

S01 - E27 - Rooted & Unwavering - Aug 11 - Hylke Faber & Debi Hanes

Presenter 00:03

Welcome to rooted and unwavering a podcast and radio show which features leaders from all walks of life in conversations about courageous connectedness. How do we stay connected to our best selves, especially when we are challenged? What becomes possible when we truly stay committed to our own and others rightness also when we don't feel it, join hosts Philco, Faber, transformational coach, facilitator, and award winning author of taming your crocodiles and his guests as they explore leadership greatness in today's episode of rooted and unwavering.

Hylke Faber 00:43

Well, welcome to rooted and unwavering broadcasting live from Phoenix, Arizona, where we help leaders connect more deeply to their innate potential. I'm your host Hoka Faber, and I am delighted today to be together with my friend and a leader in Microsoft, Debbie Haynes, Debbie, how are you today?

Debi Hanes 01:04

I'm doing great today. Thank you for asking.

Hylke Faber 01:06

I'm so happy to be here with you today. And we'll hear more about you in a second. I'm going to tell a little bit more about the podcast as we always do to get settled. And then we'll have a conversation with Debbie. And so first about this podcast to get this all oriented. This is the 27th episode. And so why are we doing this? Why are we spending time to rescue connect with ourselves and each other. And the orientation here is that great things happen within ourselves and around us when we are more connected to ourselves and each other mean great things as more true things more caring things more wise things, they might not always be easy. They might not always lead to the outcomes that we want. But at least they're connected to a place that we can say later. Yeah, that was me. And I'm proud of it. Or that was me. And that was us. And I'm really happy that that happened. So we're rooted into something that's enduring, something that you could say transcends this moment that's bigger than this moment. And something that moves that lives on something deeper in us. Some people think about this, their values, or their core life principles. And also it is about connecting to that true place in each other in each other. And then also connecting to our purpose in the world, our task, whatever we're doing whatever is in front of you and how we connect to that. So that's what this podcast is about. And we don't throw concepts at each other, which is also useful. We actually look at stories because I believe that stories have such an impact on us, at least for me, I remember so much thinking about heart like from last week. Vita Olufsen Sneed, speaking about her mother asking, Who do you want to



become is this who you want to become when she did something to disappoint her mother, it's like I remember those stories they keep resonating in my mind. So today, we're here with Debbie Haines. And Debbie is a person that just reminded me I know for already four years, although it feels a lot longer. And also it feels like a long time. At the same time. Sometimes these things happen. Debbie lives today in Columbus, Ohio, with her family, which includes animals and three children. Also, I understand she is principal group software engineering manager at Microsoft and leads teams that drive solutions in the finance organization of Microsoft business operations. Her team's software and data engineers and technical program managers are innovators that drive digital transformation of business capabilities probe out, propelled by data, AI and applications. She's been with Microsoft for five years. But that's not how long she's been in leadership. She's been before that with General Electric GE for 25 plus years with a plus. It's a long time, I will want to hear about the early beginnings of Debbie Haines because if I add that up, it's 30 plus years of working, so that's a lot of time. She has a passion for developing people. And that's also the capacity in which I think we met working together with her teams, and solving tough business challenges with simplification and technology. And I would add compassion, because that's how I know Debbie. Debbie has three children that are growing, they're in high school and middle school. So it's a lot on Debbie's plate. And one of the other things I know about you, Debbie or that I know in my heart about you is you're a person that's able to hold a lot at this same time, and still bring grace to it. And a lot of clarity and wisdom. So I'm so happy to be here with you today, Debbie. So, yeah. So, first question to kick off our conversation. Debbie, what have you learned about connectedness in your life? What have you learned about connectedness in your life?

Debi Hanes 05:24

Thanks. Thanks. Elke, when I think of connectedness for me, for Debbie, which is my truth, which different for everyone is really understanding what what drives me. Right? And what, what truly drives me because we all have different hats. But at the core of it, for me is is really, it's a genuine care and concern for other people, right? Empathetic leadership, whether that leadership is in an office or in my home office or at the kitchen table. Right? Right. Really just, you know, staying true to that. What drives you? And again, it's that empathetic leadership for me. And it's tough, right? I think I told you before the master juggler some days, I feel like I'm the master juggler as we go through things, but but really keeping that core and that center of of who you are. And honestly, knowing yourself enough to know when you're straying away, right? And you got to pull yourself back in. Yes. Is that true?

Hylke Faber 06:35

Yes, yes, yes, a true sense of connectedness, to being a master juggler. And I hear master in that. So there's a stick in your seat at the kitchen table or in your home office or in an office with your colleagues or other people that you're leading and leading into with with kindness and with care who you truly want to be. So I just want to start from the beginning. That'd be right. So where were you born? And and how did you learn about Debbie, how have you been learning about Debbie in your life? Tell tell us about this. And I'm just completely fascinated by how long you've been doing. Working. So looking at us like some time to do the maths and, huh, okay. Tell Tell us about that early beginning.



Debi Hanes 07:29

Certainly. Well, I started when I was two. So I was born in Louisville, Kentucky, and I said law of all some people say Louisville or Lewisville, but it's Louisville, Kentucky, and I am a navy brat. And that's what we say in the US when you're the child of someone in the armed forces in the military. My dad was in the Navy. So born in Louisville, we moved around quite a bit. And when I'm the third of four, so when the oldest, my oldest sister made it to high school, we stopped moving and we stayed. And then dad kind of did his travel wherever the Navy took him. But Louisville is always been my home. I started I started working really early. Right? Well, we'll skip a couple early jobs that paid for fast food in high school. But I started at GE as a high school Co Op. So second semester of my senior year of high school. I didn't go to school in the morning. And I would work at GE as a co op to aviation as a co op. And I did cool things like I typed for people and I made copies. And I went to the cashier to get people their cash advances for when they're going on business trips, because it was a long time ago and everybody didn't have a corporate card. Super early exposure for me to the professional working world. And people didn't see me as the high school girl. I was just another one of the employees and I was young and I had some really great mentors along the way that really helped me

Hylke Faber 09:19

early, that's super early. I want to know more about the mentors. But before I know that I want to know about why did you choose or art had to go to work in the afternoon because that's not something that all kids will do. Now I know I come from Netherlands where probably nobody does that pretty much like 5% of kids. So tell me more about what was driving you to do that.

Debi Hanes 09:45

So again, so in the US second semester of my senior year, so I had finished all my what they call core classes and had done electives and really love the business school like I did. I did typing with actual typewriters. And I've liked that right and, and, and never knew how important typing would be. So there's my little tidbit take typing if you haven't, if you're, yeah, whatever age you are take typing. But I really enjoyed it. And an opportunity came up. And I thought, well, I don't need any more classes, and I could use the money for college and, and I did it and it wasn't a, I'm going to I'm going to take this afternoon Co Op job. And then I'm going to work for GE for the next 40 years. We don't think like that when we're 17 years old. So it wasn't as intentional as I would love to, you know, make it sound to me, but really, really enjoyed it. And stressed every day because you know, high schoolers dress a little bit differently from people in the office in the like, at the time in the office, the the men wore types? Oh, yes, we wore skirts. Some of them were pants, right. But it was different. So I don't know, it was great to just to be able to be surrounded by people that even the even the early engineers were eight years older than me, six to eight years older than me, right? So it just it just gave me a different exposure than what most students get at that age.

Hylke Faber 11:24

How did you keep your footing as this young person from high school? If you can remember we talking about connectedness? How did you keep your footing? While you have all these people around you



that dress differently? You're coming from high school and you're about seven years younger? How did you do that?

Debi Hanes 11:40

You know, it was wow, this is this is reaching back. I just felt first of all, I felt blessed to be there. Right? Because right my my buddies at school, no shade on retail workers, but they were working at the mall. And they were at fast food. And I had a chance to go to the GE plant, right, which is just around the corner from my dad's house. And I didn't even drive at the time. So I remember driving with a dear friend Robbie, and he would drive me to work. Right. And it was just it was an awesome way to connect with him. And it's it's not until I feel like a really old lady right now. But it's not until you get older and you reflect back of wow, you know, even something that seems as small as giving somebody a ride every day to work, right? He enabled me to like, do really cool things. And, and, okay, typing and making copies isn't really cool. But it's better than for me flipping burgers.

Hylke Faber 12:35

Yes, yes, yes. So I sense a sense of appreciation. And that what you're saying, if you're part of what gave you your footing was your appreciation, Your you felt blessed, happy to be there and appreciated that your friend Robbie was able to take you take you there. So you mentioned mentors before. And I heard you speak about mentors also in other conversation. So can you tell me a little bit? Can you tell us a little bit about what you've been learning from mentors, about becoming the Debbie that you aspire to be?

Debi Hanes 13:10

So I've I've had mentors and we didn't always call them mentors, from that first day as a high school student working at GE Appliances. And my very first one was one of the administrative assistants. We call them secretaries then, and she took me under her wing. And she showed me things right because I first of all, I worked for Mr. Hall. And everybody else called him Ed but I was a student and I called him Mr. Hall. And it was a joke that we had running for years until he retired. I always called him Mr. Hall. But I remember early on we had to my I truly wish I could remember her name. It was a little bit ago, but the the woman that was my mentor, she was gonna go to a work dinner. And it was a fancy dinner at a hotel ballroom and she took me as her plus one. And I remember sitting in her office outside of Mr. Hall's office, and she was showing me just the basics like there's going to be seven utensils around your plate which one do you pick up and only cut one piece of your you know, chicken or meat at one time and eat it it was just some of this had nothing to do with GE and had nothing to do with the day job but just her taking me under her wing to show me some of those things because we we had a fork at our dinner table maybe a knife but there wasn't all that stuff around it and she she really took the time to help me feel comfortable and welcomed.

Hylke Faber 14:46

Yes, yes. Yes. So feeling welcomed and comfortable that and having somebody really take the time to help you to be invested in your success. at that dinner table in Louisville, Kentucky, that was no an



affair a thing that that helps you connect more for how it helped you to be at ease. Yeah. Do you remember? Do you remember anything about the dinner? How was it?

Debi Hanes 15:16

I have no idea. But it's interesting that

Hylke Faber 15:19

you do remember the preparation of it, or the preparation.

Debi Hanes 15:21

Isn't that interesting? Yeah. And I'm thinking to myself, I think her name was Sandy. And it's gonna drive me just a little batty until I go back and figure out who what her name was. But I'm thinking Sandy.

Hylke Faber 15:32

Okay, so maybe Sandy. And maybe Sandy will listen to this podcast at some point, too. And so you can see that he had an impact. And you because he helped you to find your footing? How does that How did that experience which you could say is so insignificant, and I'm very struck by this conversation so far, you're able to appreciate the seemingly small things, and have them be quite orienting for how you are going about your life. Because you remember this, for example, right? Like, I went to see Bruce Springsteen, and this happened to me, you know, I went to see and somebody taught me about these forks, and knives. So tell me about, well, how is that informed how you lead today, that experience?

Debi Hanes 16:13

Oh, wow, I'm a my whole career I've just been drawn to call them early in career. Now, whether it's the co ops or the interns or the new hires from college, I went through a college, a leadership program from GE when I graduated from college, so I went through that, but as I think through now, it's it's really wanting to reach out to those interns, and reach out to those early in career and make space to talk to them. And I spoke to someone just last month, and she was quite nervous to talk to me, she's in my organization, and I will give out her name. And she was quite nervous. And I said, it's just me, right, we're just talking, it's not a review, it's a get to know you session, nothing, you know, you don't have to prepare anything. And it's just me, and I really wanted to learn a little bit more about her and her background. And I love learning people's stories, right? I just calm down that oh, my gosh, this person is resilient, or levels above me. No, it's, it's just Debbie. And we're going to have a conversation and learn about each other,

Hylke Faber 17:24

taking away all the noise, which, you know, we could describe as the ego noise, the noise of what we think we should be all the imagery that goes in on the head. And making it simple, breaking it down to the essential I am a person just like you, let's talk, let's connect with each other. Let's do that together. That's one of the things you took away from that. So that was, let's call her Sandy. And then tell us about other formative experiences you've had that helped you in your leadership later on.



Debi Hanes 18:01

Um, I think one of the early experiences, this is at GE Appliances again. And I was graduated from college, and I was on this leadership program. And I had my first rotational assignment. It was like a two year deal. And you did for six month assignments. And I, I had a project leader, that was a mentor for me, like she sponsored the rotation. And I remember her taking the time to show me her project book. Like, okay, we have all kinds of way cool software now. But it was binder, and I had tabs and how she ran her projects. And she took the time to take me through that. And Jill was just a huge supporter for me. And again, in addition to helping me with the work, she helped me with other things. I mean, I recall coming out of a meeting. Well, I can remember these memories are coming from healthcare, you must be magic. I remember coming out of a meeting and she's like, Debbie, you've got really great ideas, but no one can hear them. You need to speak up, you've got to voice us it because I was super soft spoken because I'm still pretty young. Not that you have to yell, right? But it's, you've got a seat at the table. Use your voice. And I just have so many great memories of working with Jill.

Hylke Faber 19:29

So what was it like? Do you remember what it was like when Jill said you've got great ideas, but people are not able to hear them?

Debi Hanes 19:36

It took me aback. First of all, I was reveling in the praise if you've got great ideas, right? Because we're young, and we're just starting out. But that but that reinforcement at the time, and again, this is just a couple of years ago. There weren't many women at the table. And I don't want to turn this into a big gender discussion but The men were louder than we were. And, and I, that's stayed with me for quite some time. And I've used that exact advice with several mentors through the years of you've got great ideas, bring them to the table,

Hylke Faber 20:16

bring to the table, bring to the table. So tell us about how you do that, how do you bring good ideas to the table, also, when the people around you may look different, may have a different gender may not be from Louisville, Kentucky, may not be from GE, you know, may come from a very different life experience than that you're coming from? How do you bring things to the table in a way that help people connect to them?

Debi Hanes 20:48

Yeah, you know, there's, there's so many, there's so many leadership books out there, and I have read many of them. But but for me, it's, it's really helping the team, whatever that team is, help them understand their value to the organization to the team, right. And, and I can't act on your great ideas if you keep them in your head. Right. And so for me, so many years later, you know, I'm, I'm very conscious of the different styles of people of different backgrounds of people, even virtual tables, because I haven't been in the same room with my team for quite some time. But making that space,



right, whether it's around the round the team's chat, or some sort of way to break the ice at the beginning of the meeting, to really make it a safe space for people to come forward. Now easier to do in a team of 10. Hard to do in a team of 100. Right. With larger and larger meetings, but but really helping people to understand their value that they bring to the team. And recognize from from self confidence perspective, people are different places. Yes, you invite inviting, inviting people in. And there's still times today, I've got some forms with my organization, they're no laughing It's called drinks with Deb. And it's coffee or water just depending on the time of day. And it's just total open forum. And even that can be intimidating for some folks that are not used to working with senior leaders. And so it's just making sure that that's continually there. And that even though you know, a year ago, not great attendance, and now we're having some better attendance, right? As we go, just make space,

Hylke Faber 22:52

you make space. And how do you make that space so that people are feeling invited? And also that it doesn't become impress Debbie our?

Debi Hanes 23:04

No, it's definitely not impressed. Debbie. Our part of it is, you know, Helga, you and I have known each other for a while is there's as a leader, and I'm just a person, right? I'm just, I'm just a person, I may be in different circumstances or different country. But just trying to make people feel welcomed and appreciated, right back to, you know, appreciation of the people that have helped you. And just that, that ability to just be genuine. And sometimes that means being vulnerable. That doesn't mean share your entire life story. But sometimes it's being vulnerable of, Okay, today's this such and such meeting, and I'm, I'm struggling today, or I'm sleepy today, or I'm a little grumpy from something else that happened, but I'm going to, you know, my intention is to be present here today. And if I need to step away, I'll let you know.

Hylke Faber 24:02

That sense of vulnerability sharing the troopers, I'm struck throughout this whole conversation Debbie already about, like, how you stick with the realness of things, you know, whether it is the fork with Sandy that needs to be known where it goes, or the internet needs to know that we are also people together, like or your team that needs to know that. I'm a human being. And so are you. Let's talk about what's going on as opposed to what we should be saying. Now, I'm curious about how you stay connected to you, or maybe when you lose it, and how you come back and maybe we're gonna have a few minutes before we take a break. I'm curious about whether you can share something with us about when, when Debbie has a hard time herself How She Keeps connecting to herself. And also how she keeps connecting to others. Because I've seen you do that. And I'd love for you to speak to that

Debi Hanes 25:15

there's there's a whole sense of honesty here, Hillcoat, right sometimes we have to be honest with ourselves that I'm, I'm staring away. Right and, and knowing knowing yourself well enough to say, Wow, either that didn't feel good. Or it wasn't taken as I expected. And really just finding a way to step



back, right? self reflect. So if there's some self awareness in there, sometimes it's not that and somebody just really came up and said, Debbie, that didn't work. Being open to that, you know, the feedback, but for me, it's, it's talking to someone, right, I'm obviously a people person, I'm an extrovert, whether that's talking to a therapist or my life, you know, lifelong friends, which is tough for people that moved around a whole lot, but I've got some really strong girlfriends that I stay connected with. And just finding time to sit in the quiet a little bit, which, you know, a few years ago was with three small children, and there's not much quiet at all, but just trying to find that whether it's a quick walk, or some sort of a check in with yourself to say, Okay, that didn't go great, or it could have gone better. Just recognize that give yourself some grace, like, give myself some grace, okay, I'm human too. And sometimes things don't go as I expect. And revel in this, you got the small wins, right? And just don't don't let the small wins get knocked back by something that didn't go your way. And that sounds really doesn't sound real. It sounds like just management talk. Well, it's, it's real for me. And you know, sometimes it's okay, I've got I've got eight minutes before my next meeting, I'm going to take a walk around the house.

Hylke Faber 27:05

Yes, yes. Maybe she'll share an example. Recently, or not so recently about where you practice exactly that, or maybe not exactly that. Or maybe you didn't practice at all, and you wish later like, oh, gosh, I wish I'd practice that, because that would have been good. We have shortened the cycle of problems a lot by a lot. Can you share an example of,

Debi Hanes 27:30

you know, I, I want to be careful in that, you know, examples that I do share. I have, I have just a really good friend. at Microsoft. She used to work for me. And we are great sounding boards for each other now. And we stay connected, right? I still meant to her. And you know, I get as much from her as she gets for me. And so it helps me combine a couple of things, right, I get to stay connected with her. But you know, sometimes it's just a quick text. Neither one of us have time on our calendar. But I'm like, I need five minutes, right? We get I put my earbuds in and I go for a quick walk around the neighborhood to talk to her. And that just helps me get centered. It gets me up and moving and you know, out of the chair out of the office. And let me connect with someone that I admire and respect. And it's a really good mutual back and forth.

Hylke Faber 28:27

Very clear, we're going to take a short break. And after the break, we're going to go a little deeper into the value of this. Working with others and doing that quick reach out and what happens within us when that happens, and maybe how it also helps the person that we reach out to. We've been talking to Debbie Haynes, who's a senior leader in Microsoft, and also a dear friend of mine who I admire for her compassion and honesty and I think about this last half hour already. I'm very impressed and touched by the realness that you bring to every moment. See you after the break.

Presenter 29:14



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Hylke Faber 29:38

Welcome back to ruidounwaivering. I'm your host Ahsoka Faber. I am speaking with Debbie Haynes senior leader at Microsoft and also mother of three and many other things master juggler of many things. And one of the things we talked about before the break was so I have a difficult moments He and then I reach out to a mentor slash friend, slash mentee. And then something happened. Can you give us an example of maybe some hot water or difficulty that you're in? And then maybe you reaching out and what happened? Ah,

Debi Hanes 30:25

I'm going to tell you about sin, his friend of mine, and a mentee of mine, and she's just a lovely, lovely person. She is one of one of the many, I shouldn't say many. She's one of the few actually super close, like, tell, tell it to me real person. Right. So there's, there's a couple of them. And she and I had had a chance to work together for several years. And she's one of the people in the in Microsoft that I go to, and we and we chat. And while I was really struggling, with a role, and my, my place in the role, and she was a sounding board, for me as we went through that, and sometimes it was just, I was just so frustrated. I mean, did I need to give myself a timeout? And step away? Whether it was, you know, walking in the house or walking outside and talking just to say, Okay, how could I have done that better? I'm super frustrated. I know, we have to, we have to do this together? You know, just asking for the, what could I have done? What could I have done differently? Or how could that have landed better? And, you know, sometimes we don't have answers, right? And I recall one distinct conversation. It was that sucked. Yes, it did. What are we going to do about it?

Hylke Faber 32:07

I can imagine sin saying that the person that I also adore, so happy that she came up in this conversation into this conversation, I can just imagine her. So there you are. Yes, that happened. Yes, that sucks. Now what we're going to do, what's the value of somebody mirroring that back? That first part? To you,

Debi Hanes 32:34

to me, I mean, the value of just mirroring that back to me is sometimes we can be so critical of ourselves. Just say that sucked. Right? That didn't go the way I expected. And you're either going to hear oh, great, or I thought you sounded Well, or that really resonated with who you were talking to? Or sometimes you need that. Yeah, that sucked. It really wants to add, right? So it helps us It helps me just understand, Okay, I'm not blowing this out of proportion, I really was bad. And then what can what can I do to help put things back on course, whether that's, you know, the recommendation to reach out to someone else to talk to, right, get a different perspective, because you know, humans are hard, right?



Humans are hard being that so many people take things differently. Right? I just getting different perspectives. helps. And sometimes the resounding perspective, regardless of your background is yeah, that was bad. But that didn't work. And we have to do it differently. But the value of what comes in when you open yourself up to have those conversations is now you've got this collective mind to say, okay, okay, we need to turn this around, what are the two or three things that we could do not the 50, that's going to stress you out? What are the two or three things that we can do when we can focus on like, I need to go talk to these three people to raise the ship a little bit as we go forward. So that to me is the value of that parrot back is to say, okay, sometimes we're too hard on ourselves. Other times, maybe not hard enough, but Right, just

Hylke Faber 34:32

right, right. This is this kind of self honesty, kind self honesty, and I love that you're bringing up this image of collective mind. And by definition, or by extrapolation, I'm thinking and therefore my individual mind, by definition is going to be smaller, for more narrow and therefore less full of perspective, because I don't I'd like to hear from you happens with you when you don't reach out. But what happens with you? What happens? What happens with you, Debbie? Let's say with that I'm frustrated about this role in the work my place in it. I'm trying to find my way. And you hadn't reached out.

Debi Hanes 35:19

Yet? Yeah, I am. Wow, you're asking the hard questions today. Hoka as we as we go through it, but for me, I even as a senior leader, and I've been at this for a minute, right? That self confidence, right and and you're you start to question or you self doubt, and for me, it's just I become a little withdrawn. And I want to think about things. But I get stuck in this spiral of not good, right? Yes. And people react differently. As I've already shared, I'm an extrovert and I draw my energy from other people. And if I stay with myself too long, and things aren't going great, I just, I don't I'm not my best self, right. I'm not my best. I'm not my best leader. I'm certainly that we miss mom or partner as we go through it, and sometimes that reach out as my sisters, but they're just agree with me and tell me what I want to hear. I love them. But sometimes you need that impartial person. Uh huh.

Hylke Faber 36:27

Yes, yes, I hear you. I hear you about that. And what comes up for me is a mind is like a dangerous neighborhood. It's better not to go there by yourself. You know, it's like, I love this, what you're talking about this obsessive quality, something happens. And I stayed and lost in the maelstrom of whatever's going on in my mind. And I don't move on. And one of the things I heard you say was when I talked to a min D mentor, Confidant like sin, for example. Yeah, that happened. Yeah, it sucks. Now, what are we gonna do about this? That's right. Right. And that, by itself helps to restore some confidence. Because I'm, like me, staying in my obsessive mind becomes becomes a downward spiral, I feel worse and worse about myself.

Debi Hanes 37:24



Right? Right. I think and just some tough things going on just in my family. And personally, you know, this week, and I and I really reflected just, it's just been tough. But I think of the people and in my case, it just happens to be women that I reached out to, right, a girlfriend that I was super close with for years, right? We had our first babies at the same time, right? And we've stayed connected through the years less lately when they hit high school. And I reached out to her and kind of rekindled that I've got a really good girlfriend, who's now in Seattle. Lisa, and I've been friends for 17 years. We don't talk every week, sometimes a quarter could go by a half year could go by. And I reached out and I talked to her this week. And it's just reinforcing to me that sometimes those friends and mentorships call them family. Right? You don't have to talk to him every day. I don't have to call every every week to say, Hey, Lisa. Hey, Michelle. Right. What's what's going on? It's just drawings, some strength and knowing that. Yeah, we probably should stay in touch more often. But we know when, you know, there's tough things happen that, you know, there's that that genuineness and that connectedness that you can draw upon?

Hylke Faber 38:55

Yes, yes. That's the basis, that genuineness that connected this. That's the basis and everything else happens from there, starts from there, starts from there. How do you develop that genuineness with somebody? Because, you know, you're talking about, you know, kind of unconsciously skilled as I hear about it, yeah. And I call Michelle or I call Lisa or I call sin or, and we have this genuine conversation. And I can imagine people listening, some of them listening like I don't even know where to start. There's a person, right. Right. And how do I talk to my person about what I need to talk about? How do I do that?

Debi Hanes 39:38

Wow, that's that's a that's another tough one. Okay. It's just I being being a navy brat, right and military, right kids, right. You made you made acquaintances quickly, right. So a lot of acquaintances because you're always the new kid every year. For the first I don't know, five or six years of school either. As the new kid, so you make acquaintances really quick, but I only have very few very close friends. Right? And it's having those friends through all of life's ups and downs, and, gosh, the daycare years, when the kids were really little, a lot of conversations about daycare. But for people to develop that, it's not that you need these lifelong friends. It's finding an outlet, finding a person that you can connect with, right, that you can have a conversation with. And, and that can be hard for some people, especially for introverts, or other folks that just don't trust really easily with people. But just finding that person start with one, right, could be a therapist, I started seeing a therapist earlier this year. And she's lovely. Right? And it's that that that unbiased, right? Not my sister is gonna always agree with me, mostly agree with me. But just find that person, it could be through, you know, mental health, right? A therapist, a neighbor, and equate, I don't know who that is. But having someone that you can talk to could be your spouse, could be an adult child who knows, reconnecting with a parent, I don't know. But from, for where my brain is, and how I'm wired, I'm a people person. And having the opportunity to be able to reach out to three or four people when I when I need, or just do a check in on what where they are right. It's not that one way street is super helpful. So I, I don't know if I have great advice on how to get your person.



Hylke Faber 41:56

No, but I understand that person

Debi Hanes 41:59

is to talk.

Hylke Faber 42:04

Yes, just talk, talk with them. Just talk with them. Talk with them. Talk with them. And one thing I am noticing, as you talk about these conversations, is that I heard you say the word check in a few times. And I didn't hear you say a solvent or brainstorm?

Debi Hanes 42:27

No, just to check in.

Hylke Faber 42:29

Yeah. So say more about the value of being as a leader, right? And how it is also translates in how you lead, finding this balance between working with each other, and sharing about what's going on, checking in. And then moving into so what are we going to do about this? So how do you find that balance? So how do you balance those two?

Debi Hanes 43:02

Um, I do a lot of check ins with my staff. Right? So I've lead I lead teams of teams. And I'm very intentional about keeping that one on one check in time. And I don't come with an agenda. I say it's your agenda, to talk, whatever you want to talk about, whether that's vacation or project, if we have to, if there's help, that's needed. Career, it can be any thing like that, but just to again, make that space for that check in. And I still occasionally have to, like check myself because I'm a I'm a problem solver. Right? Sometimes they just need an ear. Sometimes they just need me to listen for a little bit. And so I've I've gotten better at like, pause, listen and reflect. And, you know, what do you want? Right asking, asking them, what do you what do you want? Are you are you wanting an ear? Are you looking for suggestions? Right? So I just want to set those expectations up front. So I if if they need solutioning we can go there if they need an ear to talk it through. I'm there.

Hylke Faber 44:20

Yes, yes. Yes. I have a question that is maybe a bit of a challenge in this in the spirit of asking some maybe some hard questions, which is and you're a leader of an organization and you have goals. Know, Microsoft operations has a big responsibility and you have a big responsibility in that, right. So, how do you then make sure that when things need to be talked about maybe with A person that you're having your one on one with, that they actually get raised. How do you do that?

Debi Hanes 45:07



So I'm a couple of different ways. There's, there's quite a few connection points across my organization, certainly the one on ones with my direct people, leaders. And then I also do check ins monthly with their leadership teams. As they go, and then it's, it's been instilled with me for from years, years gone by they've gone by different names, but there's a monthly business review that we do with my team that we check in where progress on low work happens. And you know, where are their issues? Where are there things that we need to celebrate? Right, because there's wins, right, so let's celebrate the wins, but also have that forum for quick status, risks and issues and that celebration, so there's a couple of different forums that we use to do that. And I recall way back to my GE appliance days, that was a really big meeting. And it happened, I think it was monthly, it could have been quarterly. But everybody stressed out about it, because everybody had to work on their pages and get their status updated. And sometimes the status when you finally put the page together, it's like, well, that's not good. How are we going to? How are we going to explain that way? Right, for from a work perspective, is just making sure they're the operating rhythms that are put in place. And you know, what if there's something hot going on? And it's a one on one, it's totally okay, we'll talk about it then. Right. So I don't want those one on ones to be project reviews. But if something's going south, or they need a little direction to get right back into the rails, totally happy to go there.

Hylke Faber 46:46

So what I see you do is you make intentional spaces for both. There's the operational reviews, where we have the conversations about what's going well, what can be celebrated, and where the red and yellow issues that need to be addressed. And let's talk about them. Yes. And then there's also the spaces intentional spaces for check in for like personal check in. And if the two happened to be colliding, because there's an hot potato issue that needs to be addressed. You will do that, too. Yes. Yes. Now, how to weave together, how to weave together. So how do you maintain a degree of connectedness with the person while you're in the middle of hey, that's red? Like, that's not working? How do you do that?

Debi Hanes 47:41

Well, first of all, we have to get the work done. Right. But there's, there's very few times I've seen that you that you you throw away the connectedness that you've had with this person for a year to talk about some red issue, right? So they have to be intertwined, right, but what when, when we're in an issue, whether it's in an operating review, or fly by chat that comes in, right, we're all people, things happen, right? So for me, it's, it's even something I've done with my kids, you gotta wait to be where you take a beat to, okay, understand what it is. And then let's solve it going forward. And if there's, you know, systemic things we have to fix, because whatever caused it to go red, we can address those, but let's try it as much as we can, let's keep the emotion at it, and don't have it be a flare up, let's just let's just work together, collaboratively, collaboratively, to figure out on how to solve it. But really, it's at times when you've got those red items or things that are on track as you need them to be that you can really lean on the connectedness that you've built with the team with the colleague with the partner whoever it is, so that you can work on it together. Yeah, you know, things are gonna happen all the time. Right? Whether it's a security incident whether it's a project went south who knows what that might be. But it



certainly is in my experience, better to go through the solving with someone that you already have some sort of connection with.

Hylke Faber 49:26

Better to go through to solving with somebody you already have connection with. Yes. And what I hear you do and Debbie and I've seen you do it is you build this connective tissue throughout and you don't wait for it to happen. You make it intentionally happen. And then what what I also heard you say is an way to beat we wait to beat we wait to beat before we actually start saying something or so we because we We allow for that moment to give, give perspective to it. And my sense is in that moment, that's also a quick remembrance like, oh, and you and I connected, we know each other. Yeah, that didn't go well. But it doesn't mean that you're wrong, or that I'm wrong, or that our connection is not there. It's, we are humans is what you're saying. And we got to learn through this and grow through this because we end because we have this connective tissue, we can lean back on it.

Debi Hanes 50:30

Yeah. And I think that I think the beauty here is, of course, Microsoft has a huge company. Right? And sometimes things don't go well, and you don't have a connection with that person. Right? What a great opportunity once we're kind of past the crisis to keep that going. Right? Do you do that check in after the brouhaha. Right, and just you know, add another person to your, you know, group of people that you pulse with, right, and I'm not saying you've got 151 on ones every month. But that periodic check in really helps that there's still people today on teams, I'll reach out to folks I worked with five years ago just to Hey, how's it going? Right, and it's not a hour long conversation. It's just a, it's just a pulse check. There's a super funny story. And I know we're short on time, but there was a man that I've worked with, when I was fairly new at Microsoft. And he and I were peers. And I would go to his office and it was the funniest damn thing. Hulka he had these bananas. I swear, there's a point here. He had these Denise's on his desk, and they were like black. They were like spotted black bananas. And I'm like, Oh, gross. He's like, that's the best way to eat bananas. So we've had a banana thing for a couple years. So I kid you not in the last month, I received a picture. message from him on teams. And it was bananas. He's like, I saw these today. And I thought of you.

Hylke Faber 52:15

Probably and I keep throughout this conversation. Coming back to this orientation I sent in you, Debbie of really celebrating the small things in people, and also the big things and people over and over and over again and create connective tissue that way. We're getting towards the last few minutes of our time together. It's been flying by what would you say to somebody who find it challenging to create this connective tissue with others? Yeah, because, you know, we might think I'm not good at it. Or I'm an introvert. He's an extrovert. So it's, you can do that. But I'm an introvert. I don't know how to do that. Or no, we've gone through so much stuff together disagreements and things like that. It's just not going to happen for us. What would you say to that person? Hmm.

Debi Hanes 53:09



Wow. You know, if you asked, I'm going to tell you, I think you have to start small. Pick one person. And maybe the first person you pick isn't the one that you just had that big, contentious thing happened with. Just pick one person, right, and just say, I'm, you know, endeavoring to improve myself or I'm endeavoring to learn more. I'm curious. I would like to learn more about blah, right Pick, pick the topic that you're truly interested in to forge one connection. Right. And it could be one, it could be one meeting, right? I've got someone on my team, I'm preparing to do come some reverse mentoring with right now. I'd love to learn how they do. Some of the software work just some of the processes and the tools. And so I'm gonna have a reverse mentoring and it's not a dog and pony show. It's not this big presentation. It's just show me your day to day helping you learn it. Right. So. So for someone that's having difficulty making those connections, because it's not easy for some folks. What's that one thing that you're curious about and find somebody either on your team or on the next team that that understands it and just open yourself up a little bit to say, I love to learn more about something. Just to start, you start small. And then you know, the second time you try it might get a little easier.

Hylke Faber 54:44

Beautiful, that curiosity that brings you to another I want to learn about black bananas.

Debi Hanes 54:51

Because he fighty he's the X.

Hylke Faber 54:54

Okay? Yes, yes, yes. Excellent, excellent. In a moment, I'm going to I ask you to share your closing thoughts. And as before you do that I'll share some of mine. And what I've been taking away from this conversation, which has been so much Debbie is to really cherish the mentorship, the support, we can give each other, both giving and receiving and how that builds connection. I'm thinking all the way back to the beginning of this conversation about Sandy, and how she helped you navigate the knives and spoons and forks and other things on the table helped you feel settled and giving that gift to each other. I remember the conversations that you talked about with sin and other mentors that help you feel get settled and how the other person gets settled, and how the other person get connected. And that's how we connect to ourselves as well, with his very simple, seemingly simple, but seemingly simple approach of staying curious about what might be important for us to think about together now. Debbie, what's your closing thought?

Debi Hanes 56:05

Wow, I am super appreciative Hilda, for you inviting me to come along, it's taken us a couple of months to get here. i As you can tell from this conversation, I love connecting with people. There's never enough time to do as much as we would like. But I just really appreciate the opportunity. And I can't believe this is like Episode 27, I'm gonna have to go back and watch a few more than what I've seen as we go through, but it's really helping others, right, we've got to, I feel it is it a responsibility as a leader to help those that are coming next. Right, and some of them are early early on their journey. And, and some have been here for a while but but really find a way to connect with yourself, right and really help



you understand what what drives you, right. And then finding those connections with other people. Because there's so much that we can do together. Certainly more than we can do by ourselves.

Hylke Faber 57:09

So much that we can do together, definitely more than what we can do by ourselves and imagining that'd be being in this tapestry of connections, almost like a quilt of different pieces that are connecting with each other, and you never quite know what's going to happen in it. But what you do know in it, it creates new possibilities. It's connected. And it's heartwarming, I'm thinking about the world with a lot of that in it, what you practice, and lead and do Debbie being so much of a of a kinder, more resourceful world that I thank you for sharing with us today. And for everybody who's listening, you've been listening to Roseanne and wavering with with Debbie Haines. She's a senior leader in Microsoft, also a mother of three. And he's talked a lot today about the value of reaching out from this very genuine place. And what allows what happens when you allow yourself to be truly mentored, and mentor and support each other and see that as part of our roles to help each other. Next time. We'll be here with Kelly wendorf. She is a master Coach and Trainer and also person that works with horses, to help people connect to their authenticity. So we're we keep weaving this story about how you build connectedness. You've been listening to this broadcast, you can also listen to it on Apple or Spotify, YouTube, other places where you find your podcast. And of course, there are reruns on LinkedIn as well. You can find on growth Leaders Network so and you can connect with Debbie on LinkedIn as well. I know she's there. It's been a pleasure to be with you today. Thank you again, Debbie. And see you next time on Rutan wavering, where we help leaders connect more deeply to their innate potential. I'm your host, local farmer. Thank you so much.

Presenter 59:16

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