



**DIANNE GIPEY**

BRINGING GRACE, COMPASSION & KINDNESS TO LEADERSHIP

**LEADERSHIP MOMENTS PODCAST TRANSCRIPT**



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**EPISODE 60**



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[Start of Transcription]

**DIANNE:** (00:00) I think sometimes we lose ourselves trying to be what everyone else wants us to be and sometimes we just need to sit back and look at our own meaning and purpose and just go on that discovery of what is the meaning and purpose of your life and how does that affect your leadership.

[music]

**MURRAY:** (00:17) Welcome to my podcast. I'm Murray Wright. This is Leadership Moments, real people 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 most importantly, live a better life.

[music]

(00:39) We talk about authenticity and being vulnerable as leaders, but we're not always clear about what it means. Di Gipey is an indigenous woman from Western Australia. Hear her story of being a victim of domestic family violence and sexual assault to becoming CEO of Women's Safety Services in Alice Springs and why grace, compassion and kindness are so important to her. She shares her leadership moments including how she learned that knowing and accepting who you are makes you a more effective leader, able to bring about change. You'll get a different perspective about what a safe working environment means as we discuss practical steps a leader can take to support victims of domestic family violence and sexual assault in the workplace. Enjoy!

Di Gipey, welcome to Leadership Moments.

**DIANNE:** (01:33) Thank you, Murray.

**MURRAY:** (01:35) Di, it's really great to have you on and really give a bit of a different voice to the normal voice we have on the show. You, until recently, were CEO of Women's Safety Services of Central Australia. Do you want to maybe explain to our listeners what that role was about?



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**DIANNE:** (01:56) That's right. So, the Women's Safety Services Central Australia provides the domestic family and sexual violence services to women and children. We have a 30-bed shelter as well as an outreach arm that goes to remote areas and provides service to women in town. So, it's quite a large service and overall, probably on average around about almost 6,000 contacts per year of women and children accessing a service and with accommodation provided to approximately 1,350 and another 1,000 receiving a full service from the outreach team. So, it's a busy little service and it provides a service to women and children across Australia. So really, it's a national service in Alice Springs.

**MURRAY:** (02:53) And when you say across Australia do you have branches in other states?

**DIANNE:** (02:58) No. That's just the women who come to the service from other states.

**MURRAY:** (03:02) From other states. Great.

**DIANNE:** (03:04) So we see women and children from around about 110 different towns.

**MURRAY:** (03:08) Wow! And they come to Alice Springs. And are they mainly from Central remote Australia who are coming into you?

**DIANNE:** (03:15) Mostly yep, and then every now and then a tourist might get a bit stranded. Something happened to the relationship and she's been assaulted, so partner drives off and leaves her. So, we see a lot of tourists.

**MURRAY:**(03:32) Yeah. Wow!

**DIANNE:**(03:33) But a very large indigenous population as well.

**MURRAY:**(03:36) Yeah. What has brought you into this role and doing work in this area, Di?

**DIANNE:**(03:45) So I had a very dysfunctional childhood and left school at 14 and then left home at 14. I was actually expelled from school and then I left home at 14 and got pregnant and had my first child by the time I was 17.



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**MURRAY:**(04:07) Yeah.

**DIANNE:**(04:07) And then I'd had three babies under the age of 20 but I also was in a relationship with a very violent man. So, my childhood progressed into adulthood basically and I lived in that relationship for around about 17 years.

**MURRAY:**(04:24) Wow!

**DIANNE:** (04:24) And left to myself to go to a shelter and stayed in the shelter and that's where I had... my journey of recovery started when I was provided a service of support. So, I guess what led me to my job is going I'm so grateful to be able to have had a place because I went on to get a... I went to university as mature age student and got a degree and for me being able to give back in an area that I feel I have the experience but also the compassion to be able to lead a service to support women and children.

**MURRAY:** (05:05) And when you say the compassion, can you talk a bit about that and why it's so important?

**DIANNE:** (05:12) Compassion and kindness to me are the biggest attributes that we can bring to working within this type of environment because these women and children are often broken, mostly broken. They've been assaulted. They've been abused and they've been emotionally abused. They've had everything stripped off them and taken away from them. So, the best thing that we can do is be compassionate. And that might be going, "Would you like a cup of tea?"

**MURRAY:** (05:41) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (05:41) "How can we help you?" Sitting down and just sitting and just listening sometimes or just meeting practical needs.

**MURRAY:** (05:48) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (05:49) And also believing women's stories and providing a place of solace for the children. That's really important.

**MURRAY:** (05:58) So you said that you were in this relationship for 17 years and you went to a shelter and that's where your journey changed, if you like, and you set out on this journey to being where you are today and working in this space. I'm really curious about... What was it that you found within yourself to even get to the shelter in the first place?



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**DIANNE:** (06:20) So for me, I thought that I was going to die.

**MURRAY:** (06:24) Right.

**DIANNE:** (06:25) I just fearfully thought that I was going to be at that point in that relationship and I also saw the pattern happening to one of my children and that devastated me more than anything. And that's just when I just picked up my kids and just did that's it and went to a DV service and to be truthful, because I'd grown up in dysfunction. I didn't necessarily call it or label it. Domestic family and sexual violence, I didn't know. All I had ever known was abuse. So, once I started getting help and that's when I realized that actually it's not normal and something had to change.

**MURRAY:** (07:09) And how hard was it for you to make the change?

**DIANNE:** (07:13) Well, it was incredibly hard. I left with the children and we went and stayed in a strange place and, you know, I had one daughter in Year Twelve, going through Year Twelve, but I just couldn't stay any longer. I was then working also as a domestic. I used to do domestic work in a mental health facility and so I had some income coming in but then I couldn't work. I was just incapable of working as well at that time because... You know, leaving is hard when you know you leave with nothing and I was the owner of the house because it had been put in my name from my parents but I had to leave, which happens to a lot of women.

**MURRAY:** (08:00) Yeah. Yeah. So, let's get to that first leadership question. Who would you say has influenced you the most as you think about your leadership journey?

**DIANNE:** (08:12) Well, for me I think, my grandmother.

**MURRAY:** (08:15) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (08:16) And my mother probably had the most influence over my leadership and what I feel is the right thing for me on how to lead. They were both, they were all remarkable women. My grandmothers in particular. They had... Two traditional Aboriginal women who were moved on from their own place, and they had to readjust, and they had to learn new things to be able to survive. And they did it with such grace and compassion and kindness. And that came through then also to my mother who was also displaced, and I think for me watching and seeing that they were always kind and didn't lose hope. That's something that I've always thought that



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as a leader that is the quality that I would want and of course that's the first one on a personal level. Of course, there's people on a professional level where I've watched. I've had the privilege of working with several. A lot of people who obviously lead very differently and the big difference though I've always thought was people who could bring people alongside them and there's one fellow in particular, Kevin. He just always seemed to have a way to be able to bring people alongside with him. But he went against what everybody and what all the books and all the teachings were saying about how you should manage people.

**MURRAY:** (09:48) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (09:50) And he just had an exceptional skill of bringing people alongside and walking the journey that needs to be walked even through the tough times. So, I've always admired him for the way he led his team.

**MURRAY:** (10:07) Can you say a bit more about the walking alongside?

**DIANNE:** (10:11) He actually employed me.

**MURRAY:** (10:13) Right.

**DIANNE:** (10:13) After... I really started to leave a management job. My first management job I left, and I actually ran into Kevin in the street and I said, "Have you got a job?" And he said, "I do."

**MURRAY:** (10:22) Fantastic!

**DIANNE:** (10:23) That's right. So, I applied for that job and won that position. So, I had the privilege of seeing how... that difference between his team and other people's teams and how he was able to just get that confidence, get them to have confidence in him.

**MURRAY:** (10:44) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (10:45) And it was done through... I think basically being nice. It seems to be like a... I feel that there's this narrative that leaders need to be a bit more cutthroat.



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**MURRAY:** (10:58) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (10:59) And I feel that for me and especially within the help industry it's actually not how we work. Even though we can manage multi-million-dollar businesses, we can manage... You know, we have to do all those things that we have to do, but above all, we have to actually be kind and compassionate towards staff and be flexible.

**MURRAY:** (11:18) I love that you're coming back to that kind and compassionate because it's something we've discussed in a few of these episodes with guests, this whole notion of compassion. It's very easy to lose it for others. Yet, if we just sit in their shoes and... I love what you said earlier about compassion. Just listening and offering a cup of tea or whatever. It doesn't have to be a great big thing but just be there.

**DIANNE:** (11:44) It doesn't, and I think that goes for clients as well as staff and I think that leading by example to how I expect clients to be treated is then how I also respond to them.

**MURRAY:** (12:00) Yeah. So, you've been in Alice Springs... Well, maybe I'm making an assumption. When did you actually get to Alice Springs?

**DIANNE:** (12:10) Fourteen years ago.

**MURRAY:** (12:11) Fourteen years.

**DIANNE:** (12:13) And I came up... So, my first job in Alice Springs was with the federal government where I came up for a nine month... in a graduate program after I just, as I said before, I was a mature age student and I applied... So, I was the oldest in the graduate program. I was the oldest at uni often and that's what I came up for to do the graduate program.

**MURRAY:** (12:38) I've got a question about... So, you started obviously studying at uni and you've moved around. You've been working in different organizations as an indigenous woman. What's been your experiences of that? I suppose what are the challenges you've had in that.



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**DIANNE:** (12:58) They have been varied and there have been challenges around... In particular when there have been certain groups of people who I've managed, in particular, men.

**MURRAY:** (13:12) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (13:12) Aboriginal men and expectations and differences because officially culture is incredibly strong here in Central Australia.

**MURRAY:** (13:27) Yes.

**DIANNE:** (13:28) And there would sometimes be some conflicts around men's business and what that looked like for women staff and what the expectation is for midwives traveling out i bush. So there have been some very interesting conversations and I guess it's also a huge challenge as well because I think everyone thinks that you get off the back of being Aboriginal and look, I'm not going to say I've just worked really really hard for everything that I've got.

**MURRAY:** (14:01) Yeah. Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (14:02) It's not just because I'm Aboriginal.

**MURRAY:** (14:04) No. And in dealing with the men did you have to make a shift in yourself, in the way you approached them and managed them to get different results?

**DIANNE:** (14:16) Look, I didn't at that point because this was probably earlier on in my career and it is something that I could have done differently on how I approached staff because I was probably a bit of a bull at the gate and going, "Well no. This is how it should go." So I would imagine... Yeah. I do think that I may have done things slightly different, the Di today than the Di back then, but I think that there was a lot of compromise and expectations about my views in supporting women to be able to go out and do their jobs. You know, it doesn't matter who you are in the workplace you're all expected to actually have the same expectations of the work that you do.

**MURRAY:** (15:01) Yeah. Yeah.

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





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And now, back to our guest.

So, what's been one of your bigger 'aha' moments, when you suddenly took a step back and said, "Now I understand what this whole leadership thing is about."

**DIANNE:** (15:55) Yeah. So that would be one. Another would be... Well, you know, I was quite green. Literally somebody said to me, "There's a job going in this place. It's a manager's job." "Well, I've never really managed anyone." "No. You've got five kids. You'll be fine."

**MURRAY:** (16:14) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (16:15) "That's right. Fair enough." And I guess one thing that I've always done is just go, "Okay. You know what? I'll give it a go." So, I put an application in and won the position and one of the things that I did earlier on was decide that we'd do this team building.

**MURRAY:** (16:32) Right.

**DIANNE:** (16:33) And although forced team building. You can begin to see how it started to unravel really really quickly because I think the whole team just rebelled against me.

**MURRAY:** (16:44) Right.

**DIANNE:** (16:45) Because nobody actually wanted to do the activities in the team building that I thought were great and were going to make us all work incredibly well. We were going to be buddies, all of us.

**MURRAY:** (16:55) Yeah.

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**DIANNE:** (16:55) But it didn't quite work out that way and I learned from that, better consultation processes and different ways of team building. Like I feel as though it would be very hard to participate in the traditional form of team building any more. Our last team building was a two-day well-being...

**MURRAY:** (17:18) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (17:19) And that was about really focusing on staff and their well-being.  
**MURRAY:** (17:24) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (17:24) As opposed to sitting down traditionally and telling staff directions, what we're going to do. That will all come but being able to spend a couple of days just to say to staff, "You're worth it." You know?

**MURRAY:** (17:35) That's fantastic.

**DIANNE:** (17:36) "What you do is hard work and we acknowledge that." Whereas that's not what I did the first time. So, I've learned from that.

**MURRAY:** (17:42) So the lesson here to our listeners is, be wary of your team building.

**DIANNE:** (17:47) Be wary of your team building and also be wary of... I think it's about the direction that you think everyone should go down may not be the direction if you actually don't talk to them.

**MURRAY:** (17:59) Yeah. Yeah. I think that's beautiful.

**DIANNE:** (18:01) So really talking to you team is probably... And don't be frightened. One of the things is... I think sometimes we're set up as leaders to have all the answers...

**MURRAY:** (18:13) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (18:14) And to give direction and I think one of the things I've learned is that it doesn't mean you have to have them. You can be a leader and actually not have all the answers because other people will often have better answers than what you could even think of. So working together with everybody regardless of who they are

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in the team setting it up. I've always said to... from everyone in the workplace, has a place that is of importance and hearing their voice about what might work is much more important than me coming up with a solution because I think I have to because I'm the leader.

**MURRAY:** (18:49) Yeah. You talked about the fear and often as leaders we're scared about showing weakness or vulnerability.

**DIANNE:** (18:57) That's it. And often staff, you know, sometimes, you know, some staff will, you know, boom in and for me, that's been okay. Like, alright, that has been a journey and I think it's one for me in going... Because I made a decision a few years ago that I would be vulnerable, and I would tell my story because I have a story to tell and this why I... I think for me, wanting staff to understand where I come from and why I drive things the way I drive things, it's important for them to understand my history and my past because that actually does impact on how I provide leadership in the workplace.

**MURRAY:** (19:39) A great lesson I think for all of us about understanding where we've come from and how it impacts how we go about things.

When you made that decision to be vulnerable, what changed for you?

**DIANNE:** (19:53) What changed for me was better understanding. I know someone who came to me the other night. We were at an award... I was actually shortlisted for the NT Australian of the Year an ex-work colleague came up to me and said, "You know Di, we weren't sure about you to start with, but then you told us your story..." And you can imagine you and the staff, you're in a team. You're leading a team to change management who don't want to change and don't want to be teammates together and this was a really large team. And she said, "That's what changed. That's when I knew that you were going to be a really good leader in this workplace." And that was a really nice feedback. I haven't worked with her for years.

**MURRAY:** (20:41) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (20:41) But there was also criticism. There were also people that went... Well, you know, that's oversharing and that's not important, but it was important for me and I felt that I had to do it. I would recommend... I feel the more vulnerable I am as a leader, the easier it is to bring the team alongside to implement change.

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**MURRAY:** (21:03) Beautiful. And talking of change, because you are passionate about this whole issue of domestic abuse and we were talking before we recorded, you wanted to make the normal in Australia abnormal because there's too much of it going on. Managers, leaders listening to this, what would you say their role is in making the normal abnormal?

**DIANNE:** (21:36) Absolutely crucial. It's a huge opportunity for leaders to be able to support women and men, whoever is going through domestic family and sexual violence, to set up the processes in the workplace that support people when they come forward, to have a plan. The best place for a person to be safe, in particular a woman, is in the workplace.

**MURRAY:** (22:00) Right.

**DIANNE:** (22:01) So she can start the safety plan. She can start to look at... If she wants to leave, start doing that exit plan about how that would look. So I would really recommend that places, think about having... looking at who is in that safe person in the workplace who would want to go and do training to be the support person when people come forward, especially in large organizations. And then being able to support with flexibility, with time. You know, we even as a domestic family violence support service have people who go through that themselves. And it's about being supportive of that and understanding the time off and what that entails especially if there's court cases. So, there's some legislation built around that as well that many people would be aware of, but I think having that identified person in the workplace who could... who is the go to person would help enormously. And I truly... And I said this to you before, I really believe that this could impact and help to save women's lives.

**MURRAY:** (23:04) Yes. It is serious. It's a massive issue, isn't it. And it gets brought up every so often but will fade away again. The one question I've got as a leader/manager is there's maybe people at work who don't want to talk about it or we might not even know and obviously you don't want to pry too much. But what should people be looking for and how would they then, if they suspected something, address their suspicion?

**DIANNE:** (23:38) And that's the challenge.



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**MURRAY:** (23:40) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (23:41) Because since I took over this job and before I took over this job, I had managed hundreds and hundreds of people in this town.

**MURRAY:** (23:49) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (23:50) And then some of those became clients and that was the other 'aha' moment and going, oh my gosh, I missed the signs. You know, that black eye... "Oh my gosh I ran into the door."

**MURRAY:** (24:08) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (24:08) That broken arm. "Oh my gosh! I fell down the stairs once again." So, for me, even I didn't see the signs. So, I think it is about looking out for the signs. And it's also about... If you have a relationship with this person and it's a good relationship, then you can go and say, "Look. How are you going? I'm just a bit worried about you. Is everything okay? Is there anything I can do to help you?"

**MURRAY:** (24:36) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (24:37) And just having those thoughts and letting them know, "Look, I'm here. If you need anybody to have a talk to. I know you're saying there's nothing wrong but if there ever is anything, I just want you to know that I'm here."

**MURRAY:** (24:49) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (24:50) So I think that can make a huge difference to somebody. Caring about somebody and people who just think that nobody will understand, having someone understand could really open those doors.

**MURRAY:** (25:05) What I'm hearing in that as well is it's, as you say, people will come in and say, "Oh I walked into the door," or whatever and sometimes that might be the case but it's I suppose taking a second to pause and just think about it. Ask yourself, is there anything else that needs to be done here?

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**DIANNE:** (25:26) If anything else, "Is this the first time that they've had a black eye?" "Is that a second time they've had a broken bone?"

**MURRAY:** (25:34) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (25:35) Is it, you know... And look it could be that they're accident prone, but it also could be that there being solid bruises, emotional... Being fearful. So, it's not just the physical, it's also being fearful, jumping when the phone rings.

**MURRAY:** (25:55) Yeah. Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (25:55) There's something happening. But I find that most people if they feel safe, they will say something, and I think it's about the workplace providing and talking about it openly as well not necessarily as a team building... Not team building but in your team meeting, making sure people have had training, everybody has had training, for example.

**MURRAY:** (26:17) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (26:18) You know, there's a lot of good organizations out there doing training and just providing that support. I think that will make a huge difference to changing the story and that's what we need to do. Australia, we have to do something to change the story. The workplaces have an excellent opportunity to do that.

**MURRAY:** (26:40) Yeah. I can imagine some people may be thinking, "Oh well, that's Alice Springs. There's a high incidence of this in indigenous population." But I would imagine it's going on everywhere and we don't know half of it.

**DIANNE:** (26:53) Absolutely! It's going on everywhere and we see a lot of non-indigenous women as well.

**MURRAY:** (27:00) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (27:01) And many of them are working women. And it's absolutely... We've only got to look at the numbers everywhere else as well and I think that it's easy to say those things but when you start to look at the evidence... I think it's about also just educating yourself and just going, "Okay. Well, what do I know about it?" Talking to people who have that information or listening to other people's stories I think is a really good way just to educate yourself to understand that domestic family and sexual violence is across all social status.



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**MURRAY:** (27:41) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (27:42) And we've seen that of late where we've seen some high-profile people, actresses and footballers and... have AVO's out against them.

**MURRAY:** (27:52) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (27:53) So I think it's a huge story nationally and I think that the workplace, managers and leaders have a great opportunity to be able to support people.

**MURRAY:** (28:05) And I think, you said something earlier about really actually putting on the agenda and let the people know that you are ready to handle it and support them and making that environment safe for people to talk.

**DIANNE:** (28:19) Yeah.

**MURRAY:** (28:19) If they need to.

**DIANNE:** (28:20) No. And I think that's the nice, safe way in saying, "Look. We've been looking at policies and workplaces should have a policy around domestic family and sexual violence and if not there's lots of places that can help with that. But another thing is we're incredibly influential and as the leaders or the managers we do and can drive direction. And so, we can make a difference by putting it on the agenda and saying, "This is actually going to be... This is really important to this workplace, especially if you've got a majority... Even if you've got a lot of men because it could be that they may be suffering from being the perpetrator and they may need help.

**MURRAY:** (29:04) Oh yes.

**DIANNE:** (29:04) So I think that it's a good way to be able to... Because that's how we will... Working together, that's the only way that we will see change.

**MURRAY:** (29:13) And you talk about resources. If someone's listening to this and is, "Oh, you know what? I need to find out a bit more. Do some research." Is there anywhere you would recommend them to look? Is there a website?



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**DIANNE:** (29:26) Look there are websites. There's lots of websites around but there's ANROWS, there's White Ribbon. They've still got their website up and running.

**MURRAY:** (29:34) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (29:35) There's "No to Violence" but if you typed in domestic family and sexual violence services Australia, you will get a whole bunch of different services especially locally with different information as well because it's obviously incredibly complex and that being said... Knowledge is power, isn't it, and if we've got that knowledge of what we can do then we don't feel as helpless and then we don't bury our head in the sand.

**MURRAY:** (30:03) Yeah. That's great. Before we wrap up on that part of the discussion, is there anything final on that whole subject? Is there any final word that you would say to people listening? Anything you want to add to that?

**DIANNE:** (30:21) I think that for me, don't be afraid to be who you are and if it's kindness you want to ooze, ooze kindness. If it's compassion, ooze compassion because I think sometimes we lose ourselves trying to be what everybody else wants us to be and sometimes we just need to sit back and look at our own meaning and purpose and just have that.... go on that discovery of what is the meaning and purpose of your life and how does that affect your leadership?

**MURRAY:** (30:55) That's pretty powerful. Di, talking of vulnerability, that last question. Your biggest failure? Or as a lot of people are saying, "Well, it's my failure but it's my biggest learning opportunity or moment." And how that informs your leadership today?

**DIANNE:** (31:15) Yeah. I think probably trying to... Probably what I just said really. I think trying to be what everybody else expected me to be and thought how I should be. Examples are, I often use humor.

**MURRAY:** (31:31) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (31:32) And I've had staff say, "We just don't think that a manager should be laughing as much as you do." "Really?"





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**MURRAY:** (31:41) Right.

**DIANNE:** (31:41) "Okay. That's interesting." People will always tell you what they think you shouldn't do and I think that one of the biggest challenges that we have as leaders and managers is to actually do what you know is the right thing to do and be true to yourself in the way you lead people. People like authenticity.

**MURRAY:** (32:12) Yeah. So, is there a particular moment when you realized this?

**DIANNE:** (32:17) There was. It was the moment when I... It was that moment when, I was talking about before, when I decided to just tell my story in a team meeting one day.

**MURRAY:** (32:28) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (32:28) And it was a tough team. This team didn't want to do... It was change management. I was in there to bring about a restructure and the teams did not want to join together. And for me, if I had listened to the voices and allowed those voices to say, "No. This is how we expect you to behave. We don't expect you to be vulnerable in front of us." Then I don't think that I'd be where I am today.

**MURRAY:** (33:05) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (33:06) So for me it was a defining moment of making a decision going, "No. You know what? I'm always going to have... As leaders I think we always have naysayers." There are always critical people and always people who can do our job better... And they may be able to, but the reality is we're actually in the job.

**MURRAY:** (33:24) So, you got to this point where you said, "I've got to be vulnerable. I've got to tell my story." Did you have to do any work in yourself to get to that point?

**DIANNE:** (33:35) Absolutely! Absolutely! And I think it's a case of being able to know who you are and accept who you are. One of the other challenges was that when an Aboriginal identified person from another area coming into somebody else's area and I think that one of the things is I've never ever spoken for the people here and I never will.



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**MURRAY:** (34:01) Yes.

**DIANNE:** (34:01) Because this is not where I am from and I think that's a lesson that all leaders and managers can take as well, is we don't need to be spokes people for other people and we gain a lot of respect from people when we don't. and that was also another defining moment.

**MURRAY:** (34:19) And you say... So, knowing who you are. What did you have to do to know who you are and connect with that inner purpose, if you like?

**DIANNE:** (34:28) For me, so for me it's I'm a Christian.

**MURRAY:** (34:31) Right.

**DIANNE:** (34:32) So I have a faith and that helps and drives me as well, so a lot of work has been done. But I've also, you know, I saw a psychologist for many years. So I took the help when I needed the help and I never thought that was ever better than anyone else. I think that's something that I feel as though sometimes I see leaders come up into the workplace... So one of those other bits of advice that I would give is that... You know, when you start a new job and you're going to any place take your time to sit back and just watch. You don't have to come in and change everything straightaway. That's one of the biggest lessons I've learned as well because I have gone into workplaces and of course... You know, just about every job I've had there has been, some element of change management.

**MURRAY:** (35:33) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (35:35) You need to... For me, the best way, for a long-term goal, is to take a sit back, listen, hear what the staff are saying and then when changes need to come in, unless something is illegal and not safe...

**MURRAY:** (35:52) Yes.

**DIANNE:** (35:53) To sit back and... We don't actually need to stamp our ground, I guess, which is what I think we tend to think we need to do sometimes. We got to put our mark down straightaway, so people know who we are, what we stand for. But actually, if we take a breath and sit back I think the long term goal to be able to work with the team and the team work with us is a lot easier to implement.

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**MURRAY:** (36:17) That's wonderful because we come in, we want to stamp our ground. We're actually starting the battle, the war, and so everyone... It's fight or flight and there's not much collaboration or positive work being done. But what you describe is perfect about just staying in that positive, open, collaborative space. That's beautiful.

**DIANNE:** (36:38) And then I think... Because it's easier to walk alongside people and to have people walk alongside you, if you haven't gone in and basically said, "You know, we think everything you're doing here is wrong so I'm going to make changes." Because that's really the message we send them. We go in and we need to make changes right away.

**MURRAY:** (36:58) Absolutely! Everything you did before, was rubbish. We're going to change it.

**DIANNE:** (37:02) Yeah. Yeah. So, you know, I'm here to tell you how you can do... Look,, and haven't we all done it. So please don't take this as criticism because I've been there and done that. And so, when you talked about one of the things that I've done and what I would do differently, that is what I absolutely do differently now is to sit back, reflect, take the time. And there's no time limit. You've just got to sit back and go, "Okay. How is this playing out?" What are the... And looking at what... Because staff... You're always going to have people be very helpful and give you information.

**MURRAY:** (37:37) Yes.

**DIANNE:** (37:41) So, taking all that in, but taking your time to take all that in. Giving yourself time because you know what? You don't have to prove yourself and perform the first week, second week, month even, when you're there.

**MURRAY:** (37:57) That's lovely. Well, thank you for sharing all of that. I've got a question without notice for you now. What is your favourite question? I actually collect questions from the people I talk to and it's a question you either ask of yourself or of other people when you need to create that reflection and insight.

**DIANNE:** (38:23) Yeah. My favourite question to keep reflecting – and this provides a lot of guidance and direction for me. And I've just recently came upon it when I did the Larapinta Trail with Larapinta Connect. I don't know if you've heard of them. Amazing fellows.

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**MURRAY:** (38:41) Let's talk about that in a moment. So, what was the question?

**DIANNE:** (38:45) The question is, what is your purpose and meaning in life and the direction that you want to go in? Is that being driven by that?

**MURRAY:** (38:56) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (38:58) In your everyday life, is that what you want to do? Are you finding meaning and purpose out of what you're doing?

**MURRAY:** (39:05) Yeah. Fantastic.

**DIANNE:** (39:07) And if not, do you want to keep doing it? If so, what are you going to do to change it?

**MURRAY:** (39:13) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (39:13) Because I think without purpose and meaning in our lives and feeling that we have purpose and meaning and we're making a difference, then our lives can become very stale.

**MURRAY:** (39:23) Yeah. That's a wonderful question or series of questions. It's fantastic. And Larapinta Connect, what do they do?

**DIANNE:** (39:37) It's a leadership course and they go out on the Larapinta Trail for six days at a time. They have various different ones. The one I did was six days and you go out and you basically with a whole bunch of other people who you don't know and who I didn't know and you really just ponder and had time of reflection, especially about your leadership and about things in life as well and your meaning and your purpose. I would absolutely recommend it to any leaders out there who need to just take a step back and enjoy the journey. It was an incredible time for me. It was life-changing in helping me... You know, when I was at a catalyst in my life being able to be with other people who I felt safe with to be able to have those, "Gosh. Okay. I'm not quite sure what my future direction is going to." And this was at the back of... Because one of the things with this this job, I did actually forget to say, we just also built a six-million-dollar building.

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**MURRAY:** (40:47) Yes.

**DIANNE:** (40:48) And we managed that build as a woman's service and I was pretty exhausted after doing that and one of the things that I've also realized as a leader is that I'm not a maintainer. I think knowing what your limits are within your workplace and what your strengths are because for me to get up and do something, get things happening and then stepping back is what I do and knowing the right time to be able to do that. So, going on that Larapinta Connect journey helped me to be able to make choices which actually resulted in me resigning from my job to move on.

**MURRAY:** (41:34) Brilliant. So, you're moving on and have you got anything lined up or that's part of the adventure?

**DIANNE:** (41:41) I have. I have. But when I did resign, I didn't have a job.

**MURRAY:** (41:46) Yeah.

**DIANNE:** (41:47) But I do have a job now, probably moving on with the Disability Royal Commission.

**MURRAY:** (41:51) Right.

**DIANNE:** (41:52) And doing some work there. So that's really exciting.

**MURRAY:** (41:54) How fantastic. Brilliant. So Di, that was a talk full of, well, a lot of wisdom and thank you for taking the time to come on the show and share and be vulnerable and share your experiences with our listeners because I'm sure people listening to this will be inspired and I think you will have changed someone's direction or many people's direction from taking the time to do this. Thank you.

**DIANNE:** (42:25) You're too kind.

**MURRAY:** (42:27) If someone wants to reach out and connect with you, what would be the best way to do that?

**DIANNE:** (42:33) Yeah. I'm on LinkedIn.



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**MURRAY:** (42:34) Dianne Gipey on LinkedIn.

**DIANNE:** (42:36) Yeah. I thank you. And thank you. I think it's great always to be thinking about things. I know I do tend to waffle along and go off track.

**MURRAY:** (42:43) No. I know you're not waffling. You're not waffling.

**DIANNE:** (42:47) But I appreciate also just to be thinking about these things as well. So I think that's... You know that whole Larapinta Connect that's about just causing you to pause and think.

**MURRAY:** (43:00) Yeah. I think that's... And I'm still recording this, Di. I think that's an important thing for people to find the space to stop and reflect and ask themselves some of those big questions because we can get caught up in that whole push and busyness of life.

**DIANNE:** (43:20) Yeah. Yeah.

**MURRAY:** (43:21) Di, thank you very much and good luck in the new job and I hope to stay in touch.

**DIANNE:** (43:27) Thank you so much.

**MURRAY:** (43:29) There you have it. I hope you enjoyed that different perspective. Thanks again to Di for sharing her so powerful leadership moments.

There is a lot to think about after listening to that. Some of my questions are:

Where can grace, compassion and kindness fit into your leadership? I shared some of my own reflections on this in episode 58 that kicked off 2020. Where are you not accepting and being true to yourself? What can you do at work, today to make it a safe place for victims if ever there is a need? How do people know work is safe and will support them?



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Thank you until the next time

That's it for this episode. Thanks for listening to Leadership Moments. Check out the Show Notes for the key learnings, resources and transcripts from this episode. Head to the podcast page at [www.murraywright.com.au](http://www.murraywright.com.au) for all the previous episodes and Leadership Questions from my guests and while you're there, why not subscribe. That way, you'll never have to miss an episode and as a bonus, I'll send you my white paper, "The Power of Questions". That will help you understand and ask better questions and you can find out what my five favourite questions are. Until the next time.

[End of Transcription]



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