



Episode 7 – Relational/Learning and development

Transcription

INTRO: Welcome to Trailblazing with CorbettPrice, where we present new and fresh perspectives that challenge how you approach change to solve some of the biggest challenges faced by business and government leaders today. Here's our host, Andy Corbett to introduce the final episode in our series on organisational health.

ANDY CORBETT: Hello everyone. I'm Andy Corbett, the Managing Director of CorbettPrice, and I just want to thank you again for joining us for our podcast series on organisational health and the seven dimensions of wellness. Today is our last episode in the series and what we'll be doing today is covering the 7th dimension of organisational health, which is all about learning and development.

And over the past few years, they've really reset employee mindsets in many ways, with workers really questioning their careers, their life purpose, what makes them happy, and determining the right balance between home and work life. And on the employer side, talent and skills shortages, employee retention, and hybrid working models have caused a significant shift in the focus of human resources and the role of learning and development in influencing these factors and of course, these outcomes as well. According to the [2023 LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report](#), 22% of employees of all ages stated that they wanted their organisation support to balance their work and personal life. And in the age bracket of between 35 to 49, this actually increases to 26%. The same report rated employee wellbeing as the fourth priority program area.

And if you think about this from the bigger picture, that is what we've all been talking about throughout this series, organisational health. If the learning and development opportunities do not

meet what employees want or need, an organisation's financial performance, occupational and relational dimensions can be heavily impacted. *Research from the Journal of Occupational and Environment Medicine states that employees who have participated in wellness program programs regained a total of 10.3 hours in productivity. Harvard University said employers saw a return on investment of \$3.27 for each dollar spent on wellness programs, just indicating wellness programs to be fundamental in this day and age.* **Reference:** [Udemy Business 2022 Workplace Learning Report](#)

So how do we approach learning and development opportunities differently to meet employees expectations and improve their overall wellbeing? Well, joining us for this discussion is David Powell. David is an author, founder and life skills mentor of The Golden Thread. David is the recipient of the Visioneers 2022 global award, in recognition of his work to benefit humanity, he's been empowering individuals and teams for three decades in hundreds of organisations across 30 countries and five continents to improve their lives and business performance. David's lifelong research into history, religion, gnostic wisdom and psychology, as well as his scientific background, enabled him to form his online Life Journey Skills program, which aims to help people thrive in life by addressing and inspiring the whole person body, mind, emotions and deeper inner being. So, without further ado, I'd like to introduce David.

David, thank you very much for joining us today on this episode of the podcast.

DAVID POWELL: You're welcome, Andy. My privilege to help where I can.

ANDY CORBETT: Excellent. Good stuff. All right, then, David. So look, we'll get straight into it, shall we? So, first question I've got. In the 30 years that you've been working with organisations, how have you seen employees needs change in terms of what they want and need from professional development programs that their employer provides?

DAVID POWELL: Andy, that is a crucial question. I suggest we wind the clock back a bit. 260 years ago, 1760, the Industrial Revolution began and we saw for the first time mass employment in factories and then later in offices. And the practice which employees like us have been going through since then, everybody went to work five days a week, or in my father's case, five and a half days a week. Show up at nine, go home at five, or show up at eight, go home at four. But here's the point all the employees were working under the directions of their supervisors and managers. There just was no concept of the possibility of working from home. It just wasn't part of the picture.

Then, all of a sudden, in early 2020, we had the COVID lockdowns. And this is the point. It completely changed the workplace paradigm and it changed the relationship dynamic between the employer and the employee. Because we all had to work from home. Now, fortunately, we had these relatively new communication platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams and they came into their own and made this transition of working from home so much easier. But here's the point many people have realised that they actually thrive a lot better working from home, better work life balance and they're less stressed and they have more autonomy in their environment and their day to day life, they're organising it. And that is very, very attractive to most people. It's like once

you've tried it, you don't want to lose it. And a lot of managers will tell you the amazing thing. The assumption was people couldn't work on their own. The amazing thing, it all worked.

So we've got this situation now post COVID, that a lot of people, they don't want to go back to a workplace five days a week simply because the lockdowns are finished. At least they want a hybrid working environment, sometimes working from home and sometimes going to the office a few days a week. And I think the point is Andy, it's not going back to how it was before. And here's the other point, that since COVID has swept through, a lot of employees, probably almost all employees, seem much more focused on their wellbeing and how they're feeling. And that includes wanting fulfilling and meaningful work, like a healthy work culture. And they want energised managers and leaders who empower them with passion, purpose and vision. So it's like they've stood back working from home and the consciousness has shifted and they know much more about what they want.

So, to answer your question about what has changed, all of the research is indicating employees want employers to take their staff wellbeing seriously and provide programs that support their overall wellbeing as well as enhancing productivity. And I think the point is employees who get this and who act are the ones who are going to attract and retain the best people and they're going to future proof their organisation. So no matter how turbulent it gets out there, they've got the core of the good people.

And I think the other thing about you asking about what's changed, if you're going to make this a reality and have an A-grade hybrid work culture and an A-grade, team leaders, management and staff are all going to need what I would call interpersonal upskilling, because it's a lot more challenging to work across this hybrid. So I would suggest to your listeners, everybody's going to need self-empowerment skills. They beat the drum about wellbeing. Wellbeing comes from the inside out. It's not something you can give someone a sticker. And so, self-empowerment skills will be very important. I would suggest relationship skills are also going to be important because it's a lot harder to maintain relationships in turbulent times on a hybrid environment. And, of course, team skills, exactly the same. Team skills are crucial. Together, everyone achieves more. And again, we've got to use these team skills across the hybrid environment and yes, life skills, because so much now has changed. So you ask me about what's changed, I would say that is the major set of changes.

ANDY CORBETT: Thanks, David. That's very interesting, actually, from the work that I'm doing and maybe from the work that you've experienced as well and some of the conversations that you have with those organisations that you work with. Have you seen a trend of going back to kind of pre COVID habits and wanting everyone to be coming back into the office? And if you have, what do you think is driving that and what can be done?

DAVID POWELL: It's very interesting. I don't want to be cheeky. There are some organisations that in the past thrived on what you and I might call command and control. And they like command and control. And some organisations have tried to encourage people to go back into the workplace. But what I found, and I talked to a lot of people around the world, there is an incredible stubborn resistance. People are happy to do the hybrid. There are a few people who insist on working from

home. There are people, but most people, they want this hybrid. And. Well, I'll give you an example. A woman said to me, "Look, David, the firm has started to allocate mentors". And she said, "Some of the worst command and control managers are now supposed to be our life skills mentors". So I think, Andy, that's the point we were talking about. Organisations that truly get this and handle the change of paradigms so that the people work hybrid and feel fulfilled, they will succeed. To fight it and try and get everybody back in the office, I think is pushing it uphill.

ANDY CORBETT: Yeah, okay. Yeah, I agree. And I think it's a big challenge that a lot of organisations are working through as we speak, really. And in terms of the skills that you just mentioned before, the relationship skills, the team skills and so forth, why are they so important? And what is the danger for organisations if those particular needs aren't met? Could you elaborate on that a bit more?

DAVID POWELL: Yeah, it's a good question. Well, I mean, we're touching on it already, Andy, I think the point is you can't reverse a paradigm shift. The game has changed. Once this sounds cheeky, once employees have tasted freedom, as they did, as they had to, then you can't go back. So there is this urgent need, I would say we now have to empower all the employees to feel this deep feeling of wellbeing that they're looking for because everybody's involved in this new way of operating and you ask, what's the danger? Look, if organisations don't provide this upskilling, then the people I've talked to and I've seen it happening, is the best people are going to leave seeking better support and learning opportunities. They're not going to hang around. And quite frankly, if an organisation doesn't adapt, then they simply won't attract or retain the A-grade people. I know it sounds a bit blunt, but you ask my experience, that's what I've been observing.

ANDY CORBETT: And I guess attrition is on the top of everyone's lips at the moment, isn't it? Top-of-mind. Sorry. For executives around the globe, it seems to be one of the sort of key items that's keeping them up at night, so it's something to be taken very seriously. And it's very interesting that you say that some of these sort of actions can really help address the attrition challenge.

DAVID POWELL: Yes, I mean, at the height of it, a lot of managers I was working with were saying people were asking for these telephone number, salaries or wages got a bit out of hand, but even though we're past the worst of the pandemic now and it's inverted, commerce calmed down a bit, there's still this deep need for people say it all over the place, a sense of wellbeing. And that's not easy to achieve without the sort of skills enhancement that certainly I never got at school and I haven't met many people who did. So we're after something that we all want and because it's not freely available, I would say the organisations that win will be those that provide that upskilling.

ANDY CORBETT: Yeah, absolutely. And another sort of key challenge, I guess, from some of the organisations that I work with as well is this idea of burnout and fatigue amongst the workforce. I don't know if you're experiencing the same, but do you think, what can organisations do to address the burnout and fatigue challenge?

DAVID POWELL: Well, I think that burnout and fatigue are for want of a better term effects, their symptoms. So the question then becomes, well, what's the root cause? And like, if we've, most of us have spent our entire life working in the old system where the supervisor and the manager told us all what to do. This idea that we've got to own the space, own our own life, own our own work

environment, unless you've got the skills to balance, figure out how to do it, what to do, you can stress yourself out. So I think if we don't address this, then those effects of burnout and stress and worry will remain. Flip it around. If we do address these things, then we can all adapt and arguably work better and more productively than we've ever been before, as well as feeling better with our wellbeing. So there's some terrific upsides in this paradigm shift that COVID has triggered.

ANDY CORBETT: Absolutely. And what about sense of purpose? And sort of helping people to bridge their sort of personal sense of purpose with the purpose of the organisation. What kind of trends and experiences have you got in that particular area?

DAVID POWELL: That again, is a good one. I mean, in my own 30 years working out there around the world, whatever organisation I go in, anywhere in the world, I always say first question what's the game? And by that I mean what's the vision? What's the success vision for the organisation? And then what are the strategies to achieve that vision? And we can talk about that.

I found it's better if you've got a graphical vision. When you're communicating, the picture is always worth 1000 words. You can remember people's faces, you can't remember their name so well. So if you've got a graphical vision of what the success of the company looks like, the organization looks like on the horizon. And then you use graphical plans to come back, like rope bridges across a river and they're on the wall. Then when everybody shows up to work, you can see these strategies like rope bridges leading into the future, so everybody knows what they're going to be doing and what their colleagues and buddies in other teams are going to be doing.

Now here's the point. Because people have sort of woken up, I don't know what the right word of consciousness shift, paradigm shift, woken up. If an organisation can not only make sure that the vision for the organisation and the graphical plans are there, if the organisation can help each employee elicit their own vision of success for their life. And that could be over 5, 10, 15, 20, or 50 years. You know, who knows where they want to live, where they want to travel, what they want to do. And the organisation helps the employee get a graphical vision of their success and then using those same graphical planning tools, get a set of, I call them rope bridges back from their life vision. So on their wall, at home, they've got what I call a game plan for their life, which of course they can discuss with their partner and their family. So now we've got two games, we've got the vision and the strategies of the organisation and we've got the vision and the strategies for the employee. If an organisation can do that, then you've basically motivated the person twice. They know the game they're playing at work, the contribution they're making and what all those around them are making and they also understand how what they're doing fits into their own life journey. Does that make sense?

ANDY CORBETT: Yeah, absolutely. And just to build on that, there's this idea of what people see on the walls and also what people see in the halls. And going back to the pre-K with what they see in the halls probably now, what they see in the virtual environment, what's the kind of role of the leadership in terms of establishing the right culture in place to really sort of cement that sense of purpose and motivation for employees?

DAVID POWELL: Yeah, good question. Look, I often go back to the origin of a word, the. The word leadership derives from an ancient Anglo Saxon verb, Laedan, which means to show the way. So

when all said and done, the job of the leader is to show the way. As Henry Kissinger once said, the job of the leader is to take the people from where they are to where they've never been before. So a leader has to go, okay, team, this is where we've got to go. And in my terms, it's the vision out there in the future. And here are the graphical plans, like road bridges, so the leader can say, this is where we're all heading.

You use the word the culture. I would suggest the way to look at culture is how we're going to play this game. How are we going to play the game called let's work as a team and achieve the vision? And the two keys to any successful empowering culture, I think, are trust and assertion. Neither of these necessarily come immediately. They're all skills that can be taught. So it's not going to be possible to work with different types of people unless you know how to trust them. Where are the trust deposits being made? Where are the trust withdrawals? And you've also got to have some tools and skills around assertion, not aggression, assertion, because the pushy people have no trouble in speaking up, but the quieter people on the team have much higher acuity. They see the detail that the pushy people may miss and we have to have systems and approach is to allow those quieter people to speak up. Does that make sense? So you ask about leadership. I would say the two jobs of the leader is to create the journey to the vision and also give the people the skills so they can trust and assert comfortably.

ANDY CORBETT: Yeah, absolutely. And you mentioned systems and processes. What kind of examples have you got of those?

DAVID POWELL: Well, when I'm running workshops, I ask people to list the systems. We don't get much training on systems in life, but everything's a system. The laundry basket is a system. The printer is a system. The computer is a system. And when you ask people to list the systems that support their work environment it can sometimes be quite a long list. So if I look around my office, there's the desk, the chair, the drawers, the laptop, the screen, the lights. And then behind it, there's the computer databases. There can be all sorts of depending on where you work warehousing or trucks, all sorts of things. All of these are systematised. And then what I say to people, okay, now we've got a list of systems. Mark the systems that are working really well with a T, meaning they're tight, efficient. And mark the systems that are not working so well with an L, meaning they're loose and sloppy.

You can imagine a group of people will produce a list about 50 systems. There's probably five T's and 45 L's. And people laugh. And then you go, well, who's accountable for that system that loose one? And they go, well, we all are. And I'll say something like look, I've looked on your employee list. There's nobody with the name we all are. So I get them to list the mission critical systems that are loose. You know, maybe there's three, four, or five, and then we go, okay, let's take them one at a time. Which mission critical, loose, sloppy system are we going to fix, and who is accountable? So does that make sense that the systems underpin how we perform and play the game?

ANDY CORBETT: Yeah, absolutely. That's great. Thanks, David. And I know we've touched on this already in some of the previous answers that you've given, but I guess if we just zoom in a bit more on the learning and development programs side of things. So, there's several reports. We've got reports from Employment Hero, there's Deloitte, there's LinkedIn. They all point to the need for

learning and development programs to include how to improve employee wellbeing and, of course, mental health. So this is a big challenge, of course, for learning and development managers themselves. How should they tackle this? And if you're thinking about in terms of what should be redesigned or what should be rethought or in fact, what should be reinvested in?

DAVID POWELL: Yeah, that is another good question. My heart goes out to L&D people in HR as well as Talent Acquisition, because all of a sudden, everybody's in the spotlight. What are we going to do? What are we going to do? Look, let's chunk it down. I talked about self, relationships and teams.

Let's look at self. As I said, this sense of wellbeing that everybody's seeking is to me built internally within the self. It comes from inside out. So I would suggest L&D people have got to organise skills enhancement so that each employee can develop what I would call a strong sense of self. Learn and know who they are, are what makes them tick, how to develop inner strength and how to develop more resilience and persistence. Because we can all look out the window and see this 21st century is getting pretty turbulent and I don't think it's going to calm down anytime soon. So these are skills people are going to need, as you alluded to we talked about they're going to need self-motivation skills. So they need, as we said, not only a sense of purpose and plans at work, but they also need a greater sense of definition of purpose and plans for their life.

And then we hear a lot about this mindfulness. I would suggest that the learning and development people introduce basic meditation skills. I talk about the parrot that keeps chattering on in your ear. "What about this?", "What about that?", "It's not fair", "She should have done this", "he couldn't have done that". So, basic meditation is simply designed to calm the chattering parrot down, the ego control. And then if people start to calm the mind down, that quiet voice of intuition can come in incredibly powerful, but often very quiet. And you get this flow of creativity. And if you can calm the mind down, problem solving also becomes easier.

So those are the sort of self-skills I would encourage every L & D manager to introduce. So the person and knows how to strengthen inside, become self-motivated and calm down the chattering mind. That usually runs seven by 24 in terms then of relationships, working with other people.

What I would suggest is give people tools so that they can look at other people who they work with or who they're interfacing with, read them. In other words, understand how to read what makes other people tick and then having that understanding and empathy. And they are skills and they can be learned that not everybody's like you or I then being able to reach out and build rapport. I won't go into the technologies of the various levels of rapport. But the relationships then is reading other people understanding with empathy and then building bridges of rapport that are so strong that work over a hybrid work environment and they'll work under stress.

Now the third thing I talked about was team skills. Like if they're going to have to work in a high performance team, elicit cooperation and work successfully with other people to achieve this common goal then, as we said, you've got to go. I would urge every L&D person to go beyond the mission statement to the vision because it's so much more powerful to go beyond whatever documentation you've got in terms of strategies to build these graphical rope bridges so people can see the game plan leading into the future.

You raised this business about culture, trust and assertion, they're skills as well. And here's the point. I would also suggest they look at developing what I call contribution agreements, customer focused contribution agreements. Both customers outside the organisation, as well as people they serve or relate with inside the organisation.

And a contribution agreement goes far beyond a job description because it articulates how the employee will contribute to the organisation's success vision, and how the organisation will contribute to the employee's capabilities. So we can help people to make sure they're able to perform to whatever Gold Medal standards are needed, so they got the skills and abilities that the employees got the chance to perform to Gold Medal standards. And as you alluded to, there's a supportive culture and tight good systems, and then each employee wants to perform, they've got the keys to their personal motivation.

So I think Andy, that's what I'm saying. L&D have now got to make sure everybody's empowered the leaders, the managers, and the staff. And because we're working this hybrid, I would encourage them to consider offering mentoring and coaching and online skills enhancement training. We're finding that is very popular so that people can access the skills enhancement they need anywhere and at any time. And if they need to watch a module once or ten times. Nobody's going to know. So my summary advice to every L&D manager would be to analyse where you find yourself, analyse the exposures, get an action plan, and kick into action. Does that make sense?

ANDY CORBETT: It does. And I just want to talk about a few things that you mentioned there. So, yeah, meditation, I think that's great. I am a strong believer in that. I think it's really helpful to calm the mind down and really establish that flow of creativity. There also are a lot of people who are skeptical about meditation and sort of dismissive of it. I mean, what's your sort of advice to L&D managers to help articulate the value and importance of meditation?

DAVID POWELL: It's funny you should say that. I was facilitating a group of CEOs yesterday, and this came up. One of the guys, he's in the trucking industry, he's an Aussie bloke. And he goes, "my wife's always on about this". And then he said, "I'll tell you a story, mate". He said, "I went to a breathing meditation class with my wife and I started doing it". And he said "all of a sudden, there was this unbelievable stillness in my mind". He said it was quite incredible. He said it's never happened before, and then he said a huge wave of emotion came up. So we talked about there's two parts to this. He was very impressed with the silence that stopping the mind achieved for him. And then he realised there was stuff he was guessing that could come out and purge.

So it's what gifts and skills have you got that you can access better when you can stop your chattering parrot mind, which we all have. So look, Andy, I mean, everybody has their own path. There are thousands of apps out there with meditation. So all I would say to an L&D person is, look, just suggest to people, they consider it okay?

ANDY CORBETT: Yeah, that's right. People listening can access these things. As you said, there is lots of apps out there. It can go beyond just what's available, obviously, from the L&D manager. There's all sorts of things you can do in the home, obviously. And I think Microsoft teams have recently introduced something, haven't they, related to sorry, Microsoft as the organisation, as part of its teams products, introduced something where it encourages people to take a bit of a

mindfulness break between teams. Have you come across that? **Reference:**

<https://techcommunity.microsoft.com/t5/viva-insights-blog/introducing-headspace-a-new-focus-mode-and-quiet-time-settings/ba-p/2431919>

DAVID POWELL: I haven't seen anything from Microsoft, but the point I would make, I think there's tens of thousands, there might even be hundreds of thousands of apps out there. The point is, the mind is very powerful. Most people's minds run seven by 24. We wake up in the middle of night, there's a work problem running. You cannot access these deep intuitive gifts, these deep creative gifts, these deep problem solving gifts, unless you learn to shut the mind up. That sounds a bit crass, but whether you call it mindfulness or meditation, the purpose is to shut the mind up for a while. And then the gifts that we all have, and we need the whole team with their gifts, performing. That's the bottom line of whether you call it mindfulness or meditation, it's to tap the deeper powers that we've all got that we don't normally get to use.

ANDY CORBETT: Yeah. Do you yourself follow a meditation routine or regime, and do you have any tips around for the busy person to sort of help manage that and when it went to an appropriate time of day, or is it really just case by case, really whatever works for the individual.

DAVID POWELL: Well, obviously over the decades, I've taught a lot of teams and management teams to meditate, and what I always say to people, what I do personally over, I think I'll be meditating 50 years now. I only use two approaches. Sometimes, I just close my eyes and just watch my breathing, and I might add a mantra, so hum or whatever. But what I found very powerful is I think it was originally called [Alpha Dynamics](#). You basically close your eyes and go down through the colours of the rainbow. So if I'm leading the meditation, I go, everybody calm down. Close your eyes. Now, let the colour red immerse and wash through your body, and then orange, and then yellow, and then green, and then blue, purple and violet. So I lead them down through the colours. You can do it yourself, don't need me saying it.

But I always warn people, most of us, when we start this, carry what I call a long term sleep deficit. So you might have got 15 senior managers sitting in front of you, and I warn them, and of course, once we get down to violet, at least half of them have probably fallen asleep, and they were probably in a deeper sleep than they've been in for months. But the point of it is you then allow about 20 minutes. I usually say to people, look, once you're down below violet, just drift through the colour blue. There's something very powerful about the colour blue. You'll find your breathing is very shallow and everything calms down, and then 20 minutes later, it's not absolutely 20 minutes, just come back slowly up through the colours from violet back up to red, and then open your eyes. Does that make sense?

ANDY CORBETT: Absolutely. And I'm actually going to try that after this after this recording, so thanks, David. Appreciate that.

DAVID POWELL: I must tell you one story. No, I won't mention the telephone company, but I was asked a long time ago now. I had a senior management team from a telephone company and they asked if they could use this getting down to the blue and so I introduced this idea that they would envisage a door which they would open and there would be a very wise being their choice. The other side. And then we had this series of questions that we want they wanted to ask their wise

being. And I mean, it sounds all a bit woo-woo, but the point was at the end of it, when they came back up through the colours and quietly talked, the whole answers from their wise beings was nothing to do with the technology. It was all about empowering their staff. I always remember it's just incredible. So the point is, you go down below the chattering mind, there are sources of wisdom and power that we can all learn to access. And if L&D can give the people the tools, you've got a long way towards the A-Team.

ANDY CORBETT: Yeah. Excellent. And just one more point on that initial question and the answer that you provided. You mentioned contribution agreements, which I really like that concept and a lot of my audience within public sector, a lot of the problems that they're trying to fix really requires a kind of whole-of-government, collaborative approach across multiple teams, across multiple agencies is the contribution agreement. Obviously it's very helpful within the agency that they're a part of, but obviously I think it sounds helpful as well to go beyond that and apply it to the ecosystem that they operate within. Have you seen some good examples of that within your experience with different organisations?

DAVID POWELL: Yes, I'll put in a cheap plug for my book, [Life Journey Skills](#), which you could delete that part if you don't want it. But the point is there's a chapter on contribution agreements. But the structure this is the important point, Andy. The structure is you first of all list for each person who are their customers. Now, I use the word customer because we're giving service, we may be supplying products, we certainly got to develop a real relationship. So to answer your question, it's not only like so the first customer you have is your manager. You may have got members of your team who are also customers of yours, but in the wider government world, there are arguably going to be customers out in other departments on into the wider economy.

Then when you've got your customers listed or groups of customers, the next question is, well, what are the parameters by which each customer or group of customers are assessing value? And value can be assessed across the quality of the product you deliver, if you're delivering products, the quality of the service you're delivering, if you're delivering service, and most of us are the quality of the relationship established as well as if there's any price or cost. So you're getting people look at different customers, inverted comma customers, and clearly not everybody is assessing your performance or the employee's performance on the same set of criteria value, contribution.

And then, of course, the third question is, well, what's the Gold Medal standard? So if you say, Andy, I'll get back to you by 5:00pm this afternoon and I call you on Friday morning that is not a Gold Medal performance, that's a Lead Medal performance. There's no silver or bronze in business. It's gold or lead. So does that make sense? So it's a long-winded way of saying the contribution agreement can map out for any employee or manager who they're in service to from the government out into the wider community, and then it's the same thing. Are they able to perform? Do they have the chance to perform? Do they want to perform? Does that make sense?

ANDY CORBETT: It does. Thanks, David. That's great. So another question that I've got is this idea of lifelong journey of learning. And you hear that phrase, creating a lifelong journey of learning quite

often. How can employees incorporate these new learning approaches that we've spoken about throughout the employee lifecycle or employee journey?

DAVID POWELL: Yeah. Look, this is another important question. I often say to people, if you think back before the Industrial Revolution, the Agricultural Age, if you weren't lucky enough to be born up in the hill in the castle or the palace with the rich guys and you didn't want to live with Mum and dad or Grandma or Grandpa in a field in a mud hut, then if you wanted to get ahead in the game of business, you had to join a craft or a guild. And it didn't matter whether you're going to be a potter, stonemason, and carpenter. The system was always the same.

So you would start, let's say you're going to be a potter. Your mum or dad would take you along to the potter and you're about eight years old and you become what they called an apprentice. So if you were the apprentice, you got to get up at 04:00, a.m. Fire up the kilns, get the glazes and clay ready. And here's the point. As the potters showed up to work, they'd show you how different clays, different glazes, different heights in the kiln, produce different effects. So you would be basically learning the basic skills of being a potter. You never had much to do with the master potter. And then one day the master potter, he or she would say, "Son or young lady. See that oblong thing? That's the door". You're now out the pottery and you would become what they called a Journeyman. So the potter goes from pottery to pottery across Europe, across Asia, different clays, different kilns, and different glazes. Carpenter goes from site to site, stonemason goes to cathedral or mosque site.

The point of the metaphor is we're all on a journey to mastery. And a master. He or she has made so many mistakes, learned so much, they can consistently and elegantly produce a high performance result. So that's the point. I would suggest, Andy, that lifelong learning is a journey to mastery. So I would suggest L&D people consider empowering all the employees and offering learning opportunities communities at every stage of their career because then you can attract and create and retain A-grade staff. Does that make sense?

And as we've said, if you can link the skills that people need within the organisation game plan with here's the thing with the skills that they might need in their life game plan, even if they're not immediately useful in the organisation's workplace, you've got a double motivator because you're saying to each person, look, life's a journey. And we in this organisation not only will upskill you for our organisation, but we're going to help upskill you for your life game, your life purpose. And so whether they're working in the workplace or working from home, they've got these huge motivational hooks. Does that make sense?

ANDY CORBETT: It does. Absolutely.

DAVID POWELL: You see, so you're building this, what would we call it, a strong work-life balance. And then as I said before, if they're in a hybrid work environment and I guess we all are these days and it's not going to change, you've got to have hybrid learning. So as I said before, online learning anywhere, anytime, any device. The beauty of it, it's self-paced and it's self-interest. If one person wants to learn about self-skills, another person wants to learn about relationship skills, that's fine. So I would say if an organisation, if HR can put that together, then they've got this, what I would call a 21st century skill set. They can have very attractive induction and onboarding, I mean, how

cool would this be? If you join us, George or Mary, we will give you all these skills for work environment and we'll give you another set of skills for your life journey. When we get to performance reviews, it becomes so much easier because it's framed up in competencies. And then when they're in the organization, there are internal mobility opportunities like everybody can oh yeah, wow, if I got that skill, I could do that.

So I guess I would say, Andy, this 21st century is stormy. It's not going to get any calmer anytime soon. So I'm repeating myself now. I don't think this is optional. I would encourage every HR person. It's going to be the survival of the fittest, and organisations that get it together and act now will be strong. However stormy it gets. That makes sense?

ANDY CORBETT: It does. It does. And you mentioned the induction and the onboarding part, I guess. From your experience, do you think that's probably I mean, all aspects of the journey are extremely important to get right and we must incorporate these new learning approaches at each of those stages. But I don't know. My assumption is that maybe the first one, the induction, the onboarding is absolutely crucial to get off to the best start. Is that right from your perspective?

DAVID POWELL: Well, think about it. I mean, we'd all like a team of A-grade people. I don't know, what is it, three-and-a-half percent unemployment or whatever? There's a whole raft of jobs out there available. Yes, people are using LinkedIn and yes, people are using sophisticated AI to hook into the keywords and that but if you are looking to attract and onboard A-grade people, if you're operating with a fabulously defined organisational game plan and you can say, we will support your life game plan, how many other organisations are doing that? The answer is probably very few.

So simply by talking to the person about their life journey themselves, as well as working with you in your organisation, you're way ahead of all those other organisations that are trying to attract this A-grade candidate. Does that make sense?

ANDY CORBETT: It does. It does. That's great, David, I really appreciate the answers you provided today and all of your insights. I could talk to you about this all day, but unfortunately, that's all we've got time for today. So, look, thank you very much for joining us and providing your perspective on this really important dimension of organisational health, the relational dimension of organisational health.

And just to let the listeners know, David's book, Life Journey Skills is available for free on Kindle or to purchase in hardcover from [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com). And if you want to find out more about the Life Journey Skills program, go to www.thegoldenthread.com that's www.thegoldenthread.com

DAVID POWELL: And in my parting look, all your listeners, we're all counting on each other. We're very lucky to live in Australia. So let's all make the best Australia we can into this weird, strange, turbulent future.

ANDY CORBETT: Yeah, absolutely. Good stuff. All right, well, look, once again, thank you very much, David. Appreciate you coming on the podcast, and we'll speak again soon.

DAVID POWELL: Thanks, Andy. You've got this. Bye now.

ANDY CORBETT: That now concludes our first series on organisational health. We hope you enjoyed listening to all our trailblazers and found their insights refreshing and valuable. If you've missed any of our previous episodes or would like to download the full transcript, please go to our website, which is www.corbettprice.com.au/podcast that's www.corbettprice.com.au/podcast . Once again, thank you for listening.