



Wake Up Eager Workforce Podcast, Episode 60
Why FACILITATIVE Leaders Have Greater Success: The 8 Core Practices of Facilitative Leaders -- Produced By Suzie Price

Transcript

www.pricelessprofessional.com/facilitation

Suzie Price: I love our guest's answer today to the question, "If you could put a billboard up anywhere, what would it be?" Here's what he shared, "You'd see people inside of a company working on something clearly being productive and laughing and you'd see the energy and also see the results coming in this one picture, and the words on that billboard would be, *The Secrets of Facilitation. It Works.*" That's our topic today. Our interview is with Michael Wilkinson, the Managing Director of Leadership Strategies, the largest provider of Professional Facilitators and facilitator related training in the United States, is with us. Can't wait to share it with you, Michael, hit it.

Intro: Welcome to the Wake Up Eager Workforce Podcast, a show designed for leaders, trainers and consultants who are responsible for employee selection and professional development. Each episode is packed full with insider tips, best practices, expert interviews and inspiration. Please welcome the host who is helping leaders, trainers and consultants everywhere, Suzie Price.

Suzie: Hello, hello, hello. This is Suzie Price of Priceless Professional Development and you are listening to the Wake Up Eager Workforce podcast where we cover everything related to helping you and the employees in the organizations you work in and support, activate their greatness and wake up eager. I am a Professional Facilitator and I started Priceless Professional Development, a training and development company, in 2004. We are experts in an assessment science called TriMetrix and we help leaders and consultants use that science to assist in their efforts to create a wake up eager workforce. So we're all about wake up eager here. This science can be used throughout the employee life cycle, through the hiring process, onboarding, in leadership development, in conflict resolution and team building. We are also thought leaders in this process and in this science, and we train and certify others to become experts in the science and our thought leadership is through our books, our blog, our podcasts, and speaking of our podcasts, thank you for joining today. The directory for all of our episodes is at wakeupeagerworkforce.com, wakeupeagerworkforce.com. And my website for all of the work that we do is at pricelessprofessional.com. And you can reach me at pricelessprofessional.com/suzie, lowercase, S-U-Z-I-E.

Suzie: So this is episode number 60 and the title of today's episode is *Why Facilitative Leaders Have Greater Success: The Eight Core Practices of Facilitative Leaders*, and it is with Michael Wilkinson. The show notes for today's episode can be found at pricelessprofessional.com/facilitation and that's all lowercase, pricelessprofessional.com/facilitation. I'm super excited about this interview, I just got off of the interview, and so I'm very inspired and jazzed and always like what I get to share. I am pretty picky about who I decide to interview and discuss and it's usually for personal and professional reasons, and I'm super excited about this discussion and being able to share it with you today 'cause I know you're going to be inspired and you're going to know more about what a facilitative leader means.

Suzie: I'm super excited also because Michael's work is one of the key foundational pieces to my own personal and professional growth and happiness as a Facilitator and business owner. And as I was listing, I'm like what would be the foundational pieces that have gotten me through the 16 years? You know, the things that I came across early on and have stuck with, that have been as though it was a bright light shining over them when I found them as an answer to things I was looking for or wanting or that, you know, are part of who I am and the difference I want to make, I guess. So the first would be when I found the assessment company TTI Success Insights and I just did that interview with Rick Bowers, and that company and that whole network has been crucial and foundational to my business. Finding Robert S Hartman's work. I'm now on the Hartman Board. You all have been hearing about that, the work, and we talk a little bit about that today with Michael in one of his, one of the areas, but the work in Axiology and how that helps me understand and help people in the hiring process and coaching and helping understand my own growth. A technical piece, the third part that's been foundational is my website partner. It's Site Sale, or I don't even know how it, SBI is what I call it, I'm going to link to it, but it has helped me be a great facilitator online because it's taught me so much about all the stuff I need to know to be online and to put up things like this podcast or my Wake Up Eager Wednesday tips or to communicate. And the fourth tool is learning and using facilitation skills in my business and I've learned them all through Michael.

Suzie: So, he came along in, and his book, his first book on what, the one that I had access to, *The Secrets of Facilitation* was my Bible. I mention that in the conversation today it was my Bible, it's worn and used, you know it's a great book when you have underlined pages and you've got notes and sticky notes, and you know the cover's all damaged 'cause you carried it everywhere. Well I think this next book that Michael has about, *The Eight Core Practices of Facilitative Leaders*, is going to be that same kind of book for you. If you are a leader and you are wanting to get more from your people and have greater success and more joy in your work and to create a wake up eager leader life, then you are going to want to have these skills.

Suzie: So here are some main kind of areas that we talk about. We talk about what facilitative leadership is and why it matters. Why you want to take a facilitation approach, what does that look like, why does it matter? Why encouraging disagreement is good and he goes into great detail, and right off the bat we start talking about reasons for conflict and strategies for working with, there's only three reasons for conflict, he talks about those and just the benefit of changing your mind a little bit about, instead of avoiding conflict, understanding the power of it. If you're going to be a great leader, you have to have this piece and he is a brilliant at this, you're going to get an actionable tip, an actionable tip that if you do this tip at the beginning of every project and every meeting, you're going to inspire people more, you're going to lead better immediately, you're going to be seen as and become more of a visionary. So look for that tip 'cause you'll hear it midway through. Why being a meeting snob is a good thing and how to become one and we are going to talk about that. I am a meeting snob so, and I'm proud of it, and you'll see why and what that matters. You're going to learn about a formula $ED = RD \times CD$, and you are going to want to know what that formula is. You're going to figure out what it means and why you want to use it in your life as a leader. I reference it often in any leadership training sessions that I do, and I have taken it completely from Michael in his work. It's powerful. And we also talk about Michael's life and his journey; it's been a very interesting journey. And so you're gonna want to listen all the way through.



Suzie: So those are the key areas, there's so much here. I want you to know a little bit about Michael. He is the Managing Director of Leadership Strategies, they are the largest provider, Professional Facilitators and facilitator related training in the United States. He's widely recognized in the facilitation industry. He is a guru and he's active in business and in the government. He's facilitated hundreds of strategy sessions for large organizations or major organizations, government agencies, nonprofits. He's sought after and in demand as a facilitator, a trainer, and a speaker. So it's a joy that he was able to take time to be on this podcast, especially since he's one of my mentors and been foundational in my world. And I know you'll hear my admiration for him when you're listening to the podcast. But he is also all over the world, 25 international locations has he done his work, places like Istanbul, Hong Kong, Stockholm, Vienna, Beijing, he's been everywhere. He is noted for his dynamic presentation style, you will feel that here. He also has unique insights. He is engaging and results-oriented. He's the whole package. It's all good. So he's got a lot of other accomplishments that are all facilitator based. You'll be able to see his Bio on his facilitation and speaking website, which we'll have links to with the show notes at pricelessprofessional.com/facilitation. At the end of the interview I'll do a quick recap and at the end of our discussion he shares how he started his facilitation company and how he started caring about and becoming a facilitation expert. And so I'm going to share a few insights at the end of this episode about how I became a Professional Facilitator and why I am such a fan of this skillset. So let's go to the interview now, you're gonna love it.

Suzie: Hello Michael. Thank you so much for being here.

Michael: You know, it's my pleasure, Suzie, and thank you for the opportunity.

Suzie: Well, you are one of my superstars and want to jump right into the work you're doing around facilitative leadership and your new book. And people may or may not be familiar with what facilitative leadership is, so why don't we start right there, at the beginning. What is facilitative leadership and why does it matter today more than ever before?

Michael: And I hear you Suzie, but before I jump in, I just, I've got to say, you know, just really, I have appreciated working with you since 2004, do you realize it's been 15 years when we first met at the Southeast Association of Facilitators and, you know, I get to travel all over the world and I meet lots of people and every so often you meet somebody and you go, "Wow, this person is going places, this person is going far." And so it's been great watching you, watching your blog work, watching what you're doing with the assessment work and helping teams and helping individuals in coaching and so on. I mean you are true testament to what we call facilitation becoming a function, not a role, where it's a skill that many people have and whether you in your work are applying it to coaching whether you're applying it, working with teams, it's really clear that you are just doing excellent work. And I just want to applaud you on that because it is great to see.

Suzie: Well, thank you so much. I appreciate that. And I think I've told you that when I think of the foundation, of my four foundational pieces of my work, you're one of the four, and it was the piece that was missing, is these facilitation skills. And they are, you're correct, in my mind, it's not a role, it is behaviors that you learn to do to make yourself more effective, to make people more effective, you know, to make things easy for people to be an effective leader in front of the room, whether you're officially the leader or you're the facilitator or the speaker. So every, all of

your work, I mean it makes so much sense to me that you now have this book out because it is a skill that leaders need, no matter where you are in your leadership career.

Michael: You really got it. You really got it, that in essence there are facilitators all over the world, people with the title, doing all these great things, working with executives, working with teams, and it always happens, where executives will go, “Wow, do you know what, we need more of our people to be able to do this skill.” And so we end up getting, whether we’re helping people run better meetings or helping people facilitate training sessions or helping them facilitate discussion groups or focus groups or IT teams or requirements analysis, it’s them saying, “Hey, I need more of my people doing this.” And so facilitative leader is the first time we’ve turned our attention to say, “You know what, leader, not only do you need more of your people doing this, guess what, you can be more effective if you’re doing it.” Because step back, you think about, you said it, you know, facilitation comes from that Latin word *facil* which means to make it easy. And what is every leader trying to do? If great leaders recognize their role is to make it easy for their people to be effective. And so it’s real transformative, when we started giving leaders facilitation skills, big time. So when we think about a facilitative leader, they understand the core concept, I mean they get it, they get that they can be more effective as a leader if when they address problems, when they make decisions, when they can actually take a facilitative approach, which means get the people who are going to be impacted by the decision involved in creating the decision, because one, you get better decisions because they understand stuff that you as the leader don’t understand, two because they’re creating it, they understand it and they buy into it, which means you get higher levels of commitment to the decision. So better decisions, you know, often faster ‘cause you don’t get the pushback and so on. And then just all this buy-in to implementing it, it’s a win, win, win. So when leaders understand the skills they need to be able to do that, it’s the triple win. And that’s what the book is really all about. Laying out these eight core principles that, “Hey, when it comes to making a decision, solving a problem, putting together a strategy, think about these eight core principles and apply them to what ever you’re working on.”

Suzie: Awesome. And it’s so funny to me how easily we can forget that if we get other people involved in the decision making that we’re going to have a better decision and, “Hey, by the way, why don’t we get the people involved in decision making who are impacted by the decision and who know the work better than anybody?” And it’s...

Michael: And Suzie, there’s a real reason why it doesn’t happen, and it’s all the time because we as leaders don’t like conflict.

Suzie: Yup.

Michael: We are poorly equipped to deal with conflict. So why would I, and I’ve had many leaders ask me, “Michael, why would I ask them their ideas, because won’t they be upset if we don’t do them,” and we go, “Stop, wait a minute, you tell me, would you rather be in the room and have a chance that gives you input or would you rather just take whatever comes out?” Even if your input isn’t taken, at least you had a chance to share, understand why the decisions were made, and more times than not, those who are impacted by the decision will actually provide input that shifts the decision in ways that gets better buy in and makes it a better decision. So leaders really need to understand that disagreement isn’t bad, in fact, disagreement is good, right?

Suzie: Right.

Michael: I feel like Gordon Gekko from the movie *Wall Street*, "Greed is good."

Suzie; Yes, yes.

Michael: Disagreement is good because it means that there's an opportunity for a better solution, stronger buy-in. So you want as leaders to encourage disagreement, why, so that you can get the better decisions.

Suzie: Yes.

Michael: So that's unusual, it's not something that, and if you don't have the tools, because as you know from your work, Suzie, there are only three reasons people disagree. Every disagreement in the world, every single one and I mean we've trained 27 people in facilitation skills, we have not had a single person say, "There's a fourth reason," there are only three. And so if we as leaders can understand those three reasons, we're way ahead of the game. But that's the good news of course, Suzie; there are only three reasons. Now here's the bad news. If you have a level three disagreement, you try to solve it with level one techniques, you're gonna fail. Likewise, you have a level one disagreement, try to solve it with level two techniques; you're going to fail. So Suzie, we make it such a point to help people understand the three reasons people disagree, give leaders the tools to diagnose, is it a level one, two or three, and then strategies and that's all we need. We need just strategies but how do we address it so that we can have disagreement for lunch, right?

Suzie: Have disagreement for lunch. I'll like that. Okay, so what are the three reasons? I know what they are but let's have you share, I have had them through your training and other presentations.

Michael: Yeah, that first reason is, it's the most common, and it's lack of shared information. One person has information that the other doesn't have and they're disagreeing, they're disagreeing and they're fighting each other and they are typically with Lencioni, Patrick Lencioni speaks to, is there an advocacy mode? Both sides are making statements, statement, statement. If one of them just steps back and goes into inquiry mode and asks question, "Why do you say that? Why do you believe that? Well, how would that work?" What would end up happening is one of the other side says, "Oh, is that what you meant?" And leaders can know when those, when they hear those words, their work is done. A level one disagreement has been solved. The information has gotten on the table and they have, level one disagreements happen so often there's a name for it, right? It's called violent agreement. They're really in agreement, but they don't know it and they're arguing. So we as facilitating leaders, we need to have the tools, we call it delineation, to really quiet down, get to inquiry mode so that we can get the information on the table. So once more, one or the other was going to say, "Oh, is that what you meant?" Level one disagreement solved. Now level two different, you see level one disagreements are about information, level two disagreements are about values and experiences. They have different values or have had different experiences, they understand each other completely, and you, and the way you solve a level two disagreement is pretty simple. You isolate the most important values and then you create solutions that combine those

values. It is a creativity process that really gets to even better solutions because you understand the underlying values. And we have, while that may sound, “Wow that’s technical, how do we get the values?” It’s pretty simple when you ask somebody the strengths of their, the alternative they favor, they without knowing it are gonna tell you their values. And by using the strengths and merge strategies, you get the better solutions. So level one, we said is information, level two is experiences or values, level three is different from that. Level three is nasty, it is personality, past history, or other outside factors, basically Suzie, they don't like each other and they're going to argue, argue, argue. And you can't solve level three disagreements in the room, you can't, there's not enough time to make these pissy people, kissy, kissy, kissy, huggy, huggy. So what do you do? Right? You really have to take it to a higher source. Level three, disagreements aren't solved at this level, you take it to a higher source and that's fun stuff. So we want leaders to understand, “Hey, disagreement is good because you can get the better solutions, right?” Because as we say, if the leader says we should do this, and everyone says, “Okay,” you basically have on a 1 to 10 scale, you may have a level three solution. But if disagreement is encouraged, then somebody's just going to say, “Well that's not going to work because of this.” And someone says, “Well, how about if we do this?” Now we got into a level five. Someone else says, “Well, do you know what? That's good, but how about if we do this?” Now you're at six. Someone else says, “Yeah, but that's not gonna, how about if we do,” now we're at eight, so we get the better solutions. And what's it called? Creative abrasion, that when people have disagreement and they can rub against each other, you get to better solutions from that. And so giving strategies where you talk about strengths and weaknesses and look at alternatives and then create better alternatives and so on, you get the better solutions. So we just have, equipping leaders with those, first thing, understanding and then the tools to address disagreement makes a big difference.

Suzie: Big difference. And it, I think, underlying all of that has to be the willingness to let go of control. And I think you let go of control when you have confidence in your skills to manage the lack of control.

Michael: That's nice. And that's good, when you know that, you understand, “Okay, we're in disagreement here and it feels a little uncomfortable, but I know how, I know how to go through.

Suzie: I know where this is going or I'm okay, this has beneficial.” And you know, the more the leader, and it is a switch, and I remember, what's coming to mind to me, is many years ago I was teaching sales training, I don't do any of that anymore, but early on, and I remember it was a medical device people, was it Kimberly Clark. And what we were trying to help them do is to not come in there and pitch products. So hope this doesn't sound off track, but what they needed to do was make the switch to listen and try to understand where is this doctor coming from? Where is this hospital coming from? What do they really need, what do they really want? And that in order to do that, they had to let go of control and get into an inquiry mode and an I'm interested in you mode. And to me that applies here, that just kept coming to mind, 'cause I remember as soon as somebody made the switch and then they had skills to handle the call or the conversation, 'cause they had to report to somebody afterwards and say, “Hey, I did this or didn't do that,” they could turn off the, I got to kind of manage these people who aren't manageable to get what I want, which never works. In this case it's the leaders saying, “Okay, I can't manage these people and make them do what I want them to do.”

Michael: That's right. So we're moving them, which is really cool as even with your sales, I mean you're moving them from being, "Hey, I'm a presenter, I'm gonna tell you about my product, to now I'm going to facilitate the link between your need and my potential solution," and just to facilitate that leap, they needed to then go into question mode to understand the need, which really gets to a key skill of facilitative leaders. They know they need to ask questions. You know what, I realize we probably should step through those eight core practices.

Suzie: Yes, let's do that.

Michael: Just give a sentence on each one and we say of the practices and there, they sort of make sense in order. Start with the why, engage with the how. What typically happens with leaders is, the command and control, "Here's what I want you to do, I want you to do this." We go, "No, no, stop, don't do that. Start with the why. Hey, here's what our need is. Let's talk about how we need to make this happen." So always start with the why. Two, understand and empower. Don't command and control. Understand meaning, understanding who you're working with, and the work that you're doing with TriMetrix is really helpful there as leaders begin to understand, "Hey, there are different communication styles, I need to communicate with people differently." Situational leadership skills, "Hey, you know what, some people I need to direct, some people I can coach, some people I can delegate to," now I may have my preference, I may be a natural delegator, but then those people who need to be directed, I'm going to fail with 'cause they're not going to have enough direction. Or if I'm at a natural director where I want to tell people what to do, then there are people who know what to do and they should be delegated to and they're going to feel like you're a micro manager. So I need to understand my people and empower them appropriately versus command and control. Understand and empower, don't command and control.

Suzie: And that is the switch, I just go say that's just the switch of, "Hey, it's more about me understanding my people than me making them understand me." Which is as a facilitator is the same thing as to be just interested.

Michael: Third principle hits it directly, communicate in their language, not yours. And you mentioned the work you do with DISC as a communication style. Some people use Myers Briggs, they might use HBDI, doesn't matter the tool, the key is, we often say DISC as an example, our course DISC, it's not about you, it's about them, that you're understanding their style and communicating in their language. We all love working with people whose style is similar to ours because it's easy to communicate with them, it's like talking to ourselves. But the key as leaders, we need to understand to be effective with each individual and bring out the best in that person, i.e. bring out the leader in them it's helpful when we communicate in their language. Four is one of my favorite, and it's the one that I have to say I personally continue to work on to this day, connect first, correct second, connect first, correct second. You know when people, I'm naturally a, and you learned it from me Suzie, early on in our relationship, our creator made me a Process Improver. That is who I am.

Suzie: Yeah. And it's a beautiful thing to observe, it is.

Michael: It's cool. I can see process, I can break down processes, I can document the processes, I can identify best practices. He just created me that way and that's cool, except for



when it comes to people, most people aren't interested in you improving them, they'd rather improve themselves. So I have had to learn that when it's time to give correction, I have to connect first, I have to let them know and remind them of what they are doing great, I have to remind them of what I appreciate them for, and I can see their efforts. I have to connect with them first before I have the permission to correct. And it's just every single day learning that lesson, connect first, correct, second, praising. I used to walk around with three pennies in my pocket.

Suzie: Yup.

Michael: And every time I give someone praise, I could take one penny and move it to the other side, because I naturally was sharing with people things they could do to improve. So my goal was with the end of each day, have the three pennies in the other pocket. It took me a while before that became something I did on a regular basis.

Suzie: Awesome.

Michael: Nice little trick. Well, let's talk about five. Five, equipped for success, monitor for results. One of the things that many leaders don't understand is they often commission a person, a team, a group, a division, to take action without equipping them for success, without making sure they've defined for them, "Hey, here's our purpose, here's what we're trying to achieve, here's this specific deliverable we want you to achieve. Here's how we define success. Here are your constraints, the things you have to work with, the boundaries you have around it, here's the resources." We poorly equip teams and they often wander in the desert trying to get to a solution that we haven't defined for them. So we say equip for success. And then we have, other leaders who are equipped well but never monitor, right? They never monitor for results. How many strategic plans get put up on a shelf and don't get looked at again until a year later. So we say equip for success, monitor for results. Six, we've already talked about, engage conflict, encourage disagreement. Seven, drive strategic thinking throughout the organization. Leaders often confuse strategic thinking with strategic planning, and we say those are two entirely different things. Strategic thinking is the broad category that everyone in the organization should understand how to do and there are only a few who may be involved in strategic planning, but everyone should be involved in strategic thinking, i.e. making decisions that aren't tactical but that are strategic. And so we're teaching leaders how to get their people thinking strategically about everything, right? A tactical decision, "Where do I go to lunch today? Well, I had Mexican yesterday, had Chinese the day before, I think I'll go for Italian." Very tactical decision. Well, you could make that decision strategically, "Where do I go to lunch today? Where am I going with my career? Who are the people who might help me? And who might I want to go to lunch with as a part of, or you know what, or where my customers, what customers". And so using every decision as a decision for strategic focus, as opposed to a tactical one, so we say drive strategic thinking throughout the organization. And of course eight, the one that you and I know absolutely kills organization.

Suzie: It's amazing to me. I mean I know very successful consultants who stink at this and I don't know.



Michael: You have got to close every meeting masterfully, making sure we bring people together and you understand how to engage them, you understand how to excite them and get them involved, you know how to keep meetings on track and keep them focused on getting the work that needs to get done, done. You know how to engage people so everyone's participating, no one's thought dominating, you know how to prevent dysfunctional behavior, but should it occur, how to resolve it and you know how to close so that we have accountability and action as we go forward. So we say start, execute and close every meeting masterfully. So those eight principles is when we say, if you want to take a facilitative approach to solving a problem, making a decision, putting together a strategy, whatever it is you're doing. TAFE, take a facilitative approach.

Suzie: Yes.

Michael: So those eight principles are what it's all about.

Suzie: Okay. So which one do you think leaders most struggle to implement or buy into and how do you know?

Michael: I know you have to say it, you know it's the one we've already talked about, engage conflict, encourage disagreement. They run away from that. And it's really an important one for us to really skill up leaders to really, one, you know it's about mindset, right, it's about changing the mind because once you change the mind, the behavior will follow. So change the mindset to see that conflict and disagreement is good, that you want to eat well, and disagreement is good conflicts gotta be resolved. You can't sit on it, you can't let it sit, because it will cause problems.

Suzie: It's inevitable too. I mean there is going to be conflict. There is conflict, modests will take that on and learn how to manage it effectively. Yes.

Michael: Now watch out Suzie, you're suddenly like a high D.

Suzie: But there is, I am off the chain D, but there is going to be conflict, it said or unsaid, the steadiness folks in the room who won't speak up and you go talk to them. But anyway, yes, encourage it. And so that is the one that leaders struggle moving toward and you really outline in a very efficient manner and I know it's in complete detail in your book how to do a better job of this engaging conflict and encouraging disagreement. It's a skill every leader needs. So you need to get the book, listeners, and go to engage conflict and encourage disagreement and take it on.

Michael: Thank you for that Suzie. 'Cause it is and as you said, we really do want leaders to be well equipped. It's because of the lack of strategies. We don't know how, that we choose the avoid strategy.

Suzie: And it's lack of strategy, but it's also in a feeling place a little bit, I grew up where people didn't have those conversations, it was all undercurrents, you know, so it was all unsaid

Michael: That had to drive you crazy.

Suzie: It was all unsaid. And so, you know, I didn't know how to do that and so it's, you know, taking my whole career, I've taken that on. It's like, "Okay, I've got to figure out how to do this effectively because I didn't have role models." And I think that's a lot of people. We do not have role models that have known how to effectively have these conversations. So we need the role models, we need the flip in our mind, and we need the strategies. Well Michael, you're a great role model so, and I happen to be married to a great role model, so that's really nice too. Isn't that a blessing?

Michael: Very much.

Suzie: Yes. So talk about which of the ones, which of the eight surprise leaders the most or where people, leaders say, "Well I don't need to do that." And then how do you get them to buy in? Which one is that?

Michael: Well let's go back to the first, start with the why, engage with the how. And this is especially with leaders who come out of the command and control, right? That, you know, I just need people to follow me, I just need people to follow me, just to do what I say. And we say, "You know what, that is true, but what a difference," and this comes from Simon Sinek works, and on start with the why, and he gives a great example in his book, of a person walking and seeing one guy laying one brick over the other brick, and one brick over another brick, and the person asks, "What are you doing?" He says, "I dunno, they just told me to do this. It's hot. It's hard. It really is grilling. I hate this job. It's horrible." Keeps walking and a 500 feet later, sees another guy doing the exact same thing, laying one brick over another brick, but this guy's whistling, asks him, "Hey, what are you doing?" "Oh my God, I'm building a cathedral." Because he understands the why, by understanding the why, it can change everything. And so we say absolutely start with the why and getting leaders to really buy in. Hey, focus on getting the why out. And then you engage them and talking about how to do it. Just engage them because you may have thoughts and you can add your thoughts, but let them speak first. Engage them in describing how to do it, and by the way, you may learn something, they may come up with stuff that you hadn't even thought of. So that's one that we often find that leaders are surprised and think, "You know, is that really important? Is that really important?" Yes, it's really important when it comes to engaging people, getting their buy in and getting that extra effort that they have the choice to give you or not.

Suzie: And it's interesting to me too, with your example with the Simon Sinek, cathedral or cathedral building or, "I hate it," is most leaders will tell you, "Hey, I want to be inspiring, I want to be a visionary." Well guess what? Starting with the why is big inspiring and visionary, you know? But then when you have to go do it, like I'll even do communication strips sometimes when we're going to be doing a 360 or we're going to be doing a project and I'll say, "I want you to share why it's important to the company, why it's important to the team, why it's important to you," and they're just like, it feels too soft or it feels too mushy, or I think that's part of it, you know, sometimes it's, "I want to command and control," but some of it is it just feels soft, you know, and the thought is, you know, you really want to be a visionary, that is what part of that is.

Michael: No, I'll give one tip in particular.

Suzie: Oh great.

Michael: For people on the call, about how do you start with the why and everyone understands WIIFM, what's in it for me, that's what people are listening to. If when you start with the why, you use the words you or your at least four times, it will make sure that the why you're giving is personalized to them, it's personalized to them. Biggest weakness, for example, if we've got a team that we're getting together and they're a task force to fix the hiring process, we could easily say, "Hey, good morning, as you know, our hiring process is broke. And so we're bringing you all together so that, we do a great job of creating a hiring process that's gonna help the company, make it more efficient, make it more effective." That's where the leader starts. Now, that's not bad, it's just not great. So if the leader understands that the you and yours is what it's all about, he or she may say something like this, "Hey, good morning everyone. Just want to thank you to being a part of this. Did you know the purpose of this whole work that we're going to be doing is to improve our hiring process? Now, today, each of you are responsible for people. You may have people on your team that really aren't quite the right people you need because the process of hiring them didn't get that. As a result, you're having to work so much harder because of what they're not doing. So this is your opportunity to put a process in place that's going to help you and your department get the people you need to do the job that you need them to do," you get the idea of Suzie, I mean, all the yous and yours, it was like personalized. It's about, "Okay, here's why I should care about this." And so we teach leaders that, "Hey, you know what, make sure you give the why and when you give it, make sure it's clear, what's in it for them by making sure your why includes you and your, or your at least four times, at least." Just a thought. I think that your listeners may find that interesting.

Suzie: Yes, and that's part of the Michael Magic, is that a new phrase, Michael Magic.

Michael: Michael Magic?

Suzie: Well, that's what you do, you take something that somebody does it very ineffectively and you just, it just looks like it just happened and you dissect it and you say, "This is the elements of this behavior that they did affected." That's why I walked around with your facilitation book for years in my briefcase, it's my bible, because you do these things, which is this, you're going to do a why statement four times, you and your, and leader just has to do at once or a facilitator, just do the things you say once and you're like, "Oh my gosh, I'm a magician. Michael's a magician and I'm so good. You know, because of your magic." So there you go guys, do it four times and you've got it.

Michael: Well, you know, I do appreciate your, I mean I think we all as what you're doing is empowering me, Suzie, with your words, because what we want to do as leaders is tell people, "I see you, recognize your greatness," and that's what you're doing for me by pointing out, "Hey, this is my super power, my super power."

Suzie: It is your super power.

Michael: And everyone has a superpower. And when they are, when other people see their superpower, when other people see it, acknowledge it and show value for it, it makes stuff happen. And everyone, everyone is endowed with their super power. And unfortunately, oftentimes it's being overlooked or they're in jobs where their super power isn't allowed to shine. And so when you get in touch with your own superpower, you can find where it can shine, it



makes a difference. And you're right, I mean people in my personal life say, "Michael, do you facilitate all the time? Can't you just have a regular conversation with them?" It's not that I do facilitation, I am facilitation, that's who I am, I can't help myself.

Suzie: Yes.

Michael: That's really cool.

Suzie: That's beautiful. That's beautiful Magic Michael. So what is your favorite practice out of the eight? Mine is the one that you don't love so much, but you say you kind of love it cause you always focus on it, is connect first, correct second.

Michael: And I have to say that some people love stuff because they're good at it, some people love stuff because they recognize they have to work on it. And that is me, I connect first, correct second, and that's so simple, right? So simple, connect first, correct second, and just remembering it. And so I'm there as well as one, I like understand and empower, don't command and control, and once more to use the Michael Magic here, I often hear from leaders, wait a minute, I can't empower people because I don't trust them. And as you can imagine, trust is one of those words that it's really, really soft. And so what we do is we break soft things down, into it's pieces so that we can deal with it. So we know that there are five Cs to trust, five specific Cs that when you say, "I trust someone," it's because of one of these five Cs, one or more, one we say because we use, we call it the trust triangle that has three sides and two bases. So on the left side of the triangle is competence, that I believe you have the skills to do the job. On the right side is, you have communication, that when we communicate, we understand each other, we talk well. On the bottom of the triangle is what we call commitment, I trust you because you are committed to making this happen and I know you're committed. Then we add two other bases to the triangle, we add that we know that you care about me, I trust you because you've got my back, I know you care about me. And the last one, is character, I trust you because I know you're honest, you have high integrity; you don't lie and so on. And so we say with these five Cs, you can recognize when it's missing, when it's competence, when they're making mistakes, when is communication missing, hey, we end the meeting with an agreement and later you find out, "Well that's not what you said, that's not what I heard, that's not," but you know when commitment is an issue, they're not showing up, they're not doing what they said they're going to do. You know when caring is an issue, why, because they're not asking you questions. Why? They're not asking you what do you want? Why? Because they don't care. They are not taking your thoughts into consideration because they don't care. And then you know when characters is an issue of course, they lie, and there are strategies for addressing each one of the issues. And here's what's cool about the trust triangle, as you go lower in the triangle, the more challenging it is to address the issue. The competence issue, that's easy, right? Let's get training; let's get some coaching. Communication issue, "Hey, we go through a communication workshop together and we learn how to communicate with each other in our different styles." Okay, commitment, oh wow, now we're going from skills to behavior. Ooh, that's a little tougher. Yeah, you have to show up, you have to do, we're at the behavior level now. Then you get the caring, oh my God, we're at the feeling level now, I got show you that I care about you, that's tough. And then we have character. Wow, okay, yeah, as we like to say, if you have a competence issue, okay, give it six months, if you have a character issue, give it a weekend.



Suzie: There we go. Yes, Amen brother. Yes.

Michael: We love breaking it down, so how do you build trust when you understand and empower, figure out which C it is and then put together a plan to address that C. Once more, we just love breaking things down into pieces so that people can actually do practical strategies to make it happen. So understand and empower, command and control.

Suzie: Yes, yes. That's some true Michal Magic right there. So what I'm seeing is leaders doing what I did with the facilitation book, is carry your book around and just little by little chip away at these, cause it is definitely a process. You have to read it but then you have to try it. And I think that you make it very easy to try it.

Michael: Yes. That's the advice that we give to people who come to our course, we teach a, we take the eight modules and we have them in a half day. As you know with leaders...

Suzie: Yes,

Michael: Getting them away for four days is never going to happen.

Suzie: And with learning too, really, you kind of need to hear it, you know, take it in, go try it, then come back and talk about it. I think that makes sense.

Michael: You know, some of our clients love doing the half day once a week, kind of thing. And they go away with homework and they apply it, or some of our clients are like, "Hey, let's do the first two days as a two day, and then we'll follow up with half days for the last four modules and so on. So it can be taught in many, many different formats to meet the client's needs. But yeah, you do have to understand the skills, right, because as we say, there are only three types of behavioral issues, right? The first is awareness, right?

Suzie: Yeah.

Michael: People don't have awareness, so raise their awareness and for many times that'll solve the problem. Just being aware. But then other times they're aware, but they don't have the strategies or the skills to make it happen. That's what skills building is about, you build the skills, but then you have, as you know, if it's not awareness and if not skill, we're down to will.

Suzie: Yes. Yes.

Michael: It's a will issue. And addressing a will issue is very, very different. But the answer's always the same, start with the why.

Suzie: Yeah.

Michael: Start with the why; get their buy in that this isn't important to change and because you're really trying to motivate the will.

Suzie: Yes. Yes. Beautiful. Beautiful. Beautiful. Another beautiful thing is your work with meetings. I at one point, because of my style and I work to manage my style, but I can be impatient, and I don't like sitting through inefficient meetings. And so I stopped going to meetings basically, unless I could run them, people would ask me to be on their board or they'd ask me, it's like, "I don't know, tell me a little bit about how your meetings run and tell me, you know, how much time do I have, do I have the ability to have an impact on those meetings." And so it's been so interesting to me. I'm in a, I was in a group of top producers for the sales of the assessment and very high end, you know, people would do great work all over the country. We were not having effective meetings. So I'm in another group where it's a great thinkers around science, and again, some of these basic things that you teach around meetings are just not there. So I don't say that in a haughty way, I say it in a, it's a real big issue for people in meetings. And I love having the skillset, I'm not perfect, but I certainly care about this because it's such a problem. So I love that's one of the core skills, start, execute and close every meeting masterfully. It's number eight. Talk a little bit about that, are people willing to build this skill, because in evidence, a lot of people don't have it. And then how do you help them see, and I know you have a great book, *Masterful Meetings*, which I have referenced before and I actually have a podcast that includes it in there, some of the stuff that you talk about and how do you get leaders to get invested in this topic.

Michael: That is an excellent question; excellent question and I really appreciate it, Suzie. And I want to go deep here for a minute because you are absolutely right. If you said who outside of the CEO would be most unhappy with the level of meetings across an organization, it of course would be the COO, the Chief Operating Officer, the person most responsible for making stuff happen effectively and efficiently. And so when we talk with COOs, getting them clear on the impact meetings are having the conversation typically sounds like this, "If you can take a few minutes, would love to chat with you about the one area in most businesses where there is so much waste and yet for the most part is completely unaddressed."

Suzie: Yep.

Michael: And that's all the time spent in useless, unnecessary, ineffective meetings, people are weights, you have managers who are spending 50% or more of their day in meetings, and many of those are just so poor and so ineffective. They're wasting their time. And we give them, we can give them the numbers that you know with, if you have a group of just 20 people who are spending 35% of their time in meetings, just a 15% increase in their meetings, it's like adding two additional people to the team, right, because of the efficiency that's there that happens as a result of that. So we have lots of fun doing this, lots of research and getting people to understand. And in the class where we start with this is we tell people, we tell the leaders, just want to be really clear what's happening in your organization, the level of meetings have gotten so low, that bad meetings are considered good, bad meetings are considered good, and we say to them, we're going to prove it to you, we're going to prove it to you, we're going to give the whole group where we are handing you out now a 10 question quiz. It's just true or false questions. Just true or false. And can we agree with 10 questions? A passing grade is a D, 60%, a passing grade and it's just true/false. Yet half of you or more, are going to fail this test. In fact, we may have nobody in this room pass this test, so it's just true/false. So would you go ahead and answer the questions, and we have them answer the questions true or false. We purposely put them on guard to let them know that, "Hey," and they are simple questions and I'll give you one, simple, right? In preparing for a meeting, the three most important things to know

are the three P's. Who are the participants, what process you're going to use and what products do you want to come out of the meeting? True or false. We'll ask them, "Hey, at the start of the meeting, after introductions, if necessary, a meeting should generally start with the review of the agenda, true or false? Simple questions like that, or if you want to ask a question to get lots of ideas, most important attributes of a question is that a be open-ended, true or false? I just asked three questions, the answer to all three of those questions, is false, absolutely false. That the most important thing to know in preparing for a meeting is not the process, the product, the people; it's missing the most important thing, what's the purpose? And hey, after introductions you should start with the agenda, absolutely false. You start with, here's the purpose of this meeting, here's the product and executives walked into a room, they want to know two things, why am I here, when can I leave? That's what they want to know. Purpose, here's why we're here. Product, when we're done, we have created this and we can leave, purpose and product. Hey, if you want to ask a question to get lots of answers, the most important attribute is it's open-ended, absolutely false. The most important attribute is that your question creates an image so your people in the meeting can see their answers and so anyway...

Suzie: A type B question, is what you used to call it.

Michael: And the point of bringing it up is we use that quiz.

Suzie: Yeah, that's perfect.

Michael: It's right at the beginning of the class to wake people up and go, "Oh my God, I've never had a masterful meeting in my life."

Suzie: Yes, that's perfect, awareness. That's a perfect way to stoke interests and help people see, wait a minute, there is a better way, because I think people just think, they just think meetings stink, and they always stink, and that is just the way it is.

Michael: Actually, if I could change your statement when I ask people in a class, "Hey, raise your hands if you think the meetings generally in your organization's stink, nearly all the hands go up." I say, "Would you keep your hand up if you think you're meeting stinks?" Nearly all the hands go down. So people think other people's meeting stink, other people need to be in the training, not them. You get the idea. Yeah, it's pretty funny.

Suzie: Yeah, so the skills and the thing about meetings is you need these tools and you need, and Michael breaks them down perfectly. You need the tools and you need to make time to plan and think through the meeting before the meeting happens. And if you don't do it, nobody else is going to and it will be ineffective. And if you don't use Michael's tools, it's going to continue to stink and you continue to waste time. So, there you go.

Michael: I appreciate it. Thanks. That really is it? That really is, that meetings can wholeheartedly make a difference inside of a corporation. In fact that book, you mentioned, *The Masterful Meetings*, one of the things that we, the dream for that book and we've had a few organizations take advantage of it, so it's got a blue cover, *The Secrets to Masterful Meetings*, but we want the red cover book, *The Secrets to Masterful Meetings* at Coca Cola, and the orange cover book with *The Secrets to Masterful Meetings* at Home Depot.



Suzie: Yes.

Michael: The brown book, *The Secrets to Masterful Meetings* at UPS.

Suzie: Yes, all the people who are here in Atlanta. Yes.

Michael: Yeah, so when you come into our organization, here's how we meet around here.

Suzie: Yes.

Michael: We had Santander, the bank do that, *The Secrets to Masterful Meetings* at Santander. We've had the Unitedway *The Secrets to Masterful Meetings*, at Unitedway and so on. So we've had organizations creating their version of the book.

Suzie: Yes. I love that.

Michael: So that's what their handing to their people who join their company. This is the way we meet around here.

Suzie: Yup, that's awesome. Big impact. It's a silent killer of energy and engagement in productivity in organizations.

Michael: That's amazing; you should say that, 'cause that's the name of one of our free webinars.

Suzie: Oh cool.

Michael: Yes, the silent killer.

Suzie: Hey I didn't even know that, that was not a plant.

Michael: You're channeling our marketing team right now and I am loving it.

Suzie: It's true though. It is true. So and once you know that difference, you're willingness to sit through and especially if you're a very busy person, which I feel like I am and I know many people, everyone listening on this call is, once you know the difference and you're super busy, and you don't have a lot of time, it's like your patience for ineffective meetings is short.

Michael: Our courses generate two types of people. Those who are meeting snobs, right?

Suzie: I'm a meeting snob.

Michael: Like yourself who say, "You know what, I'm sorry, tell me about your meetings." It's like, you know how you have hotel snobs, people who will only stay at certain hotels, we produce those. But the other we produce is, who you are as well, and those are meeting revolutionaries, people who are really spreading the word about, "Hey, you know what, we need

to have a revolution here, these meetings stink, let's have a different type of meeting. So we're producing those two, meeting snobs, meeting revolutionaries. We'll take either one.

Suzie: I like it, I like it, I like it, so awesome work on taking on a facilitative approach. Facilitative leaders have greater success is actually the name of Michael's book, *The Eight Core Practices of Facilitative Leaders*. And I want to segue now Michael, and at the end we're going to give links to how to access the book and get a discount, I think there's a 10% discount, if they put in into those.

Michael: That's correct.

Suzie: And we're going to listen to the end, you're going to see that and we'll share Michael's contact information, his organization, but just kind of want to segue this part to just say, good on you Michael and your team for what you've pulled together here. I know it's going to have great impact and I encourage everyone listening to take action on this discussion and go get the book, study it and start implementing those core practices. They will make a huge difference in your life and in your work as a professional. I believe it, I know it, I've seen it. So there we go. So what I want to do now though Michael is jump into a little bit about you and we'll move quickly through this in the interest of saving your time. But let's do a couple of these about you and your career, because you've had a very interesting career and you're a very interesting person. Who has most influenced you in your life? What did they do that helped you?

Michael: And that's very cool question because in the book, *The Eight Core Practices of Facilitative Leaders*, I actually dedicate the book and I'm reading it now, dedicated to the 14 people who over my lifetime have most influenced my development as a leader in order of appearance in my life. And so it's been phenomenal. This group of people from, of course, my Mom, Reverend Randy, a professor I had in 9th grade who taught me English and gave me a D, I went from a D+ with a plus effort, to a D with a plus effort, to a D- with a plus effort where, and finally I got a C+. Now I'd never had gotten less than an A- in my entire life, this Professor just, I was so over my head and he said, "Michael, I'll never fail you as long as you keep trying." And just think about what D-, with a plus effort means.

Suzie: "I'm just being real with you, but you don't have this yet."

Michael: But because of him, when I went off to college, Dartmouth College, aced English and I've written six books.

Suzie: Oh yes, that is really beautiful.

Michael:

Suzie: He wasn't afraid of conflict.

Michael: Yeah, not at all, not at all. But there are three people in particular, and this is later in life now, these are three professional relationships. I have a picture of me and Ken Blanchard sitting at a table talking, just wonderful and he is of course an icon in the leadership and management field. And he is somebody that I get to see once a year we are a member of the

same organization and he is whale done. Whale, spelled W-H-A-L-E, it's all about how trainers train whales to jump over sticks and do what they do. And his parable story really talks through what we as leaders have to do. And very much it is the connect first, correct second. And so he is among my 14, also Patrick Lencioni, just phenomenal author and his work, probably the work that I would have to site because I love all his books, but *The Advantage*, which really talks about the advantage healthy organizations have over smart organizations. Healthy organization is organizations, as you read his stuff, you see Suzie, it's organizations that take a facilitative approach, that engage people, that have clarity around vision and so on, are very different from organizations that are smart, have the best marketing people, have the best strategy, have the best, and healthy organizations out form smart organizations over and over again. And he calls it the advantage and he talks about how to do that. And the third is Ann Herrmann.

Suzie: Yeah.

Michael: Ann heads up The Herrmann International, which is the creators of the HBDI assessment. And Ann is a personal friend. She has done such an amazing job of helping me to appreciate differences, appreciate D, I, S and C, appreciate the red, blue, green, yellow, appreciate the different styles and then to recognize how to actually adjust so that you maximize the relationship, maximize the results, maximize what's happening with the other person. She taught me to value it and then strategies of how to execute it. And it's just three amazing people and just people who've been just impactful in my life.

Suzie: That's awesome. I love it. And I love that you have all of that in your, in the front of your book, at least the 14 people listed. Isn't that great, that is awesome. So what about books or training programs? You mentioned a couple of the books here from, and we'll have links to that in the show notes, *Whale Done*, *The Advantage*, and of course links to you in the show notes, but any additional books that have been, or training programs that have really, that really stand out for you?

Michael: Wow. Excellent. Well it's *Start With the Why* of course, we have mentioned Simon Sinek's work, that's really important work and what it's been, what it's done and help people understand.

Suzie: Yeah.

Michael: For the in the facilitation world, the person who I think is the greatest thinker in our field of facilitation, Roger Schwarz wrote *The Skilled Facilitator*, which really does a great job of focusing the work. And if you know Bill Treasurer's work, *Right Risk: Understanding How to Be a Risk Taker*, he does a fantastic job there. I guess the last one I would mentioned is probably because we are growing as an organization and that that work is important, *Growing Pains*, which is for anyone who is leading an organization, no matter how small, that you want to grow, the book does an amazing job of explaining to move from and they document seven levels of organization growth. To move from level one to level two you have to have this in place. If you don't, when you get to level two you'll fail, to move from level two to level three you have to have this in place. If you don't, when you get to level three you will likely fail. And they cite organization after organization that you've heard of and then you wonder, "Hey, what happened to them?" And sure enough they are citing what they didn't have when they moved to level two

or what they didn't have when they moved to level three, and as a result, what happened. And that's just helped me make all kinds of decisions in my company about, "Okay, I know this is going to be painful, but we have to do this, we have to make this investment because if we move to the next level without it, we're going to fall on ourselves." We're gonna, yeah, so very, very helpful in providing a roadmap for the things you have to do to move from one to the other. Hope that's helpful.

Suzie: Yes. That's awesome. Seven stages of growth is actually somebody I did a podcast with that works with us around that, those seven levels. So that's awesome. Yes. So that's neat that you've mentioned that and we will have links to those in the show notes. So we're about waking up eager here, that is my podcast, Wake Up Eager Workforce. So, and I also have, do Wake Up Eager Wednesday Tips and things about mind, body, spirit. So put you on the spot, what are some of your favorite things that you do, mind, body, spirit? What helps you wake up eager?

Michael: So okay, so you're going to get a rare insight to Michael.

Suzie: Oh good, this is what we want.

Michael: So did you study psychology in school? Did you?

Suzie: I did.

Michael: You did. So you know that if there's a spectrum from 0 to 100 that what psychologists have done, they have randomly chosen a point, let's say it's 70, and they put a line at 70, on 0 to 100, and said people to the left of this line are sane, people from 0 to 70, people over 70 are considered insane. It's just an arbitrary line. But what that says is that we have all the same things in us, that those who were considered clinically insane have, but to a good degree that we have controlled it. So it was just the spectrum. And so for me, when I think of people with multiple personalities, I recognize I have them too, I just control them better those who are. So I've been able to name six different people inside of me, six different people. And the reason it's so cool is that it allows me to decide, "Okay, who do I want to drive my bus today? Or, who do I want to drive the bus right now?" Because each one have their advantages and disadvantages. And so I'll just name three because if I kept going, you'd go, "Michael, this is, we don't have therapy here." We have James, right, James is, when I wake up with James, I give him that name because the Bible says, in the book of James says, "Faith without works is dead." James is about work. James is about getting things done. When I wake up in the morning, James is ready to rock. Let's do this, let's do that, let's do this other thing, let's do this. James is great at getting stuff done right, can enjoy the book, James does the webinars. James does his thing. He's good at that. That's what he does. Then you have Carl, calm, critical, Carl. Carl is my process improver. When Carl wakes up in the morning, the first thing he's thinking about is something that needs to get fixed, or someone who did something that needs to get addressed or somebody. So Carl is that guy, he's good at analysis, but his analysis is often focused on what's wrong, as opposed to what's right. That's just what Carl does. We have Michael, and Michael of, if you look it up, says "He who is like God." Michael is my spiritual self. Michael is the one who wants to bring out the best in everyone. Michael is the one who recognizes that everyone was given by our creator this amazing part, this divine thing, their super power. Unfortunately, we've layered all this crap on top of it that people see the crap and not the superpower. And so we

don't have to become anything cause we're already it, we just have to get rid of all of this crap. And so my role in life is to help people recognize who they really are, and the strength that they have inside of them and to inspire them to get rid of the stuff that's getting in their way. And so sometimes I wake up and Michael is in the bus and in the driver's seat. So from a mind standpoint, you can imagine when Michael wakes up in the morning, right, Michael is the one who is, "Okay, let's spend our 15 minutes reading our inspirational thing, meditating, really getting quiet and ready to go," right, if Michael wakes up. If James wakes up first thing in the morning, it is all about, "Okay, good, grab the pad, you've got some things you're thinking about, write them down. Let's keep going, let's keep going." Or if one of the other wakes up in the morning, first thing, it's, "Okay, we've got enough time to do a 30 minute workout. Let's rock. Let's get it rolling." Or as we say, if one of the others wake up in the morning, it's really, I'm thinking about the people who are close to me and what do I need to be doing to reaching out today. So it's really based on who I allow to drive my bus. And so oftentimes as I go through my planning my day, and planning how I want to spend the morning, my best morning is, I have an hour and a half, 90 minutes to do my spiritual work, do my body work, do my relationship work, and what a great way to start the day. But the big key is, I get to choose who drives the bus. Somebody will wake up and they will pick the drivers seat right away. But me, I get to choose. Do I want the person to drive the bus? There you go. And by the way, one of the characters in there that I haven't talked about is Mikey, the insecure little guy who is fearful of everything. Fearful of yeah, and he's someone to manage, that's for sure.

Suzie: Oh we all, and you know what I love so much about what you just shared, but I've done quite a few podcasts about Axiology, which is the science in the TriMetrix assessment that measures how we think and make decisions. And it's interesting that you have six characters and the three that you just named are, fit the six dimensions, or fit three of the six dimensions in Hartman's work of Axiology, which is, there's an intrinsic, which is the feeling, feeling spiritual, part of us, that's the spirit. And it's, you know, unending and multilayered and, but it's all about your goodness and caring and feeling. It's the extrinsic, so that's the getting things done part of who we are. And the systemic, which is the black and white, rules, process and that we move in and that we move in and out of those, and so his work was groundbreaking, Hartman's is, because it just is. He was friends with Maslow when they were coming up with this, you know, so it's all ties together. So I just loved hearing that, I was writing intrinsic, systemic extrinsic when you talking, so that is beautiful, beautiful.

Michael: You'll include a link in the podcast for that, the work that you're doing around the intrinsic, extrinsic and so on?

Suzie: Yes.

Michael: Oh I love that. I have to take a look at that.

Suzie: Yes, will do. That's awesome. I love the way you shared that too and I love that you actually named them. I was like, "Well, I need names for parts of myself."

Michael: Yeah, it helps right, because people often think, I have a friend unfortunately who's, he says, "You know what, I'm depressed. You know, it feels awful." And I had to give him the verbal slap in the face, right, "Stop that, don't ever say that again. You are not depressed. You're

feeling depressed. The person you have driving your bus right now may be depressed, but that's not you. You are someone entirely different. You are this person who is amazing. You are this ,just right now and you're letting someone else drive the bus and that's okay, but that ain't you, don't ever get confused, that is not you. Period. End of story.”

Suzie: Love that. I love that, it is so true.

Michael: And he smiled and said, “You're right, I hadn't thought about it that way.” But that's true, we just have to, and so when people understand, you know, their different selves, all of them or part of them, but it's not them, it's just part of them. And don't get confused, don't ever get confused, otherwise, yeah, you've got people thinking they're not this. I mean, if I were thinking I was Carl all the time, can you imagine, “God, I'm such a critical SOB, geez, I just hate that.” No, no, Carl's the critical SOB and when I let him drive the bus, that's what comes out. And my job is to you use Carl effectively, not ineffectively, because I love people. I used to think I hated people sometimes and what it really was, was, right, my blood sugar was low, I needed to eat, I was just hungry. I mean, just I think. Well, I mean, here Snickers has a name for it, right? They call it hangry, right? And how that's going to help so many people when they realize that's not you, that's not you, that's just what you're experiencing right now. Don't ever get confused and think it's you.

Suzie: It's beautiful. It's the at the end our life, people who've come back from death, are still here, say, “I felt so accepted.” I felt so accepted. I felt like, “Oh, nothing I was doing was wrong.” And here we go. I mean, and when we judge these different parts of ourselves, we're not, and it's a journey for all of us, but we all have Mikey and Carl and aspects of that. But if we could just accept them, like you're talking about, naming them, is a great way to do. So, and if we can accept now, then we can have heaven now, and we can be someone who promotes heaven with others, you know? So I'm constantly working on myself in regards to not, just seeing what I see and acknowledging that. But at the end of the day, not judging people or myself for having seen it, you know, and define acceptance and it's such a much happier, joyful way to live and you know.

Michael: And Suzie, I didn't know that we shared similar spiritual beliefs and some on the podcast may be concerned when you say you can experience heaven today. And I would just remind them that if that's threatening to you, please replace heaven with any word you want. You can.

Suzie: Happy.

Michael: Yeah, happy. Joy.

Suzie: Good feelings, appreciation.

Michael: Nirvana, whatever you want to call it that. The cool thing with what you're saying Suzie, that I love is, it's a choice. We are not victims. It is a choice. And just as leaders, leaders, guess what, you can help your people experience choice and recognize that they can impact the environment they are creating and you can too.



Suzie: Yeah.

Michael: And facilitative leaders get that and understand it and then engage people in creating the kind of environment and decision-making that works for everyone.

Suzie: Okay. Michael, let's talk about some fun, get to know you questions. Where did you grow up?

Michael: Oh, I grew up in DC actually. I was a, I'm a projects kid. I grew up in the projects of DC, as we like to say, and our neighborhood people would say, "We're so poor, the roaches eat all our food." And we would say, "But we are so poor, we don't have roaches."

Suzie: Yeah.

Michael: My shift, my break in life came, I was serving papers, a paper boy for the Washington Post back in the days when they had paper boys, what a great job, and I would raise money for my family and everything. And the Post building was sponsoring interviews for private schools and any Post care could go to the interviews. And so I went and I actually got a, and this is Bill Bradley, if you remember the publisher.

Suzie: Yes.

Michael: Ended up, Bill Bradley was part of me getting a scholarship to go to a New England boarding school; actually it was the school he went to, called Saint Mark's. My graduating class was 50 people, 50 people in the graduating class, now here I am coming from the hood, this public school thing. And that's the professor guy, you remember the D-?

Suzie: Yes. Yes. How about that?

Michael: Yeah, and our class was general Patton's Grandson, and these names won't mean much to you, but you'll get the picture, the Belairs of Long Island, the Stacks of Greenwich, Connecticut. This was a very rich school and I was of course the only black face in the school, and as we like to say, we, you know how yearbooks have "First to make a million page," we had already had a million and there were two names on the list. And my test scores, I had at my senior year, I did a correlation study of grades and test scores, and the registrar gave me the test scores and grades for the senior class, stripped off the names, so it was anonymous, but he left them in alphabetical order. Okay. So finding Wilkinson in a list of 51 he wasn't really difficult, and to say that my test scores were the lowest in the group would be an understatement. My test scores were so much lower that clearly they had reached out and pulled me in. I was an affirmative action case, no question. But I graduated fifth in the class.

Suzie: Oh my goodness.

Michael: And so what I say is, I don't think it's necessarily fair that I took someone's place, that they reached down and pulled me up, but it also wasn't fair that I was poorly prepared. And so that because of that action, right I went on to an Ivy League school, went on o Dartmouth, and



came out and so on. So it was just a wonderful, wonderful blessing for me, just, you know, and what was done by the Post and UPS paid my way through college. So that was great.

Suzie: That's beautiful. I never knew that. So how did you go from, I think you were a consultant out, of when you graduate from college, but I'm not sure, but how did you get into the facilitation world?

Michael: Yeah, so that's really interesting, isn't it? For most of us, the decision, because there is no front door to facilitation, you don't come out of college and say, "I had a BA in facilitation," right? It's all back door, right? Some people come through, most people, many people come through the HR side, right, organization development side, into facilitation. Some come from the quality side. I came from the IT side. So I came out of , I was a math and social sciences major, applied math. The first 14 years of my career was in computers, so I started out as a programmer, moved up, if you know the four stages of systems, I moved up. So programmers are the bottom feeders, moved up into design, move from design to analysis, moved from analysis to planning, planning systems. They moved from planning systems to planning for business. So over 14 year career, I've moved out of systems, facilitation, we were using and loved it, just loved the facilitation, it was a cool, cause normally when you do systems work, you'd interview individual people, you'd get all the information, you'd figure some of that what's wrong, you have to go back a second time, reconcile the differences. Then we started bringing people together in the same room and started running facilitated sessions. Loved it. For some reason I was natural at it and so on and so forth. Started doing it for my church, Suzie, where those two hour board meetings, started facilitating those.

Suzie: Oh very cool. Yep.

Michael: And then started doing it for my association that I was a part of, The Black Data Processing Associates, and then got the call that completely changed my life. It was April 1991 got a call from Connie Bergeron, ITT Sheraton in Atlanta. She had been named the President of the Elect of Meeting Professionals International, the Atlanta chapter. She wanted to hold a retreat on a weekend, a couple of months away, and she'd wondered if I would facilitate the retreat. I checked my schedule, I was available, I said, "Sure, I'd be glad to," and again, she said the words that changed my life, "And we'll pay you."

Suzie: Yes. Yippee!

Michael: Really? I would've done it for free because I was doing it for free, she three months later she called me back, mentioned the pay where again, two months later called me back. I was 18 months, it was November 1992, I was 18 months from becoming a Partner at Ernst and Young, I turned to them and said, "Guys, I'm having so much more fun on the weekends." Left Ernst and Young, the next day started Leadership Strategies the facilitation company world headquarters, our second bedroom, right?

Suzie: Yes, yes. Yeah.

Michael: So it was just one. And today, as you know, we're the largest provider of professional facilitators in the country with the over 600 facilitators under contract and the largest provider of



facilitation training. We trained 27,000 people in facilitation skills. We have 13 facilitation courses. All cool stuff. It's amazing.

Suzie: It was meant to be, you're destined to do this more.

Michael: It's been fun.

Suzie: So I'm going to jump to the next question, well this is a silly question, so after all that, I'll just hit it real quick. What's your favorite guilty pleasure TV show? I was going to skip over it, but it's a fun one. How do I know it would be something good?

Michael: I'm embarrassed to say it. Oh really? It's *Love Island*.

Suzie: Oh, never heard of that.

Michael: Yeah. It's a reality TV show, which I hate reality TV, it's often people being negative, fighting one another and it just doesn't, I'm a positive person. This is the first show where it was like, there was a girl's code, there was a guy code. Everybody was working together to find love and it was just, I was amazed that I was intrigued. It happened to be on, and I had watched about 15 minutes while doing something else and got completely sucked in, saw every single episode, couldn't wait. It was amazing. I was, I mean, I was like surprised, me, *Love Island*, oh my God.

Suzie: Okay, good. I love that you shared that because now that gives me a good new show to go checkout. That's awesome. Okay. What advice would you give your 25 year old self?

Michael: You know, it really is about belief, isn't it? Just believe you can and be fearless and don't be afraid of mistakes. Believe you can be fearless, just don't be afraid of mistakes; you're going to make them. It's not the mistake that's ever the issue. I'm a learner, I pay attention. You know, there are some people who have 10 years of experience, but there are a lot of people who have one year of experience, 10 times.

Suzie: Yes.

Michael: I want to make the mistake. So when I have 10 years of experience, I'm learning and applying, and learning and applying, and learning and applying. As you can imagine, every book I've ever written has come from the applying and learning some more and the applying, it's almost like you don't want to write the book because you know you're not finished learning. And so it's, that's why you update books because you get better learning.

Suzie: Yeah. You believed you could and you were fearless when you left Ernst and Young with 18 months away, and said Leadership Strategies, the with a capital T-H-E, I think, facilitation company. You had the vision. That's awesome. Awesome. So if you could put a billboard anywhere, what would it be?

Michael: Wow. You know what it would be, I think, I bet you know it. So you'd see people inside of a company working on something, clearly being productive and laughing and really you see



the energy, but you also see the results coming in this one picture and the words, "The secrets of facilitation, it works." And then there would be some website URL. But that's all it would be.

Suzie: Oh, very good. Talk about, you know, my bias, which is how can I create a wake up eager workforce. It's, that's, I love the idea of a picture and people are productive and laughing. They want to be there. You know, if I wake up eager, I want to be doing what I do, I'm in the right place and doing the right things with the right people and we're getting results. Love it, love it. And facilitation does work.

Michael: It does.

Suzie: And with our last item as it relates to taking a facilitative approach, what would be your one last bit of wisdom or advice that you would like every listener, leader, person listening to this to think about and know in regard to, TAFA, taking a facilitation approach?

Michael: You are so masterful, Suzie, you've already had me answer the question. It's the billboard, isn't it? The secrets of facilitation, it works. It really works. If you want the decision to be effective that you, remember that formula $ED = RD \times CD$.

Suzie: Oh, I've shared that much. Yes, to hear it again.

Michael: Yes. If you want a decision to be effective, ED, an effective decision equals the right decision. Most people say put a period there. If you want it to be effective, it's the right and we say no. Effective decisions equals the right decision times commitment to the decision, meaning you as a leader, you might know the right decision, but if your people have zero commitment to it, how effective is it? Zero. Anything times zero, is zero. If you know exactly what your client needs to do, you know what the right decision is, but your client has zero commitment to it, it's zero.

Suzie: There we go.

Michael: The thing that facilitation does, as a leader, is your getting the people impacted by the decision in the room, helping create the solution or, one-on-one with you, helping getting their ideas on the table, you were coming up with the right decision and building commitment at the same time. You are maximizing those two parts of the formula. You do that, you get effective decisions every time.

Suzie: Couldn't think of a better way to close out and that is a perfect summary of so much of what we've talked about today. And in our notes I'll have, I'm gonna give everybody the information, on your, if they want to get an autographed copy of the book, they can go to your website and I'll have links to it, leadstrat.com. And also to your keynote speaker website, michaelthefacilitator.com and if you use promo code to buy this book, 8 core podcast, 8, the number 8, core podcast, you'll get a 10% discount and that's through the end of this month so that you have the whole month of October. So this is being recorded October the 2nd, 2019, to get that discount and you get an autograph copy of the book, is that right? You'll get an autographed copy.



Michael: That's exactly right. In fact, we have certified the first thousand copies and they still, we are still under that number so there's still numbers. And if you actually purchase in the month, I suspect we will still have certified copies that are numerated as well, that you have certified copy number 711 or whatever the number might be, yeah, with my autograph on it as well.

Suzie: So those, those will be in the show notes. And Michael, I know you have a hard stop. Thank you so much for your time, for your sharing, for the good work that you're doing. I'm so glad that the Posts put you on the, or you put you on the path, by being open and inquisitive and being you, but that those opportunities were afforded to you because you continue to make a difference in the world. It's awesome. So thank you, thank you.

Michael: Well, I so appreciate you and yes, you know your super power and you are using so well.

Suzie: Thank you very much. Take care.

Suzie: So hopefully you learned tips and tools. You're feeling inspired. You now have a greater understanding, if you didn't already have, of the power of facilitation and that it is to make things easy. And that facilitation is about getting people who are impacted by the decisions involved in making the decisions. And when you say it like that, it just makes so much sense to do it. So it's crazy that we don't, so flip that switch and it is a switch to flip a bit in regard to, "Okay, I don't have to be the expert, I don't have to command and make sure everybody knows I know what I know." It's funny, you flip the switch and you become more of the one who's curious and asking questions and having great, great strategies in regard to how to get people involved, doing inquiry. And you all of a sudden without commanding and controlling are, have more command and have more control. It's an interesting dynamic. And I would say flip the switch, become more curious, become more inspirational and visionary, get people involved. Take advantage of the magic of Michael. Get his books. And in particular, this one that we've talked about today, if you get it during the month of October, 2019, which is when we're recording this, you will get a 10% discount and maybe end up with one of the signed copies. The websites are leadstrat.com and michaelthefacilitator.com, and the code is 8, the number 8, core podcast, altogether, one word, and capitalized.

Suzie: So you can find all of that in our show notes at pricelessprofessional.com/facilitation, you can find all that information about getting the book and, and getting to him and his classes. He talked at the end how he became a facilitator and kind of stumbled in it. But what I guess is he's probably was doing so much of being a facilitator a lot of his life without knowing that's what he was doing. And when I look back at my life, here's a little bit about my journey of getting to where I am today and facilitation, how that became a kind of a foundation of my life and, what brings meaning to me in my work, is I think it's something I've done in one shape or form in an uneducated way initially my whole life I've always been someone who listened and related, was very encouraging, I always had multiple networks of friends from all, from the kids who were smoking weed out in the, you know, place you weren't supposed to be out in the field with the school, to the prep students who were making straight A's. I always had a mix of friends and always was facilitating conversations between them, facilitating differences between different people, trying to make things easier for people, always wanted to help people get to where they want to go, always wanted to have fun, always wanted to help people and encourage them. I did

that in my own family as well. That led to in college, a journalism major because I think part of what I liked about knowing the different types of people was just a curiosity, how do different people live. What can I learn from how they're living and how can I apply that to my life? And then as I understand people, then I get better at facilitating and listening, you know, getting people involved in discussions, learning, and listening is a big part of facilitation, is listening, being inquisitive, wanting to know. And so for my journalism major led to corporate human resource roles at NCR, State Farm and Oracle, and I didn't go into journalism straight because I lived in a small town and I needed to make money. I didn't have enough money to live and I couldn't go work for one of the small television stations and actually live. So it led me to corporate, which is actually, makes a lot of sense because corporations tend to be related to return on investment and a utilitarian focus, part of my focus was utilitarian. I need to have some economic return so I can live and that's a priority. And so that started my corporate career in human resources and it's just a perfect mix. And when human resources, you don't have a lot of, you have a lot of influence, you can have a lot of influence, and you have a lot of visibility but you don't always have the authority to make people do anything. So if you want to get people to have success and do anything, you need to be facilitative, you need to encourage and influence by listening and helping. And so that I think that was a good skillset to bring to those roles and I often got noted for that. I was working at Oracle Software and I had a boss I didn't enjoy very much, in fact, she has been in stories, many of my stories on leadership about what not to do and she wasn't very complimentary, but part of our role was to bring together different factions of the organization in the US, Canada and Latin America, and get them on the same page in regard to different processes and how they were promoting and pay scales and leadership, and so I just started having a lot of conversations with people and I was able to get people together from many different divisions and get them to agree on things.

Suzie: And it ended up being in front of the room of these have very strong willed, we don't want to change who we are, want to do it my way people, and getting them to agree to come together. And I think one of the only compliments my boss, that it didn't like very much said to me one day was, "You're really good at that. How do you know how to do that?" You know, I didn't know what "that" was, but that compliment really caught me off guard, I'm like, "Okay, that was okay, I brought a bunch of people together and I helped them discuss and I helped them make a decision and we took action." How about that? And who knew? That's actually a skill set and I found out that consultants need that skill set. So I ended up going to a consulting company called Right Management and I became a trainer and facilitator and also had clients and did sales and just learned a lot about assessments and consulting. And it's that same role in regard to where, you're working with people and you can't make them do anything, but what you want to do is understand what's important to them and help them get to where they want to go. So I was at Right, I wanted to continue to facilitate, they really wanted me to stay in Right Management was the organization, they wanted me to stay in the sales side of it. And so the part of me that's very theoretical in the motivators that loves to learn, is super curious said, "Okay, I can do sales but I really want to be learning." And so that led to Priceless Professional Development. I was 38 years old at the time, it was 2004, I didn't know what I didn't know, but I figured I'd figure it out. And lo and behold, those things came along, such as Assessment Company and the Hartman work. Both of those pieces when they came along, I mean, I don't think I slept for a week because I knew they were pieces that were going to be important to me. Further down the road I found the website tool that allowed me to be in charge of my online presence and allowed me to do things like the podcasts and things that, I see the website tool, SBI as a facilitator for my business because of the flexibility it gives me and there's so much that



I can do on my own. And then the piece of, the other piece of the puzzle that came together was, "Okay, I'm going out to groups and I'm not always feeling great after the event I, and thinking I did what they asked me to do but it was bumpy but apparently it was effective enough cause the same people would call me back, but it's like I know this can be better, I need, there are skills I'm missing now." And it was the facilitation skills, the actual strategies, the very specific things that Michael teaches, is that Michael Magic, about how do you open a session. How do you hold a meeting, how do you help people understand disagreement, how do you help people, what processes do you use to help them get through disagreement? I mean, I actually today facilitating them, got something going on right now where I facilitate conflict between players in business and I call it communication resolution. But there's so much that I do related to facilitation, related to the skills that I learned through that Michael Magic and through his programs. So it has been a great, great ride. And the leadership strategy skills that Michael teaches has been a big piece of it and will continue to be. And it's interesting as a leader and as a facilitator and if you ever do any speaking, you never ever finalize the mastery of those skills.

Suzie: And I think that's exciting, not frustrating. You never finish the leadership journey in regard to, "I've mastered it all," because there's always going to be another situation. You know, people are so interesting. So there is always such an opportunity as a facilitator, a speaker, a trainer, a leader to continually grow and refine your ability to impact, to express, to speak well, to say and do the things that are gonna help people come along with and help it make it easy so that people can, I mean this is my, this is my thing, people can get to where they want to go and oh that makes me emotional just saying it, but people can get to where they want to go and that you can play a part, and I don't need to be a big part, but if I can be a handoff part somewhere along the journey, that's a life well lived.

Suzie: And so I just thank you for being a part of this journey here at Wake Up Eager Workforce and appreciate you tuning in. If you have any feedback about this episode, love you to share it. We always could benefit. I don't ask enough for iTunes reviews, but if this episode or others are effective and helpful to you, please leave us a review on iTunes and, or just share this episode with people. If you see us on social media, we're on Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook, all with the Wake Up Eager or Suzie Price moniker, so can find us, but share what you see and comment and let others know about us. Thank you so much. We'll see you on the next episode. All the best.

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