



**RICHARD CORNALLY**

KNOWING WHERE THE GOLF BALL IS

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**LEADERSHIP MOMENTS PODCAST TRANSCRIPT**



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**EPISODE 54**



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[Start of Transcription]

**RICHARD:** (00:00) If I'm working with someone and I don't believe in their capacity to find the solution, that they're going to do it, that they can do it, then that's my shortcoming not theirs.

[music]

**MURRAY:** (00:16) 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]

(00:38) "Acting," I hear you say... What's this got to do with leadership? Listen to this great conversation with my guest Richard Cornally as he explains how the principles of acting, losing our self-consciousness and focusing on others is key to connecting with our own authenticity. He tells us what makes a compelling story that engages our stakeholders and shares practical tips to help us manage our voice, body and emotions to develop our leadership presence. Enjoy.

(01:06) Richard Cornally, welcome to Leadership Moments.

**RICHARD:** (01:10) Thank you very much for having me.

**MURRAY:** (01:12) So Richard, your journey – acting, training actors, writing, directing theater and film – what brought you to the corporate world?

**RICHARD:** (01:27) The beginnings of that were in my acting classes. So I had been teaching acting at this point for about, about eight years and I found that in every single class, I would have at least two or three people who weren't your standard beginner actor or aspirational actor. They were people who were consultants or managers or lawyers and they were getting feedback... You know, they were in their late 20's or in their mid-30's and they were getting feedback around their confidence, their communication skills and their assertiveness and they'd been recommended, "Go to acting classes because that will help you with your confidence." And so they were going to my classes and I was... I'm a very accommodating person and I was curious and so I was like, "Yeah. Of course. You don't have to want to be an actor." And I started to think about what their goals were. Because it was something I did at the beginning of every one of my terms is get everybody to talk a little bit about what



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they wanted to get out of that term. And so for those actors who wanted to advance their career we'd focus on that. But for those people who wanted to become more confident, I realized that we could use these principles to help them gain a high level of self-awareness in their communication and their interactions but also to have a higher degree of perception and awareness of other people, because that was really the key. And over time I found this work, working with these people really rewarding because it was really changing their lives. You know, I love actors and I love storytellers and I love supporting young actors starting out on their careers, but the change that was happening at work and in their relationships and in their own sense of their identity, for these people who were coming and applying these principles to their life, was starting to become really satisfying and meaningful. Then I had a few people who were referred to me for private coaching and I started doing more and more of that kind of work and it just evolved from there. I took out more time. I started getting more excited about the results I was getting with people and I started to think more deeply about how the skills and principles of acting and storytelling could be applied in real life to help you become a more confident and grounded communicator. And that's when I started hearing about this word authenticity. [laughter] And that's when it became

**MURRAY:** (04:20) So before we come to authenticity, you just talked there about how the principles of acting, the things underlying it can be applied into the coaching one-on-one for people in corporate roles. What are those principles and how do they apply?

**RICHARD:** (04:41) So what I noticed is that people would come for two things. They wanted to be more confident and they wanted to be authentic in their confidence because even though they wanted to be more confident, they didn't want to adopt a persona that wasn't them and a lot of them acquired confidence with arrogance. And so I had to help people unknot what those things were. So I think what we need to start with is maybe a little bit of a deeper understanding of how I approach acting and training because there are a lot of different schools of thought around acting. So for most people they think of acting as pretending. It's not the way I was trained. The way I was trained was very much around the idea that acting is living truthfully under imagined circumstances, which is the definition of acting of my teacher's teacher's teacher going back to a guy named Sanford Meisner and the idea that Sanford Meisner had was that if you can immerse the actor's imagination into given circumstances, which includes the emotional relationships with the other characters, their investments, then the character is created in the mind of the audience by watching that human being live truthfully under those imagined circumstances.



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**MURRAY:** (05:55) So it's about living truthfully to your emotions in that moment.

**RICHARD:** (05:58) That's right. And what we call that is following your impulse. And so when you're trained in this way, you understand that acting is not about pretending, it's about actually stripping away all of the ways in which we pretend in real life and getting down to our raw potential as a human being. And this could be quite uncomfortable especially when you're confronted with some of the emotions that you have judgements about. So in fact, to be a great actor you've got to own all of who you are and what I saw was, "Well, that's very transferrable." Learning to manage yourself so that you can be a confident communicator and be authentic. It's not that we want to be teaching everybody to follow every single impulse they have, but part of what I think is essential about learning to be confident or authentic is learning to acknowledge that those impulses are happening and to not tell yourself a little fib about what's going on inside yourself.

**MURRAY:** (06:54) Yes. So this is... That's self-awareness and being conscious of what you're experiencing in the moment. Is that then relating to then, once you're aware of that then being more conscious about the choice of how you...

**RICHARD:** (07:09) Yes.

**MURRAY:** (07:10) ...you respond with that. What you're going to do with that information.

**RICHARD:** (07:12) Yeah. So it's about shifting from reactivity to conscious creativity in your communication. So one of the metaphors I often use is, "If you want to strike a golf ball, the first thing you need to know is where the golf ball is in time and space."

**MURRAY:** (07:28) Yeah.

**RICHARD:** (07:29) You know, you can have the best club in the world but if you don't know where the golf ball is, then you can't hit it. The same is true of ourselves. If you want to direct your own personality, your own emotional system in a particular direction, the first thing you need to know is the authentic truth of where are you now, not where you'd like to be because then you're starting from a false assumption.

**MURRAY:** (07:53) Or where you think you are.

**RICHARD:** (07:54) Or where you think you are.



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**MURRAY:** (07:55) Where you really are.

**RICHARD:** (07:56) Yeah. So there's a spirit of humble curious inquiry around your relationship with your own emotional system and you've got to let it surprise you and perhaps even challenge your ego about what you'd like your story to be. And the same when you're trying to impact someone else. So if you want to have an impact on somebody else, the first thing you need to know is where are they in time and space emotionally and psychologically. And that then brings you to developing your heightened skills of awareness and emotional perception and psychological perception.

**MURRAY:** (08:31) Yeah. Nice. And you're just describing their emotional intelligence.

**RICHARD:** (08:34) Yes.

**MURRAY:** (08:34) Effectively.

**RICHARD:** (08:35) Yeah. Yeah. Which was a term that, you know, came up much later in my studies and my training. It fit exactly with what we were doing.

**MURRAY:** (08:43) The other thing you've addressed... I think it's clear because we're talking here with an actor who coaches corporates and you said it. It's not about faking it, and you know, they all think, "Fake it 'til you make it." It's not about that.

**RICHARD:** (08:54) No. Not at all.

**MURRAY:** (08:56) So what is it then? I know you've said a lot there, but if you were summing it up, it's not faking it until you make it. It is what?

**RICHARD:** (09:05) I think it's starts with acknowledging what is.

**MURRAY:** (09:07) Right.

**RICHARD:** (09:08) What is actually going on in you and what is actually going on in another person and surrendering to that. That's the first thing. This is the truth of the moment. Then it's about getting clear of, "Well alright, if that's the truth of the moment, what would I like it to be and what are my reasons for that?" So if you've got really clear, like a really clear sense of your values, your intention, your purpose, then you can start moving towards your goal from a place of authenticity and integrity.



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**MURRAY:** (09:38) So authenticity... I've got a question, maybe it's out of order and you've maybe answered it, but what is authenticity then?

**RICHARD:** (09:45) I love this question. [laughter] I love this question. The misconception that I see a lot is authenticity equated with either indulgent honesty... So, "It's just how I feel." You hear that from people.

**MURRAY:** (10:02) Yeah.

**RICHARD:** (10:03) And they think that's authenticity. I feel it so it's real. It's honest. It's authentic.

**MURRAY:** (10:06) Yes.

**RICHARD:** (10:07) The other authenticity you see, which is camouflaged I think is, truth used as a weapon, "Well, it's what other people are telling me."

**MURRAY:** (10:16) Right.

**RICHARD:** (10:17) "It's what I've been told."

**MURRAY:** (10:18) Yes. Yes.

**RICHARD:** (10:19) "I'm just being authentic with you." No, neither of those things I think are true authenticity because I think in order to behave truly authentically you have to own all of your own emotional intelligence and resources. Authenticity is the pairing of acknowledging everything that's going on, including all of those indulgent impulses, and taking responsibility for what you do with that. A really simple tool that people can use to help them knit out what is authentic for them at the moment is a series of questions that can help them understand the friction between their different codes of ethics. If you ask yourself, "What do I want to do about it?" Then that can tap you into your personal code of ethics.

**MURRAY:** (11:02) Yup.

**RICHARD:** (11:02) And then if you follow that up with, "What would I usually do in this situation?" or "What's the most comfortable thing for me to do here?"



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**MURRAY:** (11:09) Yeah.

**RICHARD:** (11:10) That usually can tap you into what's your collective code of ethics. And the third question you can ask is, "If I was free to do whatever I needed to do to find a solution that was good for me and good for the whole, what would I do then?" And the freedom is a key part of that because you don't want to see responsibility as something that is good and so more imposed upon you. True responsibility, adult responsibility is taken with the freedom of choice. You can do whatever you want. You can do what you want to do. You can do what you usually do.

**MURRAY:** (11:43) And it's also free from the cultural norms or history or whatever. It's just freedom to choose.

**RICHARD:** (11:51) Both free and integrated.

**MURRAY:** (11:53) Yeah. The other part of what you do is the compelling story. Can you tell us a bit more about that.

**RICHARD:** (12:02) Any compelling story is a story where your audience wants to know the outcome. Where they're invested in the conclusion. So how you set that up is you create tension and tension is just a state of uncertainty around two possible outcomes, at least two, a minimum of two possible outcomes.

(12:31) So there's lots and lots and lots of ways you can set that up. Your classic way of setting that up is by showing a person or a community or a business or any entity in a state of dissatisfaction. So there's a gap between their inner map of themselves, their inner image of themselves, their potential and their capacity, and their external experience. So in classic terms some people call that the 'prison'. And it's best to think of prison not in literal terms but in kind of archetypal symbolic terms. So what is a prison? It is a confined space where you are not free to move and that's how... You know, that's dissatisfaction. So that could be a hobbit in a little hole. It can be the Count of Monte Cristo in a prison, in an actual prison. It can be Bridget Jones in a bad relationship. It can be Indiana Jones in a tiny little office. Every story starts with the character in a sense of confinement, of no longer able to move freely because their inner image of themselves doesn't match their outer reality. That creates, unconsciously in your audience, "Oh, are they going to be able to resolve this tension?" Are they going to be able to break their external environment or change



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their relationship to it, which then sets up a desire. The desire will usually be an external fix, "You know, if I can just change the outside world..."

**MURRAY:** (13:59) Right.

**RICHARD:** (13:59) ... to fit my inner map everything will be okay." "If I could just find a husband." "If I could just get the Holy Grail." "If I could just get the Maltese Falcon." "If I could just get Ilsa back." These are all classic examples from classic storytelling. And then ultimately the poignancy, the meaning of the story comes from first, the level of struggle the character is willing to expend in the pursuit of their goals. So the satisfaction of the story is always directly related to how much somebody strives, as we respect striving. We respect striving much more than we respect success. And then the poignancy then is related to the level of identity sacrifice that is required to get the final goal. That doesn't mean the character gets what they want. Sometimes they let go of their final goal because of the identity sacrifice. But the story, there always becomes a point in the story where everything they'd been trying isn't working and they realize that the external goal isn't the problem, it's the internal map that they've got of how to achieve it. So at that point the character has to decide whether to let an old bit of themselves die in order to become a new person to get what they want. Now sometimes in the act of letting that old bit of themselves die, they realize that what they want wasn't the right thing and they end up with something more important, what they needed not what they wanted and that's when the irony and the poignancy of the story often comes in.

And the fun part about that part of the story is it's a map for all human challenge. It's a map for... You know, we read the narrative of the company. One of the reasons I think (we were talking about Apple before) one of the reasons I think Apple is such an iconic and popular brand is because they were the underdog for a while and we loved being part of their meteoric rise back to the top. But it was the back to the top bit that we all got caught into. That there was this cult kind of battle there for a while.

Yeah. The very fun part about that death of the old self is that it's often a moment where we realize that what we had been wearing as armour, what we thought was the best and strongest of us is actually what's weighing us down and what we thought was our liability is actually our greatest strength in our humanity. And you hear this all the time with high powered CEOs who go through something horrendous in their lives and they come back to work and people hear about what they've suffered from all they share it with humility and humanity and the loyalty in the organization just





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balloons because they've got that mix then of the strength of their leadership, but also the compassion and the humanity of their suffering.

**MURRAY:** (17:09) So what is it you do then working with executives around this compelling story?

**RICHARD:** (17:14) It depends very much on their specific goals. So if the project is about communicating something to their team, then I will help them craft something that recreates their journey to the conclusion that they've come to, so that their team comes to the same conclusion.

(17:33) When you read a great book or watch a great film, at the heart of that is, usually in the classics, essential thematic argument, and it's all about when you get to the end of this film, you would dwell on how you live your life and ideally you come to the same conclusion. So, if you look at one of the great classics like 'Casablanca', you get to the end of that film and you've been entertained by the love story. But when he says, the problems of three little people don't amount to a hill of beans in this crazy mixed up world, you reflect on the nobility of personal sacrifice for a greater good and you kind of go, "Yeah. Yeah. That's a good way to live life. If I was in Rick's situation I might do the same thing."

So whether it's a speech or whether it's a document, if you want people to come to an emotional, a thematic, a vision conclusion, then you can take them on a journey that again goes from dissatisfaction, through experimentation and striving, to personal sacrifice and realization that leaves you on a higher plane. You can craft that journey so that your audience will come to the same conclusion.

**MURRAY:** (18:45) So that's to get me that engagement, get the audience, "So let's talk." A leader...

**RICHARD:** (18:49) That is one of the ways.

**MURRAY:** (18:51) A leader with the team to get them on board and engaged. There's a piece about keeping that narrative going, keeping the story going and repeating it and reinforcing it.

**RICHARD:** (19:01) Yes. It loops. That's true.

**MURRAY:** (19:03) Yeah. So it's not just about doing one off and then back to normal. Also, as you were talking there I was just thinking. I would imagine for some people



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and their teams, they haven't actually worked out the story yet but together they can almost formulate it.

**RICHARD:** (19:20) Absolutely!

**MURRAY:** (19:21) Yeah.

**RICHARD:** (19:21) Yeah. Yeah.

**MURRAY:** (19:22) So don't worry. If you haven't got the story just start finding it.

**RICHARD:** (19:27) Yeah. Keep asking the questions. I think one of the classic marketing questions that I think has been demonized a little bit of late because it's got a negative connotation is, "What's the wound that you're here to heal?"

**MURRAY:** (19:43) Yeah.

**RICHARD:** (19:44) And I think it's a very powerful question if it's asked authentically, if it's asked from a place of curiosity with the intention to actually find a balm, a salve for that wound.

**MURRAY:** (19:56) What are the client's pain points?

**RICHARD:** (19:58) Yes. Exactly. That's another version of it.

**MURRAY:** (20:00) Yeah.

**RICHARD:** (20:01) Yeah.

**MURRAY:** (20:01) I just want to take a moment to let you know about my new website at [www.murraywright.com.au](http://www.murraywright.com.au). It has a whole load of resources including all the Leadership Moments Podcasts, the Leadership Questions, blogs and free tools that you can download. There's also a great download, "Leadership, it's all in your mind," a three-part series giving you more understanding of how the mind and body works to help improve focus, make more conscious decisions and change habits. Use the link in the Show Notes or go to [www.murraywright.com.au/mind](http://www.murraywright.com.au/mind), that's [www.murraywright.com.au/mind](http://www.murraywright.com.au/mind).



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And now, back to our guest.

Let's talk a bit about you, Richard. You've been on this journey, who has influenced you the most as you've gone through that and you think back at the journey?

**RICHARD:** (20:56) If I had to pick one it would be my mother because Mum has instilled in me from a very early age that curiosity, a curiosity that drives everything that I do. She also works in the leadership development space, so I've grown up with these kind of conversations and that kind of theory just chatting over the dinner table.

**MURRAY:** (21:17) And your mum was on the podcast - One of the early editions.

**RICHARD:** (21:19) She was?

**MURRAY:** (21:21) Yes, talking about systems...

**RICHARD:** (21:21) Ah, excellent.

**MURRAY:** (21:23) And systemic intelligence, Sarah.

**RICHARD:** (21:24) Yeah. So she's a huge influence on my values and my thinking. And of course on fundamentals like the encouragement and the freedom to pursue acting. But also what I've had from Mum all the way along is the question of 'why'. Why are you doing this? What is the active service to humanity that you're providing through your art? So there was always a sense of responsibility and holistic thinking even as I was pursuing, you know, this fun and frivolous thing. That certainly wasn't the way in which I was pursuing it.

If I had to pick another one it would be my writing teacher, Roland Fishman, who runs the Writers' Studio in Bronte where I still work. I think he has taught me a great deal about how to take feedback, how to lead from a place of humility and faith rather than authority. And that's been a huge, huge impact on me over the past six years.

**MURRAY:** (22:23) Two thing I want to pick up in there. The question 'why' because it is the big question that we so often miss. And that piece about leading from... What was it you said? Humility and...

**RICHARD:** (22:39) And faith.



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**MURRAY:** (22:39) And faith as opposed to authority, because again, there's a beautiful concept in there. But I think just... It would be good to have a bit more around that for our listeners.

**RICHARD:** (22:51) Yeah. I think that's an important one that's really crystalized for me over the past five or six years and one of the mantras that I have for myself now is, "Notes are given but faith is absolute." And there's a lot built into that idea. But one of the principles is, if I'm working with someone and I don't believe in their capacity to find the solution, that they're going to do it, that they can do it, then that's my shortcoming not theirs. And I think that applies to particularly when I cast actors in a production. If I don't have absolute faith in their ability to synthesize the notes and to get the result, then I've failed in casting them in the first place. That's my shortcoming as a leader. I shouldn't have given them a job. So if I have given them a job, it means that the faith is implicit and I need to be making all of my decisions and giving more of my feedback from that place because even if you don't state it explicitly people feel that, and I've certainly been on the receiving end of that before from great leaders and great mentors, is that when you feel that somebody knows that you can do it, you take on that feedback in a completely different way. Yeah.

**MURRAY:** (24:12) I love that and I've heard this before in a podcast. It's about really believing in your people and letting them know it. Because too often, as you say, we can have these doubts and we're... The questions come from a different place, "Don't they know the instructions?" And if you talk to successful people they'll often say, "A person influenced me so much because they believed in me. They gave me a chance." And I think that's a really great reminder for all of us to believe in people.

**RICHARD:** (24:41) Absolutely!

**MURRAY:** (24:41) And their potential.

The other thing I wanted to talk to you about is this whole idea of leadership presence. So often we'll have people come in, "Oh yeah. I've been told I've got to build my leadership presence. You know, in meetings they say I've got to be... have greater leadership presence." When I say that to you, what comes to you? What does it mean for you?

**RICHARD:** (25:08) For me leadership presence is almost entirely synonymous with authentic presence because when you are in total ownership of your inner system and everything that's flowing through you and when you're communicating and interacting with people in a way that is aligned with your sense of integrity and purpose and values, then you will have leadership presence. That's all it requires.



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**MURRAY:** (25:34) What I hear in that it's really understanding what you believe, what you stand for, being aware of it and bringing that into how you engage with people.

**RICHARD:** (25:46) Absolutely!

**MURRAY:** (25:46) And audiences. Yeah.

**RICHARD:** (25:48) You can't fake purpose.

**MURRAY:** (25:50) Yeah. I think relating to that is in the value of... Not the value. That's a wrong way to say it. It's the importance of actually being connected to your own purpose and how that fits with your organization.

**RICHARD:** (26:04) Absolutely!

(26:05) You know, one of the things that I struggled with in my late 20's, is did I want to pursue moving into this corporate space and helping people in this way when my goal and my identity had always been tied up with being an actor and being a storyteller and being a performer. And I had to unknit the narrative that I'd created around, "I, Richard, equals actor," and that self was vocation. And so I had to really go back into this question of 'why' and unpack, "All right, what is my purpose and is there flexibility in that?" And what I arrived at is what always was magic to me about film and novels and storytelling and acting and performing was the transformative experience that it created for me and for other people. And so, I really thought about, "Well if that's your purpose, then there are lots of different vocations within which you can create that." If that's what really excites you, then the specific form in which it takes can vary. But also identifying if that was my purpose brought a greater level of integrity to everything else that I did. I was able to show up to auditions and to castings in the theater world much more aligned because I knew why I was there.

**MURRAY:** (27:32) Yeah.

**RICHARD:** (27:33) I was able to show up in the corporate space much more aligned because I knew why I was there. So, I think figuring out what it is you're doing... Not what it is you're doing... Why you're doing what you're doing... It feeds into everything.

**MURRAY:** (27:49) Back to you. Your 'aha' moment, that moment when you understood what leadership was all about.



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**RICHARD:** (27:57) I think about two years ago I was transitioning out of my role as the artistic director of Sydney Drama School and I was handing the business back over to its founder and helping with the transition plans so that all of the cultural processes and the administration processes, everything that I'd built over six years, would continue and what I learned from doing that... I thought I had run Sydney Drama School for six years because I had taken care of so many of the day-to-day operations and watching how Toni, the owner, picked it up and ran with it, took some of what I'd left, discarded some of the rest of it and just flew with it... was a really humbling experience about understanding the role of a founder, of the visionary and of the leader because I thought leading was the operations and I was totally wrong. I couldn't have been more wrong.

**MURRAY:** (28:56) So the doing. You thought leading was doing.

**RICHARD:** (28:58) I thought the leading was the doing.

**MURRAY:** (28:59) Doing stuff.

**RICHARD:** (29:00) Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I thought I led that business because I ran it and that was a... I had that completely wrong and it was a wonderful, wonderful lesson about being humble to the great leaders and the great mentors that you come across in your life.

**MURRAY:** (29:18) So you've learned that doing is not leading.

**RICHARD:** (29:21) Yes.

**MURRAY:** (29:21) So what is leading?

**RICHARD:** (29:22) Well I could say it's being, but that seems a bit glib. But I think...

**MURRAY:** (29:27) It's a bit of both, isn't it? It's being and doing.

**RICHARD:** (29:29) Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I think it is a little bit of both.

One of the things that I think about a lot is... A couple of years ago I got my accreditation in the leadership circle and one of the things I learned was that one of the highest correlators for leadership effectiveness, then linking to business success, was the ability to communicate vision and purpose. And that for me kind of captures



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everything that we've been talking about. To communicate vision and purpose, you need leadership presence. You need to be grounded in your voice, your vocality. You need to be a talented communicator, but you have to have the vision and purpose in the first place to communicate. So that is probably the best answer I can give to, "What is leadership?"

**MURRAY:** (30:22) And there's a piece, you know, doing is part of leadership but being is also. So is that...

**RICHARD:** (30:26) Yeah.

**MURRAY:** (30:27) How is that thing, you know, because often we can focus on the doing and we forget the being.

**RICHARD:** (30:31) Yeah.

**MURRAY:** (30:31) So it's getting them in the right order.

If someone is listening to this and going, "Wow! I really like that stuff but where do I start? How do I develop my authenticity? How do I develop my presence? Where do they start?"

**RICHARD:** (30:45) Well, I think if they are a technically minded person, if they like a practical approach, I would say, find a good voice coach or give me a ring and book in a session and start to learn some of the postural and vocal skills so that you can become somebody that people want to listen to. And just a couple of things that's about unlocking your ankles, make sure your knees...

**MURRAY:** (31:11) Hold on, stop, stop, Unlock the ankles. [laughter] Tell me how does this relate to the voice?

**RICHARD:** (31:16) So your voice, especially its power, is primarily driven by your breath and your breath, of course, is in your lungs but it's all supported by your diaphragm and you can't unhitch any muscle in your body from every other muscle in your body. So your diaphragm is supported by your hips, which is supported by your quads, which is supported by your knees and your ankles. And just like a cello or a piano, if all of that is supple then the flow, the resonance, the sound, you know, like... Your voice bounces off pretty much every bone in your body at some point and if the muscles around that is rigid, you reduce the resonant quality of your voice. Just like a





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cello, just like any musical instrument. There's nothing spiritual about this. This is just sound dynamics. This is how it works. So what we tend to do, particularly when we're nervous and self-conscious, is lock off parts of our body.

**MURRAY:** (32:12) Yeah.

**RICHARD:** (32:14) So particularly if you stand up too straight and lock your knees and lock your hips and lock your ankles, you're going to lose a lot of subtlety in your breath. You're going to lose a lot of resonance in your voice and you won't get enough power under your breath to really drive an argument through. You need a certain amount of breath to really gather energy in your voice and in your argument. If you hold tension in your shoulders and your upper chest it can convey subtly in an unconscious level that you're not fully confident in what you're saying and that you're a little self-conscious. To suggest that these things don't matter because they're unconscious is to not really understand what we are as animals. You know, we've only been using verbal language for a very short amount of time as a species and we communicate primarily through posture and physical proximity and position to one another. We've all experienced this at parties, how you stand in relation to one another and the angles at which you stand all communicate subtle things about interest and comfort and...

**MURRAY:** (33:19) Yeah.

**RICHARD:** (33:20) All of this stuff has an effect on our unconscious minds. And so then the voice as well, you know. A lot of people, particularly in Australia, have tension in their larynx and you get that croak in the voice. Whereas, just a few things like humming for five minutes in the shower in the morning when you've got all that lovely hot air and steam...

**MURRAY:** (33:40) Yeah.

**RICHARD:** (33:41) Can help loosen the muscles in your larynx and you can get a better tonal quality to your voice. Doing things like horse blows which are, you know, [sound effect] blowing with your lips and pretending you're chewing a toffee apple can help you get rid of tension that's in your mask in the front of your face and your jaw and then you articulate more clearly. You chew your consonants so people can actually understand and hear what you're saying.

**MURRAY:** (34:04) Yeah. Slow down and articulate is a big one.





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**RICHARD:** (34:08) Yeah. So if you're technically minded, things like that can really help. But I would always marry that with the development of your ability to externalize your focus and put it out onto the world around you and the people around you so that you're paying attention. That's the primary thing for developing authenticity is watch, because if you get outside yourself, you will be less self-conscious, you will be more capable of allowing your emotional reactions to flow through you and not grip you and take control of you because as soon as you try to manage or stop an emotional reaction happening inside of you, you become self-conscious again and it's quite literal. You're taking your attention back inside yourself to keep yourself in control and you will miss things. You will miss cues, clues, signals. Whereas if you can get your focus outside yourself, wake up, pay attention, you will see opportunities, you will see how you're landing, you will start to see how people react to things and you will better be able to drive that.

**MURRAY:** (35:16) That's really obvious... Not obvious. It's really easy to say in a sense. For someone who walks up and gets out there in front of people and it's really hard, how can they start to build that?

**RICHARD:** (35:31) When you're getting up in front of a crowd, it's a little bit of a different thing. Similar principles but the application is different.

**MURRAY:** (35:36) Yeah.

**RICHARD:** (35:37) So short of actually doing a group training exercise, the number one tip I can give you for when you're speaking to a group is don't speak to the group. Find three, four, six people who are giving you positive feedback, who are smiling, who are leaning forward, who are interested, who are nodding and only talk to them. Make eye contact with them, smile at them, talk to them directly. If anybody catches your eye that it looks bored, ignore them. Put your focus back on the people who are creating a positive energy feedback loop for you. You will feed off their enthusiasm and you will gradually start to win over everybody in the room and you will find that the number of people that you can talk to, because they're getting more energized and more engaged, will grow.

**MURRAY:** (36:28) Beautiful. Beautiful. That's great. Great tips.

So Richard, now the final question, Leadership Moments question is about that biggest failure, the one that you look back on and it still informs your leadership today.



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**RICHARD:** (36:49) I'm not sure that I've had anything that I would consider to be such a major flop that it's completely reframed the way in which I approach things. Maybe when I was a young teacher and it's probably the best thing. When I was a young teacher I made some terrible decisions about how to try and get people where they needed to go in terms of their development from a place of 'I knew best'.

**MURRAY:** (37:17) Right.

**RICHARD:** (37:17) You know, I pushed people and hammered them and... People who were, you know, later grateful for it, but I now look back on it and go, "That's not the right way to do it." That was really all about my sense of my own certainty and power. And I'm glad I had those experiences because I'm very much informed by not repeating that loop. I guess this is one of the major things that I've learned. Now it's been... I've been teaching now for 12 or 13 years and one of my pet peeves is when a teacher talks about having got someone somewhere.

**MURRAY:** (37:58) Yeah.

**RICHARD:** (37:59) I have very little to do with that.

**MURRAY:** (38:00) Yeah.

**RICHARD:** (38:01) And I think I've really come to understand that as a reaction to some of those early experiences in my 20's where I thought I was the one getting people over the line.

**MURRAY:** (38:10) Yes. And I think there's a piece in that of, "What's your intent? Is this about me and to make me feel better? Or is it to serve that person and whatever needs to be served at that point?"

Now I do have another question. I curate questions. So when you're working with people and you want to get that shift or nuance, what's one of your favorite questions you use, that you go to?

**RICHARD:** (38:41) I think one of my absolute favorite question is a systemic question. It's from systems theory or systemic intelligence and it's, "What is that a solution for?" "What is the hidden benefit of that?" So quite often people come to me with negative things that they want to get rid of. You know when they...



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**MURRAY:** (39:04) Yeah.

**RICHARD:** (39:05) And so I think one of the first questions is, "If that was gone, what would you be able to do?" Because that can help you really get clear on, "What's the actual goal here?" And reframe it in terms of a positive opportunity rather than a negative running away from something. And the next question I love is, "If that didn't go away, what is that a good solution for or what is the hidden benefit of that?" And that really helps people to come a little bit closer to owning the fact that they're kind of attached to their suffering.

**MURRAY:** (39:36) [cross talk] Yeah. They start to understand why it's so hard to change that.

**RICHARD:** (39:38) Yeah. Yeah. Exactly.

**MURRAY:** (39:39) "Oh, I didn't realize that's why I was doing that."

**RICHARD:** (39:42) And that leads back to what I was talking about before in terms of story structure in that, the place where your growth lies, lies in the darkest part of the forest.

**MURRAY:** (39:55) Yeah.

**RICHARD:** (39:55) It's the bit that you don't want to go to. It's down in the labyrinth. It's with the Minotaur. It's sleeping under the dragon. [laughter] It's where you don't want to look.

**MURRAY:** (40:06) You don't want to look, but it doesn't necessarily have to be that scary to go and look though.

**RICHARD:** (40:13) Not necessarily.

**MURRAY:** (40:13) Not necessarily. I imagine people listening, "I'm never going to go, I'm never going to go there." Yes. It's difficult, but... I don't know. How would you describe it? You don't want to scare people out of doing it.

**RICHARD:** (40:26) Well, I guess this takes us back to what I was talking about before with being influenced by storytelling as I am. I don't mind a little bit of fear in this narrative.



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**MURRAY:** (40:36) Yeah.

**RICHARD:** (40:37) Because it helps people activate the hero in them and I think we all want moments in our life where we can be heroic.

**MURRAY:** (40:45) Yes.

**RICHARD:** (40:45) That the tension point is, yes, it's challenging, yes, you're going to have to dig deep and find that hero or heroine in you, but you've got it in you.

**MURRAY:** (40:54) You've got it. Yeah.

**RICHARD:** (40:54) It comes down back to that faith bit. You've got it in you.

**MURRAY:** (40:57) You've got it in you. You can do it.

**RICHARD:** (40:59) Yeah.

**MURRAY:** (41:00) If people want to get in touch with you, Richard, to find out a bit more about what you do. Obviously, you're really focused on this authenticity, the compelling story, the leadership presence... If someone wanted to talk to you about that, how can they reach you?

**RICHARD:** (41:20) I think the best way at this point is to jump onto LinkedIn and find me there. If you just search for Richard Cornally, I'm quite sure I'm the only one of them in Australia.

**MURRAY:** (41:29) Okay. Good

**RICHARD:** (41:29) I don't think there are...

**MURRAY:** (41:30) LinkedIn. Well, thank you. I loved having you. I loved the chat.

**RICHARD:** (41:35) Great chatting with you, Murray. Thanks for having me.

**MURRAY:** (41:37) Thanks again to Richard for those great insights on authenticity, the value of stories and those practical tips on how to develop your leadership presence. A few questions for you to help with your reflection. Do you have a compelling story that communicates your vision and purpose? In relation to developing your own



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authenticity, do you know where the golf ball is? Do you know where you are now? And those great questions for when you're faced with a challenge. What do you want to do? What do you usually do? And if you're free to find a solution that's good for you and the whole, what would you do? And remember, next time you have to speak and project your voice, make sure those ankles are loosened off. Thank you and until the next time.

[music]

That's it for this episode. Thanks for listening. Head to the podcast page at [www.murraywright.com.au](http://www.murraywright.com.au) 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]



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