

*If you only have a minute:* Rooted and Unwavering is all about connecting deeply with ourselves, others and our service in the world. The more people are inspired and joyful in their workplace, the more organizations thrive.

## Thrive with Joy in the Center

By Esther Groves and Hylke Faber

Long before he became acquainted with the term “connectedness,” Jim Lang sensed a “spirit of connectedness” in the consulting firm he was part of. “[As consultants] we talked about the “house” we wanted to live in,” he recalls. “We were all about culture and values. I think we all acknowledged we were running the business with values as the key steward, as opposed to other dimensions of business growth like strategy or ops excellence.”

Today, Jim is the CEO of Eversana, a company “...dedicated to accelerating the industry shift to patient-centered, value-based care, creating a healthier world for all of us.”

“The performance those [connected] organizations achieve has been better than those that don't have those characteristics,” he says. “The joy that employees have in those environments is off the charts compared to environments that don't create that. I do believe it is a universal win. It's not easy. It takes a ton of work. And it can't be just value statements on the wall as you walk into the lobby. You have to find ways to bring it alive for people. It isn't easy, but it's possible. It takes work, and the work never ends.”

“By contrast,” he notes, “We got the opposite lesson at that time by working with a lot of Fortune 500 clients, going into those environments and recognizing there's a lot of uninspired people who are showing up for a paycheck and not having much fun.”

From those insights and his personal experiences, Jim has garnered a collection of practical principles that foster a connected organization and keep joy at the center of his work. The principles fall into the three dimensions of connectedness and leadership: **I** (self), **We** (relationships), and **It** (tasks). Here are examples of each:

### I

“I can choose almost all my reactions to everything - I can disconnect stimulus from reaction. And that's been a big gift to me because it allows me to remain even-keel with respect to situations...allows me to choose happiness every morning.”

“It requires practice to take a deep breath, step back, count to three, whatever mnemonic technique you want to use, and then come back into the conversation. I've gotten good enough at it that I can usually handle it in the moment.”

### We

“There's got to be a better way to build and lead this connectedness where people come to work and say, I'm part of something special. I'm excited to be in the presence of my colleagues.”

Jim likes to use a 2x2 grid to measure an employee's fit for the company. On one axis is their job performance, and on the other, their alignment with the company culture and values. To be successful, employees need to score "high" on both.

Jim explains, "The "low/low people are pretty easy to deal with. The people who may not be performing optimally in their role but are high cultural fits (low/high) are the folks you're trying to coach, or maybe find a different role for, and maybe, ultimately, there isn't a role for them in the company, but that's okay. Your goal is to try to move them to high/high.

"The single most troubling quadrant is the people who have high performance in their role but are not good cultural fits (high/low). Most companies tolerate those people for long periods. And if they do, they will never have connectedness. Trust, openness, and an ability to be authentic go away, so you have to "generously sever" those people. Somebody who is a better fit could be in that role, delivering value for the client and their colleagues and making a bigger difference."

## It

"We started as a company with 30 million in revenue in 2017. We're a billion in revenue and 7,000 people now. This [sense of joy] has been a massive accelerator to our success, and a massive differentiator in attracting top talent. There really is a business rationale to it, but the fact is, it's just so much more fun than anything else."

---

*"It doesn't mean we don't have tough things to work on, but it should be inspirational, and it can be fun when it's inspirational." Jim Lang*

---