



JILL LIVESEY

STOP AND THINK ABOUT YOUR CAREER

LEADERSHIP MOMENTS PODCAST TRANSCRIPT



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EPISODE 45

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[Start of Transcription]

JILL: (00:00) What would they do if I could is that always keeping that open mind as to future possibilities, as to keeping your learning going and keeping having conversations, keeping checking back to what matters to your values, the things you enjoy in work so that you can think about what's possible in the future.

[music]

MURRAY: (00:24) Welcome to my podcast. I'm Murray Wright and this is Leadership Moments, real peoples' stories about the people and the moments that have shaped their leadership. I hope they give you new insights and some inspiration to be a better leader, make a better world and live a better life.

[music]

(00:46) Today we hear from Jill Livesay. Jill is a coach specializing in career coaching. So what is career coaching? Listen to Jill explain that yes, it is for individuals but more importantly as leaders if we want to engage our people we need to be having meaningful career conversations with them. Jill tells us what not to do and shares valuable resources including a great offer for her online coaching program. And of course, we hear her leadership moments. Enjoy!

(01:18) I'm very excited today, my first fellow Scot on the podcast, Jill Livesay from Dundee. Jill, welcome.

JILL: (01:27) Thank you, Murray.

MURRAY: (01:29) It's lovely to have you with us. You were in the legal profession. You've traveled the world – London, New York, Sydney – and now you're a coach. What took you on that journey? I'm interested to know what brought you to the coaching.

JILL: (01:43) Okay. But first I have to say that although I was brought up in Dundee, I moved there two weeks after I was born so I'm technically English. But my heart is Scottish.

MURRAY: (01:54) Right.

JILL: (01:57) So the first half of my career I was a people leader and I arrived there

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by having done a law degree. I really enjoyed studying law and I wasn't entirely sure which part of law I wanted to practice. Meanwhile I got a job with an organization. I got promoted to supervisor, manager, leader pretty quickly and really enjoyed it. So the first half of my career was as a people leader in predominantly professional services organizations as you say in London and in New York and then in Sydney. And what got me into coaching was I went and did a coaching program to bring more that tool into my tool kit and just loved it and decided that that was how I wanted to be spending all of my working time. So in spite having loved, really enjoyed being a people leader I chose that for the second half of my career.

MURRAY: (02:59) Great! And the reason I wanted to talk to you on the podcast is your focus on career coaching.

JILL: (03:06) Yeah.

MURRAY: (03:07) First of all, I'd like you to explain to us maybe what is career coaching so everyone is clear because I certainly have this impression it's maybe for people who are more senior in their career but I don't think that's the case. So you'll set me right on that. But then also what is it that's changed in the corporate world that's made this so important and fueled your passion for it?

JILL: (03:35) Okay. Well let me start in reverse order. What has fueled my passion for it is truly that belief that whatever one's belief system... You know, we have one life on this earth in this particular body and therefore why not make the very best of that that we can, whatever the best of that means to us individually and also particularly because there are so many people on this planet that don't have those opportunities at all or any opportunities, so we either owe it to them or ourselves or both. So that truly is what drives my passion.

(04:15) You also asked so, you know, what exactly is career coaching today and funny you said you think of it as people who are more advanced in their career.

MURRAY: (04:26) Yes.

JILL: (04:26) Actually there'll be a whole lot of people who think of it as something that you do when you leave school or university.

MURRAY: (04:31) Yeah. That's true. Yup

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JILL: (04:33) And the point is it is absolutely the spectrum. So what is it? I'll start by saying what it's not. In the old days traditionally, typically it would be about someone telling you based on who you are what your interests are, what your skills are telling you what you should do. Now it's very much about facilitating someone's thinking around what matters to them, what are their values and rather than getting hung up on the destination, the role, the thing that they're going to be when they grow up, rather it's about getting clear on what are the components that they want to be present at any point in time as they travel along their career journey. So when I work with someone I'll hear their career story to date, so whatever stage they are in their career, if they haven't made decisions, hear what matters to them, what their values are, who has influenced them, how they've been influenced and then get them to... and then feed that back to them basically and then look at well how does that inform them making some decisions about that next step that they want to take. And often people will come to me not because they want to be a, you know, a GM1 in 18 months from now but rather they're at a point either forced upon them or by their own volition where they want to stop and think about what they might want to do next in their career. Sometimes it's a sense of, "You know, well am I truly in the right role?" "Am I making the best of myself?" It'll be questions like that that people have and I think that we've really been misled by the paradigm set up by that question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

MURRAY: (06:29) Yeah.

JILL: (06:29) Because a lot of people come to me and they do, they've got that FOMO "I'm fearful I'm missing out on that one perfect answer..."

MURRAY: (06:39) Yeah.

JILL: (06:40) "That's perhaps eluding me." So one of the things that will work with people around is that that's perhaps the wrong question to be asking.

MURRAY: (06:49) So when we're talking now it's very much talking about the individual but you also see a great need to take the career coaching into the corporate world and training managers and leaders as career coaches. What is it that you see is driving that need?

JILL: (07:11) Well I think that in organizations today the pathways are much less clear, they're much less linear. So you've got that tension between individuals in organizations needing to have that sense of future focus. You know, "Where am I

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heading?" And yet there are less clear answers for people. So if you enable leaders to have really great quality conversations with their team members about their aspirations then I think you've got a better chance of having the right person in the right role for the right amount of time and then when the time is right they'll leave for the right reasons and ideally the leader will know. It won't be a surprise.

MURRAY: (08:05) Yeah.

JILL: (08:05) But all of that takes really quality conversations. Now a lot of leaders will say, "I don't have time for that." But the side benefit or the really integral benefit to that is also the fact that the more you know your individual team member, you know what they like, what they don't like, what makes them tick, what they're aspiring to in the future, the better you're able to even delegate to them. You know, you are able to be more artful in how you allocate work because you know how it ties in. You can have... you can help them see the connections in the work they're doing now to what they want to add to their CV or résumé that they might need two years from now. So there's so many benefits to those kinds of conversations but a lot of leaders don't feel super confident to have them.

MURRAY: (08:57) So it's like... It's a hat you have to put on. Today I'm your career coach and through that process you're going to learn so much more about that person, establish that relationship and produce more, be more productive all over.

JILL: (09:10) Absolutely! And have a more engaged person. So everyone's looking at the engagement scores today.

MURRAY: (09:17) Yeah.

JILL: (09:17) They're really what matters. That's what determines whether people hang around and how much discretionary effort they put in when they do hang around.

MURRAY: (09:26) Yeah.

JILL: (09:28) And the more... And you know, in a lot of these pulse surveys and engagement surveys come back they want somebody to care about their future.

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MURRAY: (09:38) Yeah.

JILL: (09:39) But that's very different from having an expectation that your manager is going to organize your next promotion or your leader is going to guarantee where you'll be a year from now. So the counter to those really quality conversations is to help the individual see and understand that they need to ultimately take agency for who they are and for where they want to go.

MURRAY: (10:04) It takes me back to many conversations on the podcast with leaders who talk about... Well you actually have to have the conversation with the person because if they're not engaged you have to find out what drives them, where they're passionate and you know what? They might find that better somewhere else. Then the leader's job is to help them find that.

JILL: (10:25) Yeah.

MURRAY: (10:26) Probably saves a lot of time.

JILL: (10:27) Yeah.

MURRAY: (10:28) And energy.

JILL: (10:29) Absolutely.

MURRAY: (10:30) Brilliant!

I hope you're enjoying the show. I just wanted to take a moment to remind you that you'll find great leadership questions from our guests at www.murraywright.com.au/leadership-questions or follow the link in the Show Notes and while you're there why not share your favorite questions?

And now, back to our guest.

So let's come to you a bit and that first question. So you're thinking about your leadership. Who would you say has influenced you the most?

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JILL: (11:04) So I would say, and I hope it's not cheating to choose someone famous. I would say Stephen Covey and I know he's an oldie but a goodie but really truly why I would say him is when you think about his seminal work that still gets read today and, you know, some of the principles in it that, working within your sphere of influence versus your sphere of concern starting with the end in mind, making sure you put big important rocks in, differentiating between important and urgent, seeking to understand the other before you seek to be understood...

MURRAY: (11:46) [cross talk] Seek to be understood.

JILL: (11:48) Exactly! You know, they inform every day of my life personally, professionally in terms of how I work and also in terms of the coaching work I do with people, with teams, with groups.

MURRAY: (12:04) That's a good choice. I'll have to say he influenced me a lot. I remember buying his "7 Habits of Highly Effective People" and yeah, it made a big change in my life and partly why I'm in Australia today because...

JILL: (12:18) Oh really?

MURRAY: (12:17) I had my plan and my priorities and it helped me get clarity around that. And certainly I would recommend it for anyone who hasn't read it to do it. And I find that in that sort of work there's one universal truth and Covey seems to have assembled all these truths together, whereas everyone else... And people express it in different ways but his is one that particularly worked for me.

JILL: (12:45) And it's very succinct and concise.

MURRAY: (12:47) Yeah, I know. It's really good. It's almost like a manual you can work through.

JILL: (12:50) Yeah. A manual for life.

MURRAY: (12:51) Yeah. Exactly. Brilliant! So you've talked about your purpose and you say it's about supporting people to make the best of themselves through conscious choice. Can you talk a bit more about that conscious choice because it's held within Covey's work. It's held within what we do as coaches. But I think it's good to highlight it.

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JILL: (13:13) So... and taking it back to the career coaching. When I'm working with an individual or groups around career, you know, as I said we'll look at all of those components, the things that matter to them, what they're good at, their values, but then that's all very well to identify all that. Then there's the piece which is, "Okay what are you consciously going to choose to do with this information?" And look at, you know, what might that next step look like? It also ties back to that piece that fueled my passion in this area which is that because we do have the luxury of choice and a lot of people don't. So it's about very consciously making them. You know, we can... Every day we make thousands of choices during the course of the day and often they're on autopilot. So the idea of stopping and thinking and consciously choosing what it is you're going to do about either having that conversation with your manager to try and reshape your role or have a conversation with a partner around how they might support you to make some shift. The clearer people can be on what those choices are and which ones they're going to take then the more they get that sense of control over their life and that connection to the future. And the thing that I... You know, the great contributor to that conscious choice, apart from coaching of course, is things like mindfulness because mindfulness practices meditation practices, all of those things that allow us to actually stop operating on autopilot so that we are really being more conscious about the choices we make. And a lovely thing that I heard quite recently, an idea that I heard quite recently, is that question of, "What have you unlearned since your childhood?"

MURRAY: (15:22) Yeah.

JILL: (15:23) Because a lot of those autopilot choices stem from, you know, how we were brought up, our experiences. I mean at some point they might start to serve us less well. So I really like that idea of, "What have you unlearned since your childhood?" So in the career coaching perspective... You know, I had someone the other day who had grown up in a family where the family went into a certain typical line of professions.

MURRAY: (15:53) Ah right.

JILL: (15:54) And they have therefore worked within that value system and that very much informed what it was they did. And yet by stopping and thinking really about what their own value set was and what choices that made available to them. They were able to see that actually they could stop operating according to their family's...



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MURRAY: (16:21) So unlearn a little bit the family system and focus on your own.

JILL: (16:25) Yeah. In order to be successful, in order to be valued you need to be doing A, B, C. Manage to unlearn that.

MURRAY: (16:32) Brilliant! So second question, your 'aha' moment when you understood what leadership was all about?

JILL: (16:42) So I think it was very, very, very, very early on in my career which is actually when I was backpacking.

MURRAY: (16:50) Yeah.

JILL: (16:51) So my first life in Australia I was backpacking and I worked in a restaurant and the restaurant was generally pretty quiet and I was made manager of the restaurant. However, there's this festival that occurred for a week. That week there was tens of thousands of people that came through the district.

MURRAY: (17:13) Where was this?

JILL: (17:14) It was Woolloomooloo.

MURRAY: (17:15) Woolloomooloo.

JILL: (17:15) The Navy boats came in.

MURRAY: (17:18) Oh right. The American sailors?

JILL: (17:20) Yeah.

MURRAY: (17:21) Oh!

JILL: (17:21) All around the world sailors. And so the place was absolutely mobbed and I was the manager, you know, the sitting manager for this event. So I drafted all these staff and although I set them up and talked to them before, when it came to the crunch and those crowds came to the door I just had my head down bum up doing my job.

MURRAY: (17:46) Yeah.

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JILL: (17:48) I didn't for a second have time to stop and wonder how the team was going. And it was only when it got to the end that I realized that's what I'd done and I thought manager, in name only really like I hadn't actually done anything to support, check in with them along the way during the busyness. And I think that's such an important... Because even today... That was a long time ago and I hadn't had any leadership training. But you know, if you look at that...

MURRAY: (18:18) Just making an excuses now.

JILL: (18:21) If you look at that today... Absolutely. If you look at that today, still a lot of that goes on. You know, when things get busy people can just... And particularly if it's leaders who have been put into leadership roles when they come from a technical background because they can go to what's comfortable.

MURRAY: (18:43) That's right.

JILL: (18:45) It's actually easier...

MURRAY: (18:45) Safety.

JILL: (18:47) To just keeping busy doing that doing rather than pull their head out and being what they need to be for the team.

MURRAY: (18:55) So how would you sum up then? What is that learning that you took from that? What was that 'aha' moment?

JILL: (19:01) Well, your success depends on the success of others. And I think it's Napoleon, I'm sure someone will correct me here if I'm wrong, who would be at the front line and then at the end of everyday he'd take himself up onto his tent on a hill away from everyone to really get that balcony view, that strategic...

MURRAY: (19:22) [cross talk] The balcony view.

JILL: (19:24) And that's something that so often comes up in leadership coaching. It's not even necessarily that people don't know how to do that or can't do it or don't want to. It's about that Covey carving out the time to create the space to do that high level thinking.

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MURRAY: (19:42) Yeah. Yeah. That's great. Brilliant! I'm coming back to the career coaching, a bit of process now. If I were someone who was uncertain about career and wanted to start thinking about it in a different way, what are some of the things that I should not do?

JILL: (20:08) The first and foremost for me is get fixated on the fact that there's this one perfect answer.

MURRAY: (20:14) Yeah.

JILL: (20:15) Because there rarely is. There is no guarantee to a successful outcome. There can't be. There never is. So there will involve an element of risk. Not to jump without thinking. So if you've had a bad day and your mates moved to another organization and they call you up and they tell you there's a job going and you're going to get an extra two grand or whatever that relative amount is in your world... Don't do it without thinking. Another thing I would say is, don't leave without exploring the options, the possibilities, the opportunities within your own organization. Don't stay in a situation that is really impacting many aspects of your life and you have done everything that you can to resolve what's within your sphere of influence and you don't see anything changing.

MURRAY: (21:18) Yeah.

JILL: (21:21) Don't let go of your network and a lot of people will think that... A lot of people say to me when they come to career coaching, "I'm not very good with my network. I don't really have one." Everybody does. It's the human beings that you come into contact with and some people are classic networkers and sometimes some of them are quite self-serving ones and the other end of the spectrum is doing nothing, not catching up until you feel a need. So you want to ideally be doing that along the way holding that idea, "What would I do if I could and what would I do if I had to?" Which is really about strategically managing your career along the way the whole time checking in. So that's a don't. It's don't wait until there's a crisis to start thinking about it.

MURRAY: (22:16) Yeah.

JILL: (22:16) Don't wait until you've got that new bad boss to think about it.

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MURRAY: (22:22) And you talk there, “What would I do if I could? What would I do if I had to?” Just expand on that a bit more because those are wonderful questions and would fit into our Leadership Questions.

JILL: (22:37) Excellent! So in terms of, “What would I do if I could?” It’s that idea... It’s balancing the art of possibility with the reality of life in a sense. That’s another phrase I love to bring into career coaching because there is that harsh reality of, “I’ve got to pay my bill and I need to...”

MURRAY: (22:55) Yeah.

JILL: (22:56) Or whatever those equivalents are in your world. So, “What would I do if I could,” is that always keeping that open mind as to future possibilities, as to keeping your learning going and keeping having conversations, keeping checking back to what matters to you, your values, the things you enjoy in work so that you can think about what’s possible in the future.

And then, “What would you do if you had to?” So you, you know, the next day someone turns up that changes the whole place at work and you don’t want to be there or you get fired or made redundant or whatever it is. If you had to, if you do at the very least want your résumé to be up-to-date. You want your profiles to be up-to-date. You want to have kept connected with the industry, the sector, the people who are in your network so that you’re in a position to move if you had to.

MURRAY: (24:01) Brilliant! Okay. Last question. Your biggest failure and how does it inform your leadership today?

JILL: (24:10) My biggest failure I would say was not failing enough because recently somebody had been hauled in for something somewhere and I was thinking, “I have never actually had that happen to me.” And it made me realize how safely I have probably played and by playing safe you then don’t role model for others to take risks and so that really was... When I stopped and thought about it, I thought that is probably the biggest failure is not failing enough.

MURRAY: (24:49) And how has that changed things now?

JILL: (24:55) It actually had already changed through being exposed to things like Carol Dweck’s growth mindset.

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MURRAY: (25:02) Yeah.

JILL: (25:03) That whole idea about a growth mindset versus a fixed mindset. A fixed mindset being, you know, "I can't do this." "I'm no good." "If I try and I'm still no good then I'm stupid." Whereas the growth mindset is, "I can't do this yet." "If I put in effort I will get better." And for me I distill it down to the, "Do I care more about whether I look good or do I care more about whether I learn and grow?" And growth mindset enables me to come back to that very question anytime I feel a little bit nervous about what I'm going to do by trying something new or different.

MURRAY: (25:50) Yeah. So don't worry, just learn.

JILL: (25:53) Absolutely! And you can't be successful without trying and making an effort and that's the other thing with the growth mindset is you see an obstacle as a challenge to overcome whereas a fixed mindset you see an obstacle as a setback, a failure. "I'm no good. I won't try anymore."

MURRAY: (26:18) And the famous example everyone uses is the lightbulb and Thomas Edison.

JILL: (26:22) Yeah. Absolutely!

MURRAY: (26:24) He went through how many prototypes before he got one that worked? Yeah.

JILL: (26:28) Exactly! There's thousands of examples of that. Yeah.

MURRAY: (26:32) Yeah. Brilliant! Thank you. Now you actually have an online course for career coaching. Do you want to tell us a bit about that?

JILL: (26:45) Yes. I'd love to. So a couple of years ago I developed and launched an online version, so it's a career coaching online program that pretty much mirrors the methodology that I would take someone through in a face-to-face coaching. Actually people who have done the course have described it as like having a coach in the room with you. So it's not about ticking boxes and coming out with an answer as to what you should be, but rather it just takes someone through a process where they stop and think about what matters to them and what those next steps might be that they take. What are the actions that come out of that?



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MURRAY: (27:32) Where can we find it?

JILL: (27:34) So it's at www.careergrow.coach.

MURRAY: (27:39) www.careergrow.coach.

JILL: (27:41) Dot coach, yeah.

MURRAY: (27:42) So you go there on the website, you find it?

JILL: (27:44) Yeah.

MURRAY: (27:45) And you have kindly made an offer to the Leadership Moments subscribers.

JILL: (27:53) Absolutely!

MURRAY: (27:54) Do you want to tell us a bit about that?

JILL: (27:56) Which is that... So the program normally costs \$290 but with a special voucher code that will be in the notes...

MURRAY: (28:06) We'll put this in the Show Notes. Yes.

JILL: (28:09) And we'll offer it to any listener to Murray's wonderful podcast for \$200.

MURRAY: (28:16) Oh brilliant! So just the website again.

JILL: (28:20) [careergrow...](http://careergrow.coach)

MURRAY: (28:21) [careergrow...](http://careergrow.coach)

JILL: (28:22) Dot coach.

MURRAY: (28:23) Dot coach. And \$295 but follow the link and get the voucher in the Show Notes and you'll get that program for \$200. That's fantastic! And just to be clear I get no benefit from this. This is a genuine offer for people listening who maybe want

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to work through and just reassess and plan ahead and think about the future and what they want to be doing.

Brilliant Jill, thank you. So I really enjoyed that chat and it's given us a lot of insight to career coaching and what it is. You've already given a couple of great questions. You know me, I like to get more because I do curate the questions. Have you got a favourite question that you use beyond the ones you've given earlier?

JILL: (29:12) We'll, one is... Actually part of the coaching process is for people to strategically manage their career on an ongoing basis.

MURRAY: (29:23) Yes.

JILL: (29:25) I get them to identify what are the five questions they want to ask themselves every three months or two months.

MURRAY: (29:33) Oh nice!

JILL: (29:34) And so it might be something like, "How do I feel on a Sunday night?" "What have I learned lately?" "Am I happy sometimes for people?" So they come up with their own questions and they check in and answer those and then go, "What do I need to do as a result of those?"

MURRAY: (29:52) So it's, "What are your questions for yourself that you have to answer?"

JILL: (29:56) Yeah. Regularly on an ongoing basis. So I get them... And anyone listening to this, it's a great... Whether it's around career or anything, but it's a great simple thing recurring in like private invite in your calendar. Pops up every three months. You've got your questions. You take a moment to answer them. And it helps you stop and think about what might be needing some attention from you.

MURRAY: (30:18) What a great tip. Brilliant! I love it. Have to think of my own questions. Thank you.

And reading... So you've already talked about Covey's "The 7 habits..." Any other things for people who are at a stage... The challenges are so much online, so much information coming. It's good to get a recommendation that helps people cut through. What would you recommend?

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JILL: (30:46) A couple that I've got on my bedside at the moment to read is the Brené Brown, "Dare to Lead."

MURRAY: (30:54) Yeah.

JILL: (30:55) And also the Mark Manson, "How to Not expletive give an expletive."

MURRAY: (31:02) How not to give a ... Yes.

JILL: (31:04) Yeah. And I thoroughly recommend those. I haven't completed both of them yet but they're there.

MURRAY: (31:11) You're like me. I've got a pile on the bedside, part read.

JILL: (31:14) You know, I cannot walk out of a bookshop without having picked up something. But the other one... And she's a local woman and a peer of ours is a book particularly for career management. So it's by Janine Garner, "It's Who You Know." How a network of 12 key people can fast track your success. And what it is, is it's not just about your network. She identifies sort of categories of people who will help you, like the mentor, the champion and then identifying people who fit into those categories.

MURRAY: (31:53) Right. Yeah.

JILL: (31:54) So it's a really lovely concept I think and so I would recommend that book as well.

MURRAY: (32:02) Brilliant! Thank you. I've got something, is their one final tip you would give for someone around career coaching whether it be a leader who is managing or someone who is thinking about the future.

JILL: (32:19) It's the little things, the little actions, that little conversation with your leader, that little conversation with your direct report. It's those small things that will often make the biggest impact to changing something in your life.

MURRAY: (32:38) Beautiful. With that we'll leave it, Jill Livesay. Thank you very much.

JILL: (32:42) Thank you very much.



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STOP AND THINK ABOUT YOUR CAREER

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MURRAY: (32:43) Thanks to Jill. Some great thoughts for all of us. The important points that I take away are, we need to be thinking about our career regularly. You cannot put it into autopilot. Building and maintaining networks is essential. We have to become career coaches to our team members to truly understand how to engage them and support their development and growth and finally it's the little things, the little actions that can often make the biggest impact in changing something in our lives. What's your little thing?

[music]

That's it for this episode. Thanks for listening. Head to the podcast page at www.murraywright.com for the transcript, key learnings and resources from this episode. You'll find the leadership questions from all my guests under the resources tab and while you're there, why not subscribe to the Leadership Moments and that way, you'll never have to miss one. Until the next time.

[End of Transcription]



PLANNING A CHANGE?

In the middle of, or planning change for yourself or team and want to get it right? Talk with Murray to discuss options on building clarity, setting expectations and creating the culture that will engage people and bring success.

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Look forward to hearing from you.