, awareness, mindset of wishing the best for them courage to take action, sometimes we need to do what's hard for our customers at the expense of ourselves in the short term, right? Turns out that the companies who did these things balanced and it's a balance, right? Sometimes you need to take care of the company, the shareholders, companies who did this, were fortunate, 14 times more profitable. That's 14 100%, more profitable than the standard s&p average. So it's counter intuitive. So if you really care about shareholders, then you really should take care of your customers. If you really care about shareholders, then you really should take care of your employees, which means you don't work them 20 hours a week. Look, sometimes Yeah, if it's a big priority. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Make sure you're right. You're right. You're right. I take that back. Yeah. So it's a balance.

M

Mitch Simon 42:38

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, no, it's it's it's beautiful. It's interesting. I was just using a statistic yesterday, I think AI companies that bring EQ into their companies, their profitability goes up. 14 100%. It was just, it's just that no, I'm sorry, the ROI for the programming is for ads, right.

G

Ginny Bianco-Mathis 43:00

Yeah. Right. Yeah. Once Daniel Goleman prove that 20 years after initially, ai came out.

Yeah. Right. And all of a sudden, people started paying attention to, which is fortunate.  
But

**S** Scott Shute 43:14  
it's interesting, because the science is already there. Yeah. We already scientifically know that what the thing we're talking about works. But we're so ingrained in this agrarian mindset of just do what I said to do. Mm hmm. Or I'll find somebody else. Yeah. And that is hopefully fading away, because that's not how it works in the long term. Wow.

**G** Ginny Bianco-Mathis 43:39  
Well, this has been so enlightening and inspiring. I'm going to have to go off and meditate right after, after this. where can our listeners find you?

**S** Scott Shute 43:50  
Sure? Well, so the book is called the full body. Yes, you can find it at the full body. Yes, calm, but it's also available wherever, you know, Amazon and Barnes and Noble. Oh, I learned a fun thing. Yeah, if you want to support your local bookstore, but you want to buy online, there's this place called bookshop.org. And you can buy online, but you can assign the profits to your local bookstore, which I think is really cool.

**G** Ginny Bianco-Mathis 44:12  
That is Yeah.

**S** Scott Shute 44:15  
And you can you can find me I'm most at on LinkedIn. So you can follow me on LinkedIn or go to Scott shoot calm. And if you want to do meditation with me, follow me on insight timer. I do insight timer live about every two weeks, and I have some classes recorded there as well.

**M** Mitch Simon 44:31  
I will do that. I definitely will do that. Wow.

**G** Ginny Bianco-Mathis 44:35  
take us home here.

**M** Mitch Simon 44:36  
Yeah, Scott. This was this was just by far an incredible, incredible morning. And I think I'm gonna listen this podcast a couple times.

**G** Ginny Bianco-Mathis 44:49  
Can we put this on? Yeah, can we get this out there faster. I

**M** Mitch Simon 44:53  
think we do. We do need to do that. But I've really thoroughly enjoyed this. We one of my clients We we stole someone from LinkedIn, down in San Diego. And Scott, this man lives according to everything that you have shared today. Yeah. And there's and there's something special about this man.

**S** Scott Shute 45:14  
There's something Yes. There's something special about LinkedIn and the people that we attract and then when they go other places, I

**M** Mitch Simon 45:20  
hope they take all that goodness with them. They have they have. So with that, I want to thank you are incredible listeners and want to thank you, Scott, I want to thank you, Jenna Bianca maphis. And if you've loved this, please, absolutely this episode, share this with your friends and your colleagues. You know, share our podcast, it's getting a lot of traction. Again, thank you all and we'll see you next week on our next episode of team anywhere