



Wake Up Eager Workforce Podcast, Episode 72
The Student TriMetrix Assessment, MORE Than a Degree – A Discussion with Indigo
Education Company Founder Sheri Smith
-- Produced By Suzie Price

Transcript

www.pricelessprofessional.com/studenttrimetrix

Suzie Price: "Look through their eyes, through to their soul, to see them for who they were born to be. Imagine you were God, what would you see? Take the time to see and validate them for who they are. If a person feels completely seen and valued without any external circumstances, I find that to be one of the most transformative experiences a person can have." That's a quote from Sheri Smith, she and I are just discussing today her company, Indigo Education Company, where they work with students in high schools all over the country and they use a product called Student TriMetrix. Indigo Education Company is a Fiber 1-3C. And we have decided to partner with them as a non-profit that we support and recognize, and hence the episode today, the Student TriMetrix report will help young people help us help the young people around us grow into roles that help them wake up eager, help them be happy and pay the bills. So we're all about wake up eager here. And if you don't have teenagers in your household, you may find this interesting anyway, because maybe you have interns at work and you want to help guide and support them and help them feel committed in their internship with you, maybe you have nieces and nephews like me. So this episode has a little bit of something for everyone. It also is interesting in that if you are using or thinking about using our TriMetrix tool, you'll gain some additional insight just through the lens of how this is used for students. So I can't wait to share it with you, Sheri Smith is an awesome, caring person, doing great work in schools across the country, and it so aligns with our mission, so it feels like a privilege to have the ability to support what they're doing and to share it with you. So let's get started. 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: Hey there, this is Suzie Price at Priceless Professional Development. You just heard my Southern accent when I opened up with, "Hey there." You know, I'm calling in and talking to you from Atlanta, Georgia. It's on a sunny, sunny Monday, June afternoon and you are listening to the Wake Up Eager Workforce Podcast, where we cover everything related to helping you and the employees and the organizations you work in build a high commitment, low drama, wake up eager workforce. And our company is, the Wake Up Eager Workforce is sponsored by our company, Priceless Professional Development. And we help thousands over the, we've been in business now since January 2004, so this is our 17th year, thousands of leaders in insurance, technology, construction, utilities, health care, consulting, recruiting, consumer goods. And we focus quite a lot on our TriMetrix tool. We have other resources as well, but we use those tools to help leaders engage, understand and manage the employees. And it's interesting because our tools are useful throughout the lifecycle of an employee. So could start out with hiring, are they a good fit? And you'll hear Sheri Smith and I today talk about fit and it'll make a lot of sense when you, when you hear some of her success stories that she shares. But hiring, a lot of times



success is related to being a fit for the role. And what TriMetrix does is it helps you look at things that aren't immediately visible on the resume, but you can determine in advance and lower the risk when hiring, because there's always a risk, right? And so especially right now, it's June 1st, 2020 pandemic is, as you know, people are starting to get back to work, things have shifted and changed, and so hiring, making sure you have the right people in the right seats is going to be really important. There's now a lot of people looking for work and so you want to make sure you're picking the right people when you are hiring. And then once they're on board, you use the same tool for onboarding, you have discussions to make sure they stay engaged and they don't leave quickly. You can use the tools for team building, it's same report that you can repurpose into coaching and leadership development and succession planning. And I would never facilitate a conflict resolution session without having the results from these reports. We train and certify others to become experts in these tools as well. We have a signature 6-week certification program that allows people to self-pace and then test and study. And we do some coaching with them to give them, get them set up and ready to go. So this is of interest to you, go to pricelessprofessional.com/certification and you'll see 3 different certifications. There is a Certified Professional DISC Analyst, Certified Professional Motivators Analyst and TriMetrix Expert Analyst. Those are 3 different certifications. I would suggest if you were going to start, start with the Motivators Analyst, add on the DISC Analyst. And then if you feel like you will be using the 3-science tool, you would add through the third science. So that is a bit about our business. Wake Up Eager Workforce for, to see all of our episodes, if you go to our directory, it's at wakeupeagerworkforce.com. I just created a page that shows you how to review the show. So if you've been listening for a while and if you're listening this and say, "Oh, I'm listening to another episode," boy, I sure would appreciate it if you would go leave us a review. So if you go to wakeupeagerworkforce.com, if you're on any of your mobile devices or if you are on your computer, you'll see at the top there wakeupeagerworkforce.com, different buttons for Apple, Google and Spotify. And there's places there that you can subscribe. We actually have an App particular to Wake Up Eager so then you never have to go looking for an episode, it'll just show up on your App and you'll be reminded that it's there. And you can also leave a review. And we don't, I haven't done a real good job of asking for that, I've also been trying to do a little bit more of that on LinkedIn. So anyway, if you feel inspired to leave us a review, I'd love it, and that will just help more people find it and it will do a better job of making this visible, this work we do for these episodes visible to other people who might be interested. And also, if you have a particular episode that inspires you or gives you great results, you can leave me a message on, there's a purple microphone on the page at the wakeupeagerworkforce.com, you'll see it there, purple microphone. I actually had somebody leave a message recently about an episode they particularly liked and I'll be sharing that. If you click on the purple microphone, you can leave me input, you can leave a suggestion, you could, my hope is that I'm going to ask more questions here and then have people use the Speech Pipe or that purple microphone to leave feedback and then highlight it in the episode. So anyway, lots of resources and ways to reach out, if go to wakeupeagerworkforce.com, there is all of that. And then you'll also, that takes you to our website. If you want to reach out to me directly pricelessprofessional.com/suzie, S-U-Z-I-E, all lower case.

Suzie: Let's get into our episode, it's Episode 72 and the title of today's episode is The Student TriMetrix Assessment: More than a Degree. And that's a discussion with Indigo Education Company's Founder, Sheri Smith. And the show notes for today's episode is at pricelessprofessional.com/studenttrimetrix. Here's what we're going to cover today, we're to talk about self-discovery and self-worth and why self-discovery and self-worth matter more than a

degree and good grades. That's how we start out, that's the very first thing I talked to her about. So that is really important, and that's why the title today is More Than a Degree, degree is good, but we also want, with that degree, self-discovery and self-worth and the Student TriMetrix tool is a piece of that puzzle. How the Student TriMetrix assessment helps students grow into a role that makes them happy and pays the bills. She has a lot of activities in one of her books and we talk about 2 of her favorites, and I love them, and I know you're going to love them and want to do them with your students. It's How Are Your Children, How the Genius Project and Awesome Project Exercises Leads to a Healthy Ego and a True Sense of Self. And then I'm going to quiz Sheri about her own Wake Up Eager life and a little bit more, can learn more about what she is doing in schools and how you could potentially support what they're doing in the school near you. So again, the show notes are at pricelessprofessional.com/studenttrimetrix. And if you would like to see a Student TriMetrix Assessment, a sample report, go to pricelessprofessional.com/pricelessindigo, I-N-D-I-G-O, pricelessprofessional.com/pricelessindigo, that's all one word, lowercase. You can see a sample report, you can see more about their company and then that'll also take you to the development resources. So I've created a student development resource page for anybody who, it links back to some things that Indigo has and it just has it all in one place on our site, pricelessprofessional.com/pricelessindigo, would be a way to see that. If you're curious about, what would the report look like, what would my student get, that type of thing. So if you're not familiar with TriMetrix very quickly, just one little paragraph here. TriMetrix is a 3 science, tri-modal assessment, and it was developed by our premier vendor partner company TTI Success Insights. So Indigo has also partnered with TTI Success Insights and now I am partnering with Indigo to just promote what she's doing. And I've been making some of the Indigo assessments available to key clients as complementary reports. You can purchase the reports as well on my website. But we both are, use the science from TTI Success Insights. TTI is a great organization, I've interviewed other people on this podcast, you will see that in the show notes when you go to pricelessprofessional.com/studenttrimetrix. You'll see, I have 15 different episodes out of the 75 are all about TriMetrix or DISC or Motivators. I interviewed the President of TTI Success Insights. I interviewed one of the key brain researchers there at TTI Success Insights. They have 3 decades of research, 4 patents, they have a center for applied cognitive research of their sighted and business journals like Harvard Business Review and the International Association of Human Resources. They present and attend an association of talent development conferences. 30 million assessments have been completed worldwide, they're in 47 languages in 58 countries. And there's just so many reasons why I've been partnered with them. And pretty much since I've started my business, I became certified in DISC and Motivators, probably in 2004, and then wrapped it up with the TriMetrix in 2005. And that has become my key work is everything related to how to use that tool to help people wake up eager, create a wake up eager work. So if you go to pricelessprofessional.com/studenttrimetrix, you will see links to everything that Sheri talks about. She mentions some books and some resources and it really helped her. You'll see that there, she talks about Christian Mystics, I have links to that information. And then you also see everything else that we talk about.

Suzie: But let me tell you a little bit about Sheri. She's the Founder and CEO of the Indigo Project, which is the Indigo Education Company. She graduated with a BA in International Studies and holds an MA from Georgetown in Communication. She interned in college, so there she was, an intern, we're talking about using this assessment for interns that are working for you. But Sheri interned for Vital Voices, which is an initiative started by Hillary Clinton and was recognized for her passion for helping people find their voice. So she shifted her career focus to



consulting and then really focuses on, and we talk about accessing your genius, I always talk about activate your greatness. So she and I are in so much alignment. More of her books is *Accessing Your Genius*, which we talk about today. But she founded Indigo, and her vision is to usher into the education system, a process that empowers students to find work they love. And I love their core values; their core values are self-awareness, at Indigo Education Company, self-awareness, empathy and freedom. So self-awareness is know yourself. Empathy in their core values is know your team and then, so know yourself, understand others and know your possibilities. So being able to know and having the tools to know that you can pursue life, liberty and happiness, they are a Fiber 1-3C. And as I mentioned, we are now focused on highlighting them and supporting them through Priceless Professional Development efforts. And I can't wait for you to listen. Let's go there now.

Suzie: Hi, Sheri, thank you for being here.

Sheri Smith: Thank you. Glad to be here, Suzie.

Suzie: I'm going to jump into our first question, and it's when I was reading your book, *Accessing Your Genius 101*, and it's a book that you've created for students and educators, and you've got great, great information in there. And one of your things that really stood out to me is some of your quotes. I'm going to share them here and get some feedback from you on them and ask you to kind of expand. So here's some quotes from your book, "So many people think that you get a degree and then get a job. And 40 years later, you retire happily ever after. That's not how it works. The reality is that you've got to take charge and you've got to get out there and find it. It's a journey, a journey of self discovery." And then another favorite quote that I want you to talk about is, "At Indigo, we share to uncover the innate value of each individual. It is our belief that a sense of self-worth can contribute more to personal success than a lifetime of formal education." So hear are my thoughts for you, so you know, your ideas around education being the biggest avenue to success, you know, is a belief that, you know, most parents and educators say, you know, "You've got to get an education, it's everything." They don't necessarily say or often verbalize it, getting a sense of self-worth and self-discovery matter. So talk a little bit about why you feel like that matters so much and why, since you are in the schools and in with families, why this isn't highlighted more?

Sheri: Yeah, I feel like, of course, education is important, but because the education system we have right now is still largely a byproduct of something that was created in the industrial age, where we didn't have information at our fingertips, you can go on your phone and look everything up. And there was a much more clear path to success at the time, we really are missing a huge part of education that's even more important now. I think it's always been important, but even more important now, which is the softer side of education, the human side of education. So how do you know yourself? How do you understand other people? How do you work on your mental health? How do you cope in a world where you do have every single piece of information in your phone and find the exact information you want, and distill that information into something that's meaningful or matters to you. And so this idea of education being important is true, but education that's just focused on the mind and the head and giving information to students is really not complete and not nearly adequate for the digital age that we're currently in.

Suzie: That makes a lot of sense, that it's solid, but it's not complete.

Sheri: Yeah.

Suzie: Yeah. So tell me some examples of insights where you've helped adults begin to embrace this idea of self-discovery matters, sense of self-worth matters, and so that they could make that shift. I mean, so often, and you hear it, I hear it with my neighbors, I don't have children, but I hear it, you know, "We're really worried about what degree and how could she make enough money, and, you know, they want, she wants to do this degree. And we are just thinking, how is there a career for that?" And I know all those are practical concerns, but there's not, I, what I observe is there's often not a lot of thought about what does this person really want to do? You know, what's a match to the language that you and I know their greatest interests and motivators, what's a match to their style? What's matched to their Acumen? Nobody's thinking about that. So talk about when you've had some students and family members embrace this, you know what they say and how they make the shift.

Sheri: Yeah, I think that, you know, it's an interesting conundrum because we've had 2 pendulum's going on, which is the one pendulum where families really do believe that you have to go to the best schools and get the best majors in order to make it in life. And that's why we had that whole situation where a lot of celebrities were willing to pay millions of dollars and falsify applications to get their kids on that track. So that's like the extreme version of needing to have the kids do the right thing. And I've also heard that wealthy people actually spend, on average \$100,000 a year on their children's education so that they can achieve that Harvard Ivy League track or that pathway that they feel like their kids are going to need to be on to be successful. That's like one extreme of the pendulum. And then the other extreme of the pendulum is it doesn't matter, you don't have to be practical, just follow your passion. And if you follow your passion, the money will come. And I feel like that's led a lot of, you know, families and kids down the wrong track. Like so many kids say, "Well, my passion is playing basketball." But if you're 5'6 and you don't have the genetics to play basketball, like that might be your passion, but it really doesn't match with what the needs are of the job. So Indigo's is really in the middle where it's very practical, like, "What are your dispositions? What are your motivations? What are your skills? And then what is the best way to get those skills in a way that allows you to have a job that makes you happy and pays the bills?" And a good example, I was working with a family on the East Coast and their kid, you know, they had all the means to send their child to any college he wanted to go to, and they wanted him to go to college, but he hated college so much that he actually dropped out 3 times and didn't tell them. And this created a lot of mental health issues and a lot of pain in the family. And when we looked at his Indigo results, which you know the language of that, he was very low Theoretical. So he didn't like learning in a normal situation. He was high Traditional, so actually being far away from his family was very painful for him. And then their disapproval on top of that caused more mental health issues and more fear. And he was Utilitarian and he loved working with his hands. And so actually, one of his options on the list of the Indigo options was carpentry. And he had secretly wanted to be a carpenter forever. And when I brought that up to his parents, they were like literally horrified because this is a very wealthy family, and they were like, "Our kid is not being a carpenter, like that is not happening." I'm like, "Well, do you want to keep wasting hundreds of thousands of dollars and having him lie to you and drop out of college? You know, how do I keep that happening or do you want to try to make something practical?" And so the way that we made it practical is not just getting him carpenters skills, but also teaching him business ownership skills because they had the funds to invest in him actually starting his own business so he could be a

business owner and do what he loved. And that's like the more practical pathway. And the parents were very supportive of that. And the child was really supportive, too. So we kind of take the middle road where you're matching up the practical skills with some of the passion and then opening new opportunities that families really wouldn't have thought of because they never thought of him as an entrepreneur, as a business owner.

Suzie: I love that. That is the perfect story. And it is so interesting because you started out saying, you know, we don't teach mental health and how to cope, and the way I see that tying in is, you know, his happiness and his understanding of who he is, you know, probably helped with his, you know, what how he showed up on the assessment and helped him with his own self-acceptance, which had to help his mental health, cause he was having mental health issues. And then it helps a parent, his parents accept him and see him for who he is in a positive light as opposed to who they wish he was or how, "Let me make you over, my image," kind of thing, which is well-meaning, but people do it all the time. You know, "You need to be like me," you know, great, great story. It makes me think, too, my neighbor is a very successful, high-end carpenter; he has a business where designers from all over the world contact him to make specialty items. So there you go.

Sheri: Exactly.

Suzie: Exactly. So there are lots of ways to slice and dice that. Interesting. That is so good. I am, and I said this as we started today, you and I privately, how excited I am to have you, Indigo is a non-profit that we support and that we're offering the Student Version of TriMetrix to our clients and to their teens or young adults, high school, college students. And so I'm so excited about that. But what I might find and what some parents are going to come to me and say, "We really want my child to take this," and some might say, well, you know, "Really, should they do this," or might be concerned. What do you hear are the biggest concerns, reservations or maybe unrealistic expectations from the parents or adults or teachers, you know, when you're in the schools, around this process, when they've not taken it yet but are worried or whatever, what kind of things do you hear?

Sheri: You know, what's really interesting is a lot of the adults say, "Well, kids don't know themselves, you know, my child, they don't really know who they are right now, it's not going to come out accurate, it's too boring for them, it takes too long." And they, like, underestimate like how much their own child or the students they serve really are capable of knowing themselves, are capable of answering the questions in a way that the result is insanely accurate and many times more accurate than the adults. And they really, when they see the results, sometimes they're like, "Well, you might say, oh, so-and-so is a leader." And they're like, we had a kid scored off the charts on leadership, and they are like, "This is the worst kid we have in this school, he's not a leader. He's creating so many problems. We're getting ready to expel him." And it's like, but the fact that he can create so many problems and so many kids follow him easily...

Suzie: Let's channel that.

Sheri: And so for the adults, it's getting them to take away their own lenses, their own stories that they've made up about kids and taking the data and trusting it and saying, "Ok, if we trust that this young man is a leader, how can we actually give him a positive leadership position in

the school so we don't have to expel him and we're using his strengths for good." And that's what they did, they actually made this kid the School Spirit Ambassador. And it was a complete turnaround story. And he ended up graduating and having one of the most powerful legacies on the school, like they voted him, like the Legacy Award. And he was literally on the verge of being expelled because they saw his leadership as a negative. And if I wasn't there to be like, "No, no, that leadership score is correct, troublemaker could mean leader."

Suzie: Yes. Let's channel it.

Sheri: Yes, let me channel it. Yeah. Just knowing and trusting the data and then working with us.

Suzie: Yes, yes. Yes. And I have seen that with my nieces and nephews in different, you know, before I had the Indigo, I'd have them do the adult version. And sometimes the parents, I've seen a little bit of that, so I'm sure I'll see more. It's interesting. I love the word ease. You said the results are insanely accurate and oftentimes are more accurate than adult's results. Speak to that a little bit.

Sheri: Yeah, I feel like young people have less filters about what they're supposed to be. And they're used to taking tests, right, because schools make them take things, and this is actually a very low stakes, there's no like grade or anything, right? So they tend to be more honest in their answers and they have less filters around, "I'm taking this and trying to answer it the way people are supposed to answer it," whereas I feel like sometimes with adults they have developed like a false-self or facade that's been with them so long that sometimes, it, they can answer it from that perspective and it can turn out not as accurate as the kids. I mean, I find the adults to be super, this why I use this tool, TTI as tools.

Suzie: Right, right.

Sheri: It's insanely accurate, but it's funny, like kids really don't game it and adults sometimes can.

Suzie: Yeah, yeah, they try to. The good thing about Acumen is it'll reveal it, that they are gaming it and the DISC, if they're gaming it, it'll show they have all even scores. But still I can see where there's a little bit more of an agenda with adults.

Sheri: Yeah, no agenda with the kids because they're just, they're just who they are.

Suzie: And they're probably, my guess is when you're debriefing with students, I know with my nieces and nephews and you know, the examples that I've used so far with young adults, they're so receptive and like, "Oh, yeah," there's a lot less getting them comfortable before you get going type, you know, with adults or a little bit of, and it's ok because it's all part of, you know, to me, my job is always, the way I see it, is reduce resistance, one, you know, to the information, and then two all about where do they want to go and help them there, not trying to enforce something on them. But kids are like, "Wow, yeah." They're much more open, it seems like, you find that too?

Sheri: Oh, absolutely. Kids are way more open and they really do listen to you. And you can change their life, you can literally change their life with one conversation, and that is an amazing, amazing experience to have with somebody.

Suzie: Yeah. Yeah, you know, I wish that I had known early on that my Theoretical, which is a drive for knowledge, is as high as it is, because I think, I had like, learning issues like in elementary school and I made good grades going through school. But I always was worried about, you know, whatever has imprints on you at an early age, like, you know, first grade or whatever, it seems to imprint and carry us until we work through it. If I had known, I mean, it makes so much sense, my parents are big time learners, I spent a lot of time being curious and it did guide my life, by chance, somewhat. But now that I know and since I have known for the past 20, almost 20 years now, life has gotten better and better. So the excitement is that students can know these things about themselves earlier and make even better choices. So what are the top benefits you hear from those adults once their teen has gone through the process? What do you hear over and over again?

Sheri: Number one is communication. They feel like they finally understand their child in a new way and that they can communicate better with them. I mean, I've had so many parents literally in tears because they thought they couldn't communicate with their kids. And when they realize it's like, "Oh, I'm actually just doing it wrong and when I communicate in a way that aligns with their DISC style and their communication style, it works." So it drives them to literal tears of joy because they can communicate with their teenager and also this idea of the motivations, the Motivators are really powerful for adults because they're always trying to get their kids to do what they want them to do, but from the lens of their Motivators and when you understand that maybe your child like might be a high Aesthetic Motivator, which is a classic one. And if you're, we've seen a lot of how Utilitarian Dads that are just constantly putting down like their child's pursuit of piano or art or yoga, and when they realize that's actually something that really matters to them and if you can relate to them on that level, you can have a much more validating and whole experience in relationship with your child. That's a really eye-opening and powerful way of being for parents. And they find it incredibly helpful to understand what motivates their children.

Suzie: Awesome. So for our wonderful listeners, could you explain the difference between Aesthetic as a top interest, and Utilitarian as a top interest?

Sheri: Yes, of course, the Aesthetic motivator is someone who really values balance, harmony, beauty. They really see beauty in things. They may or may not be artists, but they're over, they tend to be sensitive to their environments, physical environments, and also how things feel, so energetic environments. So that's what the Aesthetic is. So they tend to like things like music or yoga or nature. They might even be environmentalists and be very concerned with climate change, or they might just be somebody who likes to look really sharp and make things look beautiful and be interested in design and form and beauty. So that's the Aesthetic. And the Utilitarian is almost the exact opposite, although you can be Aesthetic Utilitarian, which I find a fascinating combo. But the Utilitarian is about efficiency, practicality, getting things done, maybe even making money; a lot of times are very oriented towards return on their investment. So the high Utilitarian stereotypical father, for example, which oddly enough, there are a lot of these stereotypes play out, they are the money-money, they're working hard for their family, and they're the ones that are saying, "You should go and get an engineering degree because you're

going to be able to get out of school and make a lot of money, and engineers have a lot of status in society." Whereas, like the Aesthetic child is much more interested in different things and might not be thinking about things from a Utilitarian perspective.

Suzie: Awesome. Yes. And for our listeners, those who are clients, what I want to say, this is the Workplace Motivators Assessment, and our car analogy is what puts gas in their tank. So it's not visible, but it is their top interests. And I love the descriptors, how you described Aesthetic, Sheri, and Utilitarian, it was perfect. So let's talk a little bit about you have in your book *Accessing Your Genius*, and it's a book that we make available to students as they complete the assessment and it speaks to, helps parents and the student understand the results and use them. You have lesson plans and different information in there and different exercises. And so I looked at the additional exercises, as some of my favorites were The Awesome Project, and The Genius Project. So talk a little bit about The Awesome Project and The Genius Project, what they are? And then any of your favorites in the 21 exercises that you have in your book?

Sheri: The Genius Project is one of my absolute favorite ideas and activities in there, because it's based on, really Google when they first started their company, they decided to give their employees 20% of their time to pursue any kind of project creation that they wanted to do. And most of Google's coolest products actually came out of that 20% time, that was really free time to be creative and to think, and some of our schools who have adopted this free time, some of the projects that have come out of that for kids has been really powerful. And there's actually a movement on that called Global Moonshots and Education, if you want to Google it, that espouses this idea in schools. And the Genius Project is really just, "Hey, let your kids live their genius, if they are interested in something, you should go all out to let them pursue that at a level that they want to." So, you know, when my husband was young, you know, he, everyone thought he was not smart and he got D's in school, but he was obsessed with the astronomy, so much so that he built his own telescope and got published in *Scientific American* as a teenager. And Northwestern let him into college, even though he had horrible grades because he had that project and that passion and it showed through that. So if you are concerned about your kids getting into college or finding their passion, if you can do The Genius Project with them, which is really support the thing that brings out their genius that they're most interested in, and let them take that to whatever level they want to, and that's super authentic, that actually is a selling point to get them into colleges because colleges aren't looking for the cookie cutters, they're looking for people that have a passion and that will also be them probably towards their profession, into something that's really fulfilling to them.

Suzie: Love it. You know, it is really the joys and the journey. So if I can, your husband was joyous in that work and then that brought out his genius. That's a great story. Does he still into astronomy?

Sheri: He is. He wanted to do it as his profession but of a lot of reasons why he couldn't. You know, the interesting thing, he doesn't like the coursework he had to do in college, do in astronomy, but he likes the work of astronomy, and thank goodness there's a lot of new pathways out there for kids who can do things like astronomy or go into other professions without having to go to college, because I think a lot of people have been held back from their purpose by cumbersome college programs like Computer Science, for example. Why do you

have to do math to be in computer science, like you could be an amazing programmer and be bad at math. And so, those kinds of things are changing.

Suzie: Yes. Yeah. You know, it's my nephew, the middle nephew, smart enough to be in college, had kind of a background, you know, his family situation really didn't lend itself. He's super smart and we used to always joke and we would joke together, he's like, "Is there a job for somebody who has, like knows a ton of information that nobody else can use?" That was always the joke. But, you know, he's very high Utilitarian since we just gave that definition. And he is high Individualistic/Political, which is a motivator to kind of be in charge of your destiny. And it is a motivator where you like to network and connect. And so he's a connector. And so tying that together, he likes to use his hands and so we've helped them start a business where he, his new business is called Parts by Drake, and that's his last name, and if you need any machining projects, so he's brought in a C&C machine, he is starting a business. He's making, he's one of those guys that can do the technical part and go out and meet customers. And so that's his genius project. So and he went to vocational school to get the skills, but not traditional college, even though he, when you look at him and you talk to him, you think, "This kid would knock it out of the park in college," but that was not happening. So there was another example of tying it to. That's awesome. Talk about The Awesome Project, speaking of awesome, that's another one of the activities in your book.

Sheri: Yeah. The Awesome Project is really about highlighting why you're awesome in a way that employers or teachers or even your family, like I'm sure lots of Aunts and Uncles and Grandparents would love to see your awesome project. And it's really creating a portfolio for yourself that highlights things beyond, like, "I like to play soccer or I'm a 9th grader." You know, it might bring out some of the specific strengths in Indigo and give examples of those strengths. Or it might highlight some of your top 21st century skills and explain how you do that and visually show that. So there's a lot of different portfolio programs out there, The Awesome Project, we promote Zemi, which is a website that they can build their portfolio, but they could also do it, you know, they could make a Wick's website, you know, their own portfolio website. They could do, if they like video, they can have a video compilation that they put up on YouTube. But it's really kind of like a self-portfolio saying, "I'm awesome, this is why I'm awesome," and it's way deeper than the typical way, you know, young people talk about themselves, which is like, "I'm a 16 year old from Pleasanton, North Carolina." Right? And it gets to the deeper part of why they're really awesome.

Suzie: That is very good. And, you know, if you think about it, that's, you know, in the Hartman work, it's, you know, not only aligning with, you know, what you do, which is limited, it's like, who are you as a human? What's your individual, special value? So, what would you say to people who worry about over emphasizing someone's awesomeness? Because there is that challenge in corporate America, you know, I always talk about, you know, highlighting strengths, leveraging strengths, you know, manage the gaps where they're important in keeping someone away from their goals. But at the end of the day, we benefit. There's research all over the place around this, especially through Gallup, you know how highlighting strengths really helps people perform more strong or grow and develop. What would you say to parents who are worried about, "Gosh, I don't want to over highlight, I'll make them ego-y or something?"

Sheri: I think with young people, and this is different from older people who are already narcissists, this is a totally different thing, that's another conversation. But young people, I feel

like you cannot over highlight authentic strengths, right? Like just saying they're great at everything and having no reality to it, so there's no room for anyone else that could be unhealthy. But if you know what their strengths are and how they're really wired and what I call, "Intrinsic genius is," if you can pump that up, that's actually a way to stop people from getting overly inflated. Because the folks that you know, if you think about the person at work who thinks they're the best thing ever, it's because they actually never developed an identity when they were young, they were told when they were young, like, "You're not good enough. Who you are isn't okay." And then they have this false ego that they've developed through that that actually breeds all of those problems. And this is a bit of an extreme example, but you know, Hitler was an artist when he was young. And I think his true soul was a really sensitive person, who really cared, and somehow that dream was destroyed and out of that became the craziness that was Hitler. And so I actually believe that validating and building people up so that they develop a really healthy ego like that's based on truth and who their true self is, is the way to prevent those narcissistic, overly inflated egos that we see in adults who never were validated as young people.

Suzie: Yep, yep, yep. And it's interesting how we could overcompensate for the very tiny percentage who are egomaniacs or narcissistic, you know, and be like, "I better not compliment them too much, they might think," too, you know, at the end of the day, we know through Hartman's work, you know, the stronger their internals are, the stronger they know who they are, the greater sense of belonging they have in the world, the more resilient we are, the better we handle stress, the better we take accountability because we have this very strong internal foundation that is so key. And I like what you said, "Highlight your authentic strength."

Sheri: Yes.

Suzie: Yes. And the Indigo assessment really highlights that for students and parents.

Sheri: Absolutely.

Suzie: Did we cover your two favorites? Are there any other activities or lesson plans in your book that you think might be a top favorite? That really plays out well; do you think we covered it with Awesome Project, Genius Project?

Sheri: Those are two of my favorites just for the practical listeners. I think there's some lesson plans in there about how to use Indigo to create a better resume or a better college essay. And, you know, I've many, many students, maybe hundreds, have told me how much easier it was for them to write their college admissions essay using the Indigo method than just trying to figure it out on their own.

Suzie: So using their tools and resources and actually the assessment helps them use language when they're putting to their resume together or their college essay together about their strengths, which is another reason for them to do The Awesome Project to help them.

Sheri: Yes.

Suzie: So what's your favorite Indigo success story?

Sheri: Whoa. That's a hard question.

Suzie: You've already given some great stories, so this ought to be a good one. You have a favorite or one that stands out right now? Maybe one that is most recent?

Sheri: One that's standing out to me right now is actually not even about a student, it's about a teacher.

Suzie: Oh, tell me.

Sheri: I feel like teachers have so much influence on kids and it's really amazing when their mindset shifts. And I find most teachers to be incredibly altruistic and really care, but they have been raised and educated in a system of putting kids in certain boxes and trying to make kids the way education wants them to be. And so one of my favorite stories is a science teacher who was very, very high, Theoretical, high intellect, brilliant guy, who was trying to get the kids to like science, you know, and we talked a lot. And he finally came to me like, this is like, he was one of them, he did not like Indigo, he thought it was a waste of time. And he finally came to me a couple years later, and he's like, "I finally get it, Sheri, I finally get it. Like, I'm not supposed to change kids, convincing, trying to convince kids to like science will only make them hate it more. And my job is to see the kids, love the kids and try to relate science to something that matters to them. And maybe they'll remember something about science that's valuable to them when they grow up." And I was like, "Yes!"

Suzie: Yes, that's huge, because that's the science teacher that the kid who never liked science will remember 20 years later. "You know what, he believed in me. And he saw the good in me, even though I struggled in his class," you know. People remember that, kids remember that, I remember that, don't you? Do you remember the teachers who took a shine to you or are appreciated you anyway?

Sheri: Absolutely. And it wasn't even on his radar screen to do that until he started looking at Indigo. And he's like, "Oh, this actually works. And my thinking about it needs to be different." And it was very powerful moment for me and for him.

Suzie: Do you find as you're taking Indigo, cause you're all over the country, as you're taking Indigo into schools, do you get a lot of pushback or is it mix? Tell us a little bit about your world in that way, in schools.

Sheri: It's very hard to get in, because schools don't really have a lot of budget for self-awareness. Like, this isn't something that's high on their checklist of things they get evaluated for. But once we're in, it actually really goes well. There's not a lot of pushback. The kids love it. The parents love it. The teachers love it because it's what they've always believed about students. And it tends to make people overall happier. And they work together better in teams, so and it gives them tools that aren't possible any other way. And so once we're in, there's not a lot of resistance. There is always a time crunch, but any school will tell you there's always time problems. But getting in is the tough part.

Suzie: Yeah. And how does that happen to, do you have to have a like somebody from the higher Ed part or administration or can the principal do it? Or just...



Sheri: Some principals can do it, but usually you have to work with the District and there's a very long RFP legal process that takes time.

Suzie: So have other people been able to help you with that? So somebody knows somebody at the District, they get to know you get to know the assessment, wanting to plant a seed to anyone who's listening right now and their heart is singing and they believe in this. You know, how could they help Indigo? Would that be a way to make an introduction in a District, Administrator?

Sheri: Word of mouth and trusted introductions is really the best way. I mean, we don't even have a formal sales process because it's just too hard with a company our size in School District. So connection with somebody who knows somebody with decision-making power is really the best way to go, and being happy to talk to anybody.

Suzie: And then, Sheri, when you do go in, so somebody at the District says, "Ok, we believe in Indigo. They've got everything that we need. We're going to bring them in." What's a typical engagement look like, do a bunch of Seniors, take it in a high school? Or is it you only go to colleges? What does a typical engagement look like?

Sheri: So we usually work in the high schools, sometimes middle school will be involved, too, if they are a Unified District. So usually they take it freshman year coming in because you really want to know the kids that are coming in. And then also, you know, which kids need more emotional support from our Hartman portion of the assessment, that's a social, emotional learning screener. And then there's so many kids, so, you know already, what are your kids like coming in? How can you partner them with mentors and teachers that really are going to align with them in the school? And then how are you going to help your counselors to really support the students who need the most social, emotional support? So 9th grade is usually when they take it at first and then they have either their 11th or 12th graders take it to really prepare for that college process. So helping them decide which college is a good fit, which majors are a good fit, how to write their college essays, so all of that college part. And we have a whole bunch of curriculum and online courses to support them in doing that. So they usually take it 9th grade and then either Junior or Senior year again, to show their growth and prepare for whatever they're going to do after high school.

Suzie: I think you have a whole cohort program or something where you have, because at the Hartman conference, you talked about that, recently last Fall. Which is how I really got to, I knew of you, but I had not ever really gone into detail about what you were doing, I knew about what you were doing, but very surface. But when you did your presentation at the conference, you talked about, I think you have the teachers get trained or they go through a process and then they actually do support or talk a little bit about that because it was powerful.

Sheri: You know, we have a lot of professional development options. So whenever a school purchases students Indigos, we include the teachers Indigos in that because we want it to be a shared experience. And then the teachers with that get some basic training around how to understand the different DISC and Motivators and use our dashboard. We have an A.I. enabled dashboard that gives teachers recommendations of exactly how to support every student and also allows them to create automatic teams that are going to work well together, be harmonious,

things like that. So they get training on that on the dashboard and how to interpret the assessment. And we have more sophisticated trainings like a counselor might want to do that, which is a certification that allows them to really become the in school experts on Indigo and other teachers can come to them for questions. And our Help Desk is open all the time. So any of our schools, if they want some advice on how to work with the student or look deeper into the data, we provide that at no charge to our schools.

Suzie: That's awesome. You're doing good work, good work in the world. We need to support it. So if you're listening and you have, I am going make sure you have Sheri's contact information on our show notes. But if you're listening, you could always reach out to me in regard to if you're a client and you're interested in taking the Indigo Assessment, I'd love to support you in that way. Or if you're not a client and you're interested in it, but then for if you have contacts in Districts and can help the Indigo Education Company get into Districts, so we can make this information available to more students and more teachers to help people be more self-aware and, you know, have a lifetime of happiness and waking up eager, we want to do it. So please support this service. So let's talk about you a little bit, Sheri, who has most influenced you in your life?

Sheri: Well, I was, I saw this question ahead of time and I was thinking, is there anybody like in particular that most influenced me? And if I had to pick one person, interestingly enough, it would be Harriet Tubman. And when I was a kid, I used to read every single book I could on Harriet Tubman because I was just completely obsessed with the idea that this woman who came from incredibly, you know, difficult situation, I mean she was an escaped slave, would dedicate her whole life to saving other people in her position. And I knew like, I wanted to do something like that, like, obviously, I'm nowhere near her status, but I really admired her courage, her self-sacrifice, her love and just her passion for helping people get freedom. And, you know, one of our core values at Indigo is freedom, because we believe that self-knowledge and empathy and believing that you are created for a purpose does lead towards freedom and free-will and informed choices. And so if I had to pick one person, it would be her. But really, the people that have influenced me the most is the people we serve, so I love going to schools, I love talking to teachers, I love talking to kids. You know, there was an entrepreneur in Clarksdale, Mississippi, who is a one-handed gravedigger, no joke, and like, he was literally the most inspiring entrepreneur I've ever met. And so I'm really influenced constantly by the people we serve in their stories and their courage in their life, and I feel like that started from Harriet Tubman, and in her example, as a young girl.

Suzie: A woman of service, and that is you as well. So there you go. No wonder that you were drawn to her. That's awesome. So what about books, training, programs, education? What's been the resources that have been most helpful to you? You're an author, you're woman owned business, you're being of service to schools and students and people all over the place have families, what would be most instrumental books, education, training wise?

Sheri: So I love the Coaches Training Institute. I've done all of their coaching certification programs and their leadership program. And I, just the way they teach is insanely experimental. It's the kind of learning that actually transforms you at a cellular level, which I call "Transformational learning." And I've done so many different coaching programs and things, and theirs is really the best I've ever experienced, the in-person. And so I'm a big fan of their work. I love the Arbinger Institute, they've written several books, one of them called Leadership and

Self-deception. And they have a bunch of trainings and I find their work to be really powerful. And oddly enough, business books and things don't really appeal to me as much, I feel like they say the same things like over and over again, I mean, I like them, but I they don't hit me in the same way. And I'm very into Christian Mystics. So people like Jeanne Guyon, St. John of the Cross, you know, Saint Theresa of Lisieux, so, Richard Rohr, these people really inspire me and have been very instrumental to me as a person, and I spend a lot of time looking at that kind of work.

Suzie: Wonderful. I love it. Okay, so we talk about waking up eager at Priceless Professional Development and on this podcast, as this podcast is appropriately named Wake Up Eager Workforce, so that is what we do, mind, body and spirit. And so for you, what are some of your top mind, body, spirit activities, actions, whatever you want to say that you do that help you create days that cause you to wake up eager and end the happy for the day mind, body, spirit.

Sheri: So mind for me, I love to learn by talking to people and doing things like this, so that actually really feeds my mind, like actually being around people and learning through dialogue and discussions. So that really works for me. And doing like meditative prayers are good for my mind. Body, I love being out in nature. I love hiking. And we live in Colorado in a place where you can't even see another house. So for me, body is really just being out and walking in nature. And spirit to me is I have like a few very, very close friends that are really spiritual friends for me and my husband and I pray every day together. And I also have a spiritual connection with my dog who is barking, and all my dogs.

Suzie: He is saying, "I love you, Mommy, I love you, Mommy." Do you have more than one dog? Or just one pup?

Sheri: Just one now. I've always had two, but one right now, but we are usually at home and it's not loud. But I'm seeing my grand baby in Portland so we're in a hotel, so there's a lot of noises for him to bark at.

Suzie: Oh, that's good. We just appreciate you taking the time to do it, and what is your puppy's name, we need to mention him or her in this conversation.

Sheri: He's a rescue. Twelve pounds. His name is Fluff.

Suzie: Fluff. What kind of puppy is Fluff?

Sheri: We don't know. He looks like a poodle, maybe a poodle Maltese mix.

Suzie: Cutie pie. What color?

Sheri: He is white-ish.

Suzie: White-ish. And he is with you right now? He is making himself known on this episode.

Sheri: Yes. Just two more questions and then Fluff will have you back on his command. Is Fluff a he or she?

Sheri: He is a boy.

Suzie: He, ok, I thought you said he. But I have two he's, so sort of always refer to dogs as a he. Ok, last two questions and then Fluff will have your full attention. If you can have one billboard anywhere, where would it be and what would it say?

Sheri: Man, you ask hard questions.

Suzie: Well, you have good answers, so there you go.

Sheri: So it would be in a super busy airport like, you know, New York City or Chicago, or even in Denver and I think it would just simply say, "You were born for a purpose."

Suzie: Yes, what a message of hope for children, for sure. Adults as well. But do not forget that. Love it. You were born for a purpose. So last question if there's one bit of advice or wisdom you want every adult listening to this conversation today, because that is mostly who will be listening, what would you want them to take away from our conversation today?

Sheri: One piece of advice for adults that I feel like is the most valuable, especially with children, is to truly take the time to see your child, to look into their eyes, to look into their soul, to see them for who they were born to be, for who they were created to be, not all the stories and all the experiences that you've had with them, but like imagining like if you were God looking at your child, what would you see? And if a person feels completely seen and valued for who they are without any external circumstances, I find that to be one of the most transformative experiences any person can have. And taking the time to see and validate your child for who they are, I think heals a lot of trauma, not just in this lifetime, but intergenerational trauma because I'm a big believer in epigenetics and I think a lot of pain comes from people not being seen.

Suzie: Yes, beautiful. How could people get in touch with you, Sheri?

Sheri: They can e-mail me. It's Sheri, S-H-E-R-I dot smith at Indigo Project dot org (sheri.smith@indigoproject.org). Or they can go to our website, indigoeducationcompany.com.

Suzie: Ok, great. We'll have all of that in the show notes. Thank you so much for being here. You've been awesome. You're an awesome person doing great work.

Sheri: Thank you, you are too, Suzie.

Suzie: All right. I hope you are inspired and enjoyed that episode. Sheri is a lovely, good person, and I know you can sense that and picked up on all that and the good work that they're doing. If you want to see a Student TriMetrix report, go to pricelessprofessional.com/pricelessindigo, I-N-D-I-G-O, pricelessprofessional.com/pricelessindigo. You can go to the show notes to get all the information, get Sheri's contact information and information to the resources she mentioned and you can find her, find the show notes at pricelessprofessional.com/studenttrimetrix.



Suzie: Again, the resources for, if you are thinking I want a Student TriMetrix report, you can go to pricelessprofessional.com/pricelessindigo. You'll see the sample report. You'll see an orange button there, you fill out the form and the Student TriMetrix is \$75. You can complete it or have your student or child complete it right away and then go immediately to the student and family development resources. So pricelessprofessional.com/pricelessindigo.

Suzie: So thanks for joining in today. I want to mention one additional thing, I have moved most of my focus on my social media onto LinkedIn. So if we are not connected, it would be a great time for us to connect. I'd love to stay in touch with you there. I've started, we're adding to our Priceless, we have the Suzie Price connection, but then we also have created a Priceless Professional Development LinkedIn page that we are making active and putting resources on there. And every one of the podcast episodes is there now or will be. The Wake Up Eager Workforce Podcast has its own page. If you connect with me, you'll see links to the other resources there and you'll see sharing and we can kind of communicate on LinkedIn. I've been enjoying focusing on one social media channel. We're still present over at Facebook and Twitter, but putting all of our energy and focus into our individual time over at LinkedIn. So Suzie Price on LinkedIn at pricelessprofessional.com, if we're not connected, reach out. And if you would like to keep track of episodes, you can do that there on LinkedIn. You can also subscribe and give us a review. If you found something beneficial from our work on this podcast, it truly is a labor of love. So if you've got a pricelessprofessional.com/subscribe, you'll see how to subscribe to our episodes, get the App or use a link to go to Spotify if you use that. And then you also see how to leave us review. So hope to see you there and see you on LinkedIn. And thank you so much for tuning in. Looking forward to our next go round. You take care.

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