



MURRAY WRIGHT & MARK POWELL | TEAM FOCUS

THE TEAM RESET

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EPISODE 73



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[Start of Transcription]

MARK: (00:00) There's this sort of enormous systemic impact that's hit the world and we know from our work with change that it's not a simple 'let's step from here to here' process.

[music]

MURRAY: (00:14) Welcome. My name is Murray Wright and this is Leadership Moments where you will hear real people stories about the moments that have shaped their leadership. You'll get invaluable leadership insights, knowledge and resources, and I hope some inspiration to be a better leader, make a better world and live a better life.

[music]

(00:37) Hi there. Murray Wright here. Earlier this year I released a Team Special podcast where, with my associate coaches, we talked about the changing expectations of stakeholders and what this meant for leaders in this COVID world.

(00:53) Well, we received a lot of great feedback about that. So, along with fellow coach Mark Powell, we continue the focus on teams. And this is aimed at giving you some ideas on how you can manage through everything that's been thrown at you now whilst looking ahead to ensure that the team remains engaged, relevant, and most importantly, successful in this different world. We've called it the Team Reset. So, today we're going to share with you in more detail what we mean by reset, why it's important and we'll outline a simple four-step process that will help you bring the team together, take that step back and reset for what's next. We hope you find this useful.

(01:39) Mark, it's great to be together and today we're going to talk about Team Reset in this different world that we're working in and really focusing for leaders and their teams in this reset and we're going to talk a bit about a process that we think could be really useful and helpful for leaders.



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(01:59) Now, before we get into that let's talk a bit about ourselves so people know who they're talking to. Do you want to maybe introduce yourself, who you are and what you do?

MARK: (02:09) Yeah, thanks, Murray. So, I'm a coach/facilitator. I work with organisations of all different sizes. My speciality is coaching international or boundary spanning teams and teams is an important space for me and as we've talked about numerous times, we can get a lot of impact and leverage by working at the team level.

MURRAY: (02:34) And I think what I love about your experience is you've done it globally. You've been based in Asia. You really love that diversity, working with diversity and what it brings to teams.

MARK: (02:46) Yes. It is great.

MURRAY: (02:48) And in some sense we do cross over. I mean we met in Singapore many years ago. My career was in Europe, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. So, I've got familiarity with working in different cultures and with different teams and obviously, working in Australia and then moving into coaching and still maintaining some contact with the diversity overseas and in Australia. And I think, like you, I've moved from working with individuals, which I love with a passion, but also to teams because you can have that bigger, wider impact through the organisation and outside the organisation as well.

MARK: (03:29) It's also that people are social. Aren't they? That's something we've learned from neuroscience, the importance of the sort of the social atom and therefore the importance of teams. Teams are fundamental, not just to doing business but to sustaining human beings.

MURRAY: (03:47) Yeah. Correct. And I think... You know, we've both done training with Peter Hawkins in that systemic team coaching, which is a great framework to use. And when you look at that systemic model now, teams are under... Well, what would you call it? Is it pressure? Is it... There's been so much going on. The change that's been

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forced upon them and continues to happen. And I think that's what's really... We've been talking about this over a few months. It's driven us to think about, "How can we support teams and help them as we (we're calling it) reset?" I mean what does that... What's going on for you? What do you see that's making this reset so useful and important?

MARK: (04:34) Oh, there's a few things. You talked about the broader systems. So, there's this sort of enormous systemic impact that's hit the world and it's probably at multiple levels, but we can go into that at more detail later. So, there's that sort of system impact that's happening for all of us. There's this massive change as a result of that impact of COVID but other things as well. I mean here in Australia we had the bush fires and then COVID and we know from our work with change that change is not a simple 'let's step from here to here' process, that change... There's a lot documented about the U-Curve of change and how we go through this process. It's often quite painful, including some anger, including some denial, including some sort of frustration and then we come out the other side and we start to build a new way of being and so... At the back of my mind there's this sense of, how do we incorporate our knowledge around how change works into helping teams shape into a new future out of what's been an enormous change and it's going to be ongoing. And then there's that sense of, we are social animals and we need to operate. We do operate in a social manner and so, again if we hold that as a truth, how do we help teams manage that social implication as they move forward into a new way of operating.

MURRAY: (06:15) I think there are some really great points there. That whole change... A lot of teams and leaders would argue and you hear the narrative, "We've made all these changes. We've shifted the way we operate." But that's the survival mode, but as you come out of that, 'how well have people processed and really been on board with that change?' Time will tell but I think there is a need for people to step back and process that. And you talk about the relationships. Again, you talk to teams, "We've operated really well. We love this virtual space. We can... We didn't realise it would be so good." But those teams were formed by being physically together and have the social relationship that's already built as a foundation to allow them to operate virtually. So, what happens when they start bringing in new members and changing and trying to build relationships with other people that they haven't met before. So, I think this is what people are thinking of to find a way of doing in this different world that we're working in. I think...



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MARK: (07:25) I mentioned to you one of the people that I work with in my business is a young guy in India who helps me with social media and I've never met this guy.

MURRAY: (07:36) Yeah?

MARK: (07:36) So, we've... Our whole relationship has been virtual and it's been a wonderful learning for me and there's going to be so much of that going forward and how important is that.

MURRAY: (07:48) The other piece about this, the teams have been working in the survival mode to get through it. They have to start to look ahead to... Well, which is a pretty uncertain future. Things become more complex and how does the virtual space work with that complexity? How will they work through more significant and difficult strategic decisions together? This is the challenge for senior teams, their leaders in this complex world that's... We already knew it was complex. It's gotten even more complex now. It's about, how did they reshape, repurpose themselves, the team so that they actually don't get left behind and in fact, stay relevant and don't become irrelevant in the future. And whilst they're doing that, not to get overwhelmed and burnt out because individuals have to look after themselves so they can keep going. And for me it's about really, how the teams move from a reactive mindset to a creative, innovative one really focusing on what they can control and develop the skills and processes that they need to be able to find the opportunities that are out there, to adapt quickly, really quickly and fast. They've already done it but how do they keep doing it and as they do that to learn and continue to deliver results.

MARK: (09:22) And so we talked about this four-step process as a way of helping teams get through this period of massive change, and not just the little bit of survival change that you've been reflecting on, which has been done very very well and tells us a lot about how human beings actually can be adaptive. But this is a much bigger change, isn't it, as we face into a future that's going to be far far more virtual, far far more complex. There are going to be some industries that are completely destroyed and restructured.



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MURRAY: (09:58) Yeah.

MARK: (09:58) So, in this sort of seismic change that's going to take place, we've got this four-step process to help teams get to a place where they can relaunch into a market with this new positioning and new purpose.

MURRAY: (10:13) Yeah. So, as you say, we built up this process for teams to work through, to assist – a framework to help teams work through this and we talked about the Regroup, the Rethink, the Reshape and the Relaunch. Let's talk a little bit in summary about each of these now. And Mark, we talked about that social piece, the need to work through the change, and that's really what we're talking about in the Regroup.

MARK: (10:44) Well, we're talking about change in the whole four steps and I think that's an important thing that we've... What we have is the end in mind here. It's going to be this new place in which the team operates and possibly a completely new strategy and charter. So, working back from that we've come up with these four steps and you're right, Murray, that the Regroup phase is such an important one, we know, in any change environment and yet it's often ignored. And it's this space of allowing people a space to come together and share what they've been experiencing to get a little bit reflective, not overly reflective, but a little bit reflective about what they've been through, what they've learned from that experience, what they've experienced. Do a little bit of a dump, a little bit of a detox but also I know you like this opportunity that the regroup stage will also look at how we're learning together and what we have been learning and how we can start to learn more effectively as a team.

MURRAY: (11:48) Yeah. I think it's in that change piece. We talked about they've been through a whole lot of change forced on them. So, it's a time to take that step back. Take a breath, just pause and think and process and process as individuals but then collectively to... What have we learned about myself? What have we've learned about others? What have we learned about ourselves as a team? And most importantly, how do they use that learning going forward?

MARK: (12:19) And to start to build some psychological safety in the team. It's obviously been there to help people get through this rough time but to start to build

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up from a more conscious position around acknowledging that social element of the team and the relationships that you talked about and we need to support each other and as we go through into a new charter, we are going to have to have the relationships in place to help do the work we need to do. Because change is really really tough and humans don't like that. Humans like certainty and there'll be this draw back this pull back to certainty and what we know and yet that's not going to be able to be the case because there's just too much complexity now.

MURRAY: (13:04) I think part of that processing is recognising what's going on individually, physiologically with the stress that they're under. I was working with a group yesterday who, at the beginning of the COVID, they were right on it as a collective. They were working so well together. Everyone knew everything and they were supporting one another. Now, as that eased, they reflected and they said, "Oh my God, we started going in fighting each other for resources. We were focusing on my department and not the others and..." That step back allowed them... I think they knew it, but they didn't have the space to stop and think and say, "Oh, how do we then change and prevent this happening?" But it's also to understand that's what happens to individuals. When you're under that sustained stress, your ability to think goes down. So, it's helping the team come together and reset that teamwork part of it, the collective engagement, make sure they drop that defensiveness, I'm not being critical of it just acknowledging all that's going on for them and the impact it's having.

MARK: (14:22) Yes, and I would say there's almost a need there for the team leader to take on a slightly different role. Yeah. It's almost leader as coach or hopefully they invite us in to do the work, Murray.

MURRAY: (14:37) Yeah.

MARK: (14:38) But there is a...There is definitely a coaching role there which is very much about listening and just acknowledging without solving anything.

MURRAY: (14:48) Yeah. It's really acknowledging the victories and what they've done well together and acknowledging what might not be going so well, but that happens.



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MARK: (14:59) And acknowledging the pain people are in. Yeah.

MURRAY: (15:02) Yeah. Yup.

MARK: (15:03) In many cases actually. In many cases.

(15:06) So, then we move to a process of Rethink, which is probably a space of more comfort for the teams. However, the rethink we're proposing is going to have to be a lot more innovative because for many teams and many organisations this is a huge change. So, how are we rethinking where we fit into the world, how are we rethinking our relationship with other teams in the organisation and with our market and the stakeholders that we need to serve.

MURRAY: (15:40) Yeah. And I think in this... We often, when we're working with teams we talk about having this big vision of the future. You say that to anyone right now, they look at you and say, "You must be kidding." But people do need some sort of vision. Now, it might be a vision for 30 days and then you might have to develop another. There still has to be some talk about it and I think there's a piece of really also stepping way into the future and not basing a view of the future on what you've just been through and trying to move from there but just stepping right into that future and working backwards and seeing where you... and letting that inform you, seeing what's going to emerge for you. So, I think it's a big one, this piece. People will be comfortable but I think probably challenged because again, the uncertainty that we're faced with makes it really hard. But the team needs to come together and work through that together.

MARK: (16:41) So, it's an exciting opportunity, isn't it?

MURRAY: (16:43) Yeah.

MARK: (16:44) To rethink the future.



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MURRAY: (16:45) Yes. An exciting opportunity. And this is the part, the innovation, but it's also about staying relevant longer term – short, medium, longer term.

MARK: (16:55) There are three things that occurred to me that any team will need to address in the rethink and you talked about some of it then. Part of it is innovation. Innovation is no longer a nice-to-have. It's a must-have.

MURRAY: (17:08) Yeah.

MARK: (17:09) There's the technology piece which just hit home so loud and clear during COVID. The fact that we're doing this virtually... And then there's probably, and you might have a better or a different language for this but I'm calling it a well-being piece. The other thing that's become clear is that we do need to look after people and as change and complexity increases, that's going to be a challenge for organisations. People who are well produce better results.

MURRAY: (17:45) Yeah. I would put that under sustainable results. So, building sustainability not only into the business and what it's doing but the people who are doing it as well because there's no point burning yourselves out, killing yourselves in the process.

MARK: (18:02) And team leaders and teams are going to have to rethink that piece about how do they stay sustainable. Yeah.

MURRAY: (18:09) Yeah, and I think... You know, there's this wonderful move to virtual and it's all great but people are also realising the impact it has on their well-being potentially because it takes up... It can take up so much of your life at home, etc. So, some real challenges there for leaders again to... and team, to manage and their wider teams.

MARK: (18:36) We've had two stages where you regroup and rethink and now the third stage we're proposing is to reshape.



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MURRAY: (18:43) Yes. And that is about the roles and the goals. It's really taking what you've worked out in terms of the rethink and putting it into more concrete steps and who's doing what?

MARK: (19:00) Who's in the team? What is it they're doing? What are their processes for success and for performance? And the topic I know that's important to you, what's their relationship with other teams in the business?

MURRAY: (19:16) Yes. And who's in the team? What skills do they need? Because again, it is a new world we're entering. So, does the team have the right skills? Do they have the diversity of thinking in the team? Because the studies are showing that the more diverse the team the better the outcome as long as they're underpinned by that psychological safety. So again, like all these steps it seems quite simple but it's also quite complex within it to work through it.

MARK: (19:45) Also made complex by the forces of economic reality that some businesses have had to let go a certain number of people just to get cost down.

MURRAY: (19:55) Yeah.

MARK: (19:56) And so, they haven't actually done the reshaping strategically. It's come about because of the cost issue. But now we're suggesting there's an opportunity to do this reshape after you've rethought your strategy in your future.

MURRAY: (20:13) Yeah. And I think acknowledging that this process... You know, it's not that you'll do it now and then that's you set for 12 months. This is going to be a continual process as things evolve and change. So, it's a really good rhythm, cadence for a leader and a team to have with each other. How do we regroup? How do we rethink? Where do we need to reshape? And then that last piece is the Relaunch. Do you want to talk about that, that piece, Mark?

MARK: (20:46) Messaging is such an important thing, isn't it, in the world. You know, the scripts we use, whether they are internal or external. The dialogues we have and

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so that relaunch is really about scripts, dialoguing, telling the story and not even from the sort of spin perspective, although that's going to be important. What's the spin that the exterior world hears about us as a team? But there's that internal piece and how do we connect the new purpose of the team with maybe what happened in the past and how do we build a new but coherent story for us that's going to hold us together and allow us to really launch out into the world and be effective?

MURRAY: (21:33) Now really in that piece also take as part of that relaunch... Yes, it's the messaging and we talked about it. It's going to be at many levels. You know, the next 30 days, the next six months, whatever is relevant to that team and situation. But there's in this part of the relaunch, it's connecting with those wider teams, connecting with the stakeholders and making sure you're in touch with what's going on around at all times and using that information - it's staying connected. That's part of this staying relevant.

MARK: (22:07) So here are four steps and as you mentioned before, we're suggesting there is a flow from regroup, rethink, reshape, relaunch that will be important for teams to undertake over the next six to nine months, six to twelve months perhaps.

MURRAY: (22:27) Yeah.

MARK: (22:28) But as you alluded to, it's also a nice framework for leaders and teams to look at and say, "Where do we need to spend our time at any point? Maybe we need to spend more time rethinking our strategy. Maybe actually what we need to do is just spend a bit of time regrouping. Maybe we do an off-site just to regroup a little bit." So, it's a great sort of model for diagnosing where the team's at as well.

MURRAY: (22:54) Yes. It's not necessarily linear.

MARK: (22:57) No. It's not.



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MURRAY: (22:59) Beautiful. Well, this podcast, this recording today was about talking about why we're doing it, introducing ourselves, talking about why we're doing this and what it is. Over the next few weeks, we're going to do an episode, a podcast dedicated to each of those elements – the Regroup, Rethink, Reshape and Relaunch – to give leaders a few more insights, tools and ways forward on how they can do that with their team and we really hope that provides a useful resource for leaders as they themselves take that step back and regroup and think about how they take their teams forward and engage them in this different world that we are faced with.

MARK: (23:50) Indeed and we'll talk a little bit more real case scenarios as we move forward to provide leaders and teams with some deeper insight. It's been good talking about this, Murray. Thank you.

MURRAY: (23:03) Yeah. I know. I've enjoyed it. It's a good start and we just hope this is useful for people and look forward to the next session as we talk about the Regroup.

(24:18) Before we sign off, Mark, is there one... There's a leader listening to this, is there one thing as you reflect and we've had this discussion now, is there one thing that's come up for you that you'd share with a leader as a useful thought or insight whether this conversation or just the situation now.

MARK: (24:41) My thought is for them to start just the reflective process with themselves a little bit. So, what have you noticed has been your own response to change? And what have you noticed about how you've been dealing with the dramatic increase in complexity? That would be the piece I'd offer.

MURRAY: (25:03) Yeah. I love that. I think I would just add to that as part of that is, step back and take that deep breath and give yourself some time and space to think and have that reflection. Beautiful. Until the next time. Thank you.



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(25:19) Thank you for listening. I hope that gave you some ideas on how you can bring your team together and start your own reset. If you follow the link in the Show Notes you can download a summary on the Reset framework which will also give you useful questions to ask yourself and the team at each stage. In the next Team Special we'll focus on the team Regroup step of the Reset process. If you have any questions about your particular situation I'd be happy to have a chat with you. Drop me a note at murray@murraywright.com and we'll find a time to talk. Until the next time.

[music]

(25:58) Thank you for listening. Check out the Show Notes for the key learnings, resources and transcripts from this episode. You'll find all the previous episodes, Leadership Questions and other resources on the podcast page at www.murraywright.com.au. Remember to hit the subscribe button while you're there and receive the fortnightly Coaching Moment newsletter. One last thing, if you enjoy Leadership Moments, it would be great if you could leave a rating on whatever platform you are using. That will help others find it and of course share it with your friends and colleagues. Thank you and until the next time.

[End of Transcription]



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