

S01 - E09 - Rooted & Unwavering - Dec 2 - Hylke Faber & Bernard Slowey

Diana Belluomini 00:00

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 brightness also, when we don't feel it, Join host 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 00:38

Welcome, everyone to this next episode of rooted and unwavering broadcasting live from Business Radio x in Arizona. I'm your host hookah fiber. This is where we help people connect more deeply to their innate potential. And this is our ninth episode. And I'm here today with Bernard slowly How are you today Bernard,

Bernard Slowey 01:03

and gray How can I'm very excited to be with you today. Thank you for including me in this podcast in the listener. So it's strange to be the actual person with you in the room, the virtual room,

Hylke Faber 01:15

I'm very grateful that you're here. And I will say a few things about you and also about this podcast as we go into it. But as I'm just looking at you and thinking about how I met you, Bernard, I've been very inspired by you from the very beginning by your humaneness at the same time, performing at a very high level. So being able to integrate those two. So we'll learn about that more in a moment that this podcast series had to say a bit more about it than just get us grounded in this is really to help to explore what it's like to be truly connected to who we aspire to be what our best selves you could say are our best angels. And, and, and learning to access that point by listening to stories from from different leaders from different walks of life and learning from them about what is it like to truly come from this. You could say deeper place, or these are my words. But from that higher place deeper place that you could call us connected to something bigger than than our immediate thoughts might lead us to believe that we are. So that's what this series is about. And I'm delighted to be here today with Bernard slowly Bernard has been working for decades now working to help to optimize and really support customer experience. He's currently vice president of digital customer Customer Success and Support at Salesforce. And before that you were working at Microsoft and GitHub for about 16 years driving, customer success and transformation. I got various leadership roles. You were at some point I'm looking here, responsible for support and one in 32 countries and over 3000 engineers, supporting customers through an outsourced and in house support model. You bring 20 years of experience in



transforming customer experiences and managing complexity in very complex matrix organizations. And now, at Salesforce, I'm delighted to sit with you, Bernard. Besides that, you're from Ireland, which is also I believe, an interesting part of your background. So before we go deeper into this, you said it was interesting for you to be now not a listener, but a speaker. So what was coming up as you thought about approaching and becoming part of this conversation today.

Bernard Slowey 03:56

And well, once again, thank you for having me here. And yeah, the Irish part is very important for me. So thank you for calling that out. And it was very interesting. As I was getting ready for this, how I kind of felt a little bit of imposter syndrome. Honestly, like I've listened to some of the guests you had, you know, some of them I know from my time at Microsoft, I was like, really he wants me on this podcast to talk about my career. So, so it was a little bit of that to get ready for it. I think I always have a little bit of impostor syndrome throughout my career, but just just excited to be here. I always feel anytime I have a conversation that you I come away learning a lot about myself. And so you know, really looking forward to the conversation together.

Hylke Faber 04:35

Brilliant. Well, let's let's just dive right in. So you know that this series is about connectedness and connecting to our true selves to our highest self to our values. So what have you been learning in your life? Just a very general question to get started about connecting to know what you really value Have you been learning about that in your life and career?

Bernard Slowey 05:03

You know, I was spending a little bit of time yesterday researching as I was getting ready for this conversation. And I actually just put into question in Google and what what is the concept of connectedness. And I was just looking through some of the different things that came back to me. And one that really resonated with me was the feeling of belonging to or having an affinity with a particular person or group. And I saw a quote that I loved under this, and it said, only one thing is of absolute importance. And that is your connectedness with being and whatever you resonated with me, it's kind of to your question is you have to start with yourself, right? And we're going to kind of get into the connectedness of a culture of an organization of a customer, but you have to start with yourself. And so for me, I've been on a journey to learn that and understand that and, you know, a lot of things that I've learned over my career, the biggest thing for me was believing in myself more healthcare, you know, if I, if I reflect back on my career, especially early in Microsoft, you know, always kind of question like, Am I really in this room? Should I be here, you know, so that's been a big thing, as I think about my connectedness to myself, and believe in myself more, and leaving that yeah, I can do this, and I shouldn't be here, I should have a seat at this table. And, and with that personal self care, you've taught me a lot about this over the years, like, if I'm not feeling right, micro librium, then I can help my team, I can help my family. So that personal self care is a huge part for me on connectedness. Does that make sense?

Hylke Faber 06:30



Absolutely. That makes total sense. And that sense of believing in yourself? Like, basically, you're saying, Yeah, am I worth it being here, even in this conversation? Yeah, you have to make a conscious choice and say, Wait a second. Is it really me that's showing up here? Yeah, and I sense this is something that many of us can resonate with, like, Oh, can I do I really belong on this chair? Whatever chair I'm sitting on at the moment. Yeah. So So and then I love that you looked at the definition of connectedness, having to do something with affinity, and then with others, but that affinity with others starts for himself, because those are the eyes from which I'm looking at others. Right? Totally. So say a bit more Bernard, about how you have learned to connect in with yourself to believe in yourself and maybe also share with the with us a little bit about the trials and tribulations? Because you've been at this for a while, and I'm imagining it hasn't been a smooth line, like yes, yes. Yes. Great. Done. I'm here. Yeah,

Bernard Slowey 07:47

perfect sailing the whole way through. And I have moments that I reflect back on that were really, you know, I look back on them and go, that's, that's where that's where I learned that thing. That's where I recognize that team with me. So I reflect back on them a lot. Like I know, like, I think back a long time ago, I knew I was the technical support agent for AOL when I was in college, and I moved from AOL to Microsoft. And that was my first like, Oh, crap, definitely going to get found out here. Should I have this seat at the room. And so I had to build up my own confidence. Like I look back on that now. Like, I have to learn to believe in myself to be confident to realize I did have belong at that table. So if I could talk back the burner 20 years ago, I'd probably give them a private conversation on You shouldn't be here, you belong to be here, that's really important. But there's just different moments in my career healthcare, like moving to the US from Ireland, I work for Microsoft and Dublin, I moved to Seattle, you know, less than 12 years ago with my then girlfriend, because then my amazing wife, Laura, from Ireland. And, you know, that was an incredibly challenging thing to do. Right? You leave everyone behind you notice your friends, your family, you move away, and move into Salesforce, you know, changing companies, I was 1415 years at Microsoft, you know, I knew I had a brand that Microsoft, I could have stayed there, I could have continued to do well, but, and I kind of reflected on these things and comes back to something that I talked about a lot. And it's that courage over comfort, right? Like I could keep staying, I could have stayed in Ireland, I could have stayed at Microsoft, I could have what like if I realized that like, they're the moments that I learned from, you know, they're the moments when I put myself into them. We just recently moved to North Carolina from Seattle is six months ago, it's been hard to adjust as a family you know, I got a little five and a half year old boy Dylan, but you know, we're settling in now and it's going well and you have to push yourself out of your comfort zone whether that's in life, whether that's in your job, like you have to do these things to grow to learn and to develop

Hylke Faber 09:48

beautiful so I I love that phrase courage over comfort and like I can see like okay, here I'm going from Ireland to the northwest via Every day, maybe I've seen weather but very different weather. Yeah, in some ways, and then, and then shifting companies and then leaving behind that reputation that you that you built up in Microsoft for many years. Yeah. Now, I'm curious about what fuels your courage, where do you get your courage from? And and I'd love you to think a bit about how that may have evolved



over time. Think about Bernard 20 years ago at AOL and his first job, where did that man at that age get his courage? And how does that evolve over time?

Bernard Slowey 10:41

Oh, that's such a great question. It's such a deep question as well. And I think looking back, I can see the reflection of my photo of my mom and dad behind me and I, you know, part of like, think what drove me was a lot of what my mom and dad had done for me, like, my mother raised five boys, which, as a father of one boy, I have no idea how she did that, you know, and, and they gave a lot, you know, in order for their sons to have opportunities in life. So part of that drove me healthy. And we've talked about this a little bit in some of our coaching together, some of that was a fear of failure, honestly, like letting them down. And, you know, and that sometimes kind of held me back, I think, a little bit as well, where I think I was too much of a perfectionist nearly like, I was afraid to do things, because I was afraid it will be wrong. And I was afraid, like, what's this gonna look like? And over time, like, I've learned that, like, failure is so important, you know, and it's like, especially as a father now, by the way, like, I'm, you know, a coach, my son's soccer team now, which is hard trying to get, you know, six year olds all run in the same direction, but he needs to fail, right? He needs to make mistakes. And, and that's what as I've learned over my career, like, that's really important to me, I have to make mistakes, like, I have to push myself out there to make that mistake, because I'll grow and I'll expand as a person, you know,

Hylke Faber 12:01

I love that the image and I also know, I've like expanding and growing, and I can see it in your hands. Right. And I also that you're referring back to the picture behind you, I think it's a black and white picture, is that right?

Bernard Slowey 12:14

It's this one over here, actually, maybe you can't really see, that's my mom and dad there. So yeah, always there behind me, so I can see them. And, you know, they've been a massive influence in my life.

Hylke Faber 12:24

And that, that's so that's so beautiful. And then and then noticing that, that you had a vision, you could say, from an early age about something that you wanted to, to achieve. And of course, that also had a shadow in it, which was the failure, like I can't let that image down. But at least every everything, my mind is so creative, I think it gives us an image to something to go towards. And and then we find the courage to go for that. Yes. I'm imagining for for your mom, it took a lot of courage to raise five boys, you know, to have no idea

Bernard Slowey 13:02

how she did it. No idea how she

Hylke Faber 13:05



did it. And, and then with you, it takes a lot of courage to actually step out of that. And I sense your vision of how you get courage has expanded from I have to satisfy a certain image that is error free to I want to see evolution, I want to see

Bernard Slowey 13:23

Oh, yeah. And it's so important when you know, you, you know whether you manage one person, or you're a leader of multiple people that like you have to let people fail. And that's hard, right? That's hard as a manager sometimes like what same as yourself, because you have to let people make mistakes, so that they can learn from it and grow from it. And like, and that's really, really hard sometimes, but it's but it's critical.

Hylke Faber 13:48

So you know what I'm going to ask you next. Which is, you know, been talking about, like fear of failure and things like that. And of course, that's been written about a lot. Yes. And we all know that we say, oh, yeah, no, failure is a good thing. Yeah. At least my experience is, when I'm in the middle of that, it often doesn't feel like that. So So tell me, tell us a little bit about what is it like, and maybe give an example of when you failed? What you noticed in yourself, and how you move through that.

Bernard Slowey 14:29

So first of all, I totally agree, which is as you go through that moment, it feels icky. Right? If anyone tells you that fail and feels good, I think they're lying to you, right? You're gonna feel you know, emotionally it's not great, you know, and but I think it's when you get past it, right, and you can kind of take a stake the stock and look back and go up to the learn, you know, and that's what I tell my training like when, when when stuff goes wrong, which it will because we're trying to push the envelope and experiences for our customers. What did we learn from it right like that's The most important thing because then we can go again, right? We can do a version two with what we learned from version one and feed it in. And ultimately, that makes better products that makes better experiences for your customers. So that's kind of why you really have to fail along the way. So you learn from it. I think for me, yes, me personally, like, I had a massive failure of my I consider it a failure at Microsoft, when we had a launch of one of our Windows operating systems, I won't go into too much detail on it. But like, we ended up like, things kind of blew up, it's the best way to describe it. And it was like, in there every morning from like, seven in the morning till 10 at night because things weren't going well. We couldn't manage the volume we would get. And then, and I think I was a little bit further along in my career where I realized, okay, you're the leader here. So I needed to show everybody that it was okay. And I needed to show everyone that it was okay. And so even though I felt like crap inside, and I'm like, oh my god, this is not good. This because this was not good leadership, etc. It was important that I was calm. And it was important that I helped to see people that this is okay, we'll get through it. And we'll figure it out. But at the time, to your point how it felt terrible. I remember coming home and like I didn't sleep well, for a couple of weeks, you all that, you know, it was stressful, very, very stressful situation. But I look back on it. And I learned so much from it. But I know it won't happen again.

Hylke Faber 16:24



I understand. So take us a little bit into the sleepless nights. Yeah. Not sleeping. So well. Yeah, what, what's the experience? And I imagine I invite you to really go to the part of movie of your life. So we can all see that. Because many people are at least I have, and many people I'm sure have been there. So what is it like to be in that sleepless night, and then how to use then still show up the next morning?

Bernard Slowey 16:49

Yes, so so I'm gonna be I'll paint the picture to people that just to help them relate to it. So every morning, we have to go in and present out on the performance of how the launch was gone. And big room, lots of tables in it. center table was pretty much like an executive leadership team across Microsoft from different organizations. And we sit at the table and kind of go around and you talk about your elements of the business and how it's gone. And so my elements of business wasn't gone very well. And so the anxiety, the nervousness of knowing, Alright, I gotta get up the next morning, I got to go into these pictures, not any better than it was today, it's not going to be any better probably for days and weeks. And so like, you can't help it now. I think it would be a lot better actually managing that sleepless thing. But anyway, at the time, like, I couldn't help but it would impact my sleep. Right? I'd be so so nervous about that next meeting, not next morning. And, you know, now I do things like meditation, thanks to you. And I'm able to be more present and let work go at certain times in my life, when I need to go. But just the nervousness of going into this room with all these people and all these execs and day after day being read, you know, I'm on a scorecard. Yeah, no, it was a horrible situation, you know, and, um, but again, I feel like I did learn a ton from that as a leader. And then to your point, like, I knew, I would meet with my team in advance of that meeting and get all the information from them. But I had to be, as I said, cam with my team, I have to show my team, it's okay, you know, we'll get out of this, eventually, we've got plans in place, and then go into that other meeting and kind of share that story with leadership. So it was really important that I gave my team that self confidence that we'll get through this, you know, we'll get to the other side, what it was they start to feel the pressure, they feel the anxiety and you need to try and take that away from them as a leader.

Hylke Faber 18:42

I love that. You mentioned the word calm. Yeah. Thank you. I love that. It's like that seems to be one of the ingredients for courage. Yeah, being able to find that. So how did you at that point? Excess more calm and be able to be.com at least portray that confidence without having hubris and being real, still being realistic? Like, hey, we're still in the red. So how did you do that?

Bernard Slowey 19:12

I think it's the three the ability to be present in the moment. And the ability to be put your feet in the ground and just realize this is just the it's just the meeting. It's just me giving an update. I'm just going to focus on this moment in time. I'm not that all the other monkeys that are going around in my brain influence what I'm about to do. And and that's that's that it's that if you can find that presence in them situations to drive clarity, you know, to be okay in the situation. That's the secret, you know, because we all have that monkey brain, right? We all have the things going around the back of our head that's Bernard you're going to get this wrong. You're going to say something wrong. They're going to pull you apart on this this isn't gonna go well. All of that self doubt creeps in in them situations. So you got to find that presence right be there and That moment and just know you got it right knowing you got it. No,



no one in the room knows this better than you. So that's the secret, right? You're in that room, because you're the subject matter expert in this space. That's why you're there. That's why you have a seat at the table. So you just got to remember that and be present in that moment, and just delivered a message you need to deliver a quote are bought.

Hylke Faber 20:20

So great, right? I hear you say like, I've got it. And I'm inferring in what you're saying that actually presents got it? Yeah, because that is actually where I'm starting from. And I'm sensing that many times, you're entering that big conference room? Not with such nice answers. So it wasn't like answers, that was giving confidence. But it was something inside of yourself, that helped you to feel and be confident in that from that place. At least that's my experience. And I'm sensing that from you as well. Resource resourcefulness, creativity. And I love that you said like, even looking up for a moment? Well, this is a meeting.

Bernard Slowey 21:06

Yeah, it's not everything. That's that's like, I find people just let work. stress them out so much, you know, and the anxiety of it, the stress of it sometimes, and it's not everything, you know, it's really that course our jobs are important. Don't get me wrong, I don't put food on the table, etc. But you can't let it be the thing that drives anxiety and pressures. And that way, are you just gonna burn in hell, no, you're just going to burn out.

Hylke Faber 21:34

I love that. Now, at Salesforce, you have these these values that I find very beautiful, like trust, customer success, innovation and equality.

Bernard Slowey 21:47

And we actually just added a fifth one recently on sustainability. And we don't often add new values, which have been four values for a long time, but it shows where we are as a company. Yeah, mate are. One of the reasons I feel great at Salesforce is I feel very connected to the values that accompany you know.

Hylke Faber 22:05

So tell us a little bit then like in burnard, version, February 2022. How do you connect to your best self? And maybe also speak a little bit about how you use connecting to Salesforce company values in that process? If you do?

Bernard Slowey 22:30

Yeah, I guess the first thing is kind of what we talked about earlier, is just making sure that I'm right, can I have myself care that my family's working? Well, like if I find not, if I if I'm not right, then I can't be right. For Salesforce, in general. I mean, it's like, I often think about it as these three circles. And in the middle of the circle is me. And it's my self care. And you know, like this morning, I went out for a run, I know, if I don't do a run, you know, every couple of days, I kind of feel out of whack. Like it's my it's my thing, right? It kind of gives me I've grown up, here's my head. And, and so that's kind of my thing. So



there's my own self care in the middle of the circle. And that includes my family, healthcare to make sure like a time with my son or time with my wife, whatever. And then after that is my team. And so like if I'm not connected, that I'm not going to be connected for my team, right? And so got to make sure I'm in the right spot. And then the circle around me is my team, right? And how do I help to drive connectedness to my team and Salesforce, right? We've gone through a lot of changes recently. I know that's uncomfortable for people, like how am I doing things to help them feel like you know, we're working on the right things. And so so the team is the kind of second circle. And then the circle around that is like our customers and our partners, like they're the tree circles that I care about. And it all ties back to the Salesforce values because you look at our values, right? Trust is our number one value. I love that right? trust in myself, trust from my family trust from my team that they know that you know what I say is coming from a place of truth. And no matter what the news is, that's important for me trust to our customers. Customer Success is one of our values, right? Our job is to make our customers successful with our products, right? If they're successful with our products, they're going to continue to use Salesforce and it keeps the flywheel spinning, you know so so our values are incredible. And then equality and sustainability. You know, it's like you know, I often think about I use I remember years ago people would talk about like their work persona. I used to drive me nuts like I remember I was at a meeting years ago and Microsoft in Dublin I was in some high performance program. And this guy came over from the US and he's like you got to focus on your work persona. Who are you at work and kind of left that and I was like, God, I got to figure out who Bernard is going to be at work, right? Like, like, Who is this Bernard guy at work? And it took me a couple years but then fair, but a while to realize like who you are and work should be the person you are outside of work, like it should be the same person. But what I've learned, and this is why that equality value is so important to me, that's not easy for everybody. It's easy for me as a white male, right to be the same person, I am every day and work for others. That's not always the case. And so that's why I love Salesforce value of equality is really, really important. Because that's, you think about that team circle healthcare, right? I want to create an environment for my team to trust that they feel connected that psychological safety that they can be who they are every day. And so that's coming back to the quote, you know, and then sustainability, right, where it's like, the world we're living in right now and what we're doing to the world, right, like, Can business be for good, and that's what Salesforce wants to be so, so sorry, I talked a lot there. But like the money is just It's how our company functions.

Hylke Faber 25:48

Yes. And I noticed the enthusiasm and the inspiration that you bring to bear as you speak about this. And also, I love that phrase that you got, I'm paraphrasing, that trust starts with truths. Yeah, it really starts with being truthful in that inner circle, like, what is it that I need? To be totally? Like, here? Yeah, yeah. And then, and then from that place, I can be that truthful, and trustworthy, frankly, with my team, and with my customers. And I also love that it is the first value of Salesforce, yes, in the end, at least in the

Bernard Slowey 26:31

way, you know, it's our number one Value Trust, it's our number one value that everything we do when Mark started the company, that was the number one value they had, which was trust. And it's, it's a



company that lives by its values, I think certain companies put you know, values on a website and say these are our values, Salesforce lives by its values.

Hylke Faber 26:52

That's beautiful. That's beautiful. So there's their sense of like, that you live up, you're now in a company where this is part of what you do. Yes, you're in that you could say very fortunate environment. And I also heard you speak with empathy, when you talked about equality, that being our true selves. Not putting a mask on stamp you can do ourselves is and is not easy for for everyone. And it might even be that people in, you know, our skin and our gender meaning you and I maybe easier than for many others, to

Bernard Slowey 27:35

100%. Right? percent.

Hylke Faber 27:38

So so how do you and also thinking about the people that you lead? Right, so you you have people, I guess, I would guess, in your team that are where you were at least age wise, you are starting off in your career, right? When you were at AOL, so? And also, how do you what do you want to say to people? How do you work with people when you notice that they may be in some kind of work persona, are really afraid of failure? How do you work with that?

Bernard Slowey 28:14

I think it's your job as a leader to create the environment that people feel safe to be whoever they want to be like that that's, that's your job. Like, it's the number one thing that I have to do is to create an environment and a culture that people feel safe in. Like, because if you do that, then people feel like they can be themselves, you know, they can do what they want to do. They don't have to be different. That's my job. And that's where I kind of look to my leaders as well as are we in creating an inclusive environment where people feel like they can be themselves? And that's your point on the on the fear of failure? It's how you run the business, right? We do things like weekly business reviews, and look the business reviews and you know, how I operate as a leader in them environment had questions I asked when people make mistakes. That's what gives people the confidence to be okay to make mistakes. And what do I mean by that? Like, if I'm, if I'm in an eight hole, excuse my English, I think we've all had leaders like that, right? That kind of rip people apart in these meetings and whatever, then people are always going to be afraid to make mistakes, right? Because they're afraid they're going to get grilled, or you know, and so, if you can be kind in their moments, even when things go wrong, and ask the question, what did we learn from it? You know, how are we going to do it the next time and then you create that environment where it's okay to fail.

Hylke Faber 29:34

I see a sense of call kindness in the way you're speaking, because we can easily misinterpret kindness is kind of wishy washy and not high performing. Yeah, what I'm hearing you speak about is kindness actually is very much helpful in bringing up the best. Yeah, taking a stand for a bigger space in which failure is possibility forever. Yeah.



Bernard Slowey 30:01

And at that point, it doesn't mean that you're not high performing, you have to be high performance, right to succeed, it just you can do it in a way that's calling, or you don't need to be in a hole in these situations, you know, I have after my 20 something years, I have a rule. Now, I just don't work with eight homes. That's what I tell myself and plenty of scars from them over the years. And so I hope I'm not like that as a leader, you know, great.

Hylke Faber 30:25

Well, I love what you're saying, we're gonna go in a break in a moment. And then after the break, I want to explore a little bit more, this question of like, how do you inspire connectedness in others? And, and also, how do you see yourself evolve in more and more connectedness and expansion into the self that you aspire to be? So thank you so much for everything you've said. And thank you for listening so far. Let's take a brief break starting now.

31:02

You are listening to rooted and unwavering presented by growth Leaders Network, the leadership team and culture development company. If you would like to learn more about working on connectedness for yourself, your team or organization, please contact growth leaders network on LinkedIn. And now back to the show.

Hylke Faber 31:27

Thank you, everyone, for listening. We are in a rooted and unwavering conversation with Bernard slowy, Vice President at Salesforce, and we've been discussing how to stay connected to ourselves. And so beautifully, Bernard was talking about the different circles of connectedness that starts with the inner circle of self family, and then going to team and then going to customers and also talking about this whole idea of creating psychological safety by by being kind and also talking about courage over comfort, being able to have the courage to stand for something bigger, even if you don't quite know yet how it's going to turn out. So thank you, Bernard. So this question about how do you inspire the sense of psychological safety and connectedness and others? And especially when you sense it? It might have left the room for a second?

Bernard Slowey 32:28

Yeah, yeah, well, it's also in a virtual world which many of us are in I've been in since my Salesforce time, it can be a little bit harder. And this is gonna sound like a strange answer. But one of the things I love to do with my team is we have some fun. And you know, we we use Slack a lot, which is a Salesforce products that has meat, Coke and Salesforce products. And if you read to our Slack channel, like, like, there's craziness in there, right, there's, you know, funny gifts, there's comments about, and it's just, it's a place where we can be human with each other, you know, I mean, where we can kind of have them conversations. And that's a huge part of connectedness, you know, if you can connect with people on the human being, and have a little bit of fun as part of that, in that business environment. That's how you can inspire it, you know, the other. The other thing I would say, and you helped me a lot in this in my career is we have a small team, and we have this at Microsoft to to run



something called our culture pover. And this is purposely it's none of the leaders in our organizations, it's all individual contributors ICS that I kind of like the people that are part about it, I think about these people as their force multipliers. You can see them in every organization, right, you probably can pick a name to your head. And we're when they rankings and they do it with the rest of the team. They drive that connectedness across the team. And it's much better when it's not always coming from leadership, like they drive this meeting called the culture corner and did this Microsoft with amazing team do it there as well, where we'll just meet every now and again, and we'll talk about things and they'll have topics that they bring up. It's all driven by them. And they drive that connectedness across the team help, especially in a virtual world, right? Using slack we're on Google meets all the times we make a bit of fun with it with our backgrounds and stuff that we change. And so trying to find them people in your organization, whether the force multipliers is how we think about them. That's a great way to drive connectedness in your organization, because it can all come from the top down. It needs to come from within the team and the people that are kind of in force multipliers.

Hylke Faber 34:32

Beautiful and then question is like, how do you keep that fresh? Right? Because so often in those journeys, you see when people learn something, and you get those inspirations like yeah, let's bring more of our true selves and then no business as usual. Or yeah, yeah, we've done this culture stuff now for a while, but how do you like okay, well, let's let's go back to To realize, so how do you keep it fresh? How do you keep inspiring people to actually keep growing? How do you do that?

Bernard Slowey 35:11

It's such a good question. I think part of it is just the cycle of business and of life. And what I mean by that is change is always coming at us, right? Like, we're in a world that we're launching products every couple of months. And so with that, in itself, there's a freshness, like you have to learn new things, you have to figure out new ways to do things for customers. And so it helps, you know, people need to think about new experiences, and they need to stretch themselves. So just as part of business, I think there's this constant. And that's why I love working at a company like Salesforce, because it's just constant change healthcare, like it's never, it's never the same thing from one week to the other. And you know, and so that definitely enabled the freshness. And then I think, also new people. And you know, when new people join your team, and we've mentioned, we've just gone through a reorg. And so some different people coming together. And that's always really difficult, right? Because there's people are here a while they've maybe got some of the relationships already. But then the new people join in, and they bring in freshness, right? They bring in a different perspective. And I always tell people, when when they join, my team is like, you have that beginner's mindset now, right? When you when you start something new, you automatically have that beginner's mindset, right? Because you have to ask questions to learn. So I say, please take that license, hate that license to be the beginner to look at things and tell me when you think something's not right. Like, why? Why did we do it that way? You know, and so, so like some of that freshness of that beginner's mindset. And that comes back to some of the Zen Buddhism stuff, which you helped a lot with as well. But it's like that's, that's the core of freshness is you always approach things as a beginner.

Hylke Faber 36:53



Yes, yes, yes. And I love that you also did that in the beginning of this podcast, where you announced that you had a part of you that said, Well, I'm maybe a little bit of an imposter here. So let's get past that. There's a freshness already by acknowledging that where you are being very honest about that. So how do you as a leader, practice being in that staying connected to that learning, because when I look at, like everything that you've written, or a lot of what you've written, I've not read everything, but I've read some some of the things you've written. And when I think about how I know you, and also how you're speaking today, I keep seeing this. Yeah, ooh, challenge. Let's grow. Let's evolve. This is exciting. Let's see how we can look at this differently. So how do you, yourself cultivate a beginner's mindset? How do you do it?

Bernard Slowey 37:49

I think that the number one thing is you have to be curious. And you know, you have to have curiosity. Like when I'm when I'm hiring people, or you know, people join my team or something, I look for people that are naturally curious. And then you can see them, right there. The people in the meeting that will ask the question that everyone else is thinking what they're afraid to ask, right? And so so I've always tried to anchor myself on curiosity, like I like to read where I can find the time it seems these days and as good as they used to be. And I like to listen to podcasts like yourself, like Tim Ferriss, because I know these are all things that are like, helping me learn helping me develop only curious. So so. So curiosity is a huge, huge thing is like, make sure you stay curious, because it's easy to kind of, especially as your career grows, right? It's easy to kind of go, oh, you know, filming this before, we can just do A, B and C and that will work. I did it at Microsoft, you know that way? It's like, but no, you got to be curious and figure out if there's a different and a better way to do it. So I think curiosity is the number one thing, how can

Hylke Faber 38:55

I see that I see that? And if when you're not curious? Where does your mind go?

Bernard Slowey 39:04

Board? Yeah, yeah, I have to be cure. Like, it's got to come back to my son, because there's nothing better than to watch children. Right. It's like, look at the questions children ask, right. Like, you know, he has so many questions to the point that sometimes you're driving the car and you're just wishing he'd Shut up to be honest. But but you know, I mean, that the nicest possible way, obviously, but like, we have this curiosity as children, right, we have this we want to ask these questions. We want to learn, we want to understand that and somewhere along the way, we lose that and it's not that we don't steal up the questions in our head. It's kind of like we're afraid to ask the question anymore, where I often say as well as the people it's great to be the dumbest person in the room. You know, it's I've actually been talking about when I joined Salesforce, and loathe no knocking about Salesforce because I had a license to ask as many questions as they wanted to ask because I don't know I've never been in before I've never done it. I'm the dumbest person in the room? That's a great place to be sometimes.

Hylke Faber 40:04



And how do you balance that? If there if you need to balance it with you still have responsibilities? Yes. But Salesforce, you know, you're not just there as an intern or student. Yeah, you're not their intern your suit, your role is to lead for customer success. I mean, that's a lot. So how do you balance that?

Bernard Slowey 40:25

Yeah, I kind of like talking with this. My team, we were meeting the last two days with our extended leadership team, we're doing some planning for next fiscal year. And like, there's some, like I kind of have my team is like, we run a business. Like there's the metrics that we have to hit to run our business. Like, we have to have some green things in our scorecard to show like customer satisfaction, are we driving an experience that our customers are satisfied with, nothing's more important than that. So they're all like table stakes, non negotiables. Like, we got to be driving the business to hit them metrics so that we're green on them elements. But then you got to have space for the moon shots, right? Like, you got to have space for the creativity, like the the, like the things that are maybe going to bring that metric to the next level in the future, because you haven't even told about it that way. So you've got to create space. And this is where the curiosity comes in again, right? Because you got to create space for the things that maybe don't sound like a great idea. But you know what, it's that. So it's a balancing act, I guess, is what I'm trying to say how it goes like, you have course yeah, like I'm the VP for digital customer success at Salesforce, right? I need to make sure that we're driving success at scale for our customers I'm responsible for that's my boss, my boss's boss. And so I got a lambda that just had to happen. And then it's like, how are we doing these ordered things that maybe it's going to be that the next evolution of what we're doing in the future? Like, that's where you create that space for the for the moon shots,

Hylke Faber 41:51

table stakes and moon shots on I remember, get a t shirt on that. That's great. So I have to ask you this question then. Especially in the current climate, where there's a lot of uncertainty. Yeah, maybe even sometimes on table stakes. The How do you work with that? You know, when when maybe even some of those table stakes measures gonna go from green to orange to maybe red sometimes? How do you work? Yeah,

Bernard Slowey 42:25

yeah, well, there's a couple of things is coming back to something that we talked about at the start on the failure pieces, sometimes you need to be okay with red. And, you know, as long as like you're learning I'm, why it's red, and what we're going to go do to improve upon it. But the undercurrent just on the current macro environment of where we are like, let's be honest, it's a stressful world for people, right? We're seeing companies letting people go, left, right or center, but like, what I've learned is like, you can't let that distract you, I can control that healthcare, I can control what's going on in the world economy, etc. And so I can't let it distract me. And I try not to let it distract my team. Now, it's hard, you know, like, I try to do virtual coffees with my extended team. And one of the first questions I get asked is, hey, what's happening? You know, are we going to be doing anything? And we got to be honest with people and tell them what's going on, etc. So I have to try and help people not get distracted by that, including myself.



So a real focus and commitment on what you actually can control.

Bernard Slowey 43:29

Exactly. Exactly, exactly. And that helps you, right, because if you can focus on what you can control, you can start to forget about some of the things that you can control.

Hylke Faber 43:41

I'm thinking of a previous podcast guest that was sitting in your chair. And she was coming from Ukraine. And so basically what she was leaving, losing everything, right. Yeah. Which is not the situation that you're in or that I'm at this moment. Anyway, you know, we're all a billion humans of us. Yeah, Sydney is different chairs. So when you start losing table stakes, yep. And this is the reality for some people that are losing jobs, right? Yes. Maybe that's not as, at least in my mind, not as severe as driving out of key or being bombed. Yeah, it'd be the experience psychologically, and even survival like might be. So how do you? How do you think about and because, you know, I think Buddy goes to challenge you've been through your own challenges, I'm sure you have, like, where do you find the wherewithal to keep focused on what you can control, to keep focusing on curiosity to keep focusing on courage over comfort? Where do you find the wherewithal?

Bernard Slowey 44:51

Yeah, I listened to that podcast, by the way, in Ukraine, and it was incredible and my heart goes out to the people Ukraine still and what they're going I'm true. And you know your mind to me with this question. So my wall tempting wall behind me of all these pictures up on the wall and to try and inspire me to be a little bit creative, etc. And I'm one of them is my grandfather's brother, John Joe trainer, and he got killed when he was 17, in the 1916 writing in Ireland, so it's a picture of them in the medals beside them that he got given afterwards. And so he was just on 17. So you're 17 years of age, and he went out on the streets of Dublin to try and fight for our freedom. And he got a bullet in the head. On the ground Grandfather, I remember growing up sitting on his lap at the fire when I was younger, and he'd be telling me stories and connect them into my Irish history and how important it was to me, and I reflect on that, like, look at that picture sometimes. And I think I don't have to go to anything like that, you know, like, why He died for gives me where I am today. Like, I wouldn't have had this platform, it wouldn't be talking to you if he hadn't fought for Ireland's freedom, etc. And so nothing that's happening to me, How can this happen around me, don't get me wrong, of course, I'd be fearful of losing my job, etc, just like everyone else, but not in that situation. You know what I mean? And so that's a massive ground. And for me that relates to what you were saying about Ukraine and what that lady's going through. Nothing's as bad as that situation. Right. And so I look at this picture a lot. My granddad is just across room that became a detective in the Irish police force when they formed and it grounds me, right, I don't have to deal with them situations. Yes, life is hard. Sometimes. Yes, my job is stressful sometimes. But I don't have to put my life at risk. You know?

Hylke Faber 46:42

And if you had to deal with that, where would you find the wherewithal



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Bernard Slowey 46:49

probably from thinking about people like him, to be honest, and what he did. It's deep inside you, you know, it's deep, deep inside your your connectedness and what you believe in the connectedness and fighting for the freedom of your people. And it's deep, deep inside, you know, deep inside you.

Hylke Faber 47:07

Yeah, I hear that. I hear that. That's not trivial. It's very clear and resolved. Yeah.

Bernard Slowey 47:13

Yeah. And that's my mom always raised me knowing the stories of my grandfather, my grandfather's brother, and again, maybe coming back to a little conversation at the start, but we want to succeed is like, you know, they didn't have the opportunity to go to college, they didn't have the opportunity to do the jobs I do to live in America, they laid that groundwork for me, you know what I mean? They laid the path?

Hylke Faber 47:37

Yes, yes, yes, yes. I can see you sort of, on behalf of your family lineage, your tree of what they gave to continue the work that they started. And yeah, and my sense is, Dylan will continue to start continuing to work that you started. No,

Bernard Slowey 47:55

I hope so. Like, it's interesting to him being born in America, and like making sure he understands he's Irish American, you know, but like, I honestly think if my granddad was probably looking down on me somewhere now, he'd be proud of what I achieved in life. And that makes me feel good, you know? And so I hope Dylan, you know, choose whatever he wants to achieve in life. Great.

Hylke Faber 48:18

So how would you, what would you say to, to people, that at this moment, for whatever reason, and there's so many good reasons, and we don't even need to have good reasons, we sometimes just are disconnected from that fierce depths that you talk about, that you lead from, that your family lead from, and still leads from? So what would you say to them?

Bernard Slowey 48:48

I've been disconnected at moments in my career healthcare, like I remember, like pretty tough situations. I'm sorry, just as we're talking, there's a guy's doing the leaf blower. And so I hope it doesn't come through. But I've been very disconnected at moments in my career. And, you know, and so, I think everyone goes through it. Like, if everyone if someone tells you that they've always been connected, and everything has been great to their home, I think they're logging in. Honestly, I think you're gonna have moments in time, where you're disconnected and the equilibrium doesn't feel right. And, and so, you know, now I know I'm better at finding myself, you know, I kind of said to you earlier on is like, sometimes I just need to go for a run. Am I wrong? I go true. I'm beautiful. I get the run through this forest. The trees are beautiful. It gives me time to think, you know, before I have, you know, things might be on a tough meeting coming up. I usually meditate for 10 minutes over in the chair



in the corner room. If you would have told Bernard 20 years ago that you'd meditate I would laugh that you know, and pullquote that helps me find that center sometimes right to kind of make sure that monkeys aren't going all over the place and get me centered back to where I need to be so so I know how to control it. Now. I know when to Things are going out of whack and what they might need to do to bring it back. And, and there's just little things I have, you know, that I have to go do.

Hylke Faber 50:08

So I hear two things in what you're saying. One is being aware when things are out of whack when you are disconnected. No, yeah. And, and secondly, being clear about doing something about it, like 100% going for a run, yeah, putting yourself down and meditate, or whatever

Bernard Slowey 50:34

you need to do get, take a walk out of your office, get away from your computer, clear your mind, you know, you'll come back and you'll be 10 times more productive than you are, if you stayed there. You know, take a look at the other thing for me is like, Dylan being born was like, life changing right now everyone says that, but like, he, like I go spend time with him. And I forget about or in 20 seconds. I mean, it's like so. So like, he's my like, you know, it's uh, he's amazing, you know, and he makes me think about things differently and not stress about things that maybe I would have stressed about in the past.

Hylke Faber 51:10

Can you give an example of that I'd love to hear some Dylan wisdom. And

Bernard Slowey 51:16

it's so I'm a soccer coach. So I coached a Davison fire on their sixes. So there's about I think we play like six aside, there's about eight of them in total. And he's a soccer player not going to be honest about not lying, proud dad watching them play sometimes and also the coach but like him, a match recently just really resonated with me. He Yeah, he played a pass. That was a bad pass. And the other team went on and scored a goal for but I'm like, so you know, he was at fault for the goal coming back to the fear of failure thing. I think if I was me at my age, and nearly would have fell into his he would have fell into my shell and not wanting the ball again. And literally kind of came up to me and I was like, this was a halftime we're having the team talk. And I was like, are you okay? It just happened before that. He was like, oh, yeah, just a mistake. I'll probably go score another one after halftime for us anyway. And it was just like that that like perspective of like it five and a half year ago. So I'll go score Futurama in a few minutes. Anyway, doesn't matter. I was more worried about his reaction to it than he was. Does that make sense? I was like, oh, no, he's going to be so disappointed now. And it's just like it happens. It's course of the game you learn.

Hylke Faber 52:27

I love the quickness with which he did didn't just switch then he didn't miss a beat. No. Yeah, I missed it. I'll score again. That's that's a great lesson. I think for Yeah, for for many of us. It's definitely for me to not dwell. Yes. To move right along. Moving right along, is what we're doing. Exactly. Beautiful. So well.



Very, very helpful perspective, Bernard is what you're saying. And I love the the emphasis on curiosity, discovery, expansion that we've been talking about

Bernard Slowey 53:05

the theory to add into dialogue. And so it just made me think of something when you mentioned that there is them. I was later in my career when I figured this out. So maybe it helps people that are on the call is EQ versus IQ. And I in my career started Microsoft, I told you I had massive impostor syndrome, I felt like I needed to be the smartest person in the room. Because that's kind of nerdy the way Microsoft operated back then, like sappy and Adela on an incredible job of changing the culture of Microsoft. But I learned later in my career about EQ, like, emotional intelligence and like, and that's actually what I learned about myself, what I have a good balance of is I have EQ and I also sometimes I think I have good IQ in certain situations. But that balance of EQ and IQ and knowing what emotional intelligence is, is such a learn and write when you realize that because you'll see some people in their career that really high IQ, really, really high IQ, super intelligent people. And they have absolutely no EQ. They don't know how to be around people, they don't know the way to present in a certain way to a certain audience and help them on the message. Don't connect with people. And so you could be really high on that EQ scale and do incredibly well with just that. So I just want people to remember just like that EQ versus IQ, it's not all about that intelligence of development, the product, etc. What is that that EQ element as well as super important?

Hylke Faber 54:33

So I imagine people listening to this saying, Great sometimes I just can't access my EQ, I just don't know how to do it. And I don't meditate and I don't run. Yeah, what what do you suggest that find what

Bernard Slowey 54:53

works for you? Everybody's different. Like I tried journaling for a while because people told me not to cry. A thing to do, I'm terrible at healthcare, like, I have a journal here beside me, right? And it's sometimes remind me to do things doesn't work. For me, journaling doesn't work for me, find what works for you. And everybody's different. Like, you got to try some things like you might be a runner, and you just go for a walk, you know, get out there and go for a walk, experience nature, enjoy it, you know, so everyone has something different that works for them. And you have to find it like, because that's what gives you a balance, you know, it's finding that thing that that gives you so you have to find what works for you. And everybody's different. Everybody's different.

Hylke Faber 55:35

And how would you say that, you know, when you found something that works, you'll feel

Bernard Slowey 55:43

it, you'll feel it like I am. I'm gonna run in this morning. It's 26 degrees in Davidson North Park. So just explain I moved from Seattle to Charlotte, North Carolina about six months ago, than well down here a little bit, but it's cold in the morning. 26 Fahrenheit, I don't know what that is, and Celsius anymore. Health gets cold. And so like, I was like, my wife will tell you I was like, well, in and out the house didn't want to go out look freezing, it's frosty on the grass. And, and, you know, I could just sitting here and



have my coffee time, you know, start working earlier. And but once I got out there, I was freezing for the first whatever. And then I eat the cold goes away. And I'm just lost in my talk, even though I'm running around, and there's cars going to the side of the road. And I'm you know, thinking about things, you know, it feels good. I know, like, oh, yeah, that's a good idea. Like, I should do that. And so you'll know, because you'll feel it. You'll feel it in here coming back to that presence. And you'll feel it feels right. Yeah.

Hylke Faber 56:45

You feel it in here. That presence. Yeah. And you're speaking about and to access it. Sometimes it requires a little bit of work, like going for running 26 degrees Fahrenheit, when you want to part of you. Maybe be very comfortable staying with your inside. Yeah, yeah. Right. So maybe as we're getting to the very final minutes of this podcast, what is it that you would like to say to people, and sort of as a closing thought, from this conversation?

Bernard Slowey 57:19

Oh, god, that's like, if I had a billboard, what would I write on that billboard for everyone to see. And, like closing talk is like, work is hard sometimes. You know, and it's really important to people is find that balance. Like when it kind of goes I actually I hate the terminology work life balance. I think that's completely wrong. Like I think, what is work first, if anything, it should be life, work balance, right? And so find what works for you. It's different for everybody. But if you don't get that way, I've seen people I've seen people get burned out from stress. I've seen people, you know, have to leave what they were doing, because they couldn't handle it anymore. And it's, it's all because they didn't have that balance. How can I know when I didn't have it? I know a moment in my career where it was pretty down, things weren't going well. And, you know, I didn't have my balance, right. So if I could give you one piece of advice, it's find that balance, make sure you take time for your family, for your kid for you for that self care for that circle in the middle. Because if that doesn't work, limit the other circles work. And so so find, find the balance, that's what it's all about. You have to make it work for you. That doesn't mean that I don't work hard. You know, sometimes I work later in the evening, but maybe I've taken the afternoon off because I'm going to do something with Dylan, you know, make it work for me, you know,

Hylke Faber 58:40

make it work for me. I heard about this circle of self care in the middle. My sense from this conversation with you, Bernard. That's that's tablespace stakes for you. That was stakes for you. And so well, thank you so much for an art. It's been such a pleasure and an honor to sit with you today. We've been listening to Bernard slowly, who is the vice president of customer success at Salesforce and some of the key thoughts that I'm left with from our conversation is find out what works for you. And balance balance within yourself is not a moonshot, it is actually table stakes. And it's something that requires deliberate practice, and do it in a way that works for you. I can't thank you enough. Bernard has been fantastic to be with you today. If you're listening, I'm hoping you heard something that you find helpful to connect more deeply to what's true about you. So you can think about the Salesforce values. Trust yourself even a little bit more. Maybe that's the question I'm sitting with for today from this conversation. What would it take for me to trust myself even a little bit more today? Thank you everyone, for listening. I invite you to subscribe. This podcast and also, if you'd like to talk more, we have monthly GLM



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community calls, you can find him on LinkedIn. And next time, which will actually be next week we'll be here with John Rex, the former CFO of Microsoft, North America, currently an executive coach, who I really admire. And thank you again, Bernard, for being with us. You've been listening to root and wavering, where we help leaders connect more deeply to their innate potential next time.

Diana Belluomini 1:00:39

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