



Why it's time to talk about trauma-informed leadership w/guest Glain Roberts-McCabe

Hello, evolve listeners. It is a big week for me this week. And as my book is being launched tomorrow, and so it is only fitting that I have a friend and mentor on the show somebody who helped contribute to this book Glain Roberts McCabe, welcome to the show.

Glain Roberts-McCabe 08:07

Oh, it is so great to be here and I consider you a friend and mentor to so a friend and mentoring happening.

Carolyn Swora 08:14

Well, there you go. It goes it goes both ways. And so for those of you who have already purchased the book, maybe you've gone already to purchase you'll notice that there is a name at the bottom of the book cover, and Glain so kindly agreed to write the foreword to my book. So it's a privilege to share space on a cover with you. And also you wrote a beautiful foreword and so I thought it would be great to have you on to talk about well, your work your business why I wanted to have you write the foreword and and why you felt this was an important topic. So that's where we're gonna go today. How's that sound? Sounds great. Looking forward to Yeah, so I sent you an email several months ago. Just dropped into your inbox and were saying hey, will you write this forward? What did you think when that dropped in and then when you saw the the manuscript?

Glain Roberts-McCabe 09:09

Well, it's funny because you had the word trauma right in the title. If you had dropped me that email two years ago, I would have run for the hills and I but I felt like things happen in your life at a time and a reason. And so I think for myself just was an opportunity for me to think a little bit more about my own experience with the big T word trauma, and leadership and the work that I do and I think just collectively over the last few years since COVID, and I'm so sick of talking about COVID But I feel like 2020 2021 was such a experience collective experience for all of us. And I think all of us are still unraveling what happened and what it meant. So it was, for me, selfishly, probably a little bit of a great opportunity to sink into my own thoughts and feelings and my own journey that I've been on around understanding that s aspect of myself and and then to read your thoughts because I was just exciting to kind of see where you where the journeys taken you and what you've started, what corners of the world you've started poking into,



Carolyn Swora 10:26

right, right. Yeah, I know when I was, you know, I've had a few ups and downs with this book as authors and I know you've written a few books yourself, so you know, the roller coaster of it. And I wasn't sure I was like, Oh my gosh, who's gonna want to put their name on this because you know that T word can be edgy, and there's a lot of misnomers myself included, which is why I wrote the book. about it because I had a lot of misunderstandings about it. But given your background, your experience, I thought, okay, Carolyn, if anyone is going to get this and understand where I wanted to take it. It was going to be you because you've been in this business. You've been in learning and development and leadership development and coaching and so you really seen trends and you've seen where things have gone so it was nerve racking for me not Not gonna lie. It sounds like it was it was sort of like the first big test like will people get what I'm trying to say. So needless to say when I got your reply, like yes, I'd love to. Okay, one through Well, I think I think that word,

Glain Roberts-McCabe 11:33

I know for me when I said that, you know if you if you'd reached out to me two years ago to run for the hills. I think partly I had a reaction to it. When I started seeing the word trauma informed leadership showing up in my LinkedIn feed. Yeah, I really started reacting to it because I felt at that time, so it's probably even longer than two years, probably three years ago. I I just felt like Okay, what else do you want from me as a last? You know, it's like now I need to be trauma informed. Can you just back the flippin truck up a little bit? My inner we actually did in fact, I had somebody in my Instagram feed that I was following on the time who had sent me a DM about, you know, jumping on a webinar that that they were hosting about in return for and it totally triggered me and I said, you know, I don't think you know, as a leader, I need to be trauma informed like this is getting going pushing the boundaries of what we should be talking about in leadership and I really had a reaction to it. And I think, you know, that's sort of the reality, or the thing I've learned is whenever you have a big trigger, big reaction, those are probably places you need to go looking. Yeah, yeah. So I think I sat with that quite a while and I thought, wow, what is it about that that triggers me so much? That's kind of interesting. So but I think that's what my initial thought was. And I think that's why I'm so proud of you for writing this book. Because I do think it demystifies it it takes that stigma away from it and I think it brings it into the context of what we all do deal with on a regular basis. So I think that's why it's it's just such important work that you've done. And I think it's such important work for all of us as leaders to start to lean into and get curious about,

Carolyn Swora 13:22

right. Yeah. And that's and that was what my intent was, was to invite people in to look at a new perspective. Because I hear you it's like, gosh, is as leaders like, what more do I need to do now? Like, it's like, you've got it come in, you know, from all directions. May I read a



quote from your forward? Sure. So and I felt like I was like, Oh, she gets it. Like I really I think I actually might have cried when I when I got it back from you for the first time because it was really sort of validation to say, Okay, I'm going, I'm heading into a place where people can go and they're not going to be too afraid. But one of the things you wrote in your foreword involve Carolyn Swora debunks the idea that being trauma informed means becoming a trauma therapist evolve provides an accessible primer on a difficult but important topic that will at the very least reframe your definition of trauma and at the best inspire you to develop your leader disk to even deeper levels. That that was those were beautiful client and the client. I can't tell you how much when I read that. I was like, Ah, I just suck into the coach.

Glain Roberts-McCabe 14:31

Well, I'm glad but that's all very true. I mean, I think leadership is it's not an event you don't go to a one day workshop to become a leader leadership. If you choose to step into leadership. You're making a lifelong commitment to yourself to become the best version of yourself so that you can bring out the best version of other people can't bring out the best version of other people if you if you don't know how to do it. For yourself first. So I think that's what you know, I think this isn't 101 leadership. If you're doing this is very much for people that are on that journey, and are on that commitment to want to be the best that they can be because leadership is a privilege. It's a responsibility. It's this opportunity. I say to people in our groups all the time, I'll say, you, you can be you will be that person that people are going to talk about years from now. And this you want them to be saying, oh my god, I worked for this total sob once upon a time and I couldn't couldn't wait to get away from him or her or them. Or do you want to be the person that people say I worked for this individual once and that in digital changed my life? Yeah, that's what that is what we get to do every day in leadership, right because we got in the performance management and all of that. Crazy, you know, day to day deliverables. But I think bringing yourself and being on that journey to understand yourself more so critical. And so I think this layer that you brought in and that you're introducing people to is for those that are willing to go there. It's it's really powerful. So yeah,

Carolyn Swora 16:14

yes. Well, thank you. Thank you. And, you know, I know you've been in the space of leadership development for you know, just a few years. What sort of what things have you seen why do you think that our world is ready for this, like in our corporate world, in particular, is ready for this message or this conversation right now?

Glain Roberts-McCabe 16:40

Well, I think I think to understand where leadership's evolved to you have to understand where it's come from. And I think when we go back into modern management, leadership, it's really rooted in, in the military model, right? It's very hierarchical. It's very command and



control. And I think that's been evolving like it started to shift into the late 70s and into the 80s where we started you know, looking more at you know, I think the evolution is looking at people on your team and going Gosh, how do I how do I deal with these different difficult people on my team and what do I have to for you know, give feedback and coaching and deliver you know, messages and all of that type of thing to them the evolution of understanding that it's not just the people around you, but it is you as a leader, a leader who you have to start to understand because we all have biases, we all have triggers we all have blind spots. We nobody is immune to this stuff that we write. We all have strengths and overuse strengths become liabilities, like we all are wrestling with that. And I think that that's where we're I think we're getting more and more to that I think more and more when Isaiah nations have, you know, recognize the importance of investing not just in what I would call shallow surface level development like you know, let's nation course or be some basic insight into who you are by having you do any one of the countless sort of personality tests out there or things like that. I think that stuff, organizations are getting for the most part pretty good at. I think where it's going, though, and I think this is I think it's interesting because I think we become very individualized and I'm talking North America, I mean, really mostly working in North American space but there is more of an individualistic mindset within North America so as leaders we look at ourselves and and then you know in making the best of being our you know, ourselves and how can we get very client one say to me, I became self so self aware I was self indulgent. And I thought it's an interesting insight into all this awareness. This is where to me this is where we need to go next is to move away from this model, because this is this is we're really cultivating this idea of the heroic leadership model, right? It's like, let's, let's make sure you are the best you can be but the reality of leadership is where we are sick. It is so flippin complex, and that was what it was. We had the reaction about being trauma informed because I thought, oh my gosh, we you need to be digital. You need to be a great coach. You need to be really good with them diversity, equity and inclusion. You need to end you need to but you also need to be hands on like it doesn't stop. There is 5 million things coming at us all the time. And I think the reality is, there is so much complexity, there is so much change, ongoing basis happening in the world, like COVID was just a leadership situation when you strip it all out that it's impossible for any leader to be an everything to everyone all the time. Just so we have to start shifting this narrative, and instead start thinking about how can we collectively get better? How can we move away from this isolating view of leadership? Like how can we actually kick those expressions like it's lonely at the top kicking them to the curb? How can we start kicking to the curb this idea that you know, we have high potentials and then we have low potentials, and then we have made potentially, all those kinds of things and instead say, we have a collection of people with different talents, right, the most out of everybody. And so I think the organization certainly that we work with, and that where we're seeing the evolution of the conversation going, are moving more towards this idea of finding pathways and bridges to increase collective insight and collective consciousness around how do we need to work best together and we're starting to see this migration away from this more individualistic nature. And you know, like,



all these issues that we talked about in organizations loneliness, mental health, diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, hey, when you start making this a collective responsibility to fix and you and you help people on their part that they can play in it, you start actually moving on a lot of those systemic. It's not a course not a course on how to be more inclusive leader. No, you need to be in situations where frankly, you're forced to be more inclusive. Yeah.

Carolyn Swora 21:35

And where you're forced to realize you don't have the right answer all the time. I'm with you. 1000 person blind. You know, when you think of if we go back to even before the military and mourn. I always get this word, say it wrong aggregator and like agricultural times. You know, communities, right and you you built around your community and you bartered or services back and forth and so it's like anything right the the pendulum has swung way too far the other way. And where I see where I hope you know, my work can inspire people is to really help them realize that their body is a leadership tool. Yeah. And and that our nervous systems are always in communication with each other. It's under the radar like we don't know what's going on. But when we're able to understand our own reactivity patterns when we're able to understand Yeah, I am here I am I you know, I am doing things that let this person or these people know that I'm working with them that I see them I hear them right we'll call that connection. Those to me are two fundamental skill sets that one are not necessarily easy for everybody. And two, they can be learned and three. I think that's that's our only way. Our only way to shift this pendulum away from the individualism and more towards Collective is understanding how we interact together, right science 101. What are those like neutrons and protons probably saying the wrong but like, how do we all like combine together? And I think I think it's

Glain Roberts-McCabe 23:13

like I think that the work it's so much like any relationship right like, I've thought for years and I've written about this off and on over the years, this idea that marriage takes commitment, you know, you know, I always say I love my husband, I adore him but if I focused on his weaknesses, his opportunity areas all the time, even Borst many times over and the the and I'm sharing his direction. Absolutely. I think in in work it's not dissimilar right? We have this work relationship and then work disappoints us and then we you know, and you can start then focusing on all the things that are wrong you focus it collectively with the organization with individuals on your team peers, you have to work with Boss relationship. And it's very easy to kind of, you know, make it everybody else. Yeah. And so that's part of the journey for all of us is to look say what part of this do I own? What is my responsibility here and I think that the tricky thing with you know, the, the subject that you're unpacking is that there are so many automated patterns and and there's things that get rewarded for an organized yes, you're often you know that often feed into those patterns right and so they become very hard to break. And, and our belief system based on those experiences that we've had, we have to often you know, it takes a lot to challenge those belief systems. So I think it's very complex.



And I think that's why you know, I think as leaders, we have to we have to meet or where we are, and I think it's about this ongoing journey of discovery and not just looking for the easy answer. Sometimes we look for the easy solution and then we get stuck. We don't we don't continue to evolve. I think the near the title of your book is just a great title. And the work that you're doing is just great, because it's been an evolution.

Carolyn Swora 25:18

It is yeah, it really is. I'm curious in with your clients cuz I know you do a lot of fantastic leadership programs. How are people finding the time and space to do this self awareness work to dig into this this type of because this is like this is a deep topic. It's not just you know, like you said a little checkbox, any anything any insight you can share around that how people are finding the space or time to work through this kind of stuff?

Glain Roberts-McCabe 25:49

Mm hmm. Good question. I mean, I think when I think about our programming, so we we are a coaching company and so I think with coaching, if you think why is coaching exploded since I got into the coaching space in like, early 2000s. Right? So it's been 20 some odd years. And it's really taken off and it's taken off because people suddenly were forced into reflection time. Right, and they're busy, busy, busy, and then you know, you get an hour with them as a coach and you've carved this little protective bubble, where we can actually get out of the absolute chaos of the day and think clearly and really step back and think clearly, I think we do not have time to think in our organizations. So when I think when people ask me the question about like, our programming, because we take such an anchored coaching approach, even though we work with groups and teams, it's, it's not hard to get them to carve time out because there's so much benefit for them and doing that, like I feel like one of the things that we are, if I look at the training and development space, generally, learning and development has a bias towards content, like we feel like giving people more content. And I think there's lots of content out there. I think if you want to learn how to do something, you could probably Google just about anything and Coursera has just everything that you to YouTube exactly, like so it's not really about that. What is it about? I think it's about figuring out how to make those ideas work. In your world, in your context, the quality of your situation. And so it's this balance that we need to be bringing in for people and and I think and again, we tend to work with leaders who are not super new in their careers but are more kind of that director VP senior level. Yep. Well, they've got a lot of knowledge and wisdom already on like a ton of it. And I think I think when you start to partner up like, yes, deeper self insight, so choosing tools and things I mean, we definitely do use assessments. I'm a big fan of assessments, but I'm a big fan of actionable assessment. Yes,

Carolyn Swora 28:17

|



Glain Roberts-McCabe 28:17

think you just get insight, but I think for a lot of us, so we get told I joke around I have a few clients that like to use things like disc or colors or Myers Briggs or those sorts of tools, and there's nothing wrong with them inherently. I mean, they're great for as I think of them as starter tools. Yeah, they weren't you on your journey. But I think we need to go deeper than that. And I think that that is part of the commitment to ongoing work and you'll always learn a little something but as somebody who's done probably just about every assessment under the sun, I can say I had the same three or four theme patterns that ran all the way through. So that's really what I have to figure out now. Yeah, it's not like you can you can serve it up to me with a different color or a different letter or different whatever. But it's what's going on underneath that. And I think I think if you can, I think once you start going down this path, and you're and you're committed to that curiosity about yourself and that per bigger impact. With your teams and the community around you. Yeah, I don't know that. I don't know that we I don't feel like we ever have to convince people to be in our program because we start with that insight. Yeah. Isn't that intentionality right? But I think I think that's why we're seeing though a lot of what I would describe as more traditional approaches to leadership development faltering, right. That's why we're seeing people really moving away from what I would describe as just the more traditional one and two day offsites or the one that I love is the the the approaches where we'll take a tip the busiest people in the organization, we put them on a special project as a as a leadership development program. Yeah, bonded onto this project, but they still have to do their day job and I have a couple of clients that have those kinds of programs and they'll say to me, my day job is busy enough. I don't Yeah, I don't need that. I'd hustled to as part of my leadership development. I think we just have to continuously be figuring out how do you incorporate it into the work that people already do?

Carolyn Swora 30:27

Exactly that. I remember and I remember back in like the early 2000s, maybe it was even the 2010 snow probably early 2000s You know, when you do your development plan, and it was the 6020 10 and the on the job 20 Sorry, 70 and that 70% Being on the job, I mean, there's so much to say for that in just creating that little bit of space for yourself to do it with with someone else. Obviously makes it more impactful to do it with somebody else. When

Glain Roberts-McCabe 31:02

I think we're getting into to like the experience around you like I think I think even 7020 10 you know the the deal nine is 10% is coaching and that's sort of this idea that you're off with a coach like this one too. Like, like when you look at the the way they break it down, and I kind of feel like what if it was just all these things all the time, exactly. The solution where it was actually hitting 7020 10 of the time just by the way you do the work you do, right? Yeah. I think the siloing of solutions is where organizations, leadership development is actually an organizational effectiveness or organizational design OE od it's actually that's actually what leadership development is. It's a sickness, illusion. It is not a running event. And I think too



often it's interesting being on the outside and working with different clients, you'll you'll have the OD department but then you have a leadership department or and I think there's there's just like a whole opportunity within the talent space to move away from this very siloing of roles and think more holistically about how you when you support leaders effectively your shifting culture your your gut implications around succession you've got there's so many there's so many tentacles, it comes

Carolyn Swora 32:25

back to what we were saying before this whole notion of individual versus collective and so when you look at the organization as a whole and how that all blends together. And that leads me into another theme that I wanted to ask you about in the book. So I talked about centers of intelligence in that book, as as a way that and that's how I learned what trauma was because my body center of intelligence was there. I wasn't listening to it. And so that you know, we hear a lot about our head center or heart center or hand center, so head, heart and hand. And so this notion of integration, or like Brene Brown calls it wholeheartedness or integration, but we hear this notion of being integrated or tuned. We cannot do those things. We can't tap into the wisdom of our cognitive brain which is very valued in organizations, or the wisdom of that relational ability which is our heart. And then there's you know, this wisdom of our body which again is like the our ability to take in stimulus around us. That is going to be impacted by past events in our life. And it also you know, we're gonna have sensations and things in our in our body that that tell us or you know, we can even enter in intuition here a little bit as well. In my own experience as a leader, when those are all treated as separate which I think they have been, it is really hard to manage through the complexity to lead through these di conversations and really, truly go in open hearted and not get defensive. So you know, I'm curious your thoughts on these these, like this notion of three centers of intelligence, and maybe anything you've learned about yourself?

Glain Roberts-McCabe 34:17

Yeah, I mean, I think it is. I think it's really true what you say and I'm a head person, and I think for me being in tune to my feelings to my emotions to uncertainly my body, I mean, I burnt out sometimes I was that person who internalized stress to the nth degree. So it would come up with my body rashes, you know, scratchy palms, trembling eyes. Really, all guy I twitches. I think that with organizations and I think it's interesting, right, because I think about what gets rewarded and some of us can really suck it up and Mike make our way through the organization because again, the kind of the internalized narratives that we have about what we need to be doing and how we need to be showing up and that's the stuff that's very much on autopilot like I think that when you're on autopilot like that, you are very you're sitting very strongly in your biases. You really think the world sees the world the way it is, and I think for me, I have a lot of whether you call it energy drives or whatever it might be the corporate competitive, I don't mind the, you know, the gameplay that goes on. I got stuff done in a very rapid way. Yeah, I was very good at relationships, those relationships and



alliances and so there were certain organizations where that served me very, very well. And I was rewarded as a result. So why would I look in the other areas? And so the the burnout stuff and the stress stuff, I just used to, you know, shove under the carpet. And I think I just used to think that that was just the way it is because nobody talks about that right? No, you don't talk about that kind of thing. It's it is this money, let them do you sweat. Like we have all of these things about like as leader, it's like, well, you can't let your team know you're struggling and you can't do this. Me can't do that. And you start to and I think as women too, like I'll throw the women card in there which I don't really I don't love doing but I think as a woman, you feel that pressure even more so, you know, like you're not supposed to show emotion you're not supposed to do you know, any number of things. And, and I think it's I think it's really you almost have to hit your own personal walls to realize that this isn't working. I think with age comes a lot of wisdom. If I think about I think careers go through stages. Yeah, I think my early stage of my career, I was just really driven by fear. I mean, there's people that say you're driven by fear if you're fear are you driven by success? Most of us are driven by fear. And that was me like I was that like the inner critic was heavy. I totally used to feel like I had to justify my existence all the time. And so I worked harder. I put in extra hours I pushed myself I did all of those things. And I was rewarded for that. I was quickly I was hired into jobs I wanted I had very few career disappointments in my early stage. And then I always can tell when people are struggling in their early 30s Because I remember the experience for me I was 33 and I was at this point where I suddenly had this massive career crisis. I was a managing partner. I had great salary. I had a lot of positional influence and power. I had things that on paper people would be like, Wow, he's made it like 33 year old person, and I can remember talking to a colleague and who was in her 50s And I remember, you know, probably doing some big verbal vomit. And she said, you know, how old are you? And I said, I'm 33 She goes, Well, you're in your Christ year and I've never heard that expression before. Wow. I mean, my Christ your said, well, Christ came out at 33 Like, this is a year of tumultuous pneus. And in that moment, I then started observing that and other people and I read more about the Christ year and all of that stuff. And I think that that stage for me, I meet a lot of people in my coaching practice that sort of struggle with that. It's not a year it's almost a decade for them going struggling. Whereas for me, it started to really put me on the path of saying, Okay, I've been really wide in my career. I've been trying a whole bunch of things. I've been jumping around all over the place. I've been trying to figure out what I want to do. Now I'm actually going to start to get courageous and brave and I'm going to start to put some stakes in the sand around what I do and what I'm going to let go up and who I am and what works for me and what's important, and I had a bunch of missteps, but ultimately that's what got me at the end of my 30s to launch, you know, the round table. And I think then, you know, the 40s was another stage for me. I'm now in my 50s and it's a different stage and I can look I can look back at where I was. I look back at that 33 year old and they think oh my gosh, like the level of pressure you put on yourself the stories you are telling yourself and and so much that I think is just it's the conditioning that we're in in our society. We're in deep conditioning, you know,



Carolyn Swora 39:55

performance and productivity.

Glain Roberts-McCabe 39:57

Yes, all of those things, right. And so now when I work with, you know, leaders that are on that journey, who were you know, used to be when I started the roundtable, people were close to my age. Now I'm getting older 30s and 40s You just see it through a different lens and I think that I think for me I I was grateful that I had found myself in a leadership see at the age I was at because I felt like it really fast track me into this journey that I've been on for the last 20 some odd years. And I feel like that for me is one of my missions with the people that we work with is on an individual level. I want to help them get get there faster because there's nothing worse than sort of being right on your stage. of your career. Miserable and not really understanding why you're

Carolyn Swora 40:50

why you're there. Yeah. And I'm gonna guess to like, you know, for some people, children fall into those 36 years in our 30s as well and so, I love what you said there too about, you know, trying out a lot of different things and then realizing, okay, I'm gonna I'm gonna put some boundaries in place. You know, for me what resonated when you said that is like I sucked at boundaries. I thought it was good. And I mean, it looked it looked like I had boundaries on the outside, but inside I was there's a lot of mental and emotional gymnastics going on.

Glain Roberts-McCabe 41:22

here because it's like well if I tell my boss that I don't want that promotion because I don't think it plays to my strengths. My I put my career at risk Am I never gonna have another opportunity again? Those conversations which I got, I got to the point that I had no choice but to have them and what happened after having them and I think this is the thing with fear, right? And I see it all the time when people are making that that really big, hairy kind of leap into something else is that we get so fixated on what we have the potential of losing and is really hard to go to what's on the other side that could be positive. Yeah, right. And I think but once you've once you've leaned into the fear that woman's expression, feel the fear and do it anyway. Yeah. I think if you can do that for yourself, for good or for bad, you are going to come out stronger and wiser and more resilient and with a deeper understanding. And speaking from my own personal experience, I will tell you that my worst case scenarios that I used to enact in my brain have never happened yet. Never ever. I think though, you you know so I'm not encouraging people who are listening to go and do radical crazy things, but I do think if you know yourself, the more you know about yourself, that's why doing this inner work is so important. The more confident you can feel that even in the uncertainty you're gonna land, okay, if you haven't done that other work, I would I would tell you to do



something like that work first to make sure that what you're doing is really what you want to be doing. Yeah, but I think when my own experience with just taking those big leaps, and I've done some big ones has it's not been smooth. It's not been easy. Yep. But it's the the stress and the pressures and the things that have been on the other side of it have been them being you know, in a role or in a job or in a situation where it's not aligned with your soul

Carolyn Swora 43:35

away. And I'm gonna I'm going to bring this all around full circle. I mean, because that's essentially what I'm trying to get through in this book is that being trauma informed, is learning to lean into that fear and understand some things about yourself that might be a little bit hard to understand, but when you can understand them, it's going to allow you to show up. Dare I use that word authentic in a more authentic way? People can see your gifts and talents. And, you know, that's essentially the safety creating safety for others doing it consistently and acting authentically. That those are really the core foundations of which I've built my own model on and that's what trauma informed leadership is. We don't need to know people's trauma we don't need to compare it. We don't need to do anything with it, but know that trauma is in really simple terms, an emotional wound that we've buried into our body. So

Glain Roberts-McCabe 44:36

and maybe it would help listeners who are like I don't get the connection here. I'm gonna give you a very specific specific example from my own life where I had unrecognized trauma, but it should it's showing up in my leadership since I've been leading. Yeah, and so I used to call myself a control freak. i Oh, I'm just a control freak. I'm a control freak. And I like things and and you know, who've worked with me, would probably say about me you know, I have a very high standard. I am very straightforward and giving feedback with people about whether you've met that standard or not, and I'm always pushing for better. And so I get that and that gets rewarded right like the results. I'm getting and I care about my team. We're doing it together. But you know, it's not it's not always comfortable, right? And so, for me digging into trauma and what had gone on in my childhood, when I grew up, I had a father who was very domineering very and we were not allowed to do you know, is basically children should be seen and not heard. Yeah, so that was his generation. I didn't realize until going into therapy myself and listen, I'm married to it. I know that I'm married to a psychotherapist getting three free therapy. But any any grandparents out there, I'm an engineering seven and we resist therapy because we like to be on the positive side of things. And my hope is really around saying, I don't need that. I know my childhood was difficult. I know all that stuff. I don't need to you know, think about that. But over the course the last couple of years I've been recognizing Oh no, what you went through was kind of traumatic and you need to understand what the patterns are. So thought that pattern with the team what will happen for me from time to time with my team is that I will get frustrated because I'll feel like they're not stepping up as much as they could. And I'm really looking at like, what are they working on with it and they should have been doing this and they should have been doing that it's this,



you know, kind of, you know, in a way it's not the nicest part of me and a lot of it is my own internal dialogue, which is another challenge is that it's the stuff that's going on in our head. It's creating stress for us. We're stressed out. Yeah. And then we show up not in the best ways when we're under that stress with people. So I realized that one of the roles I played I'm the oldest of four and so because my dad was so volatile, with my mother and all of us as kids, but I was the oldest. I managed to kind of create a buffer sometimes and I'm very hyper vigilant to my dad's moods as a child, very hyper vigilant. And so I would do what needed to be done to keep him calm. If it was a road trip. If we were going on Vegas, I would take over navigating because my mother couldn't do it when I would take over, you know, looking after my brothers because where my dad was at and that type of thing. And this hyper vigilance. This need to be make sure everybody's taken care of everybody's got what they need. resenting that I didn't want to be doing that when I was nine years old. Yeah. Yep. So that's the pattern that has come to me as a leader, some hyper vigilant hasn't really been what's going on. But then I resent having to do that and so I will so then it manifests for me at the end of the day when I come home and my husband said what's for dinner?

Carolyn Swora 48:05

Why can't you decide me What's

Glain Roberts-McCabe 48:09

Why am I getting triggered over the question? What's for dinner? This is ridiculous. But then when I been spending my my brain has been on this hyper vigilance. How's everybody feeling? How's everybody doing? Are they hitting the things? Are they doing what they need to do? Or does it go on and on and on? Right? So I think so I think from a really, you know, the more you can start to understand that pattern. unpack that pattern. Then what it's given me is freedom of choice now. And I have a different awareness. So when I'm in it, I can pull myself outside of myself and say, Okay, wait a second. Yep. What's happening here for you right now? What's really happening here for you right now? Because I think when we talk about it in a very sort of abstract level is sometimes hard to relate and yet, you know, you have a pattern repeating there's probably something even if you had an amazing childhood, like it's not like we all have to suffer big T trauma. Right? All of us have had these little things along the way that right, Yep,

Carolyn Swora 49:14

absolutely. Absolutely. You know, one of the things that you said there you talked about hyper vigilance, and hyper vigilance for me. I didn't I didn't realize that that's how I was processing all of my emotional wounds. And hyper vigilance can be really, really rewarded. And there was a quote, I think it was Dr. Nicole Lapera That said it I could be wrong. So please don't maybe I shouldn't have said her name. But it was in a tweet and it said she said Don't mistake empathy with hyper vigilance. And that really gave me pause for thought.



Glain Roberts-McCabe 49:52

Yeah, that's good. I'm writing that down. Yeah. And

Carolyn Swora 49:56

so you know, again, if we if we come back to why now, why is this so important now? I think it's so important. Now because, you know, three years ago, our world changed overnight. And a lot of the systemic inequities. A lot of the shitty things that were happening in our world just got magnified. And I think we're being we're past the point of being able to manage all of this in the old ways that we know how and so I don't think this is just going to be like a hot topic for you know, a year or two. I think that there is a piece that our society again will circle back to shift from that individualistic mindset and recognize it's okay, you know, we do need to work with each other. We do need to rely on each other. And there's nothing wrong with that we need to learn how to do it, and to do it in an uncountable fashion. And that's, that's why I think, and why I'm so excited to you know, to get this book into the world and be part of the conversation with many other other folks, as well. Yeah, no,

Glain Roberts-McCabe 51:02

I think it's so I think it's just so great. You've done this and, you know, shared a lot of your own journey because I think I think the thing that I know just from the work that we do when we bring groups of leaders together and peers is that there is something incredibly powerful and realizing that you're not alone. Yes, not alone on this journey and the things that you think are so unique to you, actually, everybody around this table is struggling with right and I and I think that for me is the you know, we've got to remove this again, I go back to you don't have to be a hero like let's let's remove this, you know, isolation and I think that that is what the last couple of years have done is it's given people more time to reflect and think and I think that's why more people are reassessing their relationship with work. Right now, which I don't think is a bad thing. It's been out of control for a long time. Yeah. I think there's a rebalancing that should happen and needs to happen and the leaders that are equipped to navigate through those kinds of conversations are going to be the ones that will, you know, succeed in the long term here because I think really a shift in terms of what people are wanting to get from their work experience. It's really shifting Yeah.

Carolyn Swora 52:29

Well, we could talk for hours. And I think that's I think that's probably a good place to sort of round out this part of the conversation. Where can our listeners find you if they want to hear more about your programs at the roundtable?

Glain Roberts-McCabe 52:44

Yeah, so our web address is go roundtable.com. So you can go there and find everything about our programs, you can certainly feel free to reach out to me on LinkedIn. If you'd like to connect on LinkedIn. We also have a corporate page there. That's where we're probably



the most active and we have a monthly newsletter that we send out that's just our views on different things leadership that you can connect with us on that to those are good. Yes.

Carolyn Swora 53:11

And you are active on you. Have you got you've thrown out lots of lots of things to talk about. Not shy at all. When I do go on LinkedIn, you're definitely one of the ones that I like to go and see what's going on. I find

Glain Roberts-McCabe 53:24

a lot of random run. Yeah.

Carolyn Swora 53:27

And so we'll make sure we have that in the show notes. Now to wrap up, I asked all my guests three questions because they are directly connected to the three principles of being an evolved leader. So you all set for these three questions. Well, I

Glain Roberts-McCabe 53:41

think so. Let's see how we do. All right. All right.

Carolyn Swora 53:44

So the first question is around self awareness. I know you shared a little bit of a story, but I'm gonna ask you if there's a specific time a specific moment where just a whole lot of insight was fallen upon you was perhaps pretty uncomfortable, but really yielded a lot of insight.

Glain Roberts-McCabe 54:06

Yeah, I mean, I've had so many of those moments. I think the thing for me that became very uncomfortable was when I was working at this consulting firm, and at the time, I was the head of sales, and I loved the firm. But I was so miserable. I was having panic attacks, I always I literally developed a perspiration issue where I was literally sweating through layers of my suits on an ongoing basis, and I couldn't understand why. And it was that it was that moment where I had the opportunity to do some reflection I were coached as a result and I had this big aha about my need for independence because I'd been in another roles before it's not like it was my first leadership role. I'd had many other roles before, but I'd had bigger scope in previous roles. And it sort of sounds counterintuitive, but in previous roles I've been responsible for sales and delivery and marketing and the whole thing whereas in this firm, I was only responsible for sales. Okay. And so I when I did the I when I sat down with the assessor to kind of go through my results. One of the things he said to me is you have a very high need for autonomy. And independence. And when that penny dropped, I realized working between the head of sales, head of consulting and then or head of marketing and a head of consulting with me as head of sales was actually creating just a lot of tension for me that I hadn't recognized before. And so that was what led to a conversation with my boss to



say, I've had this revelation, and I don't think there's anything you can do because he kept trying to it was like a shell game you'd like me to keep you right. Yeah. And he wanted to keep me in. And so I literally had to sit down with him and say, I realized that it's it's not the company. I love the company and I'd love to be able to stay here but I just this autonomy thing is killing me. Yeah. And so that just opened up a whole different set of conversation and ultimately is what resulted with me then taking on the role as a managing partner to being able to actually run a whole business, which was not even a role we had wasn't a conversation that I ever thought he would entertain and yet was just a real career game changer. For me. And so I think that was probably one of the biggest ones and it's ultimately why I'm an entrepreneur now.

Carolyn Swora 56:48

Today Yeah, well, and you know what I love just one little piece. I don't always do this because I know their answers. I think what, what really resonates with me in that story is your awareness helped you understand where you were in a larger system and recognized I don't have to be here. There's lots of other systems. There's lots of other setups that I can move to. And I don't want to get off a center. We could talk about that for a while but you know I think that is another piece of the power of self awareness is recognizing that you can fit in in other places, and that if you have to leave what you're currently in right now, doesn't mean you're a bad person, doesn't mean

Glain Roberts-McCabe 57:32

and I think it explains so many of my previous patterns. Yeah. And I'm very grateful. I mean, the the person I was reporting to at the time was a gentleman named Don McQuaig. He was the founder of mica and just I learned so much from him about being strengths based and talent centric in your conversations with people and he was so fabulous at bringing out the best in the people that worked for him and so I'm I'm also very grateful that I had the opportunity to explore where I was where I was at with somebody who would actually listen and not be closed minded to what you know what he had hired me for, and this is what we need you to do. And so yeah, there were so many multiple learning from that point, but it was but it was hard for me. I mean, I was the income earner in my family and and had had been, you know, so so it was a lot of pressure and baggage around that for me. So, yeah.

Carolyn Swora 58:41

Cool. All right. Second one. What is a practice or ritual that keeps you in a calm regulated state or returns you to one?

Glain Roberts-McCabe 58:51

Yeah, so a book that I've had been using for I don't know how long it's been now it's probably coming up on a decade is a book called The Five Minute Journal. And the five minute journal



is really a little mindfulness practice. Book. Are you back are you reaching for yours over there Carolyn

Carolyn Swora 59:08

reaching for the five minute journal? Yes,

Glain Roberts-McCabe 59:11

your five minute journal. And so you know, it does a number of things but one of the things that was really most powerful for me in the practice of the five minute journal is it has it pieces around your affirmation and and the way I sort of take that as like how do I want to show up today? How do I want to show up today and I use I am statements when I write my affirmation, so I will write you know, I am patient, I am loving I am kind, I whatever it needs to be or I am focused I am diligent, I am thorough, right? Because when I look at what's ahead in my day, I really have to center myself in how I want to be in that day. And so for me, that's a very grounding mindfulness practice. But also I would say and this is a funny story, but you know, I'm, I'm high independence is I just kind of shared with everyone. Which has meant the marriage has been a bit of a compromise for me and not always the most fun thing and I would I you know, I found that there was one stage with my marriage with my husband, you know, our daughter was younger and you're just yapping at each other, you know, wasn't pleasant and you know, you get into and I started in the journal because my go to and those people that know about relationship stuff is a mind go to is contempt when I'm not I'll have this tone of voice like I used to blame it on my father but I need to own it myself is it's kind of the like, what are you stupid tone of voice and it's it's terrible. I hear it I dislike it and my husband with all credit him he would call me out on it. call BS on me for talking to him in that way. But eye rolling all of that stuff and contempt is actually one of the number one predictors of divorce and so right to really think about how am I showing up here and so i for three months everyday no matter the day, I started writing, I am patient, I am loving I am kind. And we were about three months into me really every day grounding myself in those three messages. And my husband treats me one day in the kitchen. He said we were talking about something and he said to us we're getting along like much better like we're not getting at each other. Because I'm low restraint. I'm like, Yes. And you know what? My husband's like okay, the fact that you needed to write that down in your journal concerns. I think that's to me, that's the power of that and and how you do anything is how you do everything. So yeah, I talked to my husband like that when I'm under stress. I will talk to my team like that. I will talk to vendors like that I will be it's not a good place for me to be so if I know I'm having a very hectic day if I know my battery's on low. If I know that I'm you know going to be dealing with a whole lot of stuff. I need to ground myself in that practice because my to under stress is to get very directive and very impatient. Yes. It's not a good look.

Carolyn Swora 1:02:18



I you know, I haven't written in that for a while I've got it this to me. I think I sometimes think osmosis will make it come out but yeah. Okay, last but not least, what is a song or genre of music that makes you feel connected to others or part of something bigger than yourself?

Glain Roberts-McCabe 1:02:37

Yeah, okay. Is not my genre. of music because anybody who knows me knows that heavy metal isn't a genre of music. And I think if you said to me, what was your theme song for the last few years I would have had a very different response like Britney Spears work, bitch was last few years and people want a Maserati but I was like, you want to keep the lights on going through? COVID Yeah, you better work. But I think the song that for me every time I hear it, I just feel very connected to it and I get and I feel connected to a greater whole is kind of like I'm laughing because I'm thinking Enneagram seven of course, it's your song by Great Big Sea and it's when I'm up. Oh,

Carolyn Swora 1:03:22

Oh yeah, yeah.

Glain Roberts-McCabe 1:03:23

Oh and boat that optimism and that being that power of good and just that you know when I think it easy and particularly today in the world we're living in to feel very defeated by everything that's going on and that for me reminds me always that there's always so much more good in the world than there is that and and that I am that I have a responsibility to be a part of that too.

Carolyn Swora 1:03:51

I love that song and it's just yeah it is it's so and it's Canadian.

Glain Roberts-McCabe 1:03:55

Canadian Yes. So

Carolyn Swora 1:03:58

blind as always. I you know, I love our conversations. They fill my heart they fill my soul and yeah, you've just you've been a real a real inspiration. I remember. It was probably about six, five or six years ago, when we first had met and, and you there was just something you said to me that made me think I can do this on my own. Like there's something bigger there for me. So whatever you saw back then thank you because I feel like it's starting. It's starting to flourish and come out a little bit. So I'm really grateful that you've come into my world. So it should it should shout out to Fiona Ellis for that one.

Glain Roberts-McCabe 1:04:35

Yes, yes.

EVOLVE

A NEW ERA OF LEADERSHIP



TRANSCRIPT

Carolyn Swora 1:04:39

Bye. Thanks to all of our listeners. for tuning into this episode. We'll have all the show notes there for you and don't forget, evolve the path to trauma informed leadership is on sale. April 25.