



024: Transforming your leadership from the inside out with Kristen Harcourt

Kristen: [00:00:00] When people start to go on that inward journey and and really transform from the inside out, they start to ask themselves questions. They've never really asked of themselves around who am I? Who do I want to be? How do I wanna show up? What actually matters most to me? How am I getting in my own way? Much more than I might be realizing how are there all of these limiting beliefs that are operating, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously, that are getting in the way of me being able to create that environment that I wanna create to be able to have those relationships that I wanna have.

Carolyn: My guest today is Kristen Harcourt. Kristen is an executive coach, keynote speaker, and leadership trainer. She's a big believer in compassion, authenticity, and conscious leadership, and her mission is to help leaders to transform from the inside out. So they can create a meaningful career and purpose-driven life and reach their full potential.

She's been [00:01:00] working with organizations worldwide for over 15 years, empowering them at all levels to build lives and organizations of success, health, and sustainability. Kristen has a biweekly podcast called Inspirational Leadership, where she interviews progressive CEOs, strategic HR leaders. And forward thinking experts who share her mission for humanizing work and transforming leaders.

You'll hear in this conversation a few anecdotes between Kristen and I. We are friends. We met on Twitter, funny enough, and we live in the same community. Kristen has been a real friend, a mentor in this space of leadership. Work and helping leaders work from the inside out. And in the conversation with Kristen, I ask her to share what that [00:02:00] means.



I ask her to expand on. What does humanizing the workplace mean? Because I think sometimes we use these words and they sound good, but we don't always know what lies under it. So you'll hear Kristen talk about that. You'll also hear a little bit about safety. We talk about the importance of safety in this work and also about this new program she's working with called Step Into Your Moxie.

So enjoy our conversation. Maybe grab a cup of tea, because usually we're having conversations like this. At a coffee host,

Intro: welcome to Evolve a new era of leadership, a podcast for real leaders to join real conversations with business experts, practitioners thought leaders, and change makers who integrate head, heart, and body in all they do, who commit to compassion and curiosity, who commit to radical self-leadership in their quest to understand others better too.[00:03:00]

Because the only way to deliver real results is to understand what it takes to lead real human beings. This is a new era of

Kristen: leadership.

Carolyn: I'm Carolyn Suarez, and this is Evolve a new era of Leadership. Welcome evolved listeners to another episode of our podcast, and today's guest is a close friend of mine, a neighbor of sorts. We live in the same city, even though we met on Twitter. Kristen Harcourt, welcome to the show.

Kristen: Hi, Carolyn. It's so good to be

Carolyn: here.

Yeah, no, we just had coffee a few weeks ago. And we just saw each other like a week and a half ago. But now we're doing a conversation that we would usually have cuz we tend to go deep and have lovely conversations. But this time we have listeners who will be joining in on it. Yes.

Kristen: Welcome listeners. We love putting you into our [00:04:00] conversation.



It's very great. Exactly.

Carolyn: Exactly. Um, and so, I thought you would be an excellent guest to have on this show cuz as much as we're friends and I love to support your work, I wanna make sure that it's something that's gonna serve both of us. And you have been doing some fabulous work with leaders for several years now in this space of emotional intelligence.

And self-awareness and, and I was hoping we could talk about your experiences in those spaces, what you've learned working with so many leaders. I mean, your clientele is broad, geographically, and really share some relevant, you know, that's one of the things I love about our conversations. They're real and they're relevant and they're practical.

So that's where I was hoping we could go today. How does

Kristen: that sound? Yeah, that sounds awesome. I'm very passionate about this work and I think that there's so many possibilities of where people can evolve in this way. Yeah, yeah.

Carolyn: Well, why don't we start with, um, you know, one of the things [00:05:00] that you and I bonded over was going on a trip to WorkHuman together.

Yeah. She's a great conference, and I know you're very passionate about humanizing the workplace. What does that mean to you to humanize the workplace?

Kristen: Yeah, I love that question. I mean, ultimately what the work that I feel that I'm here to do in the world is to raise consciousness globally and my way of raising consciousness is the workplace.

And I think there's so much opportunity in the workplace, and I will use the word cuz I know your listeners will be comfortable with this word, is I think there's an opportunity for so much healing. Yeah. In the workplace, because



there are. All of these different areas that we have an opportunity to grow and develop and learn about ourselves.

And an organization just creates a great environment to do that, right? Because we're with a bunch of humans who are constantly interacting with all day long. We spend a lot of hours at work. And so what I love about it is when I help people transform and do this work in the workplace, it's not just about [00:06:00] the workplace, it's who they are and all.

Areas and parts of their life, their families, their communities. And so to me, when I say humanize the workplace, it is for people to come back to who they are at their core and show up as their most resourceful self. And from that place, They get to show up with more authenticity. They get to contribute.

They get to feel more meaning and purpose because they're doing that work that they're here to do in the world that's using all of their gifts and talents. And I think what keeps us from having more human workplaces is some of the old philosophies. The old way of work and the old way of doing things which didn't really let people connect human to human and really right.

Let themselves be seen and bring their whole selves and, and so to me, being able to help organizations to create an environment where people can be themselves, show up with their humanity, show up with [00:07:00] compassion, show up with inclusivity, right? Right. To create that sense of belonging. That's what everybody actually secretly wants at their core.

They just don't know how to get there. Yeah. And you and

Carolyn: I definitely share that perspective too, because I believe that the pathway to finding ourselves. Can be easier for some people to do it through the workplace. I'm not gonna say it's a sweeping statement for everybody, but that's definitely where you and I really share that.

And what I appreciate about your reflection there is that there's no pointing fingers to other people. It's like, I'm gonna humanize other people or I'm gonna



fix other people. What I really got from what you shared there was it's all about looking inward and you know, this notion of growth from the inside out.

How do people transform from the inside out?

Kristen: It's so interesting, and this is why I love this work so much because I get to witness it. And I think some [00:08:00] people, when they start on this journey of development and growth and transformation, they don't know what they're getting themselves. Yeah. They don't know what they find up for.

They think, oh, I'm gonna figure out how to fix the other people. I'm gonna get them to do what I want them to do. I'm going to all of these different things because it's all they know. And I'm not even saying that that's. Coming from a bad place, they just think that's how we go about doing this. Right?

And so they haven't necessarily spent a lot of time getting curious about who actually are they and what do like, so for when people start to go on that inward journey and, and really transform from the inside out. They start to ask themselves questions, or sometimes it's me asking them questions.

They've, they've never really asked of themselves around who am I? Who do I want to be? How do I wanna show up? What actually matters most to me? How am I getting in my own way much more than I might be realizing How are there all of these limiting [00:09:00] beliefs? That are operating, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously, that are getting in the way of me being able to kind of create that environment that I wanna create to be able to have those relationships that I wanna have.

And of course, when we think about the workplace to ultimately deliver on business outcomes, right? Like this is not an either or, it's not like if we start to be transformed from the inside out and care about our humanity, that now all of a sudden we don't care about achieving goals or business outcomes, right?

It's actually quite the opposite. What ends up happening is, There's more ease and it feels different the way you're going about to achieve those business outcomes. And sometimes the goals start to actually change and shift, and



bigger things get created and more innovation happens. So to me, this transformation can lead to so many powerful things, but going from the inside outs, I like to say that quite often it's like returning home to who you actually always were.

You just lost touch with [00:10:00] that person.

Carolyn: Yeah. Yeah. Oh, I totally agree. I agree with everything you said wholeheartedly. I. What gets in the way, like what really gets in the way? Cuz you know, one of the things you just said there that really resonated with me was the ease that comes along with this. And when I look at my own journey, that's one of the parts I am so struck by at how hard I was making it for myself.

And no one would see that it was the mental gymnastics and emotional turmoil going on underneath. But what gets in our way to doing this work or really allowing ourselves to just sink into it with a coach or,

Kristen: yeah, somebody. Yeah. I think that's such a great question, Carolyn. I think first of all, we're surrounded by this cultural conditioning that has an agenda, and that agenda for a multitude of reasons is to keep you in that place.

And it. Feels like I say, like sometimes it's a bit counterculture and it's a bit disruptive, and [00:11:00] it's challenging the status quo. I know for myself, even as a female in some of the things that I do, someone who's a type A personality who's very ambitious and very driven, it really felt like I was challenging the status quo when I said like, I'm choosing wellbeing as a foundation.

Wellbeing comes first. I'm actually choosing ease. I'm choosing rest, like all of that. It was very disruptive. Like I've had messaging for many, many years telling me you can't do that. Like you can't. So I think that there's all of this messaging and people don't realize that this messaging is operating in the background and that these beliefs.

That are actually not true. Like if we get to our core and get to our truth, those beliefs actually don't serve us anymore. And so for a lot of the leaders that I



work with, I like to talk about an onion and it's like one layer and another layer and another layer. And it's unraveling. And I think some of the unraveling is the [00:12:00] cultural conditioning.

It's parents and family and schools and friends. Yes. And teachers and all of that. All having, I'm not saying that they didn't have the best of intentions, they're just following. They're just repeating patterns that they saw. Yeah. And so these patterns keep on being repeated over and over again, especially family of origin.

And so it's disruptive to start challenging. And there's a multitude of reasons why we're keeping ourselves safe and it feels like. I don't wanna go to that place. Like I don't know what's over there. This is the known, even though the known might be creating a lot of suffering. Yeah. At least I know what this looks like.

So I'm gonna still stay in the safe place here or, and when we get into the emotional intelligence, when the emotions are coming up, this feels a little bit difficult. And I don't wanna be with these difficult emotions, so I'm just going to distract myself. And guess what? Working and spending a lot of time in this productivity mode.

It's a great distractor. Yes. Which, and there's a whole [00:13:00] bunch of other things that we do to numb that prevent us from doing this work. And I think it all comes down to ultimately because it feels safer there and you wanna stay in a place that feels more safe. Yeah.

Carolyn: Oh, absolutely. Do you find that the folks that come to you ready to dive into, because I'm guessing that that's, you know, the people that you do work with seek you out.

You're not going like trying to force anybody to come work with you. Right. People have to be ready. How does that saying go? When the student is ready, the teacher will appear. Yes. Yes. Do you find that people who are ready to do this work are at a certain age and stage in their



Kristen: life? Hmm. I love that question.

I don't think it's actually about age. I think it's definitely about a readiness, and I think some people wouldn't actually be able to verbalize what that readiness looks like. Hmm. So they might have a conversation with me and there's some level of inner knowing, there's [00:14:00] some level of trust that they feel like, okay.

I'm ready to go somewhere here. I feel like I'm going to be in a safe place where I feel the trust, I feel supported. I don't know exactly what this looks like, but I feel okay with this person to go there. And that's why I always say with coaching, whether it's coaching, facilitating, training, all of that kind of stuff, there's this chemistry.

I would definitely say for sure with coaching, there's this chemistry where that person feels that level of self. Safety with that coach. It's like this is the person where I'm gonna be able to open up and be vulnerable and go to that place. Yep. And so it's interesting when you ask me that question, because I do a lot of work with corporate.

I do say to corporate when I'm gonna go in and work with a leader, we need to have a conversation first. I wanna make sure that there's a fit. Where that person feels like they can go on that journey with me and I'm the right person for them. And if they say, no, that is great. There's somebody else that's gonna be that [00:15:00] person that they're ready to do and go on that journey with.

I would say when people come to me in private practice, there's a different level of readiness. They've come to my website, they've watched my podcast, they've listened. They've been in my world sometimes for a long time, and they say, okay, I'm ready to do this. Hmm. And corporate, I feel like it might be a little bit different, but they have chosen a culture.

They've chosen an organization that's supporting them in a certain way, and they say, yes, yeah, sure, I'm good with personal development. I'm good to start doing this. But I don't think they actually knew exactly how transformative the journey was gonna be.



Carolyn: Right, right. So I hear you. I don't have a private practice in the same way that you do at all.

So I find myself doing more of the corporate team stuff and then that will lead to some one-on-one coaching as well. And it is interesting, when I first started doing it, I'll admit there were moments where I'm like, why don't [00:16:00] they wanna work with me? And realizing, again, going like that was my own stuff to work out, but realizing I.

They were sort of given this opportunity and not really knowing what it fully involved and having the patience to let it unfold at the pace they needed it to.

Kristen: Yeah, that's a really good point. That's a really good point because one of the things I even say to people when we're gonna have a coaching conversation is this is a conversation.

Like, I'm gonna let you experience a little bit around like, what is this? Because even the word coaching, people hear the word coaching, like what does that mean? Yeah, it's an ex. Experience and the kind of work that you and I are doing, Caroline, it's a transformational, this isn't transactional, right? To just be able to even experience and start to get a feel for like, well, what does this look like and what, what's happening here?

And I think people are always intrigued when they realize, oh, like she's just asking me a lot of powerful questions for me to get some answers that I didn't know were there, or I didn't know I needed those [00:17:00] questions asked or. And what I find interesting, again, a lot of my clients, most of them are ambitious, high performing leaders.

Yeah. And so they're all about the homework, which I call play, work, and accountability and what am I gonna do? And if I'm doing enough, and sometimes I explain to them, I'm like, When you come to your session, like this isn't all about the homework out here. Like there is so much that's happening in that one hour, and then it's all like, outside of that time that we're together, it's moving in this process, but it's a process.



And then yes, there is a level of trust and patience. Yep. With the process.

Carolyn: Yeah, absolutely. Well, and there's, I'm gonna come back to that word that you said too, which is safety. I've recently published a book around, Nervous system safety. And I think that we can't underestimate that. So when you talked about, you know, I wanna have this meeting first to see if this is a good fit, right?

Safety's gonna look different for different people. And so as you [00:18:00] look at your practice and your work and how it's evolved over the past however many years, what is different now in your transformative work with clients than perhaps like 6, 7, 8 years ago?

Kristen: I think if I look at where I'm at eight years for myself, there's a level of trust that I have in myself around where I will take people.

And if you think about how you're showing up as a coach, there's a level of confidence the more you've done. I'm probably around 15, 1600 hours of coaching out. If I think about when I was at hour one and hour 1600, that looks very different because there's a level of confidence, there's a level of trust.

It almost feels like it was always there in coaching session one, but by coaching session 1600, there's a allowing myself to just do my thing. Right? Right. Like to trust that we're gonna go on this journey and I don't know [00:19:00] exactly how it's gonna look like, and it's gonna zig and it's gonna zag. And we are, uh, to talk through the model that I use.

One of the things it talks about as a coach is you're dancing in the moment. I'm super comfortable dancing in the moment. I have no idea where we're gonna go. Yeah. I don't need to know where we're gonna go. I trust that we're gonna go exactly where we need to go. And there's a understanding that. I'm here to create the space and take them on that journey, but I can't do the work.

Yeah. And so I think at the beginning there's a lot of that I wanna add value and make sure that I'm doing this right and, and I think once you get further and further in, it's not about me, actually, it's about them. Yeah. And I'm creating this



space and the opportunity. For them to do the work, but ultimately I can't do the work.

Right. It takes a lot of courage. Yes. Outside of those coaching conversations, because we're talking through scenarios where they're going to disrupt patterns and do things differently than they currently do, so I talk a lot about. There's a model through the Conscious Leadership Group where being above the line or below the [00:20:00] line.

Right. And so when you're above the line, it's happening by me. When you're below the line, it's happening to me. Right. A lot of leaders previously were in lots of, to me, to me, right. It's like their fault, reactive, and to go into above the line. It means you're taking responsibility, you're taking ownership, you're recognizing that you might be contributing to some of these situations that Right, you are doing things differently.

You are asking different questions, you're coaching, mentoring, all of that kind of stuff. It takes a lot of courage and we can talk about it. We can, we do a lot of role playing in both my coaching and my training. A lot of it. And ultimately though I'm not in that room being the one to like. Say what needs to be said to be able to have those daring conversations.

Yeah, and that's the part where I think I've really gotten to a point that it's not my job. Like I will create the space and I will always show up for you, but it's not my job to get so invested in that [00:21:00] person doing the work because I can't be more invested than they are.

Carolyn: So what I love what you just said, if we were to take a clip of that and pull it out of the show, You were describing, I believe, what great leaders do.

Hmm. Which is not trying to fix or do the other thing, but to create space and, you know, we'll say hold space. And that's not common language that, you know, you and I would've grown up with hearing this. Would it be, you know, being a leader holding space like that sounds a little bit fluffy, but that's in essence right where leadership really is.



And I just think you described it. So beautifully. And so the work that people like you and me and so many other great, great coaches and leaders out there were really role modeling. What. It can look like when we're in spaces with more people, more teams.

Kristen: Yeah, [00:22:00] absolutely. And then as they see that, they're like, okay, I can go do this.

And the reason why I love working with leaders so much is because leaders are creating other leaders and it's the ripple effect. Right? Right. So as they're doing that, Nothing makes me happier than when I hear from a leader and I get an email and they said, you know, that exercise that you did with me, I just did it with one of my employees, and it went so well, and that's it.

Right? Like they're going back and I think that sometimes people don't realize the opportunity. There's so much that comes with being a leader, and I see the opportunity, and don't get me wrong, I know that it's also really, really, really, really hard work, but some of that opportunity is. To show up in that way.

And I believe, here's the thing, it does. You don't have to be a leader by title. Every single one of us. Yep. Gets to be a leader every day. And I think that was something that I had to recognize as well. Like I've been leading since I was a little kid and when I was really little, got the whole bossy thing and I'm like, now it's, yes, I have executive leadership [00:23:00] skills, is how I would say it to my daughter.

But got that messaging that it was somehow when you are feeling comfortable sharing and I. All of these things that I now recognize in retrospect, but you know, it's the journey. You don't know it at the time. Like those were all those leadership skills coming into fruition and recognizing like what that looks like to be able to ask questions and help others to get to those answers, but they might have not if they weren't carving out that time, that hour a week is such a gift that they're giving to themselves to carve out that time that they otherwise probably would not.



Carolyn: Yeah. Yep. Absolutely. Now, I know you have your own podcast and you've been doing that for a few years now I understand it's called the Inspirational Leadership. So what's a theme that you have seen through all of your guests that really can serve anyone listening now about, oh, okay. How [00:24:00] can I be a great leader?

What theme have you heard through all of your

Kristen: sessions? One of the biggest ones that I hear over and over again is humility. Mm. And recognizing it also doesn't mean that if you're a leader, that you somehow have arrived at this place and you have all the answers and you're supposed to know it all. No.

So I think there's that level of humility I hear over and over again the more that you as a leader can spend time getting really clear about your values, your operating system. Them. I like to describe it as that guiding light, like not so much about just what you're doing, but who are you being as a leader, right?

I hear that message over and over and over again, and I think it's also important to highlight what I also see sometimes is it's almost, it's either one. Or the other. We're either an organization that we care and there's empathy and there's compassion and, but we don't care so much about these business outcomes and deliverables or it's so hyper-focused on [00:25:00] results and at the expense of everything, and it's not sustainable, and wellbeing is not at the cornerstone.

I think about this a lot when it comes to parenting as well. We don't wanna go all the way to one side of the pendulum. We don't wanna go all the way to the other side. It's about getting in the middle of that pendulum. And being able to really integrate it and recognizing and to use the parenting reference as well.

I remember when I became a parent, there's someone in this space and conscious parenting, Dr. Shafai, and she said, we, we've got all these parents who wanna do it perfectly. And they're out there saying like, I wanna be the perfect parent. Well let me tell you right now, it's impossible. Yeah. You've already like, that's not achievable, so stop trying to work towards this goal.



And so I think it's the same thing when it comes to leadership as well, like. Progress. Like as long as you're continuing to grow and learn and try different things and consistently doing that, you're also modeling for your people. I can't tell you how many times Carolyn, I've worked with a leader [00:26:00] and they will give the.

Best advice, the best mentoring, the best coaching, and I, you know, I love what you're saying there. What would it look like? For what? To turn this around and apply it to yourself. You need to have lunch. You need to take care of your wellbeing. Meanwhile, I'm just thinking of a client, she doesn't have lunches.

Yeah, that's not good. You need to have lunches and she's the first to tell everybody else you need to have your lunch. Have you had your lunch? Right. Yet not applying that same advice to themselves. I think so many leaders are so sage, they have so much wisdom to share with others. What does it look like to make sure that you're continuously really following that same wisdom for yourself and like why aren't you just to bring another one with this one?

Because I always do so much culture work. I work a lot with HR leaders and I see this consistently. They're very happy to support and have resources and everything available for everybody else. Yeah. But for some reason, they shouldn't have executive coaching. For some reason, they wouldn't have training.[00:27:00]

Yeah. Why?

Carolyn: That's where the humility comes in. Right. It's pride in a very deceptive way. It's pride of like, I'm okay. And so I really appreciate what you were saying there about humility. What are some of the tools or insights, I know that you're trained in, in E Q I, for example, but like what are some of the methodologies or things that you use to help people find that humility?

Because, I mean, I think that's ultimately where we go when it comes to self-awareness, is to really recognize that imperfection and be humble about it.



Kristen: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. I mean, I think some of the tactical things, so from my experience when it comes to emotional intelligence, especially if I'm working with leaders 35 and up, they didn't in school have anybody pulling them inside and say like, this is how you feel, your feelings and yeah, your emotions.

And build your emotional vocabulary and non-judgmentally, give yourself space to feel your feelings. And while this might sound [00:28:00] very simplistic, it is simplistic, yet it's hard because it doesn't come naturally for a lot of people. And so from my experience, a lot of times leaders are operating from the neck up.

Mm. And they're not engaging with their body. Yeah. And your body is really good at getting your attention. Yeah. And so when we start to think about the difference between responding and reactivity, and to me from my perspective, and especially when you're talking about what you're doing in your book, Carolyn, and talking about being trauma informed and trauma sensitive, and recognizing our nervous system and going into fight, flight, freeze, our body is good at getting our attention.

Yet people quite often will notice it getting its attention. And ignore, yes. When your body's getting your attention, and I want people to. Build a new relationship and reconnect with their body and listen to their body when their body's getting their attention. And this looks like, for example, when we're talking about reactivity in the nervous system, I talk a lot about triaging and noticing like going [00:29:00] from when it's green, yellow, and red.

Like there's signs that are telling you that you're in the yellow before you get to the red, right? So just even noticing in your body like. As things are starting to ramp up, what does that look like? Are your shoulders getting tight? Is your stomach hurting? Is it harder to breathe? Are your hands getting sweaty?

Is your head hurting? Like these are all starting to be signs. Your body's getting your attention. Sometimes it's like, okay, I need to recalibrate right now. I need to reconnect with myself. I need to give myself an opportunity to get re-grounded. Yep. And let's give ourselves permission to do that. Like please.



Please support yourself and allow yourself to give yourself what you want in that moment. But other times, our body's also getting our attention to let us know that there's a value. There's a value that's not being honored right now. That might be somebody else who has a different set of values. A different operating system is showing up in that moment, and so then it starts to become less.

Personal, like it's not their agenda right now to try to make you angry.

[00:30:00] Like most people don't wake up in the morning and say like, I wanna go around and sabotage. Exactly. Everybody's day to day. I wanna make their day as terrible as possible. Yep. So recognizing, okay, like they might not recognize, you know, in that moment that they're impacting you the way they're impacting you.

So again, How can you take care of yourself and maybe later on there's a conversation that needs to take place when you're ready, right? When you're in the right place to have that conversation and communicate your boundaries or needs and whatnot might not be working well for you in that moment, but also like just noticing that.

Your body can also be giving your attention because there's something that's not your own self integrity. Like there's something that you're noticing, you're recognizing my kids are very important and I'm sacrificing something right now that I don't feel comfortable sacrificing. Right? Okay, let's listen to that.

Right? Or my body is telling me right now I am completely not paying attention to my wellbeing and that doesn't feel good for me. So I think that the more we can start to get comfortable paying attention to our [00:31:00] body Yeah. And noticing what it's here to tell us. And like I'm not asking you to go from A to Z or A to Z.

Yep. Baby steps. Like baby steps to start to get more into your body and allow yourself, and then the biggest thing, Carolyn, is to give yourself space to feel the feelings and release them. They can be released. Anger is okay. Anger is not bad. Anger gets a bad rap. I love my kickboxing classes. I get so much out with those kickboxing classes that needs to move through my bar body, my dance



parties, my journaling, my walking, like there's lots of ways in a healthy way that we can process and release our emotions.

And a lot of people, Carolyn, like a lot of the leaders when I first start working with them, this is all very foreign to them. Yep. Absolutely.

Carolyn: Yeah. I've experienced it in a similar way and for myself too. Reconnecting with the body and your body is a leadership tool. Obviously, when I say that, I mean not like the physical body per se, but [00:32:00] like the subtle body, the energetic elements of your body.

The nervous system and our nervous systems are communicating with each other. Long before words are shared. And that's really the foundation of safety that we're talking about. Cause when we can regulate ourselves or be mindful, when we are not regulated, when we are, you know, anxious or nervous or activated for whatever reason, we know we are not gonna offload it onto somebody

Kristen: else.

Yeah, exactly. Like it's okay. It's okay to feel, first of all, it's okay to be feeling the way you're feeling and what do you need to take care of yourself in that moment? I think self-regulation is so powerful and I think you talk a lot about co-regulation and as someone who has a 10 year old who's very spirited and feels emotions in a very big way, being able to even co-regulate with him has been powerful.

And through that he's developed his own. Way of being able to even self-regulate. But when he was little and, and [00:33:00] still he's 10, right? So there's times where we're co-regulating together and I'm hugging him really tight and making him feel safe in that moment, or touching his hand or doing those things.

And it's beautiful for him to feel like, okay, I have somebody to be there with me as I'm feeling these really strong and really difficult emotions at his age that it's harder, it's scary. It's a lot scarier to be with. Or not knowing how to put



words around them. Exactly. Exactly. The the, he doesn't have the executive functioning yet to be able to articulate that in the same way.

Carolyn: Yeah. And now I know you do work in another program, step into your Moxie. Yeah. Can you tell us a little bit about

that?

Kristen: Yes. I'm so proud of this program. I got certified on it this year in February, just because I do a lot of work and do training on the emotional intelligence, self-awareness, mindfulness, and all of that.

One of the areas where I would notice both men and women, but definitely a lot with my female leaders as well, is this hesitancy to be [00:34:00] able to like really show up the way they wanna show up and be able to see. Say what they wanna say and feel comfortable doing that. And there is a program called Step Into Your Moxie Around Speak Up and Influence.

And the reason I really loved this program is it, it doesn't feel like, okay, so we're just gonna give you the tactical things of, okay. Right. So just what it, it looks like. Just start going out there and talking. But it has a framework and you work your way up to getting to that place that you're really speaking with presence.

So what I really love about Speak Up and Influence and the way step into your Moxie is created, if you look at it, if there's this pyramid and we work our way up the pyramid before we even get to that on the sides and what's foundational around it, and if we think about safety is foundationally we have, it's looking at self empowerment.

And social justice. So there's a social justice, self-empowerment lens, and then we've got role play and then trauma sensitive. Those are around [00:35:00] foundationally if we look at this pyramid. But then as we work our way through, it starts off with. First really even recognizing and understanding your inner voice because we all have these inner voices that are talking.



Yeah. Some of us don't even realize how, yeah. Busy. That was

Carolyn: me. I had no idea how hard I was being on myself. No clue.

Kristen: No clue. Right. So you start to recognize these, this inner voice that's operating and you didn't realize it was operating and how it's holding yourself back. And then you start to move into the physiological sensations like we were talking about before, is like, what is it like in your body when you're gonna start talking?

Like, we don't wanna skip that spot. We wanna get like, okay, so what's that like to have those sensations and how are you taking care of yourself when you're noticing these sensations before you're gonna have. High stakes conversation. You're going into a meeting with a lot of people. Maybe you're doing a presentation.

Let's honor that. Let's honor what's going on in your body and how you take care of it. Then it's getting into like, well, how do you want a message? Right? Like, [00:36:00] what does it look like to message in such a way that you're gonna call people in with what you're saying? Which to me, part of that messaging is around authenticity as well, right?

Yeah. Like what's your unique way, bringing people in and then getting into that presence. Right, because we all have our own secret sauce, right? Like what does it look like to really be in and own that presence? And then ultimately you get to that top. This is how you start to move people to action. And you start to be able to emotionally connect with people, whether that's.

One-on-one conversations and using things like storytelling, all that kind of stuff. But we can't move all the way to the top and say, oh, I'm gonna do storytelling and I'm gonna get to work for, without doing all the bottom rungs to get to that place to do, to do the transformational work. It's

Carolyn: so embodied, like, you know, in the language that I use in, in my book, in, in my training, it's around the three centers of intelligence.



Yeah. And you can't just come at it from the head, like, what are the messages? Oh, that's so [00:37:00] marvelous. So where do you do that step into your moxie work? Is it like a five hour workshop or like tell the listeners No, what it's about.

Kristen: Yeah, great question. So the shortest would be a half day. So I have half day institutes, one day institutes and two day institutes.

Okay. So I've had organizations who right away they're like, we wanna go all in. We're gonna do the two day institute. But some are like, okay, we just wanna get people right a little bit here, so we're gonna do the half day. And then what has led to after that's like, oh, we eat another half day, we wanna take of this.

But it's kind of getting them used to it. And I have to say, even the role playing, and I'm conscious of using the word role playing cuz I don't know about you, but like for me, roleplay, it brings me back to doing it in class. And like the way the role playing was set up, there wasn't a lot of safety. Yes.

Yeah. But the role playing, so I didn't feel comfortable. But I almost wanna say like the role playing, it's fun, it's playful. Yeah. And it's. It almost brings people back to a part of themselves where they're like, oh my gosh. And like you said, it's embodying it. So as they [00:38:00] learn this, this isn't just something they're learning in their head.

Yes. It's something that's experiential that they're getting in their body, and then that creates much bigger shifts. Yes,

Carolyn: absolutely. Oh, and so Kristen, where can people find out more about you, how to get in touch with you? Maybe they wanna step into your Moxie program. Where can people find you?

Kristen: Yes, thank you for asking.

So my website is Kristen Harcourt. So just Kristen Harcourt. Dot com. I'm pretty active on all the socials. I love connecting with my community, so don't hesitate to reach out to me on any of the socials. Connect with me there or on



the website, and then, uh, you can subscribe on the website to the podcast if you're interested, which is called Inspirational Leadership.

Now

Carolyn: we could, if we were to coffee shop, we would at least have another hour or two, uh, to talk. But we're not gonna go there cuz this is a shorter podcast than our regular coffee talks. But I do like to end off all the podcasts with three questions [00:39:00] for the guests. Are you ready to go there? Yes. All right.

So these three questions are similar, very much aligned to your work as well. First question has to do with self-awareness, and what is a moment that you'd like to share that could have been very uncomfortable, yet full of profound insight about yourself?

Kristen: Hmm. Anytime I think of this question, I always think of who are my best teachers and my best teachers are my husband and my kids.

Yeah, and I think what I would say is those moments where I noticed that I've gone into reactivity and I've been triggered, one that shows up for me was, it was probably a couple of years ago, but my son just about to go to school. We're in a rush, and then he decides like it's the perfect time to have to do a number two and like it's fine.

Like this is when it's gonna happen. This is a 20 minute process. Everything was so interesting because. I was aware of, not that I could be the observer, but everything in me did not like this. I wanted to [00:40:00] control the situation. I wanted to be different. Like what a great example of something you can't control.

Like there's absolutely nothing I can do about it. Yeah. But the not being able to control Carolyn, it felt like it was. I was gonna die. That's how big it felt like my body and everything that was doing, cuz it was like, I have a bit of a time cop and it's like, we need to be at school on time. It was so interesting to witness all



of this condition that was happening this moment that, and it was all made up like none.

None of it's true. It was all a story like, So what's gonna happen? He gets to school 15 minutes later, like it's fine. But there were all these things wound up in and around who I am as a mom and he should be going when he is and like, who is he to be doing at this time? Like, it was very interesting. I got to the part of it and I was able to like maintain my calm through it, but it was in.

Situations like that, I find those ones where you're trying to hold onto control so tightly Mm, and to let go of it. What [00:41:00] ends up being on the other side of it. Interesting.

Carolyn: Yes, I can certainly relate. Children are amazing teachers. So second question has to do with the topic that we started to discuss, which is self-regulation.

And you did list a few of them. Um, so you might circle back and say the same things, but maybe not. What is a technique that you use to bring your nervous system back into regulation or something that helps to bring you back or that keeps you in a calm

Kristen: state? Yeah, yeah, absolutely. And I have a list of this and I, these are my go-to things, so there's many on them, but the ones that tend to be the more, most often go-tos are my breaths, like just noticing that I'm shallow breathing, so to stop everything that I'm doing and take some deep cleansing breaths.

I'm a big journaler and not so much journaling in that like I have to have this specific structure, but journaling when I'm noticing, I'm feeling big emotions and writing out what I'm feeling because as I'm writing out what I'm feeling it, I, I [00:42:00] know that's a really nice release for me. Yeah. And a thing to do with movement, so doing little dance parties at my desk, yoga, meditation, and then music.

I find. Either it's listening to Zen music that's like very calming and centering. Yep. Or it's just putting on my favorite music, doesn't matter what the music is.



And then it puts me back into perspective and I realize like, oh, I've left my body. I went somewhere else. And it grounds me back into the present moments.

Yeah. And that tends to be very powerful for me as well. And

Carolyn: that is the segue, right? Perfect. Into the third question, which is, what is a song or genre of music that makes you feel connected to something bigger than yourself? I really

Kristen: love this question cuz I was giving it a lot of thought and I even was looking at my playlist and like what's on my playlist and what I find really brings me back when it comes to music.

Is songs that bring you back to your humanity. So, you know, when I think about Bob Marley [00:43:00] and One Love, like it reminds me when I hear him singing or when I hear tears in Heaven. Like I hear that song and it always reminds me of like the humanity of him losing his child. And so it's interesting, it's sometimes I need really joyful kind of yeah.

Um, happy songs. And then sometimes I need songs that will make me cry like I needed to be. Super, super sad. Yeah. Because in that moment it's like there's a release that needs to happen and through the humanity and shared humanity of words and lyrics, and I know you're like this with music as well, I just feel like.

Music brings me back to my soul. So anything that's reminding me, the lyrics reminds me of our humanity. Mm,

Carolyn: so beautiful. So you gave a few options there that go over the spectrum. I'm the same as you. A whole bunch of different genres, but at the core of it, yeah, there is something bigger than herself and so many types of music.

Yeah, yeah. Well that time flew by. I think we need to go have a tea, and I just wanna thank you for coming on the show and just sharing so much [00:44:00] great knowledge, you're so articulate with how you share it, and really make it



accessible for people to feel safe to go in and, and do some of this work. So I hope our listeners reach out to, uh, to you in some way, shape, or form.

Kristen: Thank you, Carolyn. Thank you for creating this space. Thank you for being who you are and how you show up in the world. It's very inspiring and I think that it's a reminder that there's never gonna be enough of us doing this work, and we're so much stronger together. Yeah,

Carolyn: absolutely. Thanks everyone for tuning into another episode, and if you like what you heard, please don't forget to like and subscribe and leave us in a comment.

We'll see you soon. Bye. When you find a coach who creates a safe place for you, it creates the conditions you need to learn about yourself to deepen yourself awareness. And get curious with your emotions, the [00:45:00] conversation that you just heard between Kristen and I really reinforced this notion for me about psychological safety and such a great reminder that that safety, that connection that we feel with others comes through our nervous system.

And I hope for you leaders out there listening that you are in. Inspired to find somebody to work with, be it a coach, be it a peer group, but recognizing that our personal growth and development is really, really required in today's world. There's a lot happening around us. There is a lot that can distract us and finding ourselves in amongst all of this chaos is not.

Something you can do on your own. So I hope you've been inspired to do this work [00:46:00] and continue finding the courage to get to know yourself better, because that's truly when we become the greatest leaders.