

[00:00:31] Patrick: Hey, guess what? But my St. Louis Cardinals have somehow found their way to second place in their division and they've won more games than they've lost now. And we're about halfway through the season, so I'm feeling pretty good, hopeful. I don't think they're going to win the World Series or anything this year, but hey, at least they're not doing as poorly as they did last year. Let's see what else is going on. It's hot in Columbia, South Carolina. That's a fact. But you won't hear me complain about it, by the way. I hear people complain and I'll listen to it. You won't hear me complain about it because I've lived in the cold too and I much more prefer this heat. I'm one of those that will take, I'll take 110 over 35 any day of the week. So what else is going on? We have so many things going on here at the leaders perspective. We're just going deeper and deeper with the organizations that we serve. We're training other coaches, we're certifying other coaches. Our podcast, thanks to you and all the listeners, it remains in Feedspot's top ten global ranking for nonprofit leadership genre. Our YouTube channel is growing. We just, life is good and you know what? People are needing it. This is, we do leadership and strategy and culture, organizational culture, coaching inside organizations. And I'm just finding a stronger appetite for it along with the need for it. So we're just excited. We're engaged, feel like we're adding value and I definitely feel like we're adding value for you today. Our guest is Eileen Cook Ryder and I came across her name in a magazine that I picked up, I think at Barnes and noble or books, a million or one of the bookstores. We were perusing around with the family and I went to the magazine section and I saw this magazine called Real Leaders. I've never seen it before. Real leaders.

It's real leaders.com if you want to go check it out. It's a really good magazine and it's the community for impact and there's just tons of really good content on here. And I came across an article called hit the ground running and it's about transitions and integrating new CEO's or new executives. And it's written by the staff at Real Leaders magazine. And the article really is about Eileen and the work she does in what she calls new leader integration, or NLI. So this article is about her work. I'm not going to read it all to you, but she is an executive integration expert. She is a certified executive coach with the International Coach Federation. And so when you're in the coaching world, you end up kind of helping organizations with lots of different things. But her specialty is new leader integration and it just fascinated me. I've already done a YouTube channel teasing up this episode because it was so, it just hit home for so many things. So I just want to say to Eileen a huge thank you because I found her online after reading the article, I looked her up, did a little research and ECR execoach.com is the website. We'll plug it again here at the end of the show and we'll make sure that link is included on the episode page. But I looked her up and I sent her an email and I said, I would love to learn more about what you're doing and what you've learned about this work of newly integration. Would you want to come on the show? And she scheduled a quick call with me and we connected. So just kindred spirits and said, yeah, let's have this conversation again, only let's record it and let the world hear it. So Eileen, with no further ado, let me say thank you and welcome to the leadership window.

[00:04:29] Eileen: Hey, Patrick, thank you for having me. It's a pleasure to be here. Talk about one of my favorite things.

[00:04:33] Patrick: Yeah, I can tell it is one of your favorite things and you're great at it. So what I want to know first is what. What should I have? What do you wish I had said in my introduction of you? Tell us the stuff that's not in the bio that normally goes out. How did you get here? Tell us a little bit about you.

[00:04:50] Eileen: Yeah, thanks.

It's a winding road for Eileen Reeder to get here.

[00:04:55] Patrick: Oh, Reeder. I'm sorry.

[00:04:57] Eileen: Oh, that's fine.

I started out in education, but the education work that I did was my undergrad degree is in behavior change and behavior management. I worked with kids with a behavior and emotional challenges. So I was always interested in what makes people tick and why do we do the things that we do. I taught for several years. I have two master's degrees. One is in ed leadership and the other is in curriculum and instruction. And I quickly learned that I love professional development. And I spent much of my time leading schools and working at the district level around curriculum and teaching leaders in classrooms.

I left education and got into the business world and co owned several businesses and learned that I love business development. And when I left the business world for a bit, I was really kind of searching for my next iteration of self. And I thought, where does behavior change, professional development and business development intersect? And that's coaching.

I went out to Santa Barbara, to the Hudson Institute and spent about a year in training there and got certified as an executive coach. And I met someone who had done a lot of work with new leader integration. It was his intellectual property. He was leaving a huge job, head of HR for a global company, 80,000 heads. He had designed this process and said, hey, Eileen, would you like to learn how to do it? And so I partnered with him for about three years. He taught me all there was to know about new leader integration. And we tweaked this product, we worked together and really, I think, improved it.

And the product that I work with now, I am really proud of, and I know it's terrifically successful. So that's how I got to this seat.

[00:07:17] Patrick: Well, I can certainly relate to the winding road piece. I chuckled a little bit when you said that, and I love the intersections. For me, it was a similar story. It was when I was in the nonprofit sector and organizational leadership. I found that what I was best at was strategy and leadership, not so much fundraising and program directorship and finance and those things. And so, you know, the windy road led me to a place where I could blend several different things that resonated with me and that I happen to be, happen to have some gifts and talents around. So I can relate to that so purely. And I just, I know that has to make you good at what you do, because, again, I can, I can relate to it.

Interesting, too, that this is proprietary, and yet I'm, I'm guessing now I could be. I don't, I don't want to, I'm not trying to insult your program, but I'm guessing there are also, as a part of this proprietary process, some pretty basics. Here's what I found in the nonprofit sector is, and maybe the corporate sector, too, is some of the things I think should be simple and basic. And like no brainers, many leaders have not been exposed to some of the simplest, most basic concepts. And so they're profound to them. And again, I don't say that an insulting way. I say that, to say, we've got to do more to expose these leaders to some of these concepts. We're not trained to be leaders. Oftentimes we're good. We're good finance people, so surely we'll make a good leader. We're good program people, so surely we'll make a good leader. We talk about this all the time on the show, and so I'm interested in knowing what some of the key tenets are without obviously going into the entire program. But it's just, it's fascinating. Would you, is, am I on, is it true that much of what you do are really covering some of the foundational stuff, or is it really a lot of deeper, complex sort of practices that you're helping organizations with?

[00:09:28] Eileen: It's an interesting question, Patrick, because really, companies are fairly good at onboarding, right. But there's not much talk about integrating. And I think what sounds like should be basic.

No one's really in charge of doing. Right.

So I can get you your passwords and I can get you your parking spot and I can introduce you to your team, but I'm not really sure what to do beyond that. Maybe I could give you the strategic plan and I could show you the chart. But who's in charge of really creating stickiness?

Maybe it's HR. And I think really good human resource leaders build, build a muscle for integrating folks. But when it comes down to getting the work done, does that become a priority, or do we just say, well, we hired talent so that talented person will figure it out?

And we have a lot of data that says the good leaders will figure it out, but we have a lot of data that says they might not or they might not be given the Runway to figure it out because they'll be evaluated prior to their ability to really understand what they're up against.

[00:11:05] Patrick: You use the word onboarding, and I want to get your take on this.

There's orientation, which is the, you know, the passwords in the parking space and the things that you just mentioned. And then there's onboarding, which at least in the sector I mostly work in, in the social sector, those are two different things. Like orientation is the two hour meeting, even with boards. Let's, let's, let's shift this to boards of directors for a moment. We have a board orientation for new board members. You've served on nonprofit boards, so, you know, perhaps you come in and, well, you know, the first thing you're going to do is attend a luncheon where we're going, going to give you the two inch manual that has the budget, the strategic plan, the staff roster, the program chart, all these things. And here's the meeting schedule for the year and here's the various committees. And, you know, you get oriented, but you don't get onboarded. You know, you don't get an education in how the programming is really working and what the different sites and facilities are and who the staff is and what are the circles of influence that we're relying on you to touch and connect to our organization as a brand ambassador? And what does board engagement even mean? And how do we develop you to be able to be ready to chair a committee, maybe be the board chair one year? And so there's the orientation, but then there's the onboarding. And this is what struck me when I read the article is it almost sounded like, well, it does sound like the fully integrated, I think is the term that I read develop, that full integration is a third level, like the orientation, onboarding on ramping, and then full integration. Do I have that right? This is, we're talking about a third level if we're framing it like that.

[00:13:01] Eileen: That's right. So I'm going to do for this new leader in 120 days what they might do on their own in the first nine months.

So I'm going to, here's sort of the quick and dirty. I'm going to let that new leader on board get on on job for two weeks, and in that two week window, I'm going to have a conversation with their hiring manager. So for this example, let's say we're integrating a CFO.

I'm going to let that CFO get her feet wet and just sort of meet their people, understand where their desk is.

And in the meantime, I'm going to meet with the CEO and start to get a sense of what are the expectations for this new hire. Who are the stakeholders that are going to depend upon this person, and who will this person depend upon to function well in their role?

I will interview the CEO with the same questions that I'm going to interview all of the stakeholders.

I want to know all sorts of spoken and unspoken expectations. I'm going to pull threads that maybe the CEO hasn't really thought about yet either. I'm going to start to really explore the culture.

I'm going to try and understand function related issues.

We definitely are talking culture.

We're talking about strategy, strategic initiatives, what's worked well, what hasn't worked well.

And then after that conversation, I'm going to return to the CFO, begin a conversation, say, hey, I talked to your CEO. These are the things that he these are the people he feels I should interview on your behalf. These are the stakeholders that we're going to engage with. How do you feel about that? And we want to get alignment around who the stakeholders are. I'm going to interview Patrick between eight and twelve stakeholders, sometimes more, never less. The interviews are about 30 minutes in length. I'm going to ask the same questions that I asked the CEO, but I'm going to do that understanding that each of the stakeholders are going to take me down different paths, because I'm just going to remain very curious in my questioning of these folks. They're going to say something or reference someone, and I'm going to see if I can pull on those threads. What are we not talking about? Maybe that we should be talking about.

And at the end of the interviews, themes will naturally emerge.

I will craft a report that includes those themes, and I will offer insights and recommendations for each of those themes. The report that I produce is about 25 pages in length. I'll debrief with the new hire, answer whatever questions. That's about a 90 minutes conversation. And if we need to revisit, we'll continue to do that until the new hire feels like they've really mined that report for everything.

I'll invite the CFO to share the report with the CEO, and then I want them to have a conversation about what they read in the report.

We're going to try and get them to identify near term goals based on that report. Near term, midterm goals.

Then I stay with that new hire, with the CFO for eight to ten weeks, and I function as the executive coach because now I know the landscape, I know the players, and I can really come alongside that new hire and integrate them well. What I'm trying to do is create a stickiness. I want to demonstrate opportunities for impact.

I want them to demonstrate competence early on, to catch the low hanging fruit, to get quick wins right out of the gate.

And through these kinds of things, we're going to figure out where are the obstacles, where are the barriers, what's going to be tough for you? Who's going to be difficult for you? Then we work together.

That CFO doesn't feel like they're out there on their own.

At the end of the engagement, I circle back with the CEO and I have a conversation about the report. Because the fun part of new leader integration is there's these byproducts.

The report actually functions as a high level organizational diagnostic tool for the CEO. And these are things that he or she may not have understood or even known about the organization. And oftentimes that leads to perhaps a further engagement on Eileen, can you help me peel this onion? What could we do about this? How might we engage the organization to solve for that? You know, those kinds of conversations are just sort of natural byproducts of new leader integration.

[00:18:28] Patrick: I'm sold. I mean, if I were running an organization really of any significant size, that is a pitch that would absolutely have me excited. Now, I'll tell you a lot of it I can relate to. What you described in the interview process is almost identical to what we do when we're interviewing community stakeholders for an organization who's going into strategic planning. So we do the same kinds of things. You know what? Tell us. You know what. You know, where do you see this organization going in five years? What do you need from this organization? What could this organization learn better and more of? What would you do differently if you were running it? What big questions would you ask if you were on the board?

You know, all of those questions. And it creates this theme or this summary of themes and patterns that arise, and it's really, really informative for the strategic planning process.

So to hear that design specifically for the successful, full integration of a new leader of a company is really exciting to me. I mean, that just sounds amazing. I want to hit on something you mentioned a while ago, that most companies are good at onboarding.

I.

You might have to convince me of that one, but I think that maybe most of them are good at orientation. If we're talking about those three levels, I think they're good at orientation. I think that in the sector I work within, the most, I would say that most nonprofits are not good at onboarding.

And one of the things that struck me in this article that I referenced was this Zender survey that's referenced of 588 executives, executives, one third of whom were c suite. 60% of those executives reported that it took six months, and 20% of them said that it took nine months. That's the number you referenced a moment ago, to have a real impact in their role. Now, the way that's phrased is really interesting. Not, it took me nine months to figure out, you know, the budget. It took nine months to have a real impact in my role. That was a stunning statement to me, and. And that's what made me say, we can't afford that. We can't. I can't hire some, a new leader. Especially an executive and expect it to take nine months before their presence is felt in a significant, impactful way. And then less than a third of them said that they received any kind of meaningful support during their transition, which would say they're not good at onboarding. So what are those organizations not doing? If there were three or four things that they could just, they could change immediately, what are those simple things that those organizations just aren't even doing that wouldn't be hard to implement?

[00:21:33] Eileen: Gosh, I suppose what I would want them to do is facilitate opportunities for the new leader to sit down and have conversations with stakeholders and really have authentic opportunities for an exchange of information. Now, that being said, Patrick, I'm going to tell you this sounds very self promoting, but there's a reason why I am successful at what I do. And I think, I think there's a number of reasons, but I think one of them is because I'm an objective third party so I can get the stakeholders to tell me things that they otherwise might not say to someone who is embedded in the organization, because there's risk around that.

[00:22:26] Patrick: That's right.

[00:22:28] Eileen: And so there's anonymity among the stakeholder input, and I get to just remain curious and ask the next best question so that I can start to unpack the things that this leader really can tackle to have impact. I'm trying to accelerate speed to value. And what could organizations do to facilitate proper integration without a third party integrator?

I think they need to create a culture where we can have authentic, honest conversations around what's not going well.

I think, and I think new leaders who are natural leaders like you were talking about earlier, that just have the leadership muscle already built inside of them are going to have those conversations anyway. And I think even after a leader has gone through the process of new leader integration, they're going to continue to have those impactful conversations one on one.

I think you want to help the new leader also welcome uncertainty into the room. So when I'm meeting with my team for the first time, it's okay if there's a little bit of churn. It's okay if there's a little bit of chaos, because it's in that uncertainty that you're going to really start to unpack where the work is. Where do we have to throw the light to start to make the change that you've been hired to make.

[00:24:16] Patrick: That's good. It's not only okay, it's sometimes good for that chaos, sometimes good for that churn.

You know, if it's just a toxic new leader who's just come in and upset the apple cart and everybody just wants to leave because they're jerks, then no. But if it's true change that is happening and the new leader is, I mean, a lot of times I've seen new leaders come in and staff sees the writing on the wall, like, you know, hey, this guy ain't playing. This woman's. She's serious. Like, we're gonna. This is gonna be a different game. And so I. Sometimes. I agree. I think it's not only okay, I think sometimes it's. It's good that that happens.

[00:24:59] Eileen: Really. What we're looking for here, above all else, is alignment.

We're looking to align with strategic goals. We're looking to align on expectations.

We're looking to align on initiatives, areas for improvement, development. We're looking to align around culture and values, norms, expectations.

[00:25:27] Patrick: Yeah, you mentioned something a minute ago that got my attention about the, the people who already have good leadership muscle will have the conversations that they need to have.

I think that's right.

But the risk that they run is not knowing who all of the stakeholders are that they need to be having those conversations with. So it's, it's knowing the landscape, not just knowing how to have the conversations. I've gone through some training recently with Doctor Peter Hawkins, who you may well be familiar with in some of your coaching studies.

He's the guru on systemic coaching and particularly systemic team coaching. And he talks about the. He does a lot of stakeholder mapping, and that's a big part of the coaching is who are the various stakeholders who are needing, expecting, wanting something out of you? Who are all of them, vendors, employees, bosses, direct reports, contractors, consultants, donors. I mean, the list goes on in the categories, but the one thing he creates a category for and a box for is what

he calls the 13th fairy. The 13th fairy, back to the original story of Sleeping Beauty and the king and queen who invite all these people to the party, and they invited the fairies and they left one out.

And when they left that one fairy out and didn't have a seat for them at the table, that fairy became, um, quite insulted to the point of cursing this princess and was going to curse her to death, but ended up being saved by one of the other fairies. And the curse was that she sleep, fall asleep. So the 13th fairy is that stakeholder who we forgot about.

And they're almost always the ones, Doctor Hawkins says, who, it'll come back to bite you that you left them out. And so having, having a third party like you to be able to come in and uncover who, who are the fairies and who is the 13th fairy, I think is a tremendous value to a new leader coming in. Does that resonate? Does that make sense?

[00:27:47] Eileen: It does. It does. And I think where does the informal authority lie? You know, I can tell you a number of times the stakeholder who has been left out is the administrative assistant, executive assistant. And so we're always very mindful of that. And do we have the people that hold the informal authority that know what's going, you know, boots on the ground, who knows what's really going on?

[00:28:19] Patrick: They have a lot of intel.

[00:28:20] Eileen: Do they do? And, and if they are the fallen 13th ferry, they can cause all sorts of disruption.

[00:28:28] Patrick: That's right.

Yeah. Including not having trust in their new leader for a, for a much longer time than it should take.

I do have a question for you on promotions. So if you're dealing mostly with new CEO's, coming into an organization, not knowing the landscape, not knowing who the stakeholders are, do you also work with companies in promoted employees who are moving from a manager to a director, a director to a VP, a VP to a CEO? They know the landscape, they know the business, but it's a new role and level of expectation for them. Is this new leader integration concept applicable and relevant for them as it is? New incomers?

[00:29:18] Eileen: Well, I'm glad you asked. Actually, the colleague I was talking about earlier, the one who designed the original new leader integration, designed it for succession planning. And so it was originally used just on internal promotions and then was extrapolated then and developed to use with external hires as well. Yeah, I mean, an internal promotion is different, but absolutely as important the integration process, because not only are you taking on a new role and really the expectations that you're being charged with are completely different from the ones you had previously or quite different.

We really have to talk about your branding now because how are we going to get the stakeholders that you worked with previously to see you in this new role and how are you going to show up differently in your new role so that they can accept you in your promoted job? And there's a lot of work to do. It's not always exactly the same as an external hire, but it's equally as necessary. And, you know, this is interesting. Some of the data says that over 80% of companies don't do anything with their internal promotions to integrate, whereas over 40% of companies don't do anything to integrate new leaders. And 83% of companies believe that it's important to develop new leaders. But only 5% have articulated integration development.

[00:31:07] Patrick: Isn't that crazy? I mean, it's just crazy. It makes you wonder how some businesses even survive. How are they even still around?

One of the key stakeholder groups that I think is the most challenging, I would say this could, I don't know what the research is, and you may know or experience something different, but in my experience, the most challenging stakeholder group for the promoted leader are the people they now supervise that they were just yesterday peers with.

[00:31:40] Eileen: Yeah. And oftentimes those colleagues will say, oh, she deserved that promotion. She was really, she was excellent.

And I think they mean it. But there's some envy, there's some ego wrapped around. She got it and I didn't. Right. Yeah.

And so that's really why we want to do the work around. What are the things that aren't being talked about that are going to be barriers and obstacles for you, and what are you going to do about that? How are you going to show up so that they can accept you in this role and you're not just wielding a big stick? And to your earlier point, what has been done to develop that promoted leadership muscles so they know how to show up differently in this role.

[00:32:34] Patrick: Yeah. And they're up for it.

You know, they're usually up for the title change and the bump in pay, but they don't really know what they're in for in terms of they have a new job now, which is to lead, and it's a different job. It's a different, it's a different to do list. It's a different set of disciplines.

[00:32:57] Eileen: I'll tell you, I just love this work because I get to do that work with them. I get to come alongside of that leader and say, okay, what are we going to do differently? So that you can demonstrate value quickly and your previous peers can see you in a new way that adds value to the organization and they can get behind you.

[00:33:24] Patrick: So let's talk about the speed to value and getting integrated more quickly. When I got my first executive directorship of a nonprofit, I had.

I know, I take that back. It wasn't my first, it was my second, but it was much bigger. Scale was going from a million dollar annual budget to about a \$10 million annual budget from five staff to 30 different community.

And one of my board members at my previous organization said, don't do anything for 90 days, Patrick, step into that role and just listen and learn. Don't do a thing. Don't, don't, pull a switch.

What do you think of that advice today?

[00:34:11] Eileen: So I think it depends on the culture that you're coming into. If the culture has been readied for change and you have been hired to be an agent of change, then I think that's bad advice.

If the culture has not been readied for change and there is no alignment around what the expectations of this new leader are, then I think it's probably a good idea to pause.

The new leader integration process does something that we haven't talked about yet.

I come alongside the new leader and we identify the stakeholders, and I make sure that the new leader does a few things to start to build psychological contracts between the new leader and the stakeholders and those psychological contracts that trust that starts to get built. Oh, this new leader wants my input. They're inviting me into this new leader integration process. They want to hear what I have to say. These are really important, nuanced things that go on that allow the new leader to have faster speed to value because you've already got buy in from those stakeholders, because you've done things to lay the groundwork that says, yeah, I'm here to make change, but I care about what you think.

[00:35:38] Patrick: That's good. That's good. Can you give us an example or two of maybe a really good new leader integration process you've seen led and maybe one that you saw had some challenges in it, maybe because they skipped a step or they didn't follow. Some of the tenants, particularly those good examples, though, just an example or two of give us a picture with protecting anonymity, of course, but give us a picture of what really good new leader integration looks like for the new CEO. For the new leader.

[00:36:21] Eileen: Well, one that I did, it was fascinating.

We had twelve stakeholders to interview, and I was integrating a chief operating officer and everyone to the person. All twelve stakeholders said, I asked a question about, what are we not talking about? Everybody knows, but nobody's talking about to the person. Patrick, every one of the stakeholders said, well, nobody else is going to tell you this, but the IT department needs to be completely rebuilt. It's absolutely the weakest link.

Every single one of them said that. So when we went back, you know, in the report, and when the new leader and I sat down, I'm like, well, here's the low hanging fruit. Right? And when I was able to circle back with the CEO, we were able, Patrick, to talk about in the, in the, I said it was a high level organizational diagnostic. Right. For the CEO, we were able to talk about that.

What's going on with your it department. But more than that, as the CEO, why do you not know that? Why does everyone in your organization know that and you don't? Or if you did, why aren't you doing anything about it? And so we're able to have some pretty hard line conversations. And one new leader integration engagement unearthed a whole opportunity for really significant improvement and change in this organization. So that was a really fun one.

[00:38:16] Patrick: I think that is the power of coaching. So I define, I have several definitions for coaching, but one of the things that I call it is a forced pause.

And it just, it pauses us and carves out space, time, bandwidth, energy to think about things. We just don't walk around thinking about.

You know, you come in and it's like, oh, okay, I got to get my head around the budget and I got to get my head around the strategic plan. And, oh, I've got this. I've got three performance appraisals coming up and my board meetings next week, and I've got a donor meeting luncheon tomorrow. And this to do list is full. I'm probably not spending time sitting at my desk or walking around the building thinking, what's the next leadership lever I need to pull? Who are the people I need to stretch a little more in order to grow and develop them? Where are the places I need to be? Be more assertively communicating a point of view and where are the places that I need to back off a little bit and get more distributed leadership in the work and where. So we just don't. We just don't. That's not what we get pen and paper out and think about when we get to work. And so coaching is that forced pause that says, okay, now we're going to pause and think about those things. You've carved out an hour with me today. We're going to think about things and talk about things you would not have spent an hour on were it not for this coaching pause. So it does

uncover, I think it's very serendipitous what coaching does because it uncovers things. You start on a particular challenge, goal issue, focus area, and you unlock something else. You uncover something else. You connect the dots between two things and go, oh, my gosh, that's why. So I love that story because of its sort of unplanned benefit that came out of that. That's powerful.

[00:40:11] Eileen: I have a number of articles that I've written on my LinkedIn site, and most recently, yesterday, I think I posted one on coalitions, healthy coalitions versus toxic ones that came out of a new leader integration that I did because the CEO had to come into an organization where there were toxic coalitions built. There was an unhealthy culture, but the coaching happened around the CEO's understanding of coalitions and what's the difference between a healthy coalition and a toxic one. And so that was the coaching opportunity then, and the integration, the new leader integration opportunity presented that for us.

[00:40:59] Patrick: So again, I don't want to oversimplify your work, but if you were to take the new leader integration process product and break it into its three to five core components, what are those, I mean, what are the sort of stages or steps or primary foundational pillars of new leader integration work that you do with organizations?

[00:41:20] Eileen: The first thing that I do is I make absolutely sure that the new hire understands that he or she is the client. While the company paid my bill, they're the sponsor, they're sponsoring me.

[00:41:36] Patrick: Yeah, that's good.

[00:41:37] Eileen: The client is the new hire and my only interest is to integrate them successfully and that everything that we talk about is absolutely confidential and that I'm their safe space, I'm their advocate.

The next thing would be identifying the stakeholders, you know, who are the people that we're going to depend upon and who are going to depend upon us.

And then it's, it's the interviews.

You know, I think we all have superpowers, right? And one of my superpowers is I am naturally curious and I really love to learn about people. And so I listen with a very open mind. I don't have biases. I don't come to it with preconceived notions about the company. I just get to be curious and find out what this person's story and their point of view is. And those stakeholder interviews, there's so much juice in those.

So I think, I think it getting the varied perspectives from the stakeholders is really an important component. And then finally from that stakeholder input, what are we going to do about this action plan? First, then next, last, I want to.

[00:43:05] Patrick: Say something about your curiosity for our listeners. I want to affirm it because what our listeners didn't hear before the introduction, music, was our pre recording conversation.

And so for the, for those of you, you know, Eileen and I met very briefly by telephone just to kind of form the logistics for the show. When we came on today to get ready to record, Eileen, you asked me, so what are you spending your time on these days? And how is that different than it used to be? And did you, did you think that's where you would be originally, was that like, are you living a dream right now, or did it change course? And how did you get into that? And who is this organization? And truly, you were just, the curiosity was coming out as if. As if you were, you

know, sort of coaching me, but from the standpoint of, we're not even into the coaching yet. We're just into discovery, and I want to know who you are. So I just want to affirm that, that you model that.

And I just want our listeners to know that this isn't someone who just says, I'm truly curious.

I've seen it in action in a very informal way. So just wanted to acknowledge that.

Thank you.

Boy, we could really. This could unpack. We could do a whole series of episodes on this, I'm guessing, and maybe this is just a wild guess. I'm guessing you partner with search firms. I would think it would be a great partnership between search firms who are doing executive searches and someone like you who can take over once the search is complete and you've recruited that person. Do you partner up with a lot of search firms that way?

[00:44:56] Eileen: I had a relationship, yes, with a boutique search firm for several years and am in negotiations with a few others as we speak. So it is a natural partnership. Absolutely. And everybody wins in that relationship, right?

[00:45:16] Patrick: Absolutely.

[00:45:18] Eileen: Solid plant. The new company is investing in their new hire, and the new hire has an advocate. So I think it is a natural, natural relationship. The other place that I've gotten a number of new leader integration contacts from is private equity and venture capital. So through search firms, private equity will look for leaders, and if done well, then the new leader is successful, and private equity is happy, and they'll often return and say, yeah, okay, let's do that again.

[00:46:00] Patrick: Yeah.

[00:46:00] Eileen: So it's a nice relationship as well. And the fun thing about new leader integration is it works in all, in all industries. It works in all business models, you know, privately owned, publicly held private equity, you know, small companies of 100 employees or massive companies of many thousand. So it's. It's sort of universal in that way.

[00:46:27] Patrick: Yeah. And I think that's another thing I want to make sure our listeners understand is that you work with all these sectors, public, private, governmental. Do you work in the government sector much?

[00:46:39] Eileen: Sure.

[00:46:40] Patrick: Yeah. I mean, that's new leader integration.

Yeah. Really interesting stuff. Eileen, I want to. We'll wind the episode down with a couple of questions that I like to ask all of my first time guests, just because I love the stories and I love the sort of some of the foundational tenets that I get out of this one is who comes to mind as a leader in your life that you would say has had tremendous impact on your leadership philosophy and why. And this can be someone living, not living, someone that you don't even know, like, you know, Mahatma Gandhi, or it can be anybody. But who comes to mind as a leader that's had a significant impact on your leadership view and why.

[00:47:31] Eileen: So I think, you know, there's all sorts of thinkers and, and social scientists

that, that come to mind, but really the one who's had the most impact would be a man named Doctor John Kane. He was the assistant superintendent when I was a high school student and our high school class was undergoing all sorts of change. He knew that I was very interested in educational leadership and he took me under his wing and he allowed me to do all sorts of things. He let me speak to groups of teachers. He engaged me in think tank opportunities. He allowed me to shadow him. And in doing all of those things, he modeled for me what I think has had the greatest impact on me as a leader, and that is the importance of listening with the intent to be influenced.

He was a great listener. He understood, as we've talked about so much today, the importance of listening to stakeholders.

And he listened with the intent to have his mind changed. He didn't have to be the smartest guy in the room. He didn't have to be right. He didn't ram his ideas down people's throat. He listened. And in doing that, sometimes his mind was changed and often he came away with a deeper understanding. And the man was so present in those conversations. You know, this was, of course, before cell phones, but I mean, I imagine even today his phone would be put away because he was so right there with you and knew that whatever nugget you were going to offer was likely going to impact how he thought about things more globally. He was a great mentor.

[00:49:24] Patrick: Those are some of the best ones. The stories I hear about either teachers or principals or people in the schools, because they've got thousands of students that they're stewarding and shepherding and the ability to be able to discern in a student, a single student, and likely it was in his character to do this with many others, but did it for you, how that discernment was able to focus from thousands to one and make that one impact and just open a little door and just a little experience. That's inspiring. I love that. And I, you know, we, you know this, too, when you're in coaching training. I mean, listening is king. You've got to be able to, first of all, you've got to be able to ask good questions, but then you have to listen to the answers.

And we've often said, or I've often heard it said, you know, listen with, listen to learn, not just to wait your turn to speak.

I like the way you said it better. Listen with the intention of being influenced. The idea that it excited me because I thought the next time I'm engaged in a conversation, I should get excited and hopeful that I'm about to learn something new. I should get excited and hopeful that I'm about to get a different perspective that's going to inform me and enlighten me in a way that I wasn't before this interaction.

[00:50:59] Eileen: That's so powerful as a result of talking with you.

[00:51:02] Patrick: Yeah, as only a result of talking with. I just would not have gotten without that interaction. Man, that's powerful. That's inspiring. Okay, last question. You're on the top of a mountain with a megaphone, and all the leaders of the world are at the bottom of the mountain and they're hearing you for 15 seconds.

What is your number one piece of advice for all leaders in the world? You're the Eileen reeder number one tenet of leadership. What is that, Patrick?

[00:51:32] Eileen: I wish I could have two.

[00:51:34] Patrick: I have two, but you can go with two.

[00:51:36] Eileen: I'm going to go with two.

[00:51:37] Patrick: Then you've earned it.

[00:51:40] Eileen: I think those two would be in service to the mission. No matter what the mission is, be a servant, wear the servant's towel and be in service to the mission. You are not bigger than the work that you do and be humbled by that work.

And I think that the second one, I can't actually claim it as my own.

It's the work of Michael Irwin and Willies Duvall. The book is called leadership is a relationship. And absolutely leadership is all about relationships. And you have to tend to the relationships if you are going to lead.

So that's what my megaphone would say.

[00:52:29] Patrick: Well said. Well said. And yes, both. Both of those are equally as hard hitting. Very powerful. Great stuff, Eileen. Thank you. This has been great. I'm even more intrigued than I was. And I hope people will visit your website and learn more about what you're doing and hopefully engage you. The website, again, folks, is ECR, as in Eileen Cookreader, ECR exec coach.com. we'll have the link on our episode page as well. Check it out and think about how your organization is integrating all the new leaders you bring in and how someone like Eileen might be able to help as a third party. We'll see you next time. Lead on.