

EEP 114- Parissa Behnia: How Badass Leaders Convert Raw Power into Real Influence

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

leaders, people, empathy, values, prickly, vulnerability, understand, genius, leadership, conversation, clients, felt, influence, spoke, badasses, team, opportunity, important, create, love

SPEAKERS

Maria Ross, Parissa Behnia

Parissa Behnia 00:01

And as we know, the great resignation tells us that people leave bad leaders. They don't leave jobs and they don't leave companies. So, create development opportunities for people get people excited. Invite them into the shared picture of success. Have them say yes and to what's your vision of success is having someone to work for you say yes and is so amazing. Create that nurture that invite that we all can do so much better. Once we say this is my genius. This is not my genius. What do you all have for me bring it on.

Maria Ross 01:35

What exactly is a badass leader? According to my guest today, there are badasses who go 80 miles an hour in a 45 zone. But don't always check to see if their team is strapped in, or even interested in going for the ride. These leaders are high value to accompany but they're prickly edges may start to diminish their value. But what if we could help those leaders embrace more empathy and channel that energy and drive into success and innovation? What's the opportunity cost of dismissing or sidelining such prickly leaders? Are we missing out on the next Steve Jobs Thomas Edison or Kamala Harris, executive coach and advisor Teresa Bania. Coaches C suite and senior leaders who are high will high skill and have a growth mindset who are badass leaders. She especially loves helping what she calls three D leaders difficult dismissive and divisive channel their raw power into influence and impact. Teresa's key strategic difference and strategic imperative is empathy. It means that leaders seek content and context to do a better job of serving their customers and engaging their teams. She has developed the Sixth Sense empathy model and wants all of us to put empathy at the forefront of how we engage. Today we talk about the hierarchy of prickly leadership. Why many 3d leaders actually do care about the negative impact they have, but are not sure how to change the dynamic, why they protect themselves so much, and how they can use her empathy framework to create stronger relationships set aside ego and have more influence and success. If you are not a badass leader, I bet you no one so you will love today's conversation.

Maria Ross 03:31

Let's get connected. If you're loving this content, don't forget to go to the empathy edge.com and sign up for the email list to get free resources and more empathy infused success tips and find out how you can book me as a speaker. I want to hear how empathy is helping you be more successful. So please sign up now at the empathy edge.com. Oh, and follow me on Instagram where I'm always posting all the things for you at Red slice Maria.

Maria Ross 04:06

Welcome Teresa to the empathy edge podcast. This has been a long time coming to have you on the show because I so enjoyed connecting with you and interviewing you for the book, the empathy edge and here you are now to talk to us about the important role of empathy and leadership.

Parissa Behnia 04:22

All right, here we are. I am so excited to be here. When you and I first spoke I love the concept of your book. And when I finally had your book in my hands I read it in one or two sittings at the most. And then the time that you came to Chicago and you spoke to that group at General Assembly it was just so magical with like,

Maria Ross 04:50

Oh my gosh

Parissa Behnia 04:51

your genius in person.

Maria Ross 04:52

Thank you.

Parissa Behnia 04:52

So this is privilege.

Maria Ross 04:55

And that was the before times right then [...] and I had this huge just a book launch tour that I was gonna plan. And luckily, I made it to Chicago and I made it to Seattle and Vancouver before.

Parissa Behnia 05:06

Yeah, the halcyon days of pre COVID.

Maria Ross 05:09

I know. Right? Right, when were emerging were emerging. So, I'm excited to talk to you about prickly leadership, difficult leadership, because you have always said that you love getting your hands on as an executive coach and a leadership advisor on three D leaders. 3d seating, difficult, dismissive and divisive. Yes, talk to us. Let's take a step back and talk about your hierarchy of prickly leadership. Because some of these are subsets and maybe some of our listeners, it's okay, if you recognize yourself in some of these archetypes that we're going to talk about, because priests is also going to talk about the way forward for for some of these.

Parissa Behnia 05:51

Absolutely. So, the types of people I love to work with are what I affectionately call modern badasses. These are leaders who go 80 miles an hour in a 45 mile an hour zone. But don't always check to see if their teams or colleagues are strapped in for the ride, let alone interested in the destination. These are your change agents. These are your pattern interrupters. These are your mismatches. These are your people who say why not instead of why. And when someone says to them, that's impossible. They'll say hold my beer, I'll show you what it actually is possible, right? These are it to put them in real life terms. These are your Kamala Harris's of the world. These are your Steve Jobs of the world. These are your Susan B. Anthony's of the world. These are your Ruth Bader Ginsburg of the world, you don't have to like them personally to understand the radical impact that they've had on us and on society. As a general matter. Regardless of you being an iPhone fan, or an Android fan, you can thank someone like a Steve Jobs for completely interrupting what that experience is for all of us. Yeah, and those are the types of people I really love. And the reason why I love working with them, as much as I do is that many of them are sidelined, because they don't know how to channel They're awesome, in ways to make them seen, heard, understood, and respected. And when we sideline that genius, there's an opportunity costs are what future Steve Jobs do we not know what future Edison do we not know what future any kind of inventor do we not know? Because their genius has been sidelined, as opposed to champion for what their genius actually is.

Maria Ross 08:02

And I like the distinction you're making, because it's not necessarily about helping them become liked. It's helping them become seen and valued for their contribution. And I think, you know, I mean, I've got some leanings on this, but I think probably Elon Musk is a figure like that for a lot of people because he's done amazing work with opening up the market for electric vehicles, and renewable energy. But there's, you know, things about his demeanor and his style of leadership and that we can all take issue with right. And this is why we bought a Kia and not a Tesla recently as an Eevee.

Parissa Behnia 08:38

So, I love that it's some of these are polarizing figures and

Maria Ross 08:42

Polarizing yes.

Parissa Behnia 08:43

Excellent. Excellent, excellent example. You don't have to like him as a person but still recognize his impact? Yes. See it. That impact is what the positive benefit may be to us without having to be besties with it.

Maria Ross 08:59

Exactly. Exactly. And your your provocative question of, you know, what, what leaders are we missing out on when we sideline these folks? I unfortunately, believe and you could probably have research that backs us up that there's probably a lot of women that gets sidelined because of their label of being difficult or hard to work with or too emotional or whatever the thing because they they have not maybe

necessarily learned to channel that awesome in a way that or or not even to channel it, but just it's been misperceived by other people. Would you say that that's true? Or is it equally does it happen to men as well?

Parissa Behnia 09:39

It happens to it happens to men as well. I have had I don't I don't pay attention to gender identity when it comes to my clients. And so, I've had my share of male identifying clients who are difficult or who are these badasses or prickly or Harvard is want to describe them and then also Have a fair share of people who identify as women as well. The emotionality of it is I, maybe the word is passionate. How How much do you fight for what your what you believe in so dearly, but you're not doing an effective job to explain the underlying cause of the passion or the root of the passion, what is driving the passion? What is driving the emotionality? And that's why it's I'm not trying to play semantics with him like, is it a motion? Or is it passion that's misunderstood? I really think it's passionate. That's misunderstood.

Maria Ross 10:46

Absolutely, absolutely. And it's funny when you were when you started off talking about this idea of them being in the driver's seat, and just going and not looking back, I just think of like those old Bugs Bunny cartoons where they're, you know, the cars racing, they're making a getaway, and they think they're making a clean getaway. And they realize, like, the money they just stole is back at the bank or whatever. So, I got this image, and I'm sure that a lot of people I know, I've, I've worked for people like that. How do you how do you discern between someone who is that type of leader? Versus what some would call and you might even have opinions about this label, what someone would call a toxic leader.

Parissa Behnia 11:30

Yeah. It's, it's interesting, a lot of the pushback I get on my work tends to be well, they're all toxic. There's like this spray painted with this broad brush, or the and the feedback, they'll also get, well, they don't care what their impact is on other people. And turns out actually, my clients are incredibly sensitive human beings. It turns out that my clients have a negative highlight reel that's on constant repeat. And so, when they have these moments, where they have been called too much, or the bull in a china shop, or they've been disruptive, disruptive, destructive, or the passion, expressed didn't necessarily match the situation. They recall in full detail, and can and can really also recall in in great detail, the impact they've had on other people and their regret is real. And so, it's really easy to tell, do they have regret? Are they bummed out that they were not able to connect with other people, or is the suit of armor they're wearing, because they've tried other ways, and it's failed every other way that they've tried. So, it's just much easier for them to be behind the suit of armor, as opposed to understanding maybe a different way to engage that might be more effective. So, this, this ability to harbor regret, and this ability to see very clearly, the impact they've had on other people is, is how it is that I discern someone from who other people might call toxic. Now a type of client I would never work with is Adam Newman, the founder of WeWork. He, he was clueless, he made a lot of poor, executive and strategic decisions. This was someone who was very much emperor had no clothes, and people were afraid to tell him that he had no clothes. Another example of someone who I wouldn't work with is Vishal Garg, the CEO that laid off 900 People over zoom around Christmas, yes. And suggested to them that they were lazy people I'm paraphrasing, I'm not saying that he said that exactly. But but that is someone who is so not environmentally aware, neither one of those individuals appear to express an

interest to become environmentally aware, or to be a little bit more present to what was going on in the rooms they were in virtual or otherwise. So it turns out it is actually easy to figure out who my people are.

Maria Ross 14:36

Got it. Got it. And let's talk a little bit about the role of empathy because you have a whole empathy model to help leaders become more. I don't want to be more accepted. That's not the right word, but to help leaders become more into their pet step more into their power and to be able to have the influence they want to have to be able to you've mentioned channel laying that, that energy into actual influence. So, talk about the empathy model, because I give you full credit every time I use this is that you always talk about ego kills empathy. Yeah. And you know, we spoke of that about that very early on in the research for my book. So just briefly, tell us a little bit about the empathy model for effective leadership.

Parissa Behnia 15:23

Yeah, I would love to thank you so much for asking. So essentially, the empathy model is a tool I use, not only in terms of helping teams create strategy, but then also helping people understand ways in which they can gauge better with their colleagues, peers, teams, clients from what have you. So, if you'd like I can go through the seven steps briefly, or would that be helpful to really briefly? Okay, great. So, the first step is ego kills empathy. So how are you getting in your own way? The second step is map your present state. So, it's a state of the state what is true right now in your environment. P is plan your future state. So, what's the ideal state we'd all like to get to is assess the gaps? What's the difference between the now and the ideal version of the future? T is test some approaches. H is hone your approach. And why is yield, yield, yield yield the market, the other people on the other side of the table are never wrong. And so, what this does is just like in design thinking, it is meant for us to take a good hard look about what we're doing, how we would like to be understood better, and also encouraging us to embrace failure and brace ways of engaging with people, sometimes it will LAN, sometimes it will not. The the issue with high performing leaders is that we have such a high emotional attachment to an outcome that we'll never try. And so, what if we said we'll probably screw it up. But let's at least try anyway. And that's the point of the empathy bottle. And so, in terms of empathy, when it comes to leadership, it's really about content and context. How do I understand your content and context better, Maria? And how do you understand mine better. And so, one of the exercises I use with my clients is a quick values exercise. So, I'll say write down your top 10 values, just really quick, don't even think about it at all, like intuitive based. And then I'll give them 30 seconds to take out the bottom three, another 20 seconds to take out the bottom two, and then another 20 seconds to take out the another bottom two, and we're left with three top values, and then evaluate where we've been in alignment with our values, and evaluate when we've not been in alignment with our values. And then understand the difference between the two. Why are these values so important? And what can we do to better operate in alignment with these values? And what can we do to tell other people what our key values are, and why they're so important. So specifically, for me, I have five top values I for whatever reason, I can't get to three, but that's fine. It's freedom, truth, justice, creativity, and loyalty. And I always say it in exactly that order. I will touch any work, I won't engage in anything that isn't in alignment with at least one of these values. Because I have noticed whenever I have been out of alignment with these values, I've had conflict. I've had disagreement, I felt alienated. I felt low energy. I felt disengaged, I had no attention span. And so now my body tells me like I know like when I'm fidgety if I can't pay attention in a zoo, or if

I'm in a conversation with someone, like Something's just not right. And so, use that the core values as the basis for understanding so that when you and I have a conversation, like okay, that's a starting point. Now that I understand you better you understand me better. What can we create together? Knowing that we have these things on the on the table as a starting point.

Maria Ross 19:59

So, how do you get these leaders who, you know, have this raw power, they've sort of been the bull in the china shop, they've been the get in the car, just drive and don't think about if anyone's strapped in behind you? How do you get them to strengthen their empathy? So that they're willing to see another point of view? Do you have to do a lot of inner work with them? Where they're actually having empathy for themselves? First? Yeah. Because you mentioned earlier, a lot of times, they're very insecure. They're very wounded. They're very, you know, it's like the bullies bully, right? And so how do you help them? You know, they think they're coming to you just for like, I need help becoming a better leader. But how do you help them strengthen that empathy first? And how do you get them to connect that dot?

Parissa Behnia 20:45

Yeah, you know, a lot of a lot of the conversations early on ended up being about how often do you forgive yourself? How do you treat mistakes? Why are mistakes, so horrible. And so once we start learning to have a little bit of acceptance, for our vulnerability in our humanity, it becomes easier to have a conversation about leadership ultimately being about humanity, and not about the doing of whatever it is that they do. It's, it's an invitation to them to release the suit of armor that has worked for for them and with them for so long. And when they show everyone else their Achilles heel, they actually become more credible, as a leader, that's the counter intuitive truth.

Maria Ross 21:46

Totally, they become more relatable. Yeah,

Parissa Behnia 21:49

They become more relatable, they become they become a more effective leader, once they spend more time expressing their humanity and whoever and however they might be outside of the office, is that same person that they might be inside of the office, completely shedding of this belief that there have to be two people in their lives.

Maria Ross 22:12

Right.

Parissa Behnia 22:13

Just one.

Maria Ross 22:14

Completely, and you're just in a different context, you're at work versus at home. I love this, because this has been such a movement of talking about vulnerability, and it's misunderstood by so many hard charging leaders that they think, you know, it's just like, what they think empathy is, is vulnerability means I'm crying in my office, and I, my hair's on fire, and I don't know what to do. You can have

confidence vulnerability. And I spoke, I'll link to it in the show notes. But one of my early episodes was with Paul Mirabella, who was CEO of harvest North America, the big ad agency, and he spoke about his experiences leading through crisis, including being in New York and 911, and being a leader within an organization. And he said that what he learned over time was that when he at least started to admit that he didn't have all the answers, not that he was just gonna throw up his hands in the air and say, I don't, we're all we're all screwed, you know, not that kind of vulnerability. But, you know, I'm scared too. And here's how we're gonna get through it together, or what are you feeling? Because I'm probably feeling the same way you are? And or I don't know the answer, but we're going to find out together, there's like a confident way to be vulnerable that I think that nuance is missed by so many of those hard charging leaders, they think it's so binary, it's either I know everything and it's going to be my way or the highway, or I'm just going to be this, you know, whimpering mass on the floor that nobody's going to respect. How do you get them to see that that's a spectrum?

Parissa Behnia 23:45

Yeah, it's such a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful point that you've made an another leader who does a really good job of saying, I don't know. And modeling I don't know is Sara Blakely. She speaks on that a lot. The founder of the founder of Spanx and Blackstone has recently had a major and she was the self that she owned 100% of Spanx until the fall when Blackstone came along and purchased a good chunk of it from her. The this invitation into vulnerability, this, this admitting that you don't have to have the answers is more about not so much vulnerability, but wouldn't it be a relief? If you didn't have to be the chief executive of everything? Wouldn't it be a relief? If you could be Clark Kent and not Superman? Wouldn't it be a relief? If you painted a very broad exciting picture of what possibility looks like for your team for your business? As an invited everyone to co create that with you. Just that, take off all of those weights from your shoulder and invite the genius of other people in Gay Hendricks, in his book, The Big Leap talks about our zone of genius being the highest and best use of our time and talent. And I like to say anything outside of the highest and best use of our time and talent is like setting fire to money and time. Why should a leader be in their zone of incompetence? Like what does that prove? It proves nothing, right? So, it turns out, you can do and create more, once you say, This is my genius. And this is the place where I need your help. It's another counterintuitive truth. Say what your limitations are, so that you can take your team even farther than what you originally imagined.

Maria Ross 26:01

It's so funny that you're saying this, because I think of all the sports analogies and military analogies that are used in business today to, to, you know, invite team building or to rally the troops or to get people motivated. And it's like, yeah, a quarterback doesn't win a football game by himself. A general doesn't win a war by herself. She has troops that she deploy, you know, so we accept this and all these other arenas except our own team, sometimes except our own group that we are leading, then it's like, oh, no one can do this, but me.

Parissa Behnia 26:37

Right. It's a it's a tick. And it's the it's this. It's tied to like a cocktail of imposter syndrome and uncertainty, they will figure out I don't belong in this seat, if I am not chief executive of everything. Or as the belief might be, no, actually you don't belong in that seat, because you were acting like the chief executive, everything, you're acting like a manager as opposed to acting like a leader. You know,

someone said, I can't remember who it was, however, many years ago that you know, a manager worries about doing things right. And a leader worries about doing the right things. Let that person who worries about doing the right things, which means letting go of the stuff that you are just not good at. Let it go. Right. It was such a relief for me when I said oh, I don't have to do my own bookkeeping, which I know is such a small, silly example. But once I gave myself permission to not do the things I was horrible at, and then I'm over overlap. It's just it opened me up to more creativity, it opened me up to more possibility. And typically, I was happier. I'm happier that I'm not the bookkeeper.

Maria Ross 27:57

Completely. And it's just funny because I'm thinking of just as a close to home example of that with with my son's school is, we were trying to find a committee chair for this. We had a bunch of volunteers signed up for this committee, but no chair. And so, I had sent a message out where I was trying to, I was trying to get this committee going not on it, but I was trying to get them to go. And someone wrote me and said. Well, I you know, if no one else is interested, I'd be interested, but I'm not sure I can take this on. And I was like, no, actually, the chair is just setting the direction and delegating to make sure all everyone's doing what they need to be doing. You don't have to be doing all the work for that committee. If you chair it, you're just bringing everyone together. And helping them prioritize and helping them coordinate and do all that I go. So that might actually be easier for you. And so, they were like, okay, I get it, you know that they finally understood being the chair didn't mean doing all the work.

Parissa Behnia 28:55

Yeah. And also, the best leaders are often with all due respect to really awesome leaders out there, the best leaders are often the dumbest person at the table I designed. Right pipe design.

Maria Ross 29:07

Right? Well, if you're a good leader, you hire people smarter than you. Right?

Parissa Behnia 29:13

Work smart, not hard.

Maria Ross 29:14

Yeah. And that's the thing, getting back to your point you made earlier. It's it's that insecurity and that ego that gets in the way, where it's like you're actually making your life harder. If you don't let go of your ego as a leader, because then you are going to be doing all the work. You are going to be micromanaging. And you're gonna be burning bridges along the way.

Parissa Behnia 29:33

Yeah, yeah. And as we know, the great resignation tells us that people leave bad leaders, they don't leave jobs and they don't leave companies. So, create development opportunities for people, get people excited. Invite them into the shared picture of success. Have them say yes and to what's your vision of success. is having someone to work for you say yes and is so amazing. Create that nurture that invite that we all can do so much better. Once we say this is my genius, this is not my genius. What do you all have for me bring it on?

Maria Ross 30:21

Yeah, I'm gonna throw a curveball at you. And maybe you can anonymize an example. But I would love to hear sort of a before and after story. I'm sure my listeners would too, about a client you worked with sort of what was the situation that then you you started with? And where did they go with with doing this work?

Parissa Behnia 30:42

Oh, my gosh,

Maria Ross 30:43

I'm sure you have so many.

Parissa Behnia 30:45

What's a really good one. Um, so there's so many good ones. I'm trying to think of one that I can I can tell briefly. There is a woman who I worked with who let's say she was tired of being the bridesmaid. And she wanted to be the bride. She kept on interviewing for more senior level roles in organizations. And she just wasn't getting there. And she felt like the feedback that she was getting wasn't actionable enough. And also, outside she was interviewing, not successful inside her organization, interviewing, not successful and she felt like she was at some sort of plateau. And so, when she and I had a conversation, what immediately became evident to me and slowly became evident to her was this aloofness, this disdain, this unwillingness to participate in conversation or participate in creation, it was more of a observing from afar and believing that everyone could read her mind.

Maria Ross 32:10

So she was she was unintentionally distancing herself from it was unintended interaction. Okay.

Parissa Behnia 32:15

Yeah, yeah, she was a great way to put it. Thank you for summarizing that. And she's she is not an aloof person by any stretch of the imagination. But her feeling disconnected from her environment. values were not aligned. Her content and context were not understood that the chasm just got bigger and bigger and bigger. And the work that she felt like she was doing was less interesting. And so, her work output, candidly, was not that great. And so, by having this exploration of how she showed up, having this exploration of how she showed up in ways that could be more transparent into what her motivations are, what interests, what her interests were, allow her then to be more engaged at the table and then have other people more engaged with her too. So, the conversation, she ended up happening at the end of the engagement was opportunities from her senior leadership for more responsibility for more visibility. And it was a function of her being better understood, and heard, just declaring to everyone what was important to her and why it was as important. I realized that me describing this sounds so basic, but it is shocking to me how little we share about that which motivates us, and why those things motivate us the way they do. I mean, in in my professional life, I was a square peg in a round hole. Frequently, one of the most heartbreaking things I ever heard in my professional life was that I was the hardest person ever to manage. Wow, cut. Yeah, it was painful. And also, I'm very clear eyed and how I could tribute it to that, and how did I contribute to it? Well, they would give me job descriptions that and and it was, you know, deliver these results, for example. And I would say great, I'll deliver all these results. But this job description is in the form of a square. Why can't I make it a sphere?

Why can't I make it a triangle? Why can't it be a rhombus but what I didn't understand in that environment was that changing the job description or adding scope, or being more entrepreneurial than what the situation called for, wasn't welcome. I wasn't aware of my environment, right? I wasn't making clear what was important to me or what engaged me. And also, I didn't know how to ask for help to communicate my wants and desires better. Had I just been a hand raiser and ask for help, or just been a hand raiser and did a better job of explaining why I wanted to do some of the fun things to me that I wanted to do. Right, that experience would have been a little bit better for me. So, three things can be true. One is I didn't know how to ask for help. Two is that I probably was the hardest person my leader had to manage, of Sure. And three is he didn't have the training, coaching or support, to know how to help someone like me learn how to ask for the help that I needed. And so, it's that experience that leads me to find my people to help them.

Maria Ross 36:28

Well, and also what you said earlier about really understanding what you valued. And articulating that because maybe you never would have ended up in that environment. Had you been able to articulate your values more, you would have seen that there was a disconnect with what that environment could offer you versus what you held, dear.

Parissa Behnia 36:32

Yeah, precisely, how would I know what my values were. And I'd been good at articulating them and why they were important, I likely wouldn't have ended up at some of the places I ended up with. And I would not have been insistent on proving that I fit in in a place where I clearly didn't fit in. A really great example of that is, it's 2008. I got married in June of 2008. July of 2008, I started a job in October of 2008. I was fired from said job. I knew the first day that was not my place. And they were not my people. I ignored it. I ignored it. That is the biggest lesson for me. So, this thing about values and being clear about what's important and clarifying for other people, because no one's a mind reader.

Maria Ross 37:45

Well, and I think what's so important about that, as I as you're talking, I'm thinking about the managers, I've enjoyed working with those, I have not enjoyed working with those that like emotionally scarred me. And even with the ones I enjoyed working with, I don't know if there was an explicit conversation about their values. And I think maybe for some of them, there didn't have to be because they lived their values. We didn't we didn't actually have to sit down and have a talk about like, okay, Maria, here's what I value on this team, because they were actually living it out in front of me. So, when you first started talking about that, I thought, wow, I never I never had a conversation like that with those managers. And then I thought, oh, I didn't need to, because they they lived it. You know? What I mean? Is not that you? The takeaway is you don't need to have that conversation. What I'm saying is that they actually weren't clear on their values. They because they were living them.

Parissa Behnia 38:40

Yeah, they were living them. And I wonder when we have conversations about values in the context of supporting a business strategy. And so, it's not, you know, philanthropy because it's nice to donate to charity. All right, all of those things is that there are hard and fast business reasons why clarity of individual values and team value values matter. Because once the team is gelling, then it becomes

easier to hit those targets for sure. And so, what would happen if a team codified their codified their team values in conjunction or recognition that it says service of whatever the strategy is? And also, we knew how that translated down to what our individual roles were and our individual values were in serving that strategy? Yeah. What would How much easier would communication be if there was a little bit more clarity so I with you, on that there are people out there that do walk their talk and it becomes very easy to understand who they are as people Hmm, I'm just offering this up as a yes. And I'm like, yeah, how much better? Would it have been? Yeah, protest the question. Yeah, absolutely.

Maria Ross 40:12

So, you know, you talk about you talk about that example of the opportunity cost. I would love to have this be our final question. What do you think organizations are missing out on? And actually, what are the leaders missing out on that are sort of that very single-minded focus now of my way or the highway? This is this is the goal. This is the agenda. You're the with me, or you're not? What is the what is the actual business cost of that style of leadership? Because I think for a long time, that style of leadership served us in the, you know, the Industrial Revolution. Right, right. Right. And those models are falling away. So, what do you what do you think is the is the cost to organizations and to leaders themselves, of, you know, firmly sticking to that strategy?

Parissa Behnia 41:04

Yeah. So, within the the opportunity costs within the context of sidelining some of these badasses or or

Maria Ross 41:11

Well, just the opportunity costs the business if someone's gonna go, nope, I, I have a clear agenda. I have a clear goal. I'm going to I'm gonna go at it. I know I'm right. I don't need other input. I'm, you know, it's the prickly leader, what would it what does the prickly what's the opportunity cost lost to the organization and to the leader themselves? Yeah, when they're operating in that way?

Parissa Behnia 41:36

Yeah. So, Gallup does a wonderful study on the state of American workplace. And we know, worldwide that the cost of disengaged employees is in the trillions. And so, if we were to say that a leader who is very much my way, or the highway working, no disagreement, Brooking, no alternative points of view, you are going to kiss goodbye, your high potentials. So, there is a hard and fast dollar cost that all you have to do is Google cost of disengaged employee, ya know, and see it, it ranges for the hundreds of billions into the trillions of dollars. So that's just, you know, one really quick thing for us to be in consideration of, you know, the, and the, the other thing is, you know, what artist do we not meet? What invention? Do we not have?

Maria Ross 42:44

Innovation suffers? For sure.

Parissa Behnia 42:46

Precisely, precisely. It's, it's what embrace of failure Do we not have? Because there's so much rigidity of thought. And so, if we embraced our more traditional leaders, and also we embraced some of our

more prickly leaders, and we created a shared vocabulary, where they communicated better with one another, what would happen? What would happen?

Maria Ross 43:25

It's amazing. That's amazing. Um, tell folks a little bit about inconceivable influence, because it's a program you've put together for those people who want to convert their raw power into influence an action and not necessarily change who they are. But channel. So, tell us a little bit about that.

43:45

Yeah, thank you for asking. So, inconceivable influence is a group coaching program, launching in the summer of 2022. And essentially, it's for people who want to speak truth to power with power and influence. It's one thing to have raw power, it's one thing to be loud, it's another thing to be heard. And so, what I want these bad assets to have is to be in their full badassery. And also have influence to have a seat at the table when complex negotiations are taking place to have a seat at the table when the CEO or the board or the president of the company is making a very difficult decision and your counsel is needed. How do you communicate in ways or how are you seen in ways for people to stop calling you too much and start calling you exactly what we need? Because that is the number one problem with badasses is that they're called too much whereas I think they're exactly what we need.

Maria Ross 45:02

I love that. Let's leave that there. We will have links in the show notes to all your wonderful work and to this inconceivable influence program for listeners who are interested. But for those on the go right now, Parissa tell us where we can find out more about you.

Parissa Behnia 45:19

I am on LinkedIn for a survey to connect with me there and my website is www.sixensestrategy.com.

Maria Ross 45:28

Awesome. That's sixense (S-I-X-E-N-S-E) strategy.com.

Parissa Behnia 45:34

Yeah

Maria Ross 45:34

Wonderful. Well, thank you so much for your insights and your your thoughts about badass leadership and prickly leaders and all the things. I really do love the term the 3d leaders the difficult, dismissive and divisive. And I also love that you are like, bring it. They're my favorite people.

Parissa Behnia 45:55

They are. I mean, they're my people. I am them. I understand them. I love them. I have empathy for them. That's great.

Maria Ross 46:01

That's great. Thanks again, Parissa for your time today.

Parissa Behnia 46:03

Thank you. Wonderful, I so enjoyed this conversation, and I love the work that you're putting out in the world. Thank you.

Maria Ross 46:12

And thanks, everyone listening for tuning in to another episode of the empathy edge podcast, as ever, if you love it, please share it, please rate it and review it. We love how algorithms work and more people can find our podcasts that way. And we also just want to hear what you think. So please leave a rating and a review. And until next time, remember that cash flow creativity and compassion are not mutually exclusive. Take care and be time.