Pedagogy Matters: Episode 18 Transcript

Hello and welcome to the latest

episode of Leadership Matters.

My name is. Valerie Jackman

and our leadership leaders CDN.

The purpose of this mini series

is to explore leadership

from different perspectives.

What can we learn from the past?

What's required for the future and

where can we draw inspiration from?

Today I'm delighted to be

joined by Roddy Miller.

Roddy is founder and CEO

of Ideas for leaders.

Which works with research faculty

and thought leaders from the top

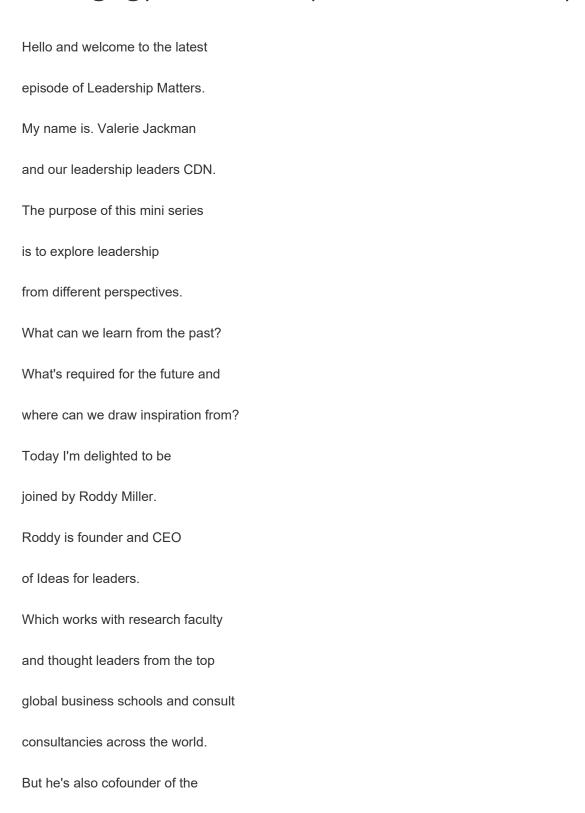global business schools and consult

consultancies across the world.

But he's also cofounder of the

Scottish Leadership Institute,

an organization focused on increasing

awareness and impact of good leadership

practice on organizations performance.

Welcome ready. Thank you Valerie.

It's great to be here.

Rody tell us a bit about this work that

you do then with ideas for leaders.

Well, I mean it.

It comes from an increasing passion

that I have around leadership and

behavior of people in organization.

I suppose it it dials back to my work

in the 1990s with the publishers

in London and I found myself

editor of a large tome on executive

education that needed to have some

articles put around it to make it

a little bit more exciting and.

Uhm, that put me in touch with working

with these big global business

schools all around the world.

And in fact I took over that business

or that publication in the early

2000s and we set it up independently

and and and took it online.

And, UM.

Since then I I've been working with lots of.

Leading faculty at at business

schools around the world.

The likes of Wharton and Chicago and Kellogg

in the States and London Business School,

Oxford,

Seden and others here in Europe and and.

Increasingly drawn to the work that they do,

and the research that they've been

uncovering and investigating on on

the leadership side on on how people

work together in organisations

and so that that's where ideas

for leaders grew out of it.

That it summarizes academic papers

and academic papers and journals,

can be pretty turgid.

Not even academics really like reading them,

but dumb. In fact that there's a.

There's a statistic somewhere that says,

on average,

six people read Business School

academic papers,

which is a fairly appalling statistic,

but they do contain many of them

do contain some really interesting

and applicable information,

and that's what we try and capture

those ones which have a real

relevance to society and business.

And there are plenty that don't,

but that we try and capture the

ones that do and summarize them

down and make them easy to access.

Uh and digest for people outside academia.

And as I say,

quite a lot of people inside academia too.

Right? Oh that's wonderful.

So tell me how.

Then if I want to access those,

how do I access them so they're

all largely free to access on

ideas for leaders.com,

so just go to ideasforleaders.com and hope.

Hopefully the the website should

spring open in front of you and it's

supposed to be reasonably intuitive

to find your way around that.

There's a good search function.

Then you can type in whatever

topics that seem relevant.

And we've now got very nearly 1000

of these short summaries available,

so there should be something if it's

work related that that that pops up.

So for me I'm getting a sense that you're.

Connecting with people who are doing

research who are starting to be able

to sense into or be aware of what.

Is going to be required of our

leaders for the 21st century,

our future leaders?

What are the kind of trends and things

that you're picking up from that?

I think.

I think I'm in a really privileged position

because I get to speak to all sorts of.

Thinkers and, and as I say,

academics and researchers who

are exploring these ideas and as.

Editor of of Ideas for leaders

and also the magazine developing

leaders that we published there and

you know I get exposed to lots of

different perspectives around this,

but what is really clear is that.

We are moving away dramatically

from command and control,

which was the 19th and 20th centuries.

Where a staggering period for humanity,

particularly in the Western world,

UM in the increase in efficiency that.

We we created and the progress and the

increase in wealth that has come with,

that is, is truly staggering.

If you look at it compared to,

you know the changes over centuries before

where you know people 567 generations

previous to anyone would be living

at a fairly similar existence to them.

But you know you only need

to look one generation back,

let alone two or three,

and see how our lives have transformed in

terms of air travel or the digital Internet,

whatever it may be.

Uhm?

So 1920 centuries were were extraordinary,

but and one of the things that

drove them forward was,

you know,

the creation of these large

organizations which have now become

extraordinary large organisations with

income and power much greater than.

Many small countries.

But with size comes huge complexity

and the way that we tackle

complexity in these organisations is.

But putting in lots of process and

lots of layers and layers and process.

Effectively dehumanize our roles in

organisations and people lose their sense of.

Purpose in them,

and if you don't have a sense of purpose,

then you you slightly lose

your energy around this.

And so the 21st century is going is very

different and the demands on on 21st century.

Organisations are to be much more creative,

much more innovative.

I was speaking to Martin Reeves,

who's the chairman of the Boston

Consulting Group's Henderson Institute.

Their internal think tank BCG.

Being that the big strategy global strategy

company earlier this week, in fact,

I got a very good podcast with him,

so I put a plug in for that.

But he was saying that you know what he

calls the fade rate of organizations,

which is how how quickly they

peak and and then then disappear.

Again, is just increasing all the time.

In 2020 years ago,

if you were in the top 10% of organizations.

If if your organization is one of

the top top 10% of organisations,

there was a fair chance there was

a 70% chance that in 20 years time

with that ten 1020 years now you'd

still still be in that position,

whereas that's now.

I'm going down to below 20% and so

big organisations are disappearing

quickly that your time at the top

is very limited and the reason

is because innovation is coming

thick and fast and and change is,

it is increasing rapidly now and and So what?

Organizations need.

Organisations need people who

can adapt and be

innovative and creative and and that doesn't.

Tend to happen in the heavily structured

matrix to organisations of the last century,

so there's a big shift there and and,

and that's what that's what we're seeing.

Sort of taking place now that that

that that's the change that's required

and and it's a big mental shift as

well as being an organizational shift.

So it fascinates me around.

You know how that's being implemented?

I was speaking to a hit or

practitioner this morning actually,

who was talking about the changes and

that even from a recruitment perspective

there are things that we will need to

factor in that we haven't factored in

before because of how quickly things

change and the skills that people will

need and the competencies of people will

need to be able to work on forward.

Even being able to work from home,

being able to work remotely,

being able to to iterate and

reiterate quite quickly so.

And that kind of kind of aligns with what

you're what you're seeing there absolutely.

And. And yeah, we see on these surveys

of what what capacities and skills

are being required of organisations.

Now we're seeing far more around

critical thinking and and agility.

And and the and being resilient and self

starter in the ship and and things like that.

And then the really interesting

thing is that you know,

we've just been through this most.

The extraordinary period that we

haven't quite got that got out of it,

but hopefully we're about to

start coming out of it.

Extraordinary period over the last

15 months with the pandemic and.

Before 15 months ago.

Organisations thought the idea

of having people working out of

out of their line of sight was a

crazy idea and couldn't be done.

And there was this lack of trust,

lack of faith in people at all levels, and.

Then it was forced upon us.

And lo and behold.

The productivity rate in in many

respects in many areas of those

people who you know not everyone

can work from home and then clearly

there there there are jobs and

careers that they could you know

have to happen in a place of work.

But then we've seen that those

people who can from work from home.

Stepped up to not is stepped up to the

mark but but really blossomed in this

and and and found that freedom that

autonomy that agency to manage their day,

manage their lives and that was

quite energizing and and and

increased their ability that there

or their levels of productivity.

So the fact that you may want to go

and put some the clothes in the washing

machine or go and collect the child

from school or something like that

mundane which has to be done in any case.

But you can fit it into your working day.

Uhm,

you know between telephone calls

and it's good to stand up from

your desk and walk about,

so you might as well go and do that.

Yeah,

the yeah that actually becomes something

pretty positive and so there's this

realization that that people are

working because they want to work,

not because you just get paid

at the end of the month.

You know,

it's a spectrum and clearly know

they're going to be instances

that that that doesn't happen on,

but the vast majority of people

want to do a

good job. Again, I had a conversation

with somebody in the college sector

recently about trust and about

trusting people trusting colleagues.

And there has been such

a shift in the Fe sector.

So people are working from home.

They're teaching from home.

And and exactly what what you said

there I've seen happen in that people.

Might need to walk the dog or nip

to take TK Maxx to return something.

Or you know go to being cute to pick

up within a paint or whatever but

they'll fit that into their their day.

Not at the cost of the work

that they're doing,

but they'll work it around it so that

they can actually show up better when

they need to and focus and better when

they when they need to and when they can.

And I think there's another.

There's another layer thin layer to that too,

which is and and and you know this,

'cause I.

I think you do walking

meditation and stuff for people.

I think you mentioned that to me before.

But uh, you know.

You probably don't get much time

to do that at work because there's

an element of being appraised,

watched of,

what you're doing in the office,

but if you go off and walk the dog

when you've just had a complete quite

a heavy conversation about something,

something work related that gives you

the time to percolate those thoughts

and distilled them and and and come

up with some fresh ideas so it it

may may be quite generative yet again.

It's not going to be always the case.

It's not.

It's not a rule,

but I think it creates this my

my definition of leadership.

But there are people who create

the conditions for for others

to do their best work.

And I think we've created slightly

inadvertently this condition where

others can do really good work.

From home,

and it's by giving them that that

sense of autonomy in that sense of

agency and sense of responsibility.

Yeah yeah, and trust that idea of trusts,

release it to the heart of it as well.

I have a question for you.

Just in all the people that

you've spoken to another.

This the research you've done.

I think most people will get it that

they're you know that we're we're we're

in a time of change not we're moving into

a time of change but we're in a time of

Iraq with things where we do need to be

adaptable and flexible and lean and agile.

And all these things and we need

to be comfortable with that.

But in many organizations there are

cultures that are very different to that.

So in your own research,

is there anything?

And the different interviews that you've had.

So if I'm a leader in an organization

that has been quite hierarchical,

a topdown command and control,

quite bureaucratic,

how am I going to even start to

think about supporting the workforce

so that we can make the shift

to a different kind of culture?

That that's a brilliant question,

and it is. It is it.

By and large the big question.

It. It ultimately has to be sanctioned

and approved from the top it it's very

difficult to try and have this more.

Fluid sort of devolved leadership.

If it's not, if it's not

flowing from the top, so.

You, you're going to struggle otherwise

if if your senior leaders think everyone

needs to show up in serried ranks and

and and carry out the instructions,

then try trying to.

Get around that in in any significant way

is probably quite a dangerous thing to do.

But so it's beholden on

the senior leadership.

As I said, to create the conditions

where this can happen because we know

we have empirical proof now that

it works that you know, we've just

seen it for the 15 month experiment.

The ongoing experiment.

What you can do is enable

it in your in your teams.

You can start it app at a lower

level in smaller pockets. And uhm.

And give people more autonomy and and

it's really invigorating to do it too.

It's not there.

There are two clear benefits.

I mean there there met many clear benefits,

but there are two two very sort of sweet,

easily identifiable once.

Well,

one is that if you give people a

bit more remit to make their own

decisions and responsibility.

You see whether they step up to the

mark and and and whether they embrace it,

and if they do,

they will let you know they're

bringing additional energy and

and ideas into the workplace,

and that and at the at the same

time they're taking work off

the leaders shoulders,

so that if you had to sort of.

Uhm,

pier over peoples shoulders come before

to check that they're doing it right

now now by giving them a bit more space,

they you know that that burden is removed,

which gives the leader more

time to do other other things.

And there are plenty other things

that need is probably should be

doing like like mentoring and and

and and bringing people forward.

That are time consuming too,

so it it takes a very change type of mindset.

To do that. You can do that.

In your small group, if if if you're no.

Given the opportunity to come,

but it's quite difficult to

do it upwards as it were,

and if you haven't been given that latitude,

then it's probably dangerous

to try and take it,

but you can have the conversations with

people and see how they how they react to it.

Uhm?

These changes don't happen overnight.

Something else that I've been

aware of through the pandemic is

that we have we're starting to

have a much more human centered.

Approach to leadership.

We you know we can't turn a

blind eye or we can't come look

at our colleagues or our team.

And just see them for the role they fulfill.

We are more and more aware of the

conditions that they live in and

what's happening with them in their

own lives. You know,

to to a greater or lesser extent,

but we know if if them.

If it's challenging to work from home,

we know if they're if they've been

trying to manage homeschooling and,

or you know whatever it is

that's going on, we tend.

Yeah, I think we have a bigger sense

of who human beings were working.

I've been doing some work with.

Paul Brown professor Paul Brown is an

applied neuro scientist and he. Is that?

Absolutely clear that. The next.

Yeah, the way we're going to improve.

Productivity at work that the success what

he calls the 21st century sustainable

organization is come by taking in

this more holistic approach to people.

If you just look at people as a expert in

this single field and that's what they

do in this bit of that of the organization,

then you're you're missing out on so

much and and you're you're failing

to leverage the potential there.

So we've got to look at.

Look at it much more holistically

and to your point. Bye bye yeah.

Families and and and other stresses

and strains that people have.

I I remember a conversation I had with

a professor at the Spanish Business

School essay in in Barcelona and he was

a an expert on expats working overseas

and he just done some research and.

It was a.

It showed that the majority of people who

were sent on to overseas assignments.

Failed that they're the ones who failed,

failed not because of the individual

or the work they had to do.

They failed because the family that

came with them hadn't integrated

properly into the overseas well,

and the reason they had they went back

to their home country is because of

the personal family reasons and and.

And that's I think that they that

that encapsulates it in a very clear

idea of how what goes on around us.

Totally impacts what we do at work and

and it always stuck with me and it's

in the same way that you know we look at.

Mergers and acquisitions and in

across across all industries and

sectors and that the bankers and

the consultants come up with lovely

spreadsheets that show how.

How much money is going to be saved and

and where all the the synchronicity

is by merging these two organisations.

So on paper it looks absolutely fine.

And then you put the two cultures together.

There's no fit whatsoever,

so it's the people.

It's always the people that know

that that cause the the difficulty,

and so we've got to be much more aware of.

What makes people work optimally?

OK,

something I'm aware of as well is

is some of the work that I've been

observing and some of the studies

that I've been doing myself.

I'm picking up a sense that.

We need to be. We do need to be quick.

So we need to not necessarily come.

Neil,

something down and say this is our

strategy for the next five years

and and blinkers on.

And that's what we're going for,

but we need to. Be able to decide on a path.

Look to try and develop ideas in

response to what's going on internally,

and most importantly, externally.

You know in that bigger,

bigger, global context.

But that.

There there,

there seems to there needs to be something

parallel going on where we're constantly

reiterating where we're trying new things,

introducing new ways,

but getting feedback on what's

working for people and what's not

working for people so very different

to this is this is the policy and

procedure and how it's done,

and this is what we're going to be using.

Are you picking up on that at all?

Yeah, I mean, I think there's a sense.

Certainly that we frequently

in organizations.

Have our eyes down too much and

are not scanning the horizon so

we don't see the bigger picture

from that point of view and and

and in order to get the job done.

You know there needs to be a focus on

on the path immediately in front of you

as well as where the path is leading.

So uhm, now it's a balance.

Like all these things from the.

We might touch on the Scottish Leadership

Institute at some point a point today,

which is another another passion of mine.

But I I started it with UM.

Jim Mather, the former Scottish

Government minister and he has he

likes to use this metaphor of the.

19th Century railroad handcart.

The thing that you have two men on,

usually in sort of Harold

Lloyd film black and white.

Silent movies and pumping furiously,

going up and down in order to move it along.

But his point being that in order to get

progress you you need to find you need

to have you know a bit of yin and Yang

that needs to be something on both sides,

and you're always trying to

achieve balance in between.

So if you're you just push down on one side,

it doesn't.

You don't go anywhere,

so it is trying to get this balance

between what needs to get done now,

but also having your eyes up.

And I think in scanning the

horizon and I think there's.

Probably less of a mindset of horizon

scanning than there should be,

and that's something I'm really

keen to to try and cultivate that

the opportunity for that to happen.

Dinner that answers your question or not.

Great answer.

And it was a lovely introduction to

the Scottish Leadership Institute.

Because, you know,

we've spoken initially about

the global work that you do,

where you're getting a sense of

what's going on on a global scale.

But then you're, as you mentioned,

your co-founder of the Scottish

Leadership Institute. What's that about?

I mean it, it it comes from.

And awareness that having worked with

the leadership development sector made

principally business schools globally,

but also lots of consultants,

both the the big international

premiere consultants like Boston

Consulting Group and the Yeah,

the big accounting firms to come.

But there's a a mass of others out there,

a plethora of small excellent

little boutique consultants doing.

Leadership work as well and it's

very fragmented, and if you're not.

Fully immersed in it.

It's very difficult to identify who are who

are the right people that to help help you.

And and I think there's.

Also, a large sector of.

Scottish business and and and public

Sector 2 public sectors better.

Slightly better provided,

but the Scottish business sector who?

Don't.

Focus enough on leadership because they've

got other priorities and and it's it's.

It's too confusing to look at

this fragmented world so that

Scottish Leadership institute is.

It is in part that.

Just raise the awareness of

the benefits of good leadership

and there's plenty research to

show that good leadership,

good good management of people.

Makes is the single most effective.

Factor in improving improving

performance in an organization.

So even if your organization is doing

well by improving the leadership approach

and the management of people within it,

you can increase that.

So it's very difficult for lots

of organisations who may not.

But large enough to have their

own expertise around leadership

within them in the organization,

which is going to be most organisations,

only. Very large ones that can do that come.

Then where to look for that so it's

Scottish Leadership Institute is is.

Going to be a place that they can come and.

Be supported in increasing the focus on

leadership within their organization,

and it also provides a navigational

map for identifying appropriate.

Providers that they help develop people

and and it will also be at its core,

a sort of creator. A pathway for people to.

Develop their own leadership career

so you can sort of map it through

through the Scottish Leadership

Institute and engage in.

Events and discussions with other people

who who also have an interest in it and

that will support support that their

journey so it it's still at an early stage,

but we're keen for people to know

there's a Scottish leadership.

Dot Org website and people to get

involved with that and find out more

and get in touch with us if they if

they want to participate in this,

it's really trying to build a movement

I suppose is that is where I should

have started and from an organizational

perspective, so organizations can be

can engage with Scottish Leadership

Institute but also individuals.

So what you're seeing, you know I

could if I if I if I thought right?

Well, I actually want to take

responsibility absolutely unneeded.

Yeah, it's a membership.

Membership will be individual.

Yeah and and and the advantage of

that is that if you change jobs or

or roles within an organization,

you can continue.

Your association with it and and and

that that will carry forward through

your career because leadership is,

is is often.

Then they only serve structured thinking.

We get around leadership often.

It happens in in short programs over a day.

A couple of days a week,

whatever it may be and and then

you don't touch it again for for

months on end or years on it.

And we want to make a little bit

more continuous than that and

and keep keep people thinking and

raising their awareness and read but.

The principal way of trying to

reach these individuals will be

through organisations,

so we're very keen for organisations to

be engaging with us and and saying yes,

it would be great to have.

X many of our our leaders,

our managers on this journey together

and and support that and again this

goes back to the conversation we had earlier.

Which is,

you know if it's supported from the

top within an organization and then

it has a great deal more impact so.

The. We're we're we're wanting

to speak to both organisations,

but absolutely individuals as well.

OK, that's really interesting and

and lovely to hear that it's a.

It's a. It's a Scottish leadership

institute 'cause I think.

I, I think one of the things that

I've picked up the very clearly from

executive working with executive

education provision that these big

business schools around the world is.

The big people tend to buy into

these expensive programs on on

the basis of the brand of the the,

the university or the Business School.

The opportunity to have a famous faculty

member standing in front of them and and.

Perhaps going on camp onto

one of these campuses.

You know you go to Oxford or something

and and you get the certificate,

all of which is extremely nice,

but none of it.

In fact changes your learning.

What changes you're learning is the

is the the fact that they've convened

a group of like minded people and

created a space where you can have these

structured thinking and discussion.

And so that's the bit that

we're trying trying to foster.

But the other part that the

business calls do very well is.

It customized programs and programs

just for a single company is make

it relevant for the participants

and that may be around their

particular strategy or whatever.

But I think that there's a

Scottish relevancy there too,

and that you know we've got a rich,

rich history of.

Philosophy around leadership in

Scotland and practice and and,

and particularly around community,

and I think there are all sorts

of threads that we can we can draw

out about that that will resonate

with people in Scotland and I and

I'm really very excited to have

the opportunity to do that.

Yeah, I'm I'm.

I'm excited to see to see what comes

of that Roddy were very close to time.

I'm going to ask if.

So if I'm a leader and I'm thinking

about what's required for the future,

if there were three things.

What do I need to be really focusing on?

Uhm, what the?

The first big event we've run at

Scottish Leadership Institute was with

this extraordinary chap called Bob Chapman,

who was a.

We inherited a as a manufacturing

business in the Midwest US when he

was quite young in his late 20s.

His father died quite suddenly and

he had by this stage had become

a trained accountant.

Had been to Business School and got

an MBA and he was very much of the.

Slash and burn sort of approach

of cost cutting and and managing

organisations on us by spreadsheet

and and he tried and the company was

not in good nick when he inherited it

and he tried it for four or five years.

That approach and it clearly wasn't

working and he came over to us just

weeks before the lockdown started

and and and and and gave this

amazing presentation that explained

how he developed his.

What he calls truly human leadership style,

which is a people centric human

centric approach where you see

everybody that you work with as

individuals with families and and his

slightly folksy Midwest phrase is

somebody somebody's precious child.

And so it's understanding and you know

that comes across as a bit schmaltzy,

perhaps for us,

but the effect of it is utterly

extraordinary and he has run

this business on this basis for

the last 25 years and he's had a

stellar performance and so I think.

Point number one is look look

at everybody as you know,

as a as a fully fledged human being

who has something to give and and

develop a people centric style.

I think the second point is.

Be aware of your influence as a leader,

and I think lots of us.

Just go to work and and possibly

any everyone is different but yeah,

but possibly fail to appreciate

what impact they have in their role

on others and so taking a moment.

Not all the time, but you know once,

once a fortnight anyway.

Just the the thing you know how?

How it what I do is that impacting

on the people I I do it with and for

and around and seeing that and if it

there the more seen ur senior you are,

the greater you need to reflect on that.

And the third part of that is

is probably just enjoy it.

I think there's there's a.

There's a great deal to be done from in

enjoying what you do in the present.

We spend a great deal of time.

Being stressed and uhm,

there's a great piece of

work by someone from.

The Center for Creative Leadership

around the fact that most stresses

it comes from rumination is because

we ponder on the things that stress

is there too much and and and

happiness and and being in the flow.

You know that moment when everything is

just going well and times it's fast.

And it's because you're absolutely

in the present.

It's the reason we love going to.

Well, maybe I shouldn't be saying

this in Scotland,

that the Members without going

to football matches.

We love going to the theater.

You can't do either, but come.

Is 'cause you're completely

tide up in the present and that

that's where enjoyment players.

So see if you can create moments

in your day when you're in.

You know you're in the present and

energy flows from that time. Yeah.

And and that that's contagious, I think.

Already, that's lovely.

What an inspirational way to finish.

Because we don't often talk about

bringing the joy or looking for the joy.

And so I'm I'm grateful that you added that.

Well, it's it's part of this.

The this awareness of of work has just been,

you know,

an integral woven part of our lives.

And if we're not in it,

we spend more time at work than

we do anywhere else.

So we should try and enjoy it

as much as we can.

It's it.

Shouldn't just be to put put some

money in the bank account at the

end of the end of the month.

Well,

I have heard someone say that you

know we spent a lot of time where

we were quite cautious about how we

spend our money. We think about it.

You know it's our money.

It's our resource.

We think about how we spend it so

and intended in terms of spending our

time and spending our time at work.

If we could think about how we can

bring our best selves and make

our best contribution and come

from that sort of police,

sounds like a good place to eat.

Buddy,

thank you so much for sharing your

wisdom and your insights with us today.

Valerie, thank you very much.

It's a great conversation.

I really enjoyed it. OK, thank you.

Thank you.