

# ***EEP 112- Chris L. Johnson: When Leaders Pause, They Win***

## **SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

pause, people, triggers, leaders, empathy, work, feel, book, business, practice, leadership, maria, life, chris, team, absolutely, relationships, learn, body, create

## **SPEAKERS**

Maria Ross, Speaker X- Dr. Chris Johnson

### **Maria Ross 00:02**

So, we know that when things like adrenaline and cortisol are really, really high, they narrow our focus. And when those dissipate the other stress hormones like oxytocin can come in and help us to be wanting to connect with other people, we have more access to our inner resources at that point. So that's why it's like the pause. This is really, really simple. But we drive right through it most of the time, most days and we're often at the mercy of external stuff, versus I get to choose how I want to show up and I'd like to show up in a more settled present way with you, whoever you are in my life, my colleague, my direct report, my boss, etcetera.

### **Maria Ross 01:31**

If you're an ambitious hard driving leader never stops to take a breath. You need to listen to today's episode. Pausing as a leader is vital to making better decisions, regulating your emotions and creating stronger relationships with your team so they can perform. You may think that rapid pace is the way to find success, but it will just burn you and your team out. today. My guest is Dr. Chris L. Johnson, author of the leadership paws, navigating the future with clarity, focus and empathy. She's devoted her life to the deep listening that underpins what matters most in people's lives. She's the founder of Q4 Consulting, a Chicago based consulting firm, committed to cultivating exemplary leaders, collaborative teams, healthy workplaces, and engaged thriving communities, and experienced psychologist, mindfulness teacher and executive leadership coach. She's known for creating trust with those who value her honesty, deep listening and commitment to their success. Chris is also the chair of conscious capitalism, Chicago and on the leadership team at Elevate Chicago. Today we talk about why she chose pausing as the topic of her leadership book, why pausing is both mental and physical, and why it's simple, but not easy. We discuss the benefits of pausing both for you as a leader and an individual, but also for your team's performance. And we dive deep into the connection between triggers, and mindful pausing, and why being unable to stop long enough to recognize your triggers can lead to disastrous results, personally and professionally. Take a listen.

**Maria Ross** 03:12

Chris Johnson, welcome to the show, Dr. Chris Johnson. Welcome to the empathy edge. We're so happy to have you and I'm so excited to talk about the importance of leaders taking a pause. I think this is underrated, and much maligned by ambitious, go getter leaders, and you are here to tell us why that is wrong wrong wrong.

**Dr. Chris Johnson** 03:36

I'll give it a shot. Because I actually believe it's really essential for all of us, who aspire to lead in any way that we're leading. The PTA, your church community, a big corporate. Yes, I think it's yes,

**Maria Ross** 03:50

all of the things. I love it. I love it so much. So just quickly before we dive into the topic of your book, the leadership pause navigating the future with clarity, focus and empathy, which is why we're here. But before we get into that, how did you get into this work of devoting your life to to deep listening and helping create exemplary leaders?

**Dr. Chris Johnson** 04:16

Well, the short answer, Maria is that I grew up with two amazing entrepreneurial parents, who were busy all the time, worked really hard, and tended to fight a lot. And so, as a kid, I was at the mercy my sister and I have a lot of contentious difficulty, and I learned from there to really, really listen and there was made more complicated by the fact that my dad had a really severe stutter. So, you could only imagine what the fights were like and what they sounded like with somebody who couldn't get his words across very clearly.

**Maria Ross** 04:51

That must have been painful. I mean, painful for for everyone painful for him and not being able to communicate exactly what he wanted to communicate and yeah, painful to hear. You know, I always I always like in when you're when you're hearing an argument or you're hearing like a contentious conversation, and it's almost like you see the trains colliding. Yeah, there's nothing you can do to stop it. It's almost like, oh, I can see where the miscommunication is between these two, like, I can see it see it plain as day, but they can't. Exactly well.

**Dr. Chris Johnson** 05:21

And when you're a kid, you know, so often kids are kind of dismissed as they don't know what's going on. But kids are really keen to tune in to energy. And so, I think early on that kind of set the stage and the answer that I would say, or then I thought at the time was there's got to be a better way. And so even as a, as a little kid, I was tuned into how do we talk to each other? How do we have conversations that matter, and even get kind of heated and still stay in the fray, to connect with one another. And so, it started really early. And then fast forward through my career, meeting all kinds of folks where the the common denominator in, regardless of whatever the work that we do in the world, is that we have to deal with each other as people. So, and that's where the rub is. And so that's where the opportunity is to. And so, conversations and empathic conversations are really, really essential to good leadership.

**Maria Ross** 06:17

and I'm so curious, because you're an experienced psychologist, you are a, an executive leadership coach, you're a mindfulness teacher, and you choose to work in the corporate realm, rather than, you know, personal, you know, with marriage counseling, or families or individuals. I'm curious was that a, was that an intentional decision, or did sort of opportunity drive you into seeing the need being greater in organizations?

**Dr. Chris Johnson** 06:44

You know, I think it's a little bit of both, if I'm honest, so I have a lot of experience working with couples and individuals and all of that. But a lot of the folks that I would meet individually, whether in a couple relationship, or personally, would often talk about what was going on at work. And early on in my career, I worked in corporate wellness, that's what we would call it today. And from that vantage point, we know that when there's contention, it rises increases our blood pressure, right. And so, I really believe that business is a force for good in the world. And I am a conscious capitalist. And so, I really believe that there's a way to do really effective business and be on purpose. So, one of the best ways to have scale impact is to work with those leaders who are going to have impact broadly. So, it's great if I can help somebody out in the consultation room. But it's even more effective if I can work with leaders who are going to have a greater reach in the world that they live in.

**Maria Ross** 07:45

I love that. And you know, we do spend the bulk of our time at work and we do this we are finally finally finally coming to this realization that work impacts life impacts work impacts life, there's no there's no concept of separating, you know, your work self from your personal self. I mean, there's definitely things you would maybe do at home that you wouldn't do at work. But this idea of having that be completely separate, which is by the way, the premise of the amazingly creepy show severance if you haven't seen that, Oh, yeah. About people that I've mentioned this on another podcast episode. The premise is that there's this corporation that has implanted a chip in their employees. So when you when you go to work, when you get in the elevator, you completely don't know anything about your life outside of work. And my goodness, leave you all you know, is that you work there when you leave. You don't know what you've done who your workmates are, they've completely separated personal and business.

**Dr. Chris Johnson** 08:44

Wow, yeah,

**Maria Ross** 08:46

Creep tastic. But anyway,

**Dr. Chris Johnson** 08:48

It sounds creep tastic. And you know what, that sounds a lot like what the predominant way of viewing business has been for the last 50 plus years, which is we've got to separate these two. And it's fundamentally impossible. We are not wired that way as humans. No.

**Maria Ross** 09:04

That's not how our brains work. That's not how you know, when we're emotionally suffering or suffering at home or dealing with a host of challenges. We take that into work with us, and also people that have very stressful, toxic dysfunctional workplaces. Bring that home and do you know, bring it out on their families or their children or their neighbors? And so the two are absolutely intertwined, because it's still us the common denominators, it's still us doing those things. They're just different activities that we do during the day, right? That's right. I love that you are actually using your powers in the organizational realm your superpowers because like I said, it is just fascinating to me why there's some psychologists that choose to stay go in one path, and those others that go in another way. And I think, you know, organizational psychology, for lack of a better word is so lack of a better phrase is so important because we need to have that understanding of the dynamics and the relationships and the communication that happens at work where these are not necessarily people we have chosen, correct in this, whatever they are, like you said, whether it's the PTA, or it's the, or it's your workplace, or it's your, you know, your church or your hobbyist group, they're not necessarily the people you're naturally drawn to, or that have everything in common with you, or that have a familial bond with you. And we have to learn how to navigate that. And that's why I'm so impressed with the idea of empathy and what it can do for just bringing a group of people together to be more productive.

**Dr. Chris Johnson** 10:43

Yes, I couldn't agree more. And I think what's happened over the last two and a half years now with this bloody pandemic, is that we have felt the effects of the isolation, I would say that there's a mental health crisis, it's just right at the edge of our awareness, with people not really knowing how to, to reconnect after the pandemic, and people are now going back to work. And if it showed us anything, it showed us many, many things. But one would be the power of empathy, to connect with people right at the edge of what's really important and how it's essential every day, and how we work together, whether, again, in all of our workplaces, and then how we bring that home or not. Empathy is really, really critical and will continue to be increasingly critical, because the VUCA world problems are not getting any smaller, anytime soon.

**Maria Ross** 11:35

Exactly. So why did you choose pause as the key topic of your book for leaders? What have you seen in terms of their response to the word pause?

**Speaker X- Dr. Chris Johnson** 11:46

Well, that's those are two separate in totally,

**Maria Ross** 11:48

Totally, totally interrelated, separate. I do that all the time. Yeah.

**Dr. Chris Johnson** 11:53

Well, so what was happening? So, as you mentioned, I teach mindfulness, I've been doing that for almost 25 years, teaching it formally and informally, in the community and in the organizations that I've

worked with. And then I also given my history with to entrepreneurial parents, I am one of those hard driving professional people who wants is very ambitious, wants to go places and get things done. And I was seeing people in my office in these courses in the trainings, who are leaders but could not a they couldn't slow down. And even when they did slow down, they were still ruminating way up in their heads about all this stuff to be done. All that kind of thing. And what I quickly discovered, and they discovered, which was even better, was that once we could pause and really sit with our bodies, these vessels that we use through life, they could start to calm down their psycho biology in such a way that it cleared the chemical toxins, if you want to say, the neural hormones that are about stress, it allowed those to dissipate. So, they could be more clear headed, they felt calmer, they could connect with the people around them, they could actually see a bigger vision. So, we know that when things like adrenaline and cortisol are really, really high, they narrow our focus. And when those dissipate the other stress hormones, like oxytocin can come in and help us to be wanting to connect with other people. And we have more access to our inner resources at that point. So that's why it's like the pause. This is really, really simple. But we drive right through it most of the time, most days. And we're often at the mercy of external stuff, versus I get to choose how I want to show up and I'd like to show up in a more settled, present way with you, whoever you are in my life, my colleagues, my direct report, my boss, etc.

**Maria Ross** 13:55

Can you describe how mindful pausing is both mental and physical? And why it matters? Because everything that you're saying is about, there's so many people that nod their heads and say that's a great idea. But then when people actually go to pause themselves, it's it's often not very successful. And I say this as someone who struggles with it sometimes as like a type A, you know, I think I'm pausing. But I'm not really pausing, right, I think because I'm sitting still, or I don't have my laptop in front of me. So, talk to us about both the mental and the physical aspect of positive.

**Dr. Chris Johnson** 14:29

Yeah, I will. And let me just say one thing before I answer that question, because it's related, you asked like, why do people struggle so much with a pause? I think paws gets a bad rap. Because for those of us who are ambitious and want to go places, and all of that, which is the preponderant view in the marketplace and with professionals today, we think of a pause is I have to stop something. And you I can't I don't want to stop because I don't want to stop the momentum of where I'm going. And so, it's had a bad rap actually. it, and I write about that in the book like this is kind of how we tend to think of it. So mentally, it's like, can we open up to well, maybe the pause is actually a really good thing, right. And then there's this phenomenon, both in breathing and in pausing. Both of those activities, if you will, are both conscious and unconscious. So, I can consciously take a breath, or take a pause. But they also if I'm caught up in what I'm doing today, or I'm on a creative project, I can also go unconscious, and I'll still breathe, and we still actually take pauses, but we're not as aware of them. So this idea of, of beginning to pause, and there are different lengths of pausing. But beginning to pause, is about a full body practice. So initially, I have to decide that I want to take on this practice and see what happens. And I encourage people to experiment. So, like if you and I were working together and say, okay, so you think it's a hard time to pause, you're probably right, so let's just practice experimenting with pause. And I would give you some directive about how to practice it and see what happened for you. But it's physical in that once we start pausing, the opportunity isn't if we can tune into the physical sensations in the body, and drop from our thinking mind into our felt sense mind and our heart, which is where

empathy, when we many say live there, then we can start to feel into ourselves. So, it's both a mental choice, I'm going to pause and drop out of the thinking, because we get caught up in this monkey mind, and then drop into the body, and the sensations that allows us to start to shift gears. If somebody's new to pausing, it might take a little bit of practice to actually feel the difference. But once people get a taste of it, it's like, oh, no, this is much better. So, I led a session yesterday with a big company in downtown Chicago. And we did about a 92nd pause, practice near the end of the day. And I had a couple people say, Oh, my God, I feel like I went got a massage, right? Because it can happen like that quickly. But but it takes a little bit of patience with ourselves. And for those of us who are ambitious, we just want to get it right away. And sometimes it takes a little while.

**Maria Ross 17:21**

Absolutely. I was just on a virtual summit this morning that started out with some deep breathing and setting intention. And I thought to myself how wonderful it is that used to be so fringe. Yeah, there's three or five years ago, that would be like, What is this woowoo business thing I'm on?

**Dr. Chris Johnson 17:39**

That's right.

**Maria Ross 17:40**

And I loved that it was we were we were all in? We're like, Yeah, of course, we need to be present during this virtual Summit. Like, of course, we're gonna take a few deep breaths and move our bodies a little bit. And, and I just thought, like how, you know, years ago, people would have said that that was just wacky.

**Dr. Chris Johnson 17:57**

And it wasn't, it wasn't that long ago that people would have said It's wacky just two years ago, you're absolutely right.

**Maria Ross 18:04**

No, and I even you know, even in some of my workshops, my brand workshops with clients, you know, if, if things are getting too tense, or things are getting contentious, or even if I just feel people slipping away, you know, I'll go okay, let's, let's just stand up for a second. And let's take a deep breath. And I know you're talking about pausing in in much deeper ways. But and that's perfectly acceptable now, for us to do that in the middle of a business meeting. Whereas before people have been like, what's going on here?

**Dr. Chris Johnson 18:31**

Right? That's right. That's right. Well, you know what, I think we forget the fact that we are mammals. And as mammals, we need to recalibrate our we need rest and renewal, just like we need to eat and sleep and all of that sort of stuff. And we tend to forget it, we live very much from the neck up. And once we start tuning into why do I have a body and it actually takes a hit from stress if I don't pay attention to it? And it's, it's come into the space a lot more through health and wellness that we now know, like, Oh, this is just good health. It's not to even mental health, it's good health, to practice some of this right. So,



I'm really glad that it's showing up in business, because I think it's going to make a difference in the long haul.

**Maria Ross 19:15**

Absolutely. And how do you think that pausing benefits leaders, so give us maybe some stories, and some examples of shifts that you've seen with leaders that you've worked with, where you've taught them how to take a pause? And as an addendum because I keep doing this to you? I asked two questions in one. Give us some examples of what pausing looks like I think, again, in theory, people are on board and they're like, I don't know what I'm supposed to do. Am I supposed to just when you say pause, am I supposed to just do deep breathing? Am I supposed to go meditate? Am I supposed to put my laptop away? Like What? What? What have you done with your clients where you've seen these transformations? What are some little nuggets you can share?

**Dr. Chris Johnson 20:00**

While all those examples you just gave could be examples of a pause, so I'll just say that. But what I can say is I think of a guy named Derek, I have permission to use his name. He was worked in environmental company; he was a general manager at the time that I worked with him. And he was, so go, go go, like, let's get out ahead of this. Let's work with this. And let's get every he was a lot of driver kind of energy. And what happened as a result of that is he would get the kind of face on that was like, Oh, I'm really serious. And I'm driving. And he was coming across with his people as abrasive and as pushy, and a little bit of a bully right now sitting down talking to him. That was not where his heart was, and what he valued. But that's how he was coming across. And so, one of the first things I did was he was telling a story, and talking about how it was going on, not very well out there with his people. And I said, right now, just pause and take a breath. And then I want you to sit back in your seats. And I want you to feel your bum in the seat. And I just want you to put your attention on your breath, at your nose. And that's all I want you to do is to let yourself breathe, but I want you to feel what it's like to feel the pause at your breath at your nose. And within about 30 seconds. It's kind of magical, actually, Maria, within about 30 seconds, his shoulder started to relax. So, his shoulders weren't up by his ears, you could see him visibly start to relax because his body was a getting more oxygen be he was being intentional. And see he was tuning into sensations that are happening in real time. And when they happen in real time, it's hard not to be present with that. Right? Right. So, he went on, we worked together. Eventually, we did that practice, I taught him a standing series of pause practices, because he was up and around all the time. And so, I taught him how to actually pause. At some places like the doorknob, or when he went into particular rooms, he would just do a 20 to 32nd Pause recenter go in. And every time we do that kind of reset, it isn't just mental, it resets our biology. And when it does that, we have again, more access to the resources that all of us bring to the table in the first place. So, what I can say is there are tons of health and wellness benefits, certainly resilience, reducing stress would be another one. But our capacity to focus and direct our attention, our capacity to have mental flexibility, when we're in conversations with people to regulate our own emotional state. And in fact, I think that's one of the most important things is learning to pause helps us regulate our emotions. So, whether we're stressed or irritable, whatever it is, we have more choice, and we can be much more effective there. And then of course, it affects leadership in terms of decision making, strategic thinking all of that. So, I don't know if that's enough of an example, I have,

**Maria Ross** 23:15

oh, my gosh, no, I think it's great. And I think it's really a great understanding of both the personal benefit that a leader can experience by pausing. But just listening to your story, I can totally connect the dots and see how his team morale would go up. Oh, yeah, with that, with that kind of shift with that kind of, Oh, I feel like he's present. I feel like he's listening to me. I feel like he's less abrasive than he was yesterday. Yes, those are all good things for getting your team to perform at their optimal level.

**Dr. Chris Johnson** 23:47

That's exactly right. And by the end of and we work together almost a year. And by the end, people were coming to him to seek out advice versus kind of, you know, cringing when he would walk by. And so but I mean, that was very palpable. And those were very objective data points for him. It's like, oh, this really matters. And here's the thing, it doesn't cost a lot. It takes the cost of choosing and taking the time to learn some of this. And then building on that kind of like going to the gym, you don't start with the 50-pound weight, you start with, you know, the smaller weights, you build up. And it made a world of difference. And I have scads of stories that I write about in the book with different pause practices so that folks can take it on and experiment. Maybe this could work for me, right?

**Maria Ross** 24:33

Yeah, exactly. And also, I like how you brought up the fact that it's not just about because some people also shy away from this as a leader because it's like, well, I don't really care what my people think, and they just need to get their jobs done and done it. But you've also focused on the benefits to the leader being able to do their job well to being able to be clear headed enough to make good decisions so they can perform and achieve their goals as an individual leader, you know, there's there's, there's so much goodness there individually and with the group that they're leading. So, I like that you bring that aspect into it, which is what makes the book so exciting. Can you can you share the important connection between triggers? And a mindful pause?

**Dr. Chris Johnson** 25:21

Yeah, great question, right. So as human animals, we get triggered all the time. And when I say triggered, I mean that it kind of takes us out of the moment, were caught off guard, and we're reactive, our biology is reactive, because we need to attend to safety. That's one of the primary things that we all need as human beings. But then we want to stay connected. And so, if you and I are in a bit of a tiff with each other, you say something to me, and I get triggered, I'm reactive, probably because I either care about you, and or I care about the thing that you're talking about. And or we share a similar value set. So, when we're triggered, and this is the cool thing about triggers, triggers are normal, and we ought not try to squash them. What we, what, what we do want to do is learn from that. And so, a trigger as I talked about in the book is actually a way in to learning a lot more about ourselves and the strategies that used to work that ones that got us here, and how to sort through those strategies. So, we can leave the old ones behind, and then take up new practices so we can move forward in our leadership. So, a trigger by pausing, and actually looking at my triggers, what you said to me that I'm reacting to, for example, and if I can tune into my body, touch in with my heart, like, what do I really care about that Maria just said to me, and then I can get more clear headed to like, Oh, she has a good point. I just didn't like it. But it's a good point. Or I still think she's full of beans, but I don't have to react like a



nutcase. Right, I can stay present with her. So, triggers can be really useful to learning about ourselves. And taking a pause allows us the space to do that.

**Maria Ross** 27:22

I feel like understanding our triggers is one of the like, saviors of human relationships, honestly. Because I, I've done in recent years, I've really tried to examine my triggers what has made me snap at somebody what has made me what has made my blood start to boil?

**Dr. Chris Johnson** 27:41

Yeah

**Maria Ross** 27:41

And being able to take a second to go, this is what I'm feeling physiologically right now. Why is it because of what Chris just said or because of what it reminded me of?

**Dr. Chris Johnson** 27:54

Great

**Maria Ross** 27:54

You know, so and it's so funny. And, you know, I'm not, I don't want to pretend I'm Zen about it. Like, I still have my triggers and don't understand them all the time. But my husband and I, just last night, had an argument in front of our eight-year-old. And we actually got into what we actually got into discussion about what actually triggered us with each other. And he was nice. He was listening the whole time; he was sort of giving us knowing looks. And I was like, okay, so it wasn't what you said it was that I'm triggered by X, Y, and Z. And he was like, well, I understand that. And he's like, and then I reacted the way I did, because I was triggered by X, Y, and Z. And so, we were actually able to get out of this spiral of sniping at each other, because we actually sat and we said, Hold on a second. Like the reason I did that was not because of what you said, the reason I did that was because it just evokes a pattern for me of something, something something. And so, I'm sorry, I reacted the way I did to that particular case. Now, can we talk about the pattern that has triggered that? Yeah, that reaction, and he did the same with me. And so, it was just really, we didn't mean to have it in front of our eight-year-old, but it was actually a really good thing we had in front of him because he was sort of watching us and kind of amused and watching us just sort through this back and forth and just come to this conclusion of like, just have a discussion. Like, it wasn't an argument, it was actually just a discussion about like, well, this makes me feel this way. And this makes me feel that way. And I thought, oh my gosh, if we could just, you know, in my life where things go wrong, if I could just catch my triggers earlier enough.

**Dr. Chris Johnson** 29:32

That's exactly right. And I do write about this, this one of these key skills, I think, for all of us, and it's especially true like with parenting like with you and your husband and having your eight-year-old watch. But it's true in the boardroom too if I if we can catch ourselves being ourselves, which means that the triggers are about who I have been up until this very moment, and those patterns that you reference, if I

can catch myself and have a little bit have grace and some self-compassion, self-empathy with, of course, I have patterns. We all have freaky patterns. Who gets in this? We don't get through life without having patterns, right? But if I can have my enough grace and self-empathy to say, hey, wait a second. And now let me share it with somebody I care about IE a spouse, and then let's sort it through, like the world would be a whole different place. I'll get really skillful there. Right?

**Maria Ross** 30:25

It would be so much better. And just, you know, hearing you talk about that, let's bring it back to the work context. That's what we mean by being a vulnerable leader, we don't mean that you're sitting in crying in a corner, that no, that's the image people have of you show your vulnerability at work? No, it means being able to look at yourself and admit that, you know, you might have had an inappropriate reaction to something or you might be scared about something or you might, you know, dislike something, it's being honest enough with your team, as a leader to be vulnerable. And that actually creates confidence that that is something that instills confidence in the leader, because they go, Oh, the Our leader is human. And is is being willing to admit that these are areas of growth for them.

**Speaker X- Dr. Chris Johnson** 31:15

Absolutely. And you probably know the work that they did at Google with Project Aristotle.

**Maria Ross** 31:20

Absolutely. Talking about all the time. Yeah, it

**Speaker X- Dr. Chris Johnson** 31:23

Well, it was so critical, right? It's so important, because the fundamental findings from that body of research that they did and worked on is psychological safety is everything. And can people come to the table and be real and authentic. So, by being able to say, I'm actually human, and I have reactions, I'm triggered by certain things, and I'm going to take accountability for that, and bring it to you as my boss and or as my team. Now we can really start working just like you and your husband did at home, we can start doing that on our teams. And then people rock and roll that it's not just like teams that are great teams, we can be excellent teams, right? We can do that, and rock and roll and create and move the ball forward down the court in very effective ways.

**Maria Ross** 32:13

Well, and I think that that's where I hear you going is that without the pause, we can't recognize those triggers. We can't recognize how our body is feeling in the moment, we can't recognize and reflect on what's setting us off if we don't pause, right?

**Dr. Chris Johnson** 32:31

Yeah, well, and we're at the mercy of it. And so it's like, we're all back to being about four. And we have our temper tantrums. Yeah. And then we wonder why everybody else is upset. And of course, we all grow through that to varying degrees. And sometimes I would say this about triggers where sometimes triggers are very subtle. And so that's the other thing to be attuned to is like, well, maybe I just get a weird vibe, but with somebody on my team, or I have a weird, keen sense of with my spouse, right? And, and to not assume that we know what that means. So instead of it being good or bad, it's just like

data and information that we can then use to like, okay, I need to call myself a little bit. And then I need to be curious about what's going on with me, but what's going on with folks on my team or my family or whatnot. So, triggers can be really subtle, and we want to learn to pay attention to them. Ultimately, if we keep practicing with a pause over time, we end up talking about this sort of keen awareness as intuition, leaders' intuition. And how do we intuition is that we know stuff without really knowing exactly how we know. And we know it because we're using our physical bodies as tools to pick up sensations and like, oh, I have a hunch, you know, I'm wondering about this. That's leadership intuition. And that's gold. That's really, really gold. And it's something we can hone as leaders, just like we can hone it as mother's intuition, right, or parents' intuition.

**Maria Ross** 34:08

Completely and if we're going, you know, 90 miles an hour, and we don't pause, learn to recognize exactly those gut reactions. So, I love that. What's one takeaway from the book that you want every leader to know?

**Dr. Chris Johnson** 34:23

The one takeaway that I want every leader to know is that it's simple and it's worth practicing. The pause is simple. It's not always easy. And it's worth practicing because it can turn your relationships with all of your folks at work on a dime, because it reflects our capacity to self-regulate mood. So, pausing in its various forms, and there are various ways and forms and lengths of pause. They're very simple. They're not always easy, but they're definitely worth doing. It will make a difference in your leadership, I promise.

**Maria Ross** 35:06

I love it. I love it. Well, everyone needs to check out the leadership paws, navigating the future with clarity, focus and empathy. And before we wrap up, I want you to talk about your upcoming course that you have as a companion to the book. Chaos for busy professionals.

**Dr. Chris Johnson** 35:25

Yes, thanks, Maria. So, this is an eight week course, that will start in September, it'll be virtual, it'll start I believe it's September 20. In the daytime, around lunchtime, central time, noon, and it's an eight-week course where we explore the moment of time that we're in as leaders look at mindset and mood, I incorporate some movement. And then we make a roadmap for where you want to go. And in this course, I implement various practices, certainly some of the research, etc. But really teaching people how to pause in such a way that the busyness can calm down. And again, all that clarity can come forward, and then make a roadmap for where people want to go. Because if there's one thing I've heard throughout the last few years, I was hearing it before the pandemic, but especially now, it's that people are trying to juggle too much, they feel too overwhelmed and too busy. And in fact, that's a result of not pausing. And so fundamentally, this eight-week course is all about preparing people in eight short weeks with some skills that they can use in the future. They can use them automatically right away, but definitely down into the future. So, calm the chaos for busy professionals, is an ongoing course that I'll be offering this fall and later into 2023. So, love any of your listeners to come and join me. They can find me at my website, [Q4-consulting.com](https://q4-consulting.com). And you can also email me at Dr. Chris at [Q4-consulting.com](mailto:Dr.Chris@Q4-consulting.com).

**Maria Ross** 37:04

Wonderful, you took my last line of how we could get in touch with you and learn more about your work. But I want to thank you so much, Chris, for your time and your insights today. The book sounds amazing. I can't wait to dig into it. It's in my queue for definitely checking out. And I think if anything, like you said one of the biggest takeaways is that if we really want to build those connections and those relationships and find success, it's worth taking the pause. It's worth it. It's worth slowing down to go faster.

**Dr. Chris Johnson** 37:36

It is it's worth slowing down to go faster, and it's simple. And it's definitely worth your time to do. So, thanks so much for having me today. I really appreciate it.

**Maria Ross** 37:46

Thank you, Chris. And thank you everyone for listening to another great episode of the empathy edge podcast. As always share it with your friends, your colleagues, read and review and if you have the opportunity, and until next time please don't forget that cashflow. Creativity and compassion are not mutually exclusive. Take care and be calm.