

## The People-Led CEO – with guest Pinky Lilani

Jeremy Campbell, CEO, Black Isle Group

00:11 – 00:24

So welcome to The People-Led CEO podcast with me, Jeremy Campbell from the Black Isle Group and my good friend, Wayne Clark from the Global Growth Institute. Wayne how you doing?

Wayne Clarke

00:24 – 00:31

Very good, very good, very excited that we've got the amazing Pinky Lilani CBE with us on the line

Jeremy

00:31 – 01:54

Absolutely, so without further ado let me introduce our guest today: we are absolutely delighted Pinky is giving up her time to spend with us today. Pinky probably doesn't need much of an introduction for most people, but I will give an introduction.

Pinky is an author, she's a motivational speaker, she's a food expert and is the founder and chair of several awards including Woman of the Future and the Asian Women of Achievement awards. Pinky was given an OBE in 2007 and also CBE in 2017. One for her work in charity and also one for work with women in business. Pinky has also done numerous things; I've heard her personally on Desert Island Discs, she's often on Radio 4, she also delivered a TEDx in Marrakesh and I saw a brilliant quote from her from somebody saying "if there were gold medals given out for networking, then Pinky would definitely have several of them." Pinky is also a kindness campaigner, which we're going to get into a little bit more and the importance of that within business. So, without further ado thank you so much for joining and welcome to the podcast Pinky .

Pinky Lilani

01:54 - 01:59

Thank you, Jeremy, I'm honoured and delighted to be here.

Jeremy

02:00 - 02:34

Brilliant. So, let's kick off and let's start with the question. Obviously, you've done so much work with so many people, you've helped literally thousands of people to better their careers and believe in themselves and give them confidence. So, many of the Woman of the Future have gone on to become CEOs, founded their own businesses and ran their own businesses. What do you think is one quality that you've seen throughout all of those incredibly talented women that that you supported over the years?

Pinky

02:35 – 03:08

Jeremy it is really hard to identify just one quality, but I think if I had to it would be a huge commitment and dedication to what they're doing. And you know then again, the next quality would be courageous. I think you know people who are successful have to be courageous.

So, I mean there are so many and I think you know you need a combination of them and to really see them live, but I think they need to be driven and that commitment comes from having that drive.

Jeremy

03:09 – 03:37

When you talk about courageous, Pinky, there's a lot written isn't there about it, I was reading some stuff a couple of weeks ago by a called Brené Brown and she talks about being courageous, but she also talks about vulnerability and the fact that you have to be vulnerable in order to be courageous. In order to put yourself out there, that you've you in affect got to put yourself out to be criticised, but that's being courageous as well.

Is that , is that what you see too?

Pinky

03:38 – 04:48

Well, I think you know courageous for me means that actually you know, overcoming the fears and therefore the fears are very much aligned to vulnerability. You normally, when you're vulnerable, like for me for instance, I'm profoundly deaf so for me it takes a lot of courage to come onto platforms where people ask me questions and sometimes I make a totally doolally answer, because I've had the question or wrong or I ask a question to somebody else's asked and they just asked a 10 minutes ago but I missed it. And I think it takes courage to overcome your fears and to actually be there and be part of the narrative, because if you are not out there if you never overcome that, then you're going to go nowhere. So courage is very, very important and we've seen, actually, during the pandemic in some research we've done, that people are really wanting leaders who are courageous and resilient, whereas before the pandemic, the traits they were looking for were people who were fair and, maybe, you know, transparent, but really it's now courage and resilience that has gone up considerably.

Wayne

04:49 – 05:24

And when you said, Pinky, about the dedication, so in response to the questions Jeremy asked are looking at the dedication of these people that have become so successful - what is it that drives that, or creates that dedication? because I think some people who are tremendously driven will completely get that and then there's going to be lots of people who struggle to get the drive. They want to be successful, but maybe can't do what's necessary to get there or struggle in some way. So I'm interested in your experience of seeing, you know, really successful people, where does that come from?

Pinky

05:25 – 06:38

I think a lot of inner motivation, it has to draw a path, to come from within. You can have a lot of external factors that may help you. You know, other people encouraging you. You know, because you really need to do it but drive really has to come from within. And I think for me also, I find why do I carry on doing things – people say “aren't you going to retire?” but I love what I do and I think when people have meaning in what they do, the drive is all the more apparent. It's much easier when you really believe in something and I think it goes back to a lot of people leaders - Many years ago, I remember an experiment was done where they were like tracking people and there were people who came out of Business School and some of them went into a particular profession because they wanted to make money and others went into something they loved and thought they, you know, they'll just follow that and the ones who really succeeded and the ones with more millionaires came from the people who were in the category of carried on what they loved and that's what drives you. Because if you don't really like what you're doing, there is no prize even if it's going to give you a lot of money.

Wayne

06:38 – 07:30

Yeah, yeah, well I actually speak on the subject of a lot of money, so Warren Buffett obviously one of the top two or top three wealthiest men on the planet, is now just 90 years old and still more committed to running his investment business than ever. I didn't realise that his adviser Charlie Munger is, I think, a couple of years older than Warren Buffett and actually in the interview with Warren Buffett they were asking him “why do you still carry on? you're 90 years old. You are worth over 100 billion dollars?” And he said that he just found something that he absolutely loved. Turns out the thing that he loved and he was great at tends to make you a lot of money, if you're good at it. So I think a lot of people misunderstood; he was never chasing money, he was just passionate about something. Turns out the thing he's passionate about made him a lot of money.

Pinky

07:30 – 07:57

Absolutely. I think passion is so important. In a way it's so important because you can't be driven unless you have passion for something you do and for me that is, you know, when you meet people and they don't have passion, you're not inspired by them. I don't think leaders are really successful can do it without a huge amount of passion and belief in what they do, and love for what they do.

Jeremy

07:57 – 08:07

Thank you. Talk to us about your, your kindness campaign and talk to us about the top 50 leaders that you're compiling.

Pinky

08:11 – 11:31

Yes, I mean for me kindness has been at the heart of everything we've done at the DNA, all our programmes is about kindness and collaboration and I thought I would put my money where my mouth was and say actually find leaders who are kind. Because often kindness is seen as extra money and it's seen as very fluffy. I think quite the opposite I think kind leaders succeed because they're kind. And to be kind you have to be strong .so I said let's find leaders who are kind and then it gives permission to everybody else to be kind and I think kindness is a great driver of business success because when you're kind a lot of people will realise that you're stronger, successful but you can still go that extra mile and they will be motivated and they'll be inspired by you. So, three years ago we set up Kindness and Leadership 50 Leading Lights. We were very lucky the Financial Times came on board as a media partner besides Business School Oxford and we actually opened the London Stock Market on World Kindness Day, which is November 13, with the, with our list published in the Financial Times and we had amazing leaders there and so many of them told me but, you know, I received so many accolades, but this is the most meaningful, because I think when you're a kind leader you do what my good friend Professor Lalan Jody said "You go from being successful to being significant," And that's the legacy we leave, and I think all of us who are living today we think so much, we wanted some legacy otherwise it just goes with us what is the use, talk to me, it's a very important component. And Jeremy, just for your information, we actually did some research last year to see: where is kindness in everybody's perspective of leadership? And we did the research last year and then again did some research on kindness and leadership during the pandemic and during the crisis and again we found people said they would stay in companies that they were working for, for longer than they had envisaged, because their leaders had shown kindness during the crisis. But otherwise if you're not a kind leader, if you don't motivate people, people leave very quickly whenever they get the first opportunity. So I think kindness is absolutely vital and we are now doing the same list; we've done it in South East Asia and we're hoping to take it global. And we want men and women we don't just want it to be a female trait, the team, ou know we need some good men out there who are actually beating the drum for us and we've been very lucky; last year was exciting for us we had Jürgen Clock on the list and Liverpool Football Club being the Premier winners, we had this lovely of Jürgen holding the Women of the Future trophy, and then suddenly everyone takes notice. So we need all kinds of role models to actually be our poster boys and poster girls.

Jeremy

11:31 – 13:03

Very good. Do you think that ,you think this but, because I totally agree, I absolutely agree, I think ,personally, I think that of course culture starts from this from the top table and the way that the board or the senior executives in any business act often is then, is often copied at all different levels going down the business and I think kindness is of course it's something that's free and it's actually something that's pretty simplistic and I agree, I think it can be seen as something that's not business related but it's very much business related cause it's people. And this is the whole point of it, the whole point of people led organisations is exactly that. And I think this, this personally, this sort of connotation of this work/life balance which is you're a different person at home then you are at work, and vice versa, yes, I think there are definitely differences but you're still your own character; you still have your own values, you still have your own principles. And if you're kind at home, you're going to be kind at work. And I just totally agree. I think that engagement is about drawing the best from people but also being as supportive as possible to get business results it's not just about pleasing people and keeping people happy. But people want to have strong leadership with strong principles. So I totally agree.

Pinky

13:03 – 14:01

It takes so little. So just as an example, I decided at the start of the pandemic, when I didn't know what we should be doing, I decided that every day I would ring up five women from our network. We are very lucky we've got this robust, huge network. I would ring up five people every day and see how they are doing. And that was the best part of my idea because these people, everybody, was actually fumbling; they didn't know they were struggling, they didn't know where we were going but just being able to talk to someone else and to feel someone cares actually changes the trajectory and motivates you. And I think, even now, six months on, we need it even more and people never forget kind people and people never forget unkindness too. So I think, you know, we must remember that, because all of us you know, we don't care who someone knows, or how much money they have. We just want to know if they care about us and that changes the way you look at them.

Wayne

14:01 - 17:18

One of the organisations that we've worked with quite a lot over the years, both worked with and really learnt a lot from is a hotelier. They're based out of South Africa and they have business in South Africa, Switzerland and the UK and the US. One of the things that they do, Pinky, when they interview all new employees, is essentially it's a test for kindness. They have the strongest, I'll connect you with them, they have the strongest TripAdvisor scores of any hotelier in the world actually, and this year their hotel in Ireland was voted the best hotel in the UK and actually their general manager in London was voted the best general manager in the world. Which is, you know, think of many general managers, there are hoteliers and there are a lot of good hoteliers, How this really works, not to expose too much of that, I guess their secret source, is essentially what they do on the first interview is they ask you some questions which tell them a lot about your desire to want to do something great for someone else. So they'll say to you if they if Jeremy was going to interview me, Jeremy so right Wayne, here's the interview, I'm going to ask you two questions at the interview. If you fail on the second question then we end the interview right now. Okay, so we could be done in 5 minutes. So I say, okay, I straighten up my shirt. He says right, first question, have you ever had a memorable experience? If so, tell me about it. And then I'll talk about it and then it's "Right, second question, have you ever created a memorable experience for somebody?" And this is a genius question, because you're testing for the empathic ability to want to do something great for another human. Their argument is; it doesn't matter whether you're being paid £1000 an hour or £10.00 an hour, your desire to want to do that for someone is something intrinsic. And actually they said we've been in the hotel business for, you know, 40 years we've not yet worked out how to train that into someone, so instead of trying to do that we realised why don't we look for it from the start? And I think, you know, a lot of, I guess, a lot of businesses are in the world of, like Jeremy's business, and I, you know, we're often asked to go into organisations and help change the way that people behave and do things. Which is sometimes possible. You know, what these guys have done is they get it right from the start. And they hire very specifically for the kindness trait which I think is so powerful. And then if you look at the evidence, in London right now, on TripAdvisor there are around 1000 hotels on TripAdvisor, they currently have number one, number two and number 3 hotels on TripAdvisor. It's practically impossible to achieve that level of success and to achieve that level you need something like a month's worth of five star ratings from every single guest who stayed with you. And again, you know, in London there are so many amazing hotels that have got fluffy slippers and lovely toiletries and powerful showers and what makes the difference is not the property it's the intangible, it's the service experience which is all about the kindness of people who work there. So, you know, I've seen in so many cases, and I'm sure Jeremy has too, lots of the companies we've worked with, you see these like diamonds, they are rare, but you see them in business. Like it just works. And then for other people they can't really understand it, because it doesn't seem so hard edged and commercial. I think as you said at the beginning, it looks on the outside soft and fluffy, but actually it's as hard edged as you can ever imagine.

Pinky

17:19 -

Wayne, thank you so much for sharing. That that's one of the most interesting stories I've heard in a long time. And I think that's really, really important and I'd love to follow up about this hotel and find that little bit more that's amazing - to test for kindness. Very good tip.

Jeremy

17:39 - 19:14

Just following on from that, and if you think about it, and I was thinking as Wayne was talking, it does, it goes right to the centre of customer service really isn't it? Because when we all have brilliant customer service it's not actually, it's

not the people that could follow the rule, that sadly they've probably been asked to go through a script, it's the ones who also say "look, don't worry I'll sort it out for you" and they will go you know this extra mile that we get, you know, that gets thrown around all the time. We want our people to go the extra mile.

What does that really mean? Because not so long ago that was presenteeism, that was number of hours, you know you have to be in the office at 6:00 o'clock and if you weren't, and that's all gone now because of, thank goodness by the way, but that's gone pretty much because we're all now remote working. But customer service is about kindness, it's "I'm going to talk to you and relate to you as a human being", which is really what you were saying, Pinky. Doesn't matter whether you are a customer and whether what my role is, but I'm going to, its empathy, I'm putting myself in your shoes and I know that you're frustrated that you can't get what you want and I've got a set of rules which frankly are not allowing me necessarily to do what I want. And maybe the hotelier is what they're doing and I don't know Wayne, you probably don't want give away too many secrets, but, but rather than having a very restrictive set of rules you're allowing people to be kind, and that's what people remember. People remember the, that is the extra mile, isn't it? Rather than working harder, because people can't work any harder than they are, I don't think.

Pinky

19:15 - 20:43

Absolutely, I mean it, what you're saying is absolutely right: that little bit makes all the difference and yet if you don't do that the prickliest hotel or for any organisation that now is on social media, it can have terrible repercussions if you just stick to the rules. I think we have to bend the rules when we can. And I think, Jeremy, just following on, people often ask us, when we have nominations open for the Kindness Leadership, is how, what is the criteria, how do you define a kind person? And I don't think I think you know when someone's kind, you know when someone is unkind,. And so, again there's a book I read, probably about 20 years ago, one of the best books I've ever read. It was called The Heart At Work. And the same people who actually wrote Chicken Soup For The Soul, which was a big hit in the early 90s. But at least one of the most relevant books that I've ever read. And I think things that matter never go out of date. You know, our values, our integrity. For me, you know, your kindness they will always be there. If you go back to really books that were written years and years ago, you know, Carnegie wrote his book in 1940s and 50s and the basic principles remain the same. So, I think, you know, what you're saying is that those kind of things never go out. We can't define them, we just know what they are.

Wayne

20:44 - 21:09

So, is it possible, do you think, Pinky, in your experience of seeing some of the leaders you've worked with, and I'm assuming here that not all of them have been on the on the bandwagon and waving the fan flag for kindness, some of them must at some point have challenged you on this. Is it, is it possible to change their way of thinking, have you come across leaders who have been able to change and have an epiphany moment?

Pinky

21:09 - 22:57

I like to think that I've changed their way of thinking and I think there is storytelling comes in, it's no use me giving principles, because, but actually telling them with stories. How things can, you know, how people can be kind and how people can change the narrative, so I think I have so many wonderful examples of kindness over the years that have helped me, you know, build my business and meet people and seen how actually small acts can have huge repercussions. So, I think, I think I've managed to change their opinion on it and some of them will always be sceptical but I think much more people are willing to accept it and you have to you have to share the narrative and you have to also make them meet those people, because there's some people who are really, I know, they want it all about themselves. So, whenever they try to do something it's so much of self-promotion, and those are the people I stay far away from. Luckily I would say that just about 5% of the people we deal with and most of them are really interested in helping others. Because I think they, they say "the fragrance always stays in the hand that gives the rose". So, you can never be talking to somebody else without actually making yourself feel good. So, I think you know people is are wonderful. Apparently they've shown in an experiment, when people feel kind, they do a good deed, they feel good, it releases all kinds of endorphins in their system. But to receive the kindness also feels good. But apparently watching somebody else be kind also raises those chemicals in your body suggest watching an act of kindness can be very powerful too and empowering.

Wayne

22:57 – 24:12

Wow. Do you think then, because I'm just thinking through some of the, I've worked with some leaders who have become kinder as they become older. Let's look at it that way. They seem to have done things as they're getting into their sort of latter end of their careers, that they perhaps wouldn't have done as a sort of hard-nosed commercial guy. And I'll give you a real example so we went with a guy who ran a big car business, thousands and thousands of people, he's like 2 years away from retirement, he's made himself an absolute fortune and he said to me that he wants to focus now on employee engagement and creating the right culture in the organisation. And I'm listening thinking "this sounds great" and then I'm like "why now?!" You know, you've made yourself so much money, you're retiring in two years, why are you now worried about this? And he said that it was now about his legacy; he had an epiphany moment and actually didn't want to leave behind a legacy that was just the money machine. He felt like there was more of a soul he wanted to inject into the business. But he became reflective in the sort of twilight of his career here and my hope and wonder is, I wonder now, with generations coming through, whether this is changing, whether younger people are actually starting out on their journey with kindness in mind rather than waiting until it's kind of late.

Pinky

24:12 – 26:04

I think they, I think when you have more people talking about something, everyone, it gathers momentum. So, in our network were always talking about kindness. So unkind people, then, you know, realised they're not going to get a look in so then they have to either adhere by those rules or they're not theirs. So, I think people are more aware that it's important. Also we've changed so much; I remember in the 80s when women were coming up into the workplace and they were told to dress in a certain way, to wear those suits and have big shoulders; they're trying to be like men. Now you never hear that and I think you know the more confidence you have as a leader the more you can be yourself. And not only leaders, everybody; the more you believe in what you do. And I don't think, intrinsically, I think people are kind. And I think it's alien to our, our default option is always to be kind, to be collaborative, some people more than others. Some people generally; there are so many CEOs, the CEO of a very big financial institution at the start of the pandemic when I was talking to her, she's one of our sponsors, and I was just telling her of other challenges because also a really small company and the next day somebody, her chief of staff, rang me up and we were talking and she said "you know, we don't need to give you the sponsorship money till next year, but if you have a cash flow problem we'd love to give it to you now". That's so kind and she she didn't have to shake up thousands of employees around the world but just one little conversation with me she followed up and I will never forget that. So I think, you know, it's, it's something that's becoming integral to a lot of people's lives, in all kinds of field and women then everywhere.

Wayne

26:04 – 26:24

Yeah yeah I guess, I wonder whether, again, as we've been through this experience over the last five/six months with Corona, you know, we've realised, I guess, that our interdependency on each other is way more than we kind of realised in February. You know, everything is connected now and we now, we now know that. For those who didn't think about it before.

Pinky

26:24 – 27:27

You know, I think, again, going back to the whole, this buzzword now, obviously everywhere 'diversity' is gone higher on the agenda. Sustainability is all over the place too. I think those are the two things and we realised you know you can't just look after yourself anymore, you have to look after everyone else. Because there's no way you can feel good if other people around you are, are suffering. I mean there's just no way, I don't think any human being can do that. And again you're absolutely right about interdependency; is that you know if we want to have the world go on for many, many more years we all have to play our part. And I think a lot people will think in life "I'm so insignificant, what I do is not going to make a difference" so they don't do anything. And for me the message now is all about "every one of us have a responsibility". And if we all gathered together those little acts of kindness through active sustainability, we actually can change the world.

Wayne

27:27 – 27:39

Yeah there's a great thing I saw on LinkedIn, it said "if you think small things are insignificant, then trying spending the night in a room with a mosquito."

Pinky

27:39 -

I think the Dali Lama said that.

Wayne

27:40 -

Oh, is that right?!

Pinky

27:41 – 28:01

We think now, we're thinking big everyone wants to have 100 million followers and you know whatever otherwise nobody rates you. But I think there is a real movement also to getting everyone to say their bit and play their part.

Jeremy

28:01 – 29:45

Yeah I, I think what's, what's definitely apparent from the last six months in the, as, as with everything in life we learn things and there's no question that its taught us the act of kindness and I think coming out of where you think where the UK was going into Covid with this horrible kind of rhetoric of Brexit and doesn't matter what your politics are, whether, which side of the fence, so it doesn't matter. The fact was that some of the language that was started to be used in the House of Commons and actually all around the country and in the press, was really quite unsavoury. And I think coming into, into the pandemic certainly, everyone's got a story about a neighbour knocking on the door, everyone's got a story about somebody trying to do some shopping for each other. Everyone's got a story about meeting ten people in their street they've never met before. And it's sort of somewhat ironic that we have to almost have this, this crisis in order for exactly what you're alluding to, Pinky, is, is just, just human kindness, is the politeness of saying hello to somebody and saying "how you doing ", you know "how, how's your day?" Rather than just keeping yourself to yourself. I'm as guilty as the next person but I must say that, that's one of the things that pandemic definitely for me which was kindness is for free and actually there's you, know, we're all the same really everyone just wants to have a couple of minutes of a chat and see how somebody is, that's all people want.

Pinky

29:45 – 30:10

Me too. I mean you know when we talk about interdependencies, basically the pandemic, you see if one person is irresponsible and goes out when they have symptoms it's going to affect so many people. And I think this is the real test of having integrity, of actually having your own responsibility, we owe it to everyone else. That's to say responsibility plays such a big role in today's society.

Wayne

30:10 – 30:31

So, how can we help to sort of light this torch paper, I mean it's already alight, obviously. How do we get it to explode around the world with respect to your awards and the recognition programme for women leadership? You said before you want to take this around the world now and what do we need to do to help it on its journey? Is there anything that we can do anything, anyone watching this can do?

Pinky

30:31 – 32:03

Absolutely, I mean we'd love names. Obviously, we're looking, first of all we have to find somebody who's going to help us in terms of sponsorship, but once we get that we'd love names, we want people all over the world. We have put our strength maybe in Europe and South East Asia but I think if we want to have every single continent involved we need people around telling us, you know, pointing the light and shining a light on other people, who perhaps you know want to be on the journey with us. And I think we need once you recognise someone, you know, Aristotle said "we are what

we repeatedly do, excellence then is not an act, but a habit". And I think we want people whose those habits of kindness, we want to shine the light on them because we want everyone to practise this until we need help. You know, every little thing so many people can help with social media they can help with contacts. I mean the most amazing things people sometimes open the network which I've never heard of till now we have after Jurgen Klopp we have a wonderful relationship with the Liverpool Football Club. And also we've got relationship now with the English Cricket Board, we've never had any relationships with people like that. But you know when I think we can work with almost anybody doing anything because we can find areas of synergy and collaboration. And so I'd love to collaborate with anyone, somebody can have a very, very different business. But I think we can find commonality.

Wayne

32:03 – 32:59

One immediately comes to mind is the UN Global Compact. So I don't know if you've spent any time with the Global Compact but, I mean, each year I'm involved with the UN at the General Assembly and there's a part of the UN called UN Global Compact which was designed to get commitment from CEOs. Now there are over 1000 signatories of the commitments of the 10 principals of the UN Global Compact and all of those CEOs they are generally from large organisations, so I would imagine you're already starting with a very open door of 1000 signatories who care about anti bribery laws, they care about infant mortality rates, is a level of interest there. I think there will be a massive open door so, again, after, the after we talk on this, there's certain guys I can connect you with there. But I think the UN Global Compact would be great one. It's a really powerful movement.

Pinky

32:59 – 34:38

We're always looking for new people to talk to and the conversation are. And, you know, you can use anybody in your networks, in our network about eight/nine years ago we had this wonderful person; she was a burlesque artist and she entered our awards. I had no idea what are burlesque artist was, but she got shortlisted and suddenly when I said Oh my God is it too risqué, but she turned out to be the most amazing, amazing, she was the first Singaporean to be a burlesque artist. It was illegal in Singapore, and there's a lovely story where I actually took all our shortlisted to Buckingham Palace to have tea with the Master of the Household, because he was one of the judges, he was so inspired by the shortlist and she came along with us to Buckingham Palace and she didn't meet the Queen or anything but she came to the ballot and had tea with and then she actually was loving the Singapore government and she used a lovely shot of her going into the Palace and actually she said that helped her to get burlesque made legal in Singapore. And so now she's on Netflix, she's everywhere and she does live TV you know, likes interviews, Instagram and she asked me to be on the live Instagram interview with her and we had like 1000 people crashing in. Because she started, so you never know who you can work with. But I think, always for me, what's really important is to have people have the same values, so you know, integrity is very important to me. Kindness. If somebody's values are very different, I don't think, you know, I would really be able to work with them. So that would be paramount.

Wayne

34:39 – 35:56

Yeah and actually we did a survey a number of years ago, we did quite an extensive piece of research of looking at employee values in organisations. And it's quite geeky exercise, but we did a word frequency analysis of, of, company values all around the world. And we found that the number one value, across hundreds of thousands of organisations that we looked at, was integrity. Actually, the interesting thing was even in organisations that didn't have explicit values, so some you walk into their office and they say it's "care, compassion, integrity" whatever. And then some there was nothing listed at all, even in those organisations it turned out that integrity was the most desired trait of the perception of how the leaders behave. And we found actually there was some quite close correlations between the level to which people felt the leaders had integrity, their perception of the leadership team and actually overall stock market performance of companies. So, I'm an economist by training, so we were really interested in the data, but it turns out that the more caring and values-led organisations seem to be; surprise, surprise, the more money they make - over the long run. Not over you know, because you can beat people up and squeeze the juice out of them short term but that doesn't last very long. So long term performance has a big correlation of course with being of integrity.

Pinky

35:56 – 36:23



I'm glad, I'm so glad to hear that because for me that's always been the number one and we're small and all kinds of people coming to our orbit and some of them offer things but if I don't think they have the same values, we never work with them. But for the long, long run is not something that we want to be in and out of, so thank you for confirming that for me.

Wayne

36:23 – 36:58

And can I ask about some advice for the other side, so we talked about some of the guys that are more experienced. I'm just about to go off to University. It's Freshers Week in September. I'm about to start my educational journey. I'm obviously not because I'm 44 years old, I'm just playing the character. But I'm just about to start University. I've got three years ahead of me. I'm going to become, you know, I want to work in business, for example. Is there anything that again sort of advising your 18 year old self, that you would say “look if I could give you some advice right from the start,” what is there that I should think about making my journey?

Pinky

36:58 – 38:51

I think, you know I would say have every experience you can. Don't be afraid of failure. Because I think when I was young I was very afraid of failure and I think I grew up in a, in a community in India where you were always worried about what would everybody else think because you know it was a very social life. So, so, I think again just you know do what you really believe in don't worry about what everybody else is going to say. And I think, you know, networks are really important and if you go out and meet as many people and, you know, really find people who you resonate with so well those will really be with you for so many years in your life so I think that is really, really important. Also, you know I've done the theory called The Seven Qs which I've invented. And one of the Qs is, is called the LQ, is the likeability quotient. You know there's some people that the University find likeable; everyone will turn round and say I like that person. Some people everyone doesn't seem to like. And I think the people that people don't like are mainly people who are arrogant and who are, have no humility. For on the likability side you have all these people who, why do we like someone normally? because they're warm, they're present when they're talking to us, they're caring. They actually, you know, the past flit about what they do and giving us attention, they follow up. And you know the whole thing about life and sometimes obviously people have charisma, everyone can't have that, but I think we can all improve our likeability quotient by being much more warm, present, following up, being caring, being kind, being collaborative and try tell them think about your likability quotient.

Jeremy

38:51 – 40:00

It's wonderful. I love that and it was, it was a question I was going to ask actually, sort of similar, really, but I guess kind of a few years in, maybe a few years or maybe not that many in advance of coming out of University, but certainly what's the new world leader look like now, Pinky? Coming out of Covid, because we've sort of been through this period, haven't we, where a lot of organisations have been through, frankly, a survival process, just really trying to keep a thing going, keep businesses going, keep people in the workplace, but coming out of it and fingers crossed we are starting to come out of it, although we just obviously don't know what's going to happen in terms of a second wave, but going forward one thing is for certain, what we do know, is it won't, I don't think the world will ever be the same again. It can't be. From what we've all experienced over the last six months. What, what do you think the leadership will look like going forward and what, what qualities do you think they will need to lead businesses post the pandemic.

Pinky

40:00 – 41:46

I think, you know, coming out we've all, as you said, just been in survival mode and getting through I think we have to move into the next mode where to really start flying high, to having a big vision, to again going back to the big dreams of what we, you know, when you start out in life you have those dreams. And it was Disney who said “If you can dream it, you can do it”. Just now none of us have been thinking of the big dreams, we've just been surviving and I think coming out of this we have to dream big, we have to take risks. We have to not be afraid of failure, but also we have to, more than ever, before collaborate. Because what we found is after Black Lives Matter, that was really the perfect storm, the reason why it suddenly became so big was, you know, people were there, they realised all this was happening. But I think you know more and more people are saying that we also have to take a stand and try to make

a difference. Because, you know, with Black Lives Matter there's so many people, so many strong articles now saying that for so many years we all saw the discrimination and we did nothing. And I think, you know, put all of us to bail it for a few good men to do nothing. So I think you know we have to, really take a stand and make a difference and not be afraid of saying what we really believe in; having our voices out there and finding a way to, people will you know I think we have to seek out collaboration lots more but so we realised again going back to the interdependency we need each other. But I think that, absolutely for me, it's quite clear you have to know where you want to go and that it's that big picture that's important, the vision is very, very important.

Jeremy

41:46 – 42:52

Yeah and I couldn't agree more. I totally 100% believe in collaboration. And we've (Wayne and I) known each other for quite a few years because we've worked together. We try to, you've definitely helped me and, and businesses that I've worked for and vice versa, we tried to try to help each other. I think the collaboration is one thing I also think courage and boldness, I think in order to get the country back on its feet I think businesses have to be courageous. I think businesses have to move forward. I think if we are slightly cautious or negative at this stage I don't think that's, I just think I think that's a recipe for disaster. Actually I think you're right, I think we've got to come out of this survival mode and go back into, back into the, being more courageous actually. And just pushing ourselves, to actually push business, and everything that we're doing to the next level. It's easy to say, it's harder to do. But, but I totally agree.

Pinky

42:53 – 43:29

Jeremy, jumping in on that, courageous, resilient – very important. But also our research has shown that people are looking for optimism from their leadership. So I think that also will be very, very important. Because you're not going to motivate everyone if you're very negative. So I think optimism is a trait have gone up in importance for people, you know, what they're looking for in their leaders. So being fair and again being authentic is important. But I think optimism, courage, resilience very, very important.

Jeremy

43:29 – 43:39

What do you think, Wayne, what have you seen in terms of some of the businesses that you've been working with? In terms of coming out of Covid and sort of, you know, 'new way forward' if you like.

Wayne

43:39 – 45:23

I think the smart ones are the ones who that will survive, or maybe even prosper, are the ones who and it goes back to empathy again, in another way, empathic enough to be able to understand what people are going through and respond in flexi organisation and essentially be agile. So you know we've seen that a lot of companies so, so just so you understand, Pinky, I have a team in the UK and then I have a small team in Turkey, Holland, also Mongolia and and in the Middle East as well, so we get quite a good global snapshot all the time of what companies are up to. And we've seen sort of companies fall into, broadly, two camps: those who saw bury their head in the sand and operated out of a reality that was March 2020, and then we've seen other organisations have accepted that things have changed, everything's changed, so we've got to change the way we think and do things fundamentally differently. And many of those companies are actually doing pretty well. So I think the adaptability, as a word, of those organisations right now is key and it comes from, I guess, the leadership team wanting to learn as much as possible about what people are going through. Which in a strange way the link back to kindness if you're if you don't have any of the quotient of any of the keys that I'm sure Pinky is talking about, your ability to empathise and be able to connect and understand the organisation is pretty much null and void before you've even begun. So you're probably the wrong type of leader. I think now calls for a definite new way of leading organisations and has to be to do with, to do with that.

I know I one final question for you, Pinky, had to ask you. Actually, I was thinking back about your, with your cooking experience: have you found any correlation between the amount of chilli someone can take and their leadership skills? Is there a link?

Pinky

45:23 – 47:04

People often ask me why I go out to give leadership talks and I take my wok along with me. And so there's the correlation between cooking and leadership. And I said you know there is so much because it when you're cooking a good dish you need fresh ingredients, you need really to put the heat to a certain level. You have to know when to be bold and put more spice and in turn, you know, kind of the pan you use is important. So I could give Jeremy and you the same ingredients but the way you cook the dish will be very different based on your courage to turn up the heat at a certain time, add more chilli, you know, actually, and also your passion - in India we believe in the Ayurveda, that we have energy. So when you are cooking, your energy goes into the dish. And if you're very reluctant, or scared et cetera, the dish will taste quite different. Your warmth and energy goes in. So with the leader, also, is the kind of traits you have that actually inspire leadership. So I think, you know, the way you put your spice, which is very, very important and so with leadership. so I, I haven't tested out the chilis thing but that's something I can. But I can tell you throughout the pandemic, when we will be able to have people over, I've been having meetings at my house for six people at least twice a week, and over food and it's been incredibly, incredibly rewarding and really it's been a huge growth area for me. Learning has been so important. And bringing people together with food now more than ever.

Wayne

47:04 - 47:06

Yeah, wonderful, thank you.

Jeremy

47:06 - 47:32

So I guess look, Pinky, thank you for joining us on this podcast. It's been absolutely brilliant. I, I'm just so grateful. I guess, to kind of close, I, maybe you could share your quote about "a day is not worth living if you haven't lived a day without kindness that". What's that quote that you use which is wonderful?

Pinky

47:32 - 47:52

Thank you very much, thank you. It's been a great pleasure. Time has just flown. And I hope you know we all go on to lead with real belief in changing the world and being there in the best possible way. thank you, thanks so much, thank you very much indeed, thank you.