

EEP EP145 - Tiffany Dufu - Elevating Women Through Support, Connection, and Accountability

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SPEAKERS

Maria Ross, Tiffany Dufu

Tiffany Dufu 00:01

One of the most important things that I've encouraged managers to do and organizations to do is to really communicate your allegiance to the women in your organization, beyond whatever team they're on. One of the intentions that is uploaded on our platform at the crew in relationship to career is finding a new job. And companies that we partner with are often very alarmed that their employees are uploading that they want to find a new job. But when you look deeper at the data, what you'll discover is that they want to find a new job, but they don't necessarily want to find a new company. It's just that navigating the politics, particularly with their manager of the fact that they don't want to be on that team, or there's something else that they want to explore. It's so much more complicated than just going and applying for a job outside of the organization.

Maria Ross 00:54

Welcome to the empathy edge podcast the show that proves why cash flow, creativity and compassion are not mutually exclusive. I'm your host Maria Ross. I'm a speaker, author, mom, facilitator and empathy advocate. And here you'll meet trailblazing leaders and executives, authors and experts who embrace empathy to achieve radical success. We discuss all facets of empathy from trends and research to the future of work to how to heal societal divisions and collaborate more effectively. Our goal is to redefine success and prove that empathy isn't just good for society, it's great for business. How can we elevate women by connecting and engaging with each other and holding ourselves accountable to our intentions? How can companies who want to attract and retain top talent do the same I had a great time talking with my guest today about her mission to support and elevate women.

Tiffany du feu is founder and CEO of the crew. Their algorithm matches circles of women who collaborate to meet their personal and professional goals. She's also the author of the best selling book *Dropped the Ball*, achieving more by doing less. According to Ford contributor Gloria Steinem herself, *Dropped the Ball* is important pathbreaking, intimate and brave. Named to *Entrepreneurs*, 100 powerful women and fast companies *League of Extraordinary Women*, Tiffany has raised nearly \$20 million toward the cause of women and girls. She was a launch team member to *Lean In* and was chief leadership officer to *Leivo* one of the fastest growing millennial professional networks, and so much more you can read in the show notes. Today, Tiffany shares her personal story and the mantra her mother used to tell her every day that she hopes to whisper into other women's ears, we discuss the crew's mission and business model and how they help women and companies achieve success through support connection and accountability. We also talk about why connection is so important to achieving goals or what the crew calls intentions and why empathy ensures successful engagement. Tiffany shares how the pandemic has affected women's career goals, and why employers and leaders need to understand this new reality and respond accordingly. And she shares three tips for connecting across diverse backgrounds that could transform the way your teams get work done.

03:19

So much good stuff in today's episode, take a listen.

Maria Ross 03:26

Hello, Tiffany du feu Welcome to the empathy edge podcast. I am so excited to have you here. And to hear your story and about all your wonderful work and helping to advance women

Tiffany Dufu 03:36

while being a fighter to be here. Thanks for having me.

Maria Ross 03:39

So let's start off. You know, we heard a little bit in the introduction about your background, very impressive and the work that you've been doing. But let's get a little personal. What is your story? And how did it lead you to this work at you know, founding the crew, first of all, and just the work of devoting your career to advancing women?

Tiffany Dufu 04:00

Oh, how much time do we have? My my life's work is advancing women. That's pretty much why I'm on the planet. I do mean that literally. For anyone who's listening every job I've had every dollar I've donated every board I've sat on every social media post, every book I've written or contributed to is focused on how do we harness women and girls talent and ingenuity for the benefit of all of us. I'm very clear about that purpose. I don't believe purpose is some mystical thing. I believe it's simply a decision inspired by one or more experiences that we have in our lives. I could share a number of experiences that ladder up to that purpose. I'm the oldest of four girls so I've always been a big sister and I'm very committed to advancing them and therefore advancing all of my little sisters in the world. But probably the most pivotal has to do with my mom, Brenda, who found out that she was pregnant with me when she was 19 years old. My family My Parents are originally from Watts, LA, and my dad joined the military, in order to just get out of the environment they were in it was the 1970s. At that time, Watts was

a rough place, it was a rough time. And my parents really believed that if you wanted something that you've never had before, you're going to have to do something you've never done before in order to get it. And so my upbringing was a bit of an experiment. When I was 16, my parents got divorced. And my mom who had been what I now call a non paid working mom, because all moms or working moms, yes, some are compensated, some of them are not really spun back into a vicious cycle of poverty and addiction and violence, that my parents had actually escaped and making that move. And in my dad joining the military, I had no idea what was happening to my mom, because I grew up as a preacher's daughter, literally, with the white picket fence around my house, my dad had gone to college on the GI Bill eventually earned a PhD in theology. And that whole experience really taught me that we are the most powerful change agents in our own journey. I ultimately couldn't save my mother, but I so appreciated how, for my first 16 years, she gave everything that she could to me, she taught me that I was smart, and that I was beautiful, and that I was loved. She actually told me that every single day as if it was the first time that she had ever said it, and I probably wake up every day, Maria just trying to get to as many women as I can. And just to whisper in their ears, whether it's on a stage, through the crew, through a book through a social media post through this podcast right now. You're smart, you're beautiful, you're loved, you can do this.

Maria Ross 06:58

Oh my gosh, I love that. I'm like, I'm getting chills listening to you. And that, you know, what a seminal experience to have that and to guide your work. And I love what you said about purpose not being some mystical thing. It's a decision. Because I think we get too caught up, especially in the idea that we, you know, for me, I don't actually believe we have one purpose. I think sometimes our purpose changes based on where we are or the stage of life we're in or what our own context is. And we put so much pressure on ourselves to find that one purpose. And so someone listening to you might be like, wow, you know, I just don't know what my one thing is. And it's, I always say it's okay to have more than one thing through the course of your life. Oh, totally.

Tiffany Dufu 07:39

Okay. And yeah, also feel like it just comes upon you. I don't know anyone who was walking down the street and the skies opened up. And some voice of God inspired them to drop to their knees and to tell them that they are here to see but work with whales or something I know. Right? That I know I've had that experience. Know that. So I funny. I think that it really is just you deciding at whatever moment you know what it is for you. And I know multiple people who have chosen different purposes throughout their life to your point, I just happen to be one of those people that just sticks with the same hairstyle. I eat the same thing. I wear the same color nail polish, like, I'm just one of those.

Maria Ross 08:18

I love it. I love it. I've always been a little jealous of people like you to be honest. But yeah, I think that that's such an important takeaway of purpose not being some mystical thing. So let's talk a little bit about the crew. Tell us what the organization does. I know that you help women realize their intentions, you help organizations, according to your website, skyrocket their potential? What does that mean? What do we actually do? And who are you bringing together?

Tiffany Dufu 08:44

Yes, so the core is very focused on what we call women in the middle. You can think of women in middle management and the middle of their lives, in the middle of their country, in the middle of their careers, however you want to interpret in the middle. And basically, we found that they're looking for three things they're looking for meaning we all want to live this purposeful life, which is why we feel so much pressure to do that. We want advancement, we want evidence, evolution of the self, not just more money and you know, higher salary. And we also want some kind of integration. We want a holistic, rounded out experience and more and more we want our employers to value and to appreciate all the different aspects of our lives. And the challenge for women in the middle is that we're socially conditioned to take care of everybody else. Our kids, our partners, our pets, our synagogues, our churches, our teams, our bosses, and what we often need is that whisper in our ear, like my mother's whisper in my ear, reminding you of what you need to focus on in order for you to create a life that you're passionate about. So we basically help women to figure out what are the things that you need to accomplish and realize in the next 12 months, in order for you to take it to the next level, whatever that means for you, we call those intentions, you can think of them as goals. And they're tracked via digital tracking tool. And then we match you with a circle of about seven other people. So it's eight of you and what we call a crew. And your crew is your accountability circle, you meet with them once a month that events called gatherings. And you use a pure inquiry based method of coaching one another in order to just hold one another accountable for your ambitions. And we do work with companies to support them in retaining and advancing their women in the middle through this process. It's really beautiful. I've used the crew myself for the past few years. And it's been a wonderful process. It's not always easy to be held accountable. We say know that. It's not always easy, but it is fruitful.

Maria Ross 10:53

Yes, I love that. I mean, that's really the idea is that is that we're moving forward. And it doesn't mean we're not taking steps back sometimes, or that it's not, you know, that it's going to be comfortable all the time. But the whole journey of, of growing and achieving and I love that you call them intentions and not goals, because I think there's that goals can be such a loaded word. And you know, as a brand, strategist words are very important. And so the fact that you even call it a gathering the fact that you're calling it a crew, and not sort of like an accountability group, you know, something really scary and corporate, I just I really, I really admire that and that intentionality of giving words that invite people in giving these these things, names that invite people in, versus putting up another barrier to especially women achieving their intentions. So well, words

Tiffany Dufu 11:45

matter a lot to me, I'm I'm English major, but also words have just changed my life. I read a lot of books, I spend a lot of time thinking and writing. And in fact, one of the reasons why I said yes to this, and I wanted to be a part of this is because empathy is a very important word to me and my family. In fact, empathy is the only word I need my kids memorize the definition of I love it. Anybody know what empathy is? So a words matter. And I respect that you appreciate that.

Maria Ross 12:14

Thank you. Well, let's talk about that. So so why is why is the idea of putting folks into groups in connection, so important to, to Success and Engagement? What is the magic that happens in a group?

Tiffany Dufu 12:28

Yes, I'm not sure that it's magic. We're all 90% more likely to realize an intention, if we one, write it down and are tracking it in some way. And to if we meet on a regular basis with one or more people in our lives, to just remind us of what we were supposed to do. That's how accountability works. So I'm not sure if there's any magic to it. But certainly, for someone who is very overwhelmed, very busy, has a lot of things on their plate. It is rather refreshing to take a step back once a month, and really devote some time and attention to what is it that I said I was going to do this year?

Maria Ross 13:14

Why am I Where was I going?

Tiffany Dufu 13:15

Yeah. Where was I going? Like, what is the point of this, this thing called life, I think is something that's unique. If there's any magic, it's just, you know, taking the time in the moment to do that when we don't normally do it right. And to do it in community and collaboration with others, I think is just a beautiful part of the human experience.

Maria Ross 13:37

Well, I think that objective point of view is also very valuable, because we can we can say all day long, but I'll hold myself accountable. But we're busy and life is overwhelming. And we're bombarded with so much in today's world, that the best of intentions of us trying to do it on our own, can get lost. And that's why I think it's so beautiful that there's this, this concept of a group that is reminding you of what's going on when things get messy when things get overwhelming and loud and busy and crazy as life is want to do. So given that and given what we've been through for the last few years. I would love to talk to you about you know, you started the crew in 2019. And then, which ironically, was when the empathy edge book came out. And then the world shut down. Right. So what is actually going on for women in their careers and their workplaces? We heard so much in the media about the fact that the pandemic really pushed women back a little bit because when people were leaving the workforce, it was predominantly women that were pausing their careers and leaving the workforce to take care of their children or their families. Was that an accurate depiction of what was going on? And are we starting to bounce back from that? What are you seeing?

Tiffany Dufu 14:53

Yes, it's a good question. I think there are two things that happened in the wake of the pandemic. The first was that at all of the domestic labor that women had been fulfilling, indirectly, meaning we had outsourced a lot of it, or piecemealed, or figured out how to get support doing all of that, that infrastructure was just pulled out from underneath us overnight. Because anyone who picked up a child came to cook dinner, anyone who used to drop them off at any anything that happened in relationship to all the domestic labor, all of a sudden you had to do and all of a sudden was under your roof. To be clear, we were always responsible for it. But because we found ways to either outsource or we have some kind of supporting infrastructure, we convinced ourselves to believe that it totally wasn't on us, when we discovered in the wake of the pandemic, no, no, it's really on you. And you really have to do this. And so that was a lot of pressure, it was a lot of work. And it was very difficult to manage. But the other thing that happened was that the aperture for what work actually is got expanded. It used to be

that if I was in sales, and I really enjoyed solving problems for my clients, for my customers, and I really enjoyed talking to them and engaging with them. But I had a boss who was kind of a jerk, and didn't give me the flexibility I wanted, I saw my work is something that I loved. And the boss is like something that I just kind of had to deal with. Somehow, in the wake of the pandemic, and everything that we were facing, the boss, that was the jerk became a part of the job. Like that became a part and it became no longer worth it. To have to deal with in flexibility, or people who you don't feel valued you when all of a sudden you're also doing all of these things at home, you're feeling an enormous amount of pressure, you're trying to keep everybody healthy. And I think that we had a real moment of what is it that I'm really doing here? And is it working all of a sudden now everything became a part of the work and flexibility and values and empathy became that much more important. And I actually think it forced us to make some more strategic decisions about how we wanted to spend our time how we were going to do that. And so I think some of the losing women from the workforce had to do with just the pragmatism of she's got a whole other job that she asked to do. But I think especially for women who could not afford to just leave the workforce, really these questions around what is important to me, how do I want to spend my time now that I have even fewer little hours in a day? And is it really worth it for me to be in a place where yes, I might love the work, but there but who do I work with? What is the what are the values of the company? What is the culture? Are they providing me the flexibility? And all of a sudden that became much more important? And we got optionality. And so I think a lot of women left but then a lot of women moved to different organizations, yes, launched businesses, just the willingness to take the risk lessened.

Maria Ross 18:14

Yeah, well, when you're, you know, when you're sort of metaphorically facing rock bottom, it doesn't seem like as much of a risk anymore, you know, got it. It's sort of like, we're here. And this is our only option. So let's launch the business. Let's go after the new career. Let's go back to school, let's do the things that we can. I really find it interesting what you're talking about, about, you know, oftentimes it was women who obviously would take on the brunt in many relationships. I know there are always exceptions to the rule. But on the whole, that's what the data show. But you know, another another aspect to the fight for pay equity, for example, is that what happened during the pandemic of women being the ones in the partnership or in the family that ended up leaving their jobs, to take care of children or take care of whatever needed to be taken care of, was also also hurt men. Because if there was pay equity, men, some men would have had that choice. But because on the hole in a relationship, many men are making more than the women in the relationship. And I read an article I wish I could remember where it was. So I could put it in the show notes. But it talks about the fact that this is what we mean by lack of pay equity hurts everybody, not just women. And we actually limited men's choices during the pandemic, because of that dynamic. And it goes even

Tiffany Dufu 19:36

further. It goes even further, Maria, because when men can't be engaged at home, because now they're having to work overdrive because they're now the primary breadwinner, it deprives kids, you know, yes, people in the home of having access to multiple ways of doing things, of executing tasks and so everyone wins when everyone is a Well to engage in both the private sphere and the public.

Maria Ross 20:04

Absolutely. And, like the follow up question to that, that I was asking was, are you seeing, you know, as the makeup of the women in the different crews changes, as you know, now that not that the pandemic is over, but as we're sort of coming out of it, hopefully with a light at the end of the tunnel, at some point, are you seeing a change in how women are approaching their careers and work? Because of what they went through? In the pandemic?

Tiffany Dufu 20:30

Yes, I'm seeing women who are a little bit more senior, really thinking about what was going to be my next the next stage sooner probably than they would have. I'm seeing a lot of portfolio careers. So you know, I'm going to do this day job, but I've got a side hustle, what are some other things that I can do to sustain myself and really explore, you know, what the options are a lot more people taking, you know, the risk, quote, unquote, risk of starting their own business. But also, I think a lot of people really thinking about what are the opportunities within my company, what is the career trajectory that I can carve out for myself, given this new insight that I have about what's most important to me, and what's really valuable, and in some ways, really, it's fueled the ambition, to want to do more, to want to be more. So I think it's changed everyone that shaped everyone, but depending upon where they are, they're having different responses to it.

Maria Ross 21:41

Well, and I think, you know, kind of relevant to the topic of empathy that we talk about on the show all the time. It's understanding that that's what many of these women are thinking and feeling right now. And so, you know, if you are a sea level leader, an HR leader, someone working with your company, culture and executive development, to understand that this is where women are right now. And this is what they're thinking, what are you as an organization and a culture, doing to address that to either respond to it, or provide flexibility around it or lean into it so that, you know, we can keep people and retain that top talent. So I love that you're sharing this, this insight with all the women that you work with, that you're seeing this trend?

Tiffany Dufu 22:24

Oh, absolutely. One of the most important things that I've encouraged managers to do and organizations to do is to really communicate your allegiance to the women in your organization, beyond whatever team they're on. One of the intentions that is uploaded on our platform at the crew in relationship to career is finding a new job. And companies that we partner with are often very alarmed that their employees are uploading that they want to find a new job. But when you look deeper at the data, what you'll discover is that they want to find a new job, but they don't necessarily want to find a new company. It's just that navigating the politics, particularly with their manager of the fact that they don't want to be on that team, or there's something else that they want to explore. It's so much more complicated than just going and applying for a job outside of the organization. And so in as much as senior leaders can really communicate the multitude of pathways for growth and development within a company outside of the team that someone is currently in is so important. So they can feel that they can grow, even if it's not with that manager on that particular team. I love that

Maria Ross 23:37

you're saying this, because I just recently recorded another podcast that will have probably already aired by the time we aired this one. So I will put a link in the show notes to it with the chief learning officer at TBWA worldwide Rhonda George Dennison. And she was talking about the fact that they have such a strong ethos that their company about betting on their people, and having a very clear and pragmatic understanding that they may only have those performers for three or four years. And then they might move on. But it's about helping elevate them, and nourish them and support them and helping them grow and expand while they're there. And I just loved that refreshing, realistic mindset of understanding. You know, we don't have lifers anymore. And I think there's still a lot of companies out there that still have that smug mindset, that well, you should just be thankful you have a job and you're going to you know, you're going to be here and you're going to put up with whatever for 20 or 30 years. That's not the way it works anymore. And I love the way TBWA worldwide is leaning into that and going we are going to develop you as much as possible. So you are completely productive. And their goal is not to keep people there their whole career. But for people to look back on their career and say I did my best work in that role. Even if I was new there three or four years. I know right? It's just Whoa, if every refreshing, it's refreshing because if every company operated that way, they'd actually You know, I think I titled the podcast episode, like how betting on your people leads to market dominance, because that is the attitude that's going to help you win. And this is why again, you know, empathy is not just good for society, it's great for business. It's following that empathy to your people, so that you can meet them where they are. And they will, they will, you know, Storm bridges for you, they will do the work, they will innovate, they will create, they will move the needle in terms of the performance of the company, if you bet on them. And you know, your work helping companies bet on women is so important, because it's especially those groups that have not been bet on before.

Tiffany Dufu 25:40

That's it? That's so true.

Maria Ross 25:42

So can you talk to me a little bit about your either your personal philosophy or the philosophy of the crew, on the role empathy can play, when you're ensuring meaningful and fruitful connections.

Tiffany Dufu 25:56

So at the crew, we use an inquiry based peer coaching model that in a lot of ways is rooted in empathy. And one of the things that we teach and we have to recalibrate our members around is what empathy really is, when it comes to supporting other people. Oftentimes, what we find in the very beginning is that a member of who is being coached, who has an intention and might be struggling, shares, what their challenges, and then someone else will weigh in with either what they did, when they weren't in that person situation, or what they imagined they would do, if they were in that person situation. Because since we were in kindergarten, we were told that to be a good steward is to put yourself in someone else's shoes. And so that's why we do that. But that actually is not empathy, in the way that we need it to happen. When you're trying to hold space. For others. Empathy is about actually taking yourself out of the center of someone else's experience, and really holding space for them and keeping them at the center of their own experience by asking them questions, like, what is challenging about this for you? Who else should be involved? Well, what would happen if you asked for exactly what you wanted? What do you need from us in order for you to be able to move forward? That's empathy. And

so for us at the crew, it's really about recalibrating empathy from I'm going to tell this person what to do to, I'm really going to hold back and I'm really going to support this person honoring their feelings, their emotions, their challenges, their barriers, their opportunities, they can find some success, I think it's really critical. It's critical at the crew, it's critical in my family, it's critical in my life

Maria Ross 27:56

in life, right? Yeah, I mean, that's, you know, I spend many of my talks at the beginning debunking the myths of what people think empathy is. And what you're describing is something I call empathy, hijacking, which we do with the best of intentions, yeah, when we hear someone's story, and we say, and we think we're connecting with that, we actually think we're being empathetic by saying, I know how you feel, because one time when I did this, and then all of a sudden the story is about you and not them. And there might be an appropriate time to share that information. But you have to ask for consent. You know, would it be helpful to you if I shared something similar that I went through? And someone could say, No, I just really want to vent right now. Right? Or, or? No, that's, that's gonna be very different from my situation. And so again, I think we do it with the best of intentions. I know, I've been guilty of it in the past. And I've talked about it on the show before, but I survived a near fatal brain injury in the past of ruptured brain aneurysm. And when I was going through my very difficult, amazing recovery, you know, that's how people connected with me because they felt uncomfortable. They didn't know what else to say. And so it was like, Oh, I know exactly how you feel. I forget things all the time. And I have to write things down, or I know exactly how you feel. I think you're just getting older. And maybe it wasn't the brain injury that's causing this cognitive deficit. It's something else. And again, very good intentions. But intention is not the same as impact. And so I love that you're actively working on that with the crew. And really what you said recalibrating people around, remembering that it's about their experience and their story and what they need, and really being with them and there may come a time in place where you can share the benefit of your experience. If they ask I need to what I need is to know how you handled it. Tiffany, did you ever experience anything like this? What did you do in that situation? Or what would you do if you were me? And sometimes we do ask those questions. But sometimes that's not what we need in that moment.

Tiffany Dufu 29:56

I learned a new term empathy hijacking. I love that Yeah, we'll use that and give you credit TM

Maria Ross 30:02

No, I'm just kidding. It's not to him. But I mean, because it's true. And like I said, I have not perfect. And I've been guilty of it too, because I think we're not. We're not educated about empathy. And, you know, my son's eighth, and they're doing a lot more social emotional learning than they did when I was in school. And I'm, you know, they are starting to understand the language and a little bit of the difference between empathy and sympathy and all these things. But I love that you're working on it actively with the women in your community. One kind of last topic for us to talk about is I would love to have your perspective or even how the crew sets the expectation. What are some of the best ways to connect with people across diverse experiences and backgrounds? What have you found has worked well, because when you're putting these crews together, people are coming from very different places, and very different upbringings even, and life experiences. So

30:57

what is your advice? Or what is your philosophy at the

Maria Ross 31:00

crew around helping these women connect and create trust in a very short period of time with people that might be very different from them?

Tiffany Dufu 31:09

Great question. There are three things that I think are important in order to do that.

Maria Ross 31:13

I love that, yes, everything's right now?

Tiffany Dufu 31:16

Well, because we're all about building meaningful connections at the crew. And you're absolutely correct that when you're matching people who don't know one another, then you really have to level set expectations. So first is around having some kind of organizing principle, that is the foundation for why it is you're coming together. For us at the crew, its intentions, we are here to help one another realize our life intentions. And that is the core purpose of the gathering. It's not to bend, it's not to quilt, it's not to dish. We're here specifically for that purpose. And we all share that common mission of supporting one another and doing that. The second thing is to really set norms to set expectations. What does effective communication mean to you? What does commitment mean to you and to really identify the behaviors that people are going to agree upon that denotes commitment, and I hone in on commitment, because it's something that in a meaningful relationship, you have to feel a sense of in order for you to feel like this is really working, one of the things that we do is we set a norm around response time, because there are some people, I don't know, let's say a publicist, who lives in a 24 hour news cycle. And if a member reaches out to her, where she reaches out to a member, and there's no response, within six hours, the person is ignoring them, you might have another person who was in the publishing world, that person disappears for an entire week to read a manuscript. And so their notion of response time around commitment is very different. And so okay, we're going to agree that 72 hours is going to be our response time, if I don't hear from another from one of the members of my court and 72 hours, then I'm going to, I can then think, well, something's wrong, they're not being responsive to me, if it has 72 hours haven't passed, they're in their own worlds, they're doing their own thing. So I think that having an organizing principle, setting norms from the beginning, and then third, having a very clear mechanism for how you're going to interact with one another. And that provides some kind of structure. So for us, it is the actual gathering, people take turns, there's a timekeeper, there's a note taker, people share, they receive a series of open ended questions from their crew, I think that's really important to teach people how to engage with one another in a new way. Otherwise, all of the people who didn't go through the programming that your son's going through at eight, to learn how to be empathetic with the between empathy and sympathy, they're gonna bring all of their expectations to the table, and people are gonna be crossing each other

Maria Ross 34:03

completely. And I mean, and that's true across whether whatever industry they're in or whatever, you know, there's there's cultural differences as well. You know, where, what country are you from? Where are you from, there's different, there's different constructs of time in different places, you know, having traveled a lot, it can be frustrating to someone from the United States to go somewhere like Spain or to Italy and understand that time does not work the same way in terms of getting back I'm,

Tiffany Dufu 34:29

I'm from Seattle, married to a man from Ghana, Africa. So we live in our home with a different, very different constructs around

Maria Ross 34:38

time. Oh, completely. And I'm from New York originally, but I've lived on the West Coast since 1999. And it's a different thing. It's a completely different thing. So, but I love this because you can kind of map this to organizational components like number one being like your mission and vision, your why what is your organizing principle number two, your norms and expectations are Just you know, your, your culture, your values, how you get things done. And, you know, similar to number three as well, but also just why are we here? Who are we serving? And how are we going to work together. And often we, those are things that people feel like they don't have to spend time on in an organization or in any group, in a parent teacher group or not, you know, a volunteer group, we kind of skip those steps. And then it brings about so many issues, and especially in the workplace, we should not be skipping those steps, just like we wouldn't skip somebody's orientation, or, you know, helping them figure out where the bathroom is, and how to get their laptop, all those things, we still need to do that within groups. And even within groups that are dynamic and forming and reforming, like different project teams, or different whatever, even though you know those people, you might not know them in the context of the project or the team that you're working on with them. And so taking the time to set those principles upfront. And those expectations up front is so powerful, and that is empathy. Because that's all about I always believe that setting clear expectations is actually empathetic. Because then you're providing you're not leaving people in the dark. You're giving them some guidance, and that that to me is a very empathetic thing to be very clear about expectations. So I thank you for that. So this has been a wonderful conversation. Tell us a little bit before we leave about your book, drop the ball achieving more by doing less.

Tiffany Dufu 36:30

Tell us about oh, I wrote a book called drop the ball because I'm someone who used to be terrified of ever dropping a ball. I used to think it was the worst thing you could do. It meant that you were failing to take timely action and disappointing yourself, your community. In my case, as dramatic as it sounds, I would be disappointing the entire black race as in, they're never going to hire another black person again, if I mess this up. So I did not develop some amazing philosophy on how to get over this or dropped the ball. I just had a life changing event. Many people have them. For me, it was the birth of my first child, it could be a diagnosis, it could be a traumatic brain injury, it could be anything that causes you to have all of your balls all over the floor. And I just had a huge epiphany that when that happened to me, Armageddon never hit all the things that I was always worried would happen. None of them happened. No one called to tell me they didn't love me anymore. I didn't get fired. No one came to arrest me. So I just overtime decided to reappropriate the word really looking at why do I feel so much

pressure to keep all these balls in the air to begin with. And that really was the impetus for for the book and supporting other individuals, women men in the life with just figuring out what matters most to you and how to engage others and how to be efficient in your life.

Maria Ross 37:53

I love it. Well, we will have a link to the book as well in the show notes as well as all the links to stay in touch with you. Where's the best place people can find out more about

Tiffany Dufu 38:01

you and your work? Oh, the crew.com Tiffany do foo.com I've got great SEO I think I'm the only Tiffany do foo in the world. So everything every

Maria Ross 38:14

I love it. I love it. At least you're not I compete with a some anime character from a video game that's named Lieutenant Maria Ross. So yeah, that's what I get to compete with. But yeah, and we should say the crew, th e CR u.com. And again, we will have all your links in the show notes. But this has been such a delightful conversation. Thank you, thank you for the work that you're doing to elevate and advance women and, you know, like you said on your website, what you want on your tombstone, I think you're gonna achieve it. She got to as many women as she could. And you're well on your way to getting to as many women as you can. So thank you. Thank you. It's been a joy. And thank you everyone for listening to another episode and another wonderful guest on the empathy edge podcast. You know what to do. If you liked what you heard, please share it with a colleague and don't forget to rate and review and until we meet again next time. Always remember that cashflow? Creativity and compassion are not mutually exclusive. Take care and be kind.

Maria Ross 39:17

For more on how to achieve radical success through empathy, visit the empathy edge.com. There you can listen to past episodes, access shownotes and free resources. Book me for a Keynote or workshop and sign up for our email list to get new episodes insights, news and events. Please follow me on Instagram at Red slice Maria. Never forget empathy is your superpower. Use it to make your work and the world a better place.