

# TCM 116 - Alex Budak: The Complete Changemaker Guide for Leaders

**Mitch Simon:** Welcome to another episode of Team Anywhere, where CEOs, leaders and experts at building teams,

**Ginny Bianco-Mathis:** companies,

**Mitch Simon:** organizations,

**Ginny Bianco-Mathis:** and amazing cultures, share how to lead from anywhere in the world. I'm your co-host on the East Coast, Ginny Bianco-Mathis.

**Mitch Simon:** And I'm your co-host on the West Coast, Mitch Simon, and we invite you to join us to Team Anywhere.

We all want change. Change in our work, in our communities and in the world, but sometimes we're reluctant to create the change we desire. Enter Alex Budak, the author and lecturer of the popular course at the UC Berkeley Haas School of Business called *Becoming a Changemaker*. In today's podcast, you'll get incredible insights in how to give yourself permission to make the change you desire, how to influence change, and how to take action so you can change yourself, your company, and your Team Anywhere.

Hello, and welcome to another episode of Team Anywhere. I'm your co-host on the West Coast Mitch Simon, and on the East coast. Our fabulous co-host, Dr. Virginia Bianco-Mathis, how are you doing this afternoon?

**Ginny Bianco-Mathis:** Very, very well. Looking at the beautiful colors, outside Washington, DC and Virginia, it's gorgeous.

**Mitch Simon:** Beautiful. It's a beautiful fall day all over the country today. Well, today on the podcast, we have Alex Budak, social entrepreneur, UC Berkeley Haas School of Business, faculty member, speaker, and author of the brand new book, *Becoming a Changemaker*, the book with the same name as his popular class at UC Berkeley. Good afternoon, Alex. How are you?

**Alex Budak:** Oh, I'm great, and I'm so delighted to be with you both. Thanks for having me.

**Mitch Simon:** Great. It's great to have you on here. So, as we look at the end of 2022, what's most on your mind as you look at leadership at this point?

**Alex Budak:** I think what I'm most excited about is *helping individuals*. We ignite their *sense of agency*. We see things like *quiet quitting*. We see the *sense of purpose* people are looking for, and how we as leaders can help our teams and those around us recapture that sense of agency, that belief that we can make something happen from where we are.

**Mitch Simon:** I love that. I just met with a client and that someone who runs a big company and he said, Yeah, I'm looking at 2023. And he didn't use those words, but he's saying, I'm looking down the barrel of a recession and how can I have my team be ignited and excited and driven to really, you know, find themselves in this new point in time.

So, I love that. So, let's just hit the book. I wanna learn more about your book, *Becoming a Change Maker*. So, first of all, what is a changemaker?

**Alex Budak:** So, I define a changemaker in a radically inclusive way. *I simply define it as someone who leads positive change from wherever they are*. So, you'll see in the definition there's no mention of roles, no mention of titles, and I believe that, Nobel Prize winner has just as much claim to that title as an entry level product manager who's coming up with new ways of doing things.

*I see it as an inclusive identity that we can layer on top of our existing identities*. We can be an engineer changemaker, we can be a product manager, changemaker, an artistic changemaker. But at its core it's about recognizing opportunities to lead change from wherever we are and then seizing them.

**Mitch Simon:** So, tell us about your class, from what I've read, your class is full. It's a popular class. But anyways, I'll get over that. I get over that.

**Ginny Bianco-Mathis:** Now you're over. Good.

**Mitch Simon:** I'm over it. But tell us about how your class came to be you know, was it called changemaker and then the book came out and what is exciting your students about this class?

**Alex Budak:** Oh, it's just the greatest joy and privilege to get to teach this class. On days that I teach and today is one of them, I'm sometimes so lit up from teaching that I can't sleep at night because the energy in the classroom just so amazing.

Just what a joy spending time with these students. So yeah, we go back to 2018, when I had joined Berkeley Haas in a staff role and had a conversation with the person who oversees all the faculty and curriculum Mitch, not admissions. So, we had no idea about your admissions.

**Mitch Simon:** Right. Ok. You had nothing to do with it.

**Alex Budak:** And I was going to him for career advice, but I think he could tell my heart wasn't really in it. And so I remember his words. He said, but Alex, what do you really wanna do? I said, Well, what I really wanna do is teach. And I kind of assumed he would say, okay, we'll come back in 20 years. Or, you know, you don't have a PhD, but instead, so he said, okay, what do you wanna teach? And that moment became crystal clear for me. I said, I wanna teach becoming a changemaker. And he said, Okay, put together a syllabus, show it to me and we'll go from there. And so I shook his hand, I left out of my seat, walked outta the office, closed the door, and then immediately Googled how to create a syllabus.

'Cause I had no idea how to do that. So I, to figure out how to build the class. But it's the class that I wish I could have taken when I was beginning my own changemaker journey. So, it's grounded in the field of change management, but brings in leadership and innovation and social impact and entrepreneurship, guest speakers, hands-on exercises, case studies, empirical data, all with the goal of having people develop their own voice as a changemaker and lead change from where they are.

**Mitch Simon:** And what are you finding that the students are getting out of the class?

**Alex Budak:** So what's wonderful about being at Berkeley is I get to teach very distinct audiences. So, today I taught undergrads and with **undergraduates**, *they have this raw energy and enthusiasm for changing the world, but they need a little bit of guidance, they need a little bit of support, some scaffolding, some support, and kind of clarifying what is they wanna lead going from, hey, I wanna fix climate, to like, okay, what specific part of climate will you take action on?*

For my **MBAs**, a lot of them have just enough work experience to have experienced some bad leadership to help to try to change some of that. And also a couple of them have become a bit jaded and so to give them that sense of hope and optimism and that they can be that change.

And then for the **executives** that I teach, which is such a joy, with them, *it's helping them figure out, well, how do they build a culture of change making? How do they bring along a team of a hundred or 500 or a thousand folks and get this, sort of spirit, this ethos, these values of change making throughout a company?* And then how can they also shift a bit of their leadership to meet the needs of the moment?

**Mitch Simon:** Wow. So tell us about what is a changemaker mindset?

**Alex Budak:** Yeah, so the class that I teach, the book that I write is broken down into three parts. We've got *Changemaker mindset, changemaker leadership, and Changemaker action*. But it all starts with Changemaker mindset. So to me, that's the way that we see the world around us and our opportunities to shape and lead it.

I'm really inspired by the words of poet Amanda Gorman. So, she wrote the poem, *The Hill We Climb*, which she delivered at the inauguration of Biden and Harris. *And the final three lines, I think, encapsulate what it means to have a changemaker mindset. She says, **for there is always light, if we're brave enough to see it, and if we're brave enough to be it.***

For there is always light, that tomorrow can always be better than today. That there's always another path that's possible and that we can play a role in illuminating that path forward for those around us, if only we're brave enough to see it. To be able to see opportunities where others might only see challenges, to identify systems that are broken and need to be changed.

And then for brave enough to be it. So, it takes courage. It's not change thinking, it's change making. It's not enough to intellectually say, ah, you know, that could be better. But it's saying, no, I'm gonna roll up my sleeves. It's gonna be hard. Maybe it's gonna be scary, but I'm still I'm gonna find that courage to be the change because that's what we need.

**Ginny Bianco-Mathis:** I'm sensing, an incredible amount of positivity also, the light. So even with the challenges, the light should draw you towards the possibilities, the opportunities.

**Alex Budak:** Nicely said. Absolutely agree. Yeah. And I differentiate here. It's not toxic positivity, it's not pretending, oh, everything's fine like everything's good. No, it's really like based on the work of Sakara at George Mason, who talks about the three different types of flexibility. One, *keeping dispositional flexibility*. *This ability to simultaneously recognize that yes, things are hard, the challenges we're facing are real and substantive, and we can do something about it and tomorrow can be better. And I think that's a key changemaker trait.*

**Mitch Simon:** Do you teach courage or do you have courage because I'm sure that, you know, whether it's undergrad or let's say the cynical MBA or executives, you know, I was just with a client yesterday. I won't name the client, and there was a lot of cynicism, like, you know, okay, we've done all this work, thank you very much. But at the end of the day, now that we have a half an hour left, Mitch is, we can't change anything. So, how do you help, people to get that courage to go out and actually do something?

**Alex Budak:** It's been one of the interesting things in my teaching that when I ask students, you know, What did you take away from the class? Courage is one of the top things they take away. But I don't actively teach courage. I don't have a lecture on courage. I don't have a part of the class on courage. It's really woven and embedded throughout the entire class. So we talk a lot, for instance, about how do you learn to take those first scary, but important steps of change.

And I think we can learn a lot there from lean manufacturing, from the lean startup world that when we think about change, we can feel like, ooh, you know, if I don't fix all of climate myself, what am I doing? *And we can actually learn how we can break change down into small, meaningful, actionable steps and find a bit of courage, find those quick wins, find a bit of momentum and it doesn't have to be nearly as scary as it may seem at the beginning.*

**Mitch Simon:** Great. So through these principles, you actually get courage because you can now see I don't have to change the world. I just change one part.

Okay. You've done a lot of original research called the changemaker Index. So, tell us about that and some of the key findings that you discovered.

**Alex Budak:** Yeah, gladly. So, change making, I think is inspiring. But some of your listeners might say, Oh, sounds a little fuzzy. And I get that you know, I'm at Berkeley grounded in empirical research and data, and so I set out to do the first ever longitudinal study looking at can changemakers develop over time?

And the answer unequivocally is *yes they can*. But then also, what are some of the traits we see that the most effective changemakers have in common? We measure 25 different changemaker traits. But what are some of the keys that lead to greater development as a changemaker or the most effective changemakers have?

And one of the ones we've found in our research that stands out above the rest, that *the most effective changemakers are able to influence without formal authority*. It's a different way of thinking because I wonder how it was when you went to business school but the traditional way of thinking about business school is, okay, collect as much power and authority and formal titles as you can. Then once you get to that point, then you can leverage those. You can tell people what to do and that's how you get change to happen. But I think we're seeing that that's no longer the case. And so, the data show that influence is increasingly important.

**Ginny Bianco-Mathis:** Totally. The work on the definition of good power is getting thing done through others. The influencing, when I see a lot of young leaders, you know, think of it in terms of how can you influence this? Not, you know, Oh, I'm not a leader which you began with. Influencing tends to be a nice word that a lot of people can get hooked on when looking at change.

**Alex Budak:** I appreciate that, and I like the way you're talking about that definition of good power. But we also see, going back to the different distinct groups that I teach, influence matters to each of them. So, for the undergraduates, they're probably gonna take a role at a company where they're about as low down on the power hierarchy as you can be, right?

And so, they've gotta find ways so they can influence from where they are. Then with the MBAs, you know, they're stepping into kind of a mid-management role and they've gotta be able to influence both up and down and horizontally, lateral leadership. And then for the executives, you know, the ones that have amassed this power, they're starting to realize, hey, I told my team what to do and they didn't do it.

**Ginny Bianco-Mathis:** I sent the email.

**Alex Budak:** Yeah. What happened? Until they realized that, yeah, even if you do have that formal power, that formal authority influence don't matters to get things done.

**Mitch Simon:** What are some of the concepts that you teach, to these three groups to actually be able to influence? Is it that you have more power than you think you do? I don't know if your research has shown that where do you, you know, help them start from the man and the woman on the bottom of the totem pole who hasn't really, you know, formally joined the company yet to the person who has the title but can't get people to change what they do?

**Alex Budak:** Yeah, the way I like to focus on is what I call influence superpowers. And you know, when we often learn influence, at least some of the books that I've read, it can feel a little bit sleazy, can feel a little transactional. You know, you can learn like the reciprocity effect. So like, I do something nice for you, and then you feel like, well, I don't actually like this guy Alex, but I feel pressure, I have to do something nice for him. And that's how we often learn influence.

Instead, I like to think about influence in terms of how can we influence sustainably for the long term and invite people into the change with us. And so, I have **five influence superpowers**. So, the 1.) *First is **empathy**, being able to put yourself in someone else's shoes and sounds obvious, but Patty Sanchez did research and wrote in Harvard Business Review that 50% of C-Suite executives when they're leading change, they don't actually take into account how people on the front lines will perceive that change.* Again, it's not enough to just be right. You've gotta think about, well, how are they be perceiving it.

2.) *Secondly, **relationships**. This is the epitome of a long term play. It doesn't happen overnight, but sometimes people will support you simply because they know that they care about you. They like you.* You know, I think about a friend of mine who recently reached out asking me to support him in running a race to raise money for a rare cancer that had affected a loved one. I said, yes, absolutely in a second. I was happy to support him. But honestly, I support him mostly because I care about him as a friend, our relationship, not specifically because of that rare disease.

**Mitch Simon:** That's great.

**Alex Budak:** 3.) *Thirdly, **vision**. Vision here I like to talk about is painting a picture of the future that's so compelling that people can't help but wanna be part of it.* And when we try to influence, I think especially in more traditional corporate settings, it's important you paint that picture and you help people see how their work, their contribution connects to that hope. There's a story, which I think it's probably apocryphal, but it's still a great story nonetheless, and it showcases this concept.

The story goes that a journalist was walking the halls of NASA and she asked the janitor, What do you do for a living? And to be clear, janitors do really important and totally undervalued work, but he says, look, I help launch rocket ships into space. That's right. That's a guy that's so bought into the vision. He understands how his work connects to that larger goal.

4.) *Fourthly, **passion**. So here's where authenticity matters. You can't fake passion, but if you truly are passionate about it, it helps people feel like they're part of something bigger than themselves. Find a sense of purpose, get excited about the work that they do.*

And the 5.) *Fifth and final one is **safety**. Some of us will be more excited about change. Others, you know, as the researchers, Samuelson and Zach Houser show status quo bias is very real. People tend to overvalue what we have and maintain the status quo. And so, some people will feel reticent to be part of change.*

And so, one of the techniques I've learned to use is to say, look, *I know that you're probably skeptical of this, I get it. But if you come along with me, here's my promise. If it works out, I promise you will get the praise. And if it doesn't work, I promise I will take the blame.* That's a small way I can make it safe for someone else to be part of the change efforts with me.

**Mitch Simon:** I wanna be in your class, Alex, where do I sign up? It's so clear and concise and precise.

**Alex Budak:** Well, thanks. Well, if you wanna be in the class, I'll tell you, this is the assignment we do to go practice it. So I tell people, Okay, you've got a few minutes. Go leave the classroom and you have to go find a complete stranger. And you have to get them to record a hype video for you. So get a stranger to record a video saying this is why I deserve an A in the class. And when you do so, you've gotta use your influence superpowers. So, you've gotta use your influence to convince this complete stranger to be on a video. And then also gotta coach 'em up and say, look, that was good, but bring some more passion in to it. Bring some more vision into it.

**Mitch Simon:** That is good stuff.

**Ginny Bianco-Mathis:** All right. I'll steal that. Thank you.

**Mitch Simon:** Yeah, it's stolen, It's done. it's in your class next month. Great. In the changemaker mindset, obviously, if you're gonna go out there and change

the world, you're gonna flop on your face a lot. So how do you teach your students to fail forward?

**Alex Budak:** Oh, that's another one of my favorite exercises that we do. Yeah. We spend a class talking about failure, about failing forward. We do some case studies. We look at empirical data, and at this point everyone's kind of intellectually understood. Okay. Failure matters. Yeah. But then I pop up a slide, which just has two words.

It just says, go fail. And students kind of look around like, what's going on? And I say, okay, here are the instructions. You have 15 minutes. You have to go leave the classroom and you can't come back until you've asked for something and been rejected.

**Mitch Simon:** Yes.

**Alex Budak:** You have to purposely get a no. And so, you can imagine these high achieving Berkeley students who mostly have gotten where they are by doing the right thing by not failing a whole lot. This is really, really uncomfortable to them. They start turning red. They start, you know, sweating. They realize it's an assignment, so you know, they leave the classroom and they sort of shuffle their feet out as they go reluctantly. But then when they come back, the energy is just off the charts. They are so lit up from this experience.

And we find that *two things* happens for about one third of students. They ask for something, they're sure that they'll get rejected and actually get a yes.

**Mitch Simon:** One third. You say, ask for something actually the person says yes.

**Alex Budak:** They get the ridiculous thing. Yeah. They get it.

**Ginny Bianco-Mathis:** Yeah. Yeah. Well that's, you know, that's what they tell, a lot of folks to do. And when you're trying to raise money or you work for an association, you're surprised at what you'll get if you just ask .

**Mitch Simon:** What are some crazy things that your students have gotten that they were darn sure they would not get?

**Alex Budak:** Well, a funny one was a woman went to the, cafe downstairs and said, hi, could I have an orange juice for free? And he said, yeah. Okay. And

she said, Oh, could I have two? And he said, Okay. And then finally she said three. And he said, no. He cut her off at two. That was really nice.

**Ginny Bianco-Mathis:** That's great example.

**Mitch Simon:** It's good.

**Alex Budak:** Another one, which is a gutsy one, which I really like, she walked into the school gym and she asked the person at the front desk, hey, could I get on the PA you know, on the microphone? And she announced, hi, it's not my birthday, but will you please sing Happy Birthday to me. And she got a gym of like 75 people to all sing her happy birthday, not on her birthday.

**Mitch Simon:** That's great. So she got a yes. Damn it, I failed the assignment.

**Ginny Bianco-Mathis:** That's right.

**Alex Budak:** Yes.

**Ginny Bianco-Mathis:** Well, I have used that one and I have to share my funny one. So, one of the guys go out and, just randomly chooses someone in the parking lot and, says, It's my birthday, today, will you kiss me? And the woman did.

**Mitch Simon:** That's so great. .

**Ginny Bianco-Mathis:** I mean, I mean a real kiss, not just a peck on the—

**Mitch Simon:** really, a real kiss.

**Ginny Bianco-Mathis:** Yeah.

**Mitch Simon:** Wow. That's great. Can we end this on a higher note? I don't know that's just fantastic.

**Alex Budak:** I can also go back and just close the failure exercise. Cause again, talk about with the other two-thirds of students experience, that's,

**Ginny Bianco-Mathis:** Oh, that's good. Yeah.

**Mitch Simon:** All right. Yeah, why don't you go ahead and just continue with some other failure you've seen.

**Alex Budak:** So, one-third or so get what they think they wouldn't get. *And then the other two-thirds, they come back and they've asked for something and they've gotten rejected, right? They get the no, but they come back and they realize that failure isn't fatal.*

*And they come back with a bit more confidence because they realize no one laughed at them. You know, they survived to tell the tale and they actually feel good about themselves because they had the courage to step out on the line a little bit and ask for something. And we see that oftentimes those small asks they make in this class can often get them that level of comfort to ask for bigger things that really matters to them down the line.*

**Mitch Simon:** Yeah, it's interesting. I can't remember who the researcher was who wrote about it, but we catastrophize the future and we say, well, if I were to do this, it would be horrible. But what you actually found, Alex, is that someone says, Oh, that would be hard for me to do.

That would be a complete failure. I feel horrible. But then they do it, they fail. And like that wasn't so bad, right?

**Alex Budak:** Exactly right. And sometimes there's other things that come out as a result. I think about one student who went up to a construction worker and said, hey, that's a cool bulldozer, can I drive it? And the guy thankfully said no but it led to a conversation and you know, they talked about construction. He learned a little bit, just in those five minute conversations they had. It was an opening. He got the rejection, but also he got a little insight as well.

**Mitch Simon:** Yeah. Which is, you're gonna learn things along the way.

**Ginny Bianco-Mathis:** Question I have, is, Alex, is, do you ever address the language of change? and what is making me ask that question is, you talked about, paint a picture in terms of the vision, influencing, which usually does have a language component to it. I'm sharing this and asking this only because I have found, I've been collecting phrases that tend to influence better, you know, that whole dialogue, kind of how to say it in such a way that you engage the person to go down the path with you.

**Alex Budak:** It's a great and thoughtful question. Thank you for asking it. Yeah. I'm not an expert in this, but like you, I sort of have picked up things along the

way and I think at first when I began as a social entrepreneur, I really wasn't thinking about it. I was just thinking about, you know, get things done.

But we had an interesting finding. So, what we found is that on our website start some good, which helps people raise money for their social enterprises. We would have people fill who wanted to raise money, they'd answer two questions. What's the problem you're solving and what's your solution? Very simple. If you were to say, you know, what would the questions be, you'd probably come up with those.

But we worked with a social scientist named Hildy Gottlieb, and she is a big believer in the power of language, and she helped us realize we were asking the wrong questions that when you think about problem and solution, basically you're already going is from negative one to zero, what's the problem? And then fix that problem.

Instead with her, we realized, *let's ask different questions, and so, the questions we asked instead are, what's the future that you're creating? And how are you creating it?* Same concept, right? It's getting the same answer, but in a very different way. And then we measured and we found that donations went way up when we used that language instead. So, that was my first introduction to the power of language in realizing—

**Ginny Bianco-Mathis:** Fabulous. Yeah, the whole appreciative inquiry. Not looking at it as a problem, looking at it as, Oh, it's wonderful what's happening here now, how are you gonna get there? Explain that to us, And that kind of take on it.

**Mitch Simon:** In your book, you write about a concept called micro leadership. Tell us about micro leadership and how we can put that into practice.

**Alex Budak:** This is what I'm passionate about. So I think when we talk about leadership, we often tell the story of leadership through the lens of the single heroic leader.

We think of [inaudible] as a scaling the fence. We think about Steve Jobs pulling the iPhone out of his pocket. And to be clear, there's a role for that type of transformational leadership that matters. But oftentimes when we put that type of leader up on a pedestal, we kind of look around and go woe, I'm not naturally extroverted like them.

I'm not naturally as charismatic as them. Does that mean that I can't be a leader? But no, I think that it's because we've made a mistake. *I think that leaders might be scarce, but leadership is abundant.* There may only be one CEO or five executive vice presidents in a company, *but leadership is something that each of us can practice.*

*And leadership is not about titles, rather it's about acts.* And so, **micro leadership** breaks leadership down into its smallest meaningful unit, which I call a leadership moment. If you think about it, we have dozens of these leadership moments that appear around us every day. It might be in a meeting you recognize that a colleague has been sort of quiet and you say, hey, you know, no pressure, but we haven't heard your voice. Would you like to share your perspective?

Or maybe it's having the courage to say no, when everyone else is saying, yes. Or maybe it's staying up late to help a new colleague clean up after their first event. These are all tiny little leadership moments, and they appear before us dozens of times per day. But through the lens of micro leadership, we can say, Look, I might not be the CEO, might not even be a vice president or a manager, but I can seize those leadership moments.

I can do something about it. *And I think the world and our ability to lead change in it changes drastically when we stop waiting for a title and instead we think about seizing those moments that are around us every day.*

**Ginny Bianco-Mathis:** You seen the work of Drew Dudley and he calls them lollipop moments.

**Alex Budak:** I love Drew Dudley actually signed that, his video, his TED Talk in my class. It's a beautiful, beautiful video.

**Mitch Simon:** So, you spoke about just now about seizing the moment. What holds a lot of us back from taking action on our ideas?

**Alex Budak:** Oftentimes it's the first thing is we're waiting for permission. We're waiting for someone to come in and be like, Okay, Mitch. Yep. Time for you to go do your thing but chances are if we keep waiting for someone else to give us permission, we'll be waiting a long time. I love the work done by Hermione Ibarra, at University College of London, and she wrote a great book called Act Like a Leader, Think Like a Leader.

So, often we think we've got a sit a room, come up with, this is our leadership style, get it perfect and then we go lead. She says, No, you've gotta actually just start leading, like start leading, get feedback, you know, of course be open to that, but start leading.

*And so, I think we need to have that bias that instead of waiting for someone else to give us permission, you know, if there's one takeaway that your listeners get from this today, hope, it's that they'll leave this with that permission to give it to themselves and say, Yeah, I can be a changemaker. I can go lead change. I don't need anyone else's permission to at least get started, than myself.*

**Ginny Bianco-Mathis:** Fabulous.

**Mitch Simon:** That's beautiful. So you like changemaker Canvas tool. So, what's the purpose of the tool and, and what can it help us do?

**Alex Budak:** It's what I've learned in working with thousands of changemakers all around the world is that those first steps of change can feel really overwhelming and it honestly doesn't matter how experienced you are.

It always feels overwhelming when it comes to change. And so, inspired by other tools like the Business Model Canvas, which maybe some of your listeners have used. *It breaks change down into small, meaningful, actionable steps.* So, it helps you deeply understand the problem, understand the core problem, the consequences, the root causes, helps you understand, you know, who are the people you will involve in this and in different ways everywhere from the core team to the evangelist.

Helps you connect with your why. Why are you leading this change? What's your minimum viable product gonna be? You know, what's that simplest test? So it helps you break change down into small steps, and you take time up front to work through this. There's a logic to it. There's a flow to it. There's clarity that comes from it.

*And then the biggest gift is that once you finish this canvas, the idea of leading change shifts from being a strategy question to simply an execution question.* You no longer need to be paralyzed by fear because when you finish the canvas, you know what you have to do, and then all you have to do is just summon that little bit of courage to take that first step. So, it helps make change something that is accessible to all of us.

**Mitch Simon:** Yeah. And I do think what holds people back is it's just the first step, the intent, the immensity of it all. And so, people just stop. So, I could see how a tool could definitely help you. Now, do you happen to have a favorite changemaker that you admire?

**Alex Budak:** What a tough question to answer because there are so many that inspire me, but I guess if I had to choose one, I go back to my childhood. So, my very favorite changemaker is Jackie Robinson. So, Jackie Robinson, of course, broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball. Like me, he's also a UCLA alum, so I think that's part of why I always—

**Mitch Simon:** Yeah, Bruins. Woo-hoo see, I knew we did the Bruins in there.

**Alex Budak:** Yeah. But I think what I deeply admired him, of course Jackie was an incredible athlete, you know, four sport athlete, But so much of what made him successful were some of these kind of intangible changemaker qualities. That it wasn't just about his ability to run the bases or to throw the ball.

It was about his courage, his charisma, his drive, his determination, his even keel, his humility. These are all traits that each of us can learn. Each of us can practice. And so I think the fact that it's, of course, his natural talent that was important, but it's these kind of other factors that put him over the top that I find really inspiring.

**Mitch Simon:** All right, so you have shared with us today a change tool influence superpowers, some incredible great questions, you know, what's the future you're creating and how are you creating it? Leadership moments. Leadership is about those moments as opposed to being, you know, just the grandiose leader you have just kind of

The sense of agency. I mean, everything is all in this podcast today. So, if I'm listening, I just want to find out more, like how can I reach out to you? how can I find out more of the book? What must I do to, get a piece of you, Alex.,

**Alex Budak:** Thanks. Yeah. To learn more about the book, you can go to [changemakerbook.com](http://changemakerbook.com) and I love connecting with Changemakers, so find me on LinkedIn, Alex Budak, which is my main social network, as well as on Instagram @alexbudak, and let me know how I can support you in your changemaker efforts and keep me updated on how you put some of the ideas, would love to hear from you.

**Mitch Simon:** Great. Alex, thank you so much. Thank you for your generosity. Thank you for some incredible insights. Thank you Ginny, as always for, being such incredible co-host. And thank you to our listeners, if you've loved this podcast, which I really have, please.

**Ginny Bianco-Mathis:** Very inspiring.

**Mitch Simon:** Yes. Share this with your friends, your colleagues, your family, and, we look forward to seeing you next time on the next episode of Team Anywhere.