

Transcript | How to Stay Motivated When Priorities Keep Shifting

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00:00:09.440 --> 00:00:22.090

Callie Bradley: Hello, everybody. Welcome, welcome. You are in the right place. I'm just going to give it a couple more seconds for people to join.

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00:00:22.610 --> 00:00:33.820

Callie Bradley: Alright, hello, and welcome to this panel event on how to stay motivated when Priorities Keep Shifting. My name is Callie Bradley, and I am an event producer here at Apolitical.

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00:00:34.290 --> 00:00:45.929

Callie Bradley: Today, we are looking at how public servants can stay motivated and keep delivering when their organization's direction shifts constantly, whether you're leading a team through it or living it yourself.

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00:00:46.500 --> 00:00:58.959

Callie Bradley: We'll hear from practitioners who have led through real organizational shifts, how they protected their focus, worked through the frustration of changing priorities, and kept moving forward without always having the full picture.

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00:00:59.710 --> 00:01:12.920

Callie Bradley: For those of you who may be joining us for the first time, welcome. Apolitical is the world's largest online network for government, used by more than half a million public servants and policymakers across 170 countries.

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00:01:13.310 --> 00:01:29.260

Callie Bradley: Apolitical is a strategic partner to governments, helping them prepare their workforces for the future. We achieve this by upscaling through expert-led learning programs in peer communities, as well as by building innovative AI-powered tools designed for and with governments.

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00:01:29.800 --> 00:01:39.510

Callie Bradley: It would be great to hear from all of you as well. So please do post in the chat where you're joining us from, and if you're comfortable, what organization you work for.

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00:01:40.340 --> 00:01:46.800

Callie Bradley: Now, I'm just going to get into a few quick bits of housekeeping before we get into today's session.

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00:01:46.900 --> 00:01:54.299

Callie Bradley: So, first, I will mention that this event is recorded for on-demand viewing on the Apolitical website, so please don't record it yourself.

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00:01:54.610 --> 00:02:07.889

Callie Bradley: We'll also be using the recording to generate events insights, including with AI-powered software. As this session is running on a Zoom webinar, we won't collect your video or audio data, but personal data you share in the chat may be captured.

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00:02:08.000 --> 00:02:19.960

Callie Bradley: Contact details for privacy concerns are in the Apolitical homepage footer. Closed captions are available in your own language and can be toggled on or off in your screen settings. My colleague will post the instructions in the chat.

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00:02:20.930 --> 00:02:37.610

Callie Bradley: And secondly, before we get started, I would love to introduce you to the life and government community on Apolitical. It's a space to connect with and learn from your peers in the public sector, whether you're new to government or a seasoned civil servant. My colleague will post the link to the community in the chat.

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00:02:38.260 --> 00:02:50.789

Callie Bradley: Alright, I'm just going to take a quick look at who we have in the virtual room today. Okay, we have lots of Canada, we have Calgary. Hello, Calgary, Saskatchewan. Hello, Saskatchewan.

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00:02:50.790 --> 00:03:00.390

Callie Bradley: Who else do we have today? Toronto, Alberta, wow, big Canadian contingent here today, so hello and welcome to all of you.

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00:03:00.390 --> 00:03:11.230

Callie Bradley: Let's see if we have anyone else. UK, Blackpool, Dublin, welcome to all of you, York, Manchester, Scottish Government...

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00:03:11.270 --> 00:03:21.379

Callie Bradley: Channel Islands, well, great. Hello to everyone. We're so happy to have you here, and keep those intros coming, because it's always fun to see where everyone is joining from.

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00:03:22.310 --> 00:03:30.990

Callie Bradley: So, before we introduce our speakers, we are going to run a few quick polls, just to get a sense of where you're coming from into today's discussion.

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00:03:31.320 --> 00:03:50.829

Callie Bradley: So, my colleague will pull that up in a second. Let's have a look at the first poll. If your motivation were a battery right now, where is it sitting? Is it at 100%, 75%, 50%, or 1.45%, but still somehow here?

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00:03:51.090 --> 00:03:55.609

Callie Bradley: I'll give you all a few moments to respond to that.

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00:03:56.990 --> 00:04:07.399

Callie Bradley: Looks like we have very few 100% percenters in the virtual room, which I assume is why you're at this event today.

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00:04:08.290 --> 00:04:19.369

Callie Bradley: Alright, looks like we have 50% in the lead, but definitely some 75% and 1.45% representation, so...

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00:04:19.370 --> 00:04:29.289

Callie Bradley: Glad to see that there is a range in the room. We will definitely address these motivation numbers in our discussion later.

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00:04:30.760 --> 00:04:37.450

Callie Bradley: Alright, looks like most of you have responded, and 50% is the winner.

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00:04:38.690 --> 00:04:52.260

Callie Bradley: We are going to move on to our second poll now, which will be up in just a second. So for this one, we'd love to know what is the hardest part of working through an organizational shift?

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00:04:52.570 --> 00:04:55.169

Callie Bradley: Is that not knowing what's coming next?

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00:04:55.310 --> 00:05:08.630

Callie Bradley: Watching priorities change before you finish anything, staying motivated day to day, explaining the shift to your own team, or is it something else entirely, and we'd love for you to post in the chat if that is the case.

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00:05:10.250 --> 00:05:14.800

Callie Bradley: I'll give everyone a few moments to respond to this poll.

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00:05:15.710 --> 00:05:21.239

Callie Bradley: Looks like a range of responses here as well, not surprising.

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00:05:21.330 --> 00:05:38.560

Callie Bradley: Most of you seem to be struggling with watching priorities change before you finish anything. I can imagine that that is quite frustrating, but we also have some people in the room who find not knowing what's coming next a big challenge. Yep, I can imagine that. And then...

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00:05:38.610 --> 00:05:45.489

Callie Bradley: staying motivated day-to-day as well. And a few explaining the shift to your own team,

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00:05:46.020 --> 00:06:04.989

Callie Bradley: Great. Well, it looks like most people have participated here, and watching Priorities Change Before You finish anything is the winner, and yes, that is a big frustration. Lots of your colleagues here agree, and that is something that we will discuss in the session today.

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00:06:05.180 --> 00:06:13.040

Callie Bradley: So, thank you everyone for taking part in those polls. I would now like to introduce our speakers for today.

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00:06:13.160 --> 00:06:19.809

Callie Bradley: So we are fortunate to have 3 brilliant guests, Stacey, Dom, and Joe, joining us today.

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00:06:20.180 --> 00:06:31.779

Callie Bradley: Stacey Ileleji is a transformational leader and co-chair of Canada's Interdepartmental Organizational Change Network, which advances human-centred change across the federal public service.

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00:06:31.990 --> 00:06:43.439

Callie Bradley: Most recently, she led the development of change management infrastructure, supporting more than 60 organizations in modernizing a key people management framework. Welcome, Stacey. So happy to have you here.

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00:06:44.220 --> 00:06:56.979

Callie Bradley: Dominic Evans was the M365 Copilot team lead at the UK Department for Science, Innovation, and Technology, where he led the adoption of Microsoft Copilot and other AI tools until its recent disbandment.

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00:06:57.540 --> 00:07:01.810

Callie Bradley: He now works as Head of Regional and Local Growth at the Wales office.

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00:07:02.080 --> 00:07:18.819

Callie Bradley: Drawing on a background in government policy, strategy, and innovation, Dom has a range of practical examples to draw upon, including the rollout of AI and automation, undertaking and managing innovation in the public sector, and managing yourself and teams through ambiguity in government. Welcome, Dom.

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00:07:19.490 --> 00:07:38.160

Callie Bradley: And last but not least, Joseph Castle is a technology executive and public servant with two decades of experience spanning government, policy, and technology, including work at the White House. He previously led the Federal Open Source Program Office at Code.gov and contributed to major federal technology policy.

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00:07:38.300 --> 00:07:46.029

Callie Bradley: He now leads Agentic AI Solutions for federal agencies and advises Maryland leaders on data and AI. Welcome, Joseph.

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00:07:46.620 --> 00:07:53.780

Callie Bradley: You can read the full bios by visiting the Resources tab at the bottom of your Zoom screen and heading to the Speakers section.

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00:07:54.160 --> 00:07:58.349

Callie Bradley: So, welcome to all of you. It is lovely to have you here.

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00:07:58.520 --> 00:08:13.219

Callie Bradley: I'd like to start with an icebreaker to kick things off, so you will each have 30 seconds to share your responses, and we'd love to hear everyone else's answers here today in the chat as well. So...

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00:08:13.510 --> 00:08:20.040

Callie Bradley: If your workday during an organizational shift had a theme song, what would it be?

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00:08:20.510 --> 00:08:31.109

Callie Bradley: And just while you think on your answers, I am going to invite our audience again to share some examples in the chat. We would love to see those, and... and yeah, hear from you as well.

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00:08:31.430 --> 00:08:39.160

Callie Bradley: I am going to start with you, Stacey. What is your theme song?

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00:08:39.580 --> 00:08:42.179

Stacey Ileleji: Well, that's... can you hear me well?

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00:08:42.990 --> 00:08:43.760

Stacey Ileleji: Yep.

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00:08:44.530 --> 00:08:58.620

Stacey Ileyji: Okay, great. Yeah, that's a great way to start the session. I love that. I love music, and for the music lovers out there, I would say both the Zoomers and the boomers alike, you'll know this one, running up that hill.

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00:08:58.690 --> 00:09:04.719

Stacey Ileyji: By Kate Bush, but I would say the Stranger Things Orchestral Edition.

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00:09:04.860 --> 00:09:21.089

Stacey Ileyji: And if you wanted the dramatized version, you can look that up on YouTube and start at the 2.35, timestamp. But, you know, it's a perfect metaphor because, you know, the song has a lot of swells and dips and...

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00:09:21.230 --> 00:09:38.199

Stacey Ileyji: organizational change can feel like that, right? With the swells and the dips, and you start, you know, with energy, you're running, there's momentum, and then you think you know where you're going, but then priorities change, the hill gets steeper, someone moves the finish line.

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00:09:38.200 --> 00:09:49.420

Stacey Ileyji: And then the communications quite... haven't quite caught up, let's say, with where you are in your running. And then suddenly you're wondering, oh my gosh, are we still running up the same hill?

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00:09:49.430 --> 00:10:06.009

Stacey Ileyji: And so, you know, that's basically organizational change. You've got your dramatic highs, your frustrating lows, uncertainty, incomplete information, sometimes a vision of the destination, it's still kind of coming into focus a little bit.

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00:10:06.040 --> 00:10:12.040

Stacey Ileyji: But the work doesn't stop, and while we're waiting for, you know, perfect clarity.

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00:10:12.160 --> 00:10:23.689

Stacey Ileyji: sometimes that's a little bit hard, and you gotta find the next foothold, and we've got to support each other, and support the people, running beside us. So, I would say that that's... that's my answer.

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00:10:23.690 --> 00:10:39.960

Callie Bradley: Awesome, thanks so much. Love that very well thought out answer. My colleague has shared a link to the YouTube version in the chat as well, for those who would like to check it out. Dom, I will go to you next. What is your theme song?

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00:10:40.270 --> 00:11:03.180

Dominic Evans: Thanks, Callie. And I think, I'm loving all the suggestions in the sidebar, many that I hadn't, thought of, actually, myself, so maybe I should have stolen one of them. But the one that came to my mind was, Eye of the Tiger by Survivor. I think it's just... you feel like you're about to go 10 rounds sometimes when you know you're going through these sort of organizational changes, you know, sometimes you've got to take the punches, sometimes you can give the punch, almost, if you want, if you use those metaphors.

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00:11:03.200 --> 00:11:15.989

Dominic Evans: But yeah, it does feel like, you know, high pace, kind of constantly on the beat, you gotta keep moving, keep up with it. So yeah, I think that, in a nutshell, would be how I'd summarize, sort of, yeah, my theme tune for change.

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00:11:16.970 --> 00:11:25.900

Callie Bradley: Yeah, thanks, Dom. That is a great one. I maybe saw that from someone else in the chat as well. Awesome. And Joe, let's go over to you.

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00:11:26.990 --> 00:11:35.909

Joseph Castle, PhD: Yeah, I'm loving the chat, responses as well. There's some good ones in there. I was thinking about this, in...

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00:11:35.970 --> 00:11:55.330

Joseph Castle, PhD: this might be sort of left field, but, I love Tom Morello. He's a guitarist, starting with Rage Against the Machine back in the 90s, to... to nowadays. Had a stint with Chris Cornell, if anyone knows Chris Cornell. And then also he does, his current band, he actually brings out his son.

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00:11:55.390 --> 00:12:01.609

Joseph Castle, PhD: to play guitar as well. His name is Roman. And so, sort of, the... this... the...

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00:12:01.810 --> 00:12:18.699

Joseph Castle, PhD: of course, you know, take the power back and rage against the machine and kind of... but part of it is just getting pumped up to, like, do the daily, even when you're not excited to do the daily. And then part of it is kind of like, we know what we're doing, we can do this, right? Like, you know, especially through administration changes and things that we're going to talk about.

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00:12:18.760 --> 00:12:30.819

Joseph Castle, PhD: And then... and then, I have... I have teenage kids as well, so, doing something with your kids kind of... kinda resets... resets your... your mindset, your focus, and it's not all about the work all the time.

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00:12:32.040 --> 00:12:47.569

Callie Bradley: Yeah, thank you. Thanks, Joe, that's a great suggestion. I think the theme of a pump-up song definitely resonates with a lot of people in the chat as well. Love that Highway to Hell suggestion from someone in the chat that made me laugh.

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00:12:47.570 --> 00:13:03.400

Callie Bradley: Great, well, thank you all, that was a really fun icebreaker, and now we will transition into the panel, going to start about, hearing your experience related to sudden prioritization and organizational shifts.

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00:13:03.400 --> 00:13:06.969

Callie Bradley: So Stacey, I will come to you first.

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00:13:07.040 --> 00:13:17.070

Callie Bradley: You are a change professional and know all about the science of change. What does that actually mean, and how does it show up for someone living through a sudden shift?

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00:13:18.510 --> 00:13:25.339

Stacey Ileleji: Yeah, thanks for that. Not sure if I know all about the sunshine, but I knew... I know a little bit, so,

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00:13:25.470 --> 00:13:32.329

Stacey Ileleji: First, I wanna... I wanna make an important distinction, that motivation, you know, is not the same as being...

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00:13:32.440 --> 00:13:38.629

Stacey Ilesji: Positive, enthusiastic, or even agreeing with the shift or the decision.

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00:13:38.850 --> 00:13:58.689

Stacey Ilesji: Of the change. So when... when things are changing, or priorities shift suddenly, I think our instinct is... it's often to ask, how do I stay motivated? How do I keep my team motivated? But if I'm going to talk about, and I use, you know, in inverted commas, the science of change, it's talking about...

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00:13:58.940 --> 00:14:07.309

Stacey Ilesji: the response to change, right? And so, how we, as individuals, respond to change, we... we...

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00:14:07.790 --> 00:14:19.040

Stacey Ilesji: We have, an effective response, so it's what we feel. We have our cognitive response, what we think or believe, and we have our behavioral response, what we ultimately do.

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00:14:19.140 --> 00:14:26.650

Stacey Ilesji: So, what I'm really talking about, if you want to call it the science of change, it's really the evidence,

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00:14:27.050 --> 00:14:40.020

Stacey Ilesji: You know, if we're looking at organizational psychology and behavioral science and implementation of science, that helps us understand both the human experience of change and the practical conditions that help people act within it.

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00:14:40.130 --> 00:14:57.630

Stacey Ilesji: So for me, you could say the science of change is about partnering the human and business side of change. And so I talked about the human side, what we feel, think, believe, and do. And the business side of change, that means the practical conditions that include communications.

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00:14:57.810 --> 00:15:06.639

Stacey Ilesji: Engagement, training, peer coaching, change strategies plans, stakeholder analysis, you know, all of that technical stuff.

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00:15:06.750 --> 00:15:17.659

Stacey Ileleji: But we can't... like, when you're experiencing a change, you can't just simply communicate someone into feeling differently about a sudden shift or, competing priorities.

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00:15:17.900 --> 00:15:26.279

Stacey Ileleji: And so, feelings affect our decisions. They just affect our decisions to make the change, to commit to the change, you know?

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00:15:26.890 --> 00:15:33.220

Stacey Ileleji: So we have to give people room to feel and reflect and decide to act.

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00:15:33.620 --> 00:15:43.280

Stacey Ileleji: And then... take action, right? So, the business side, the engagement, training, peer coaching, that can enable us to

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00:15:43.480 --> 00:15:50.739

Stacey Ileleji: feel better about the change. It can create the conditions where we can cognitively reflect and reason

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00:15:50.820 --> 00:16:03.759

Stacey Ileleji: that the shift or the priority, the new... the change in priority makes sense, and then we decide to act and support the change. So, I've experienced that myself, just a simple example, but

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00:16:04.100 --> 00:16:12.300

Stacey Ileleji: My organization moved to a new, information management system to improve workflow and horizontal collaboration.

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00:16:12.540 --> 00:16:23.009

Stacey Ileleji: For me, it came out of nowhere, but I'm sure senior management had been thinking about it for a while. So, for me, it's a sudden shift. I thought the idea was excellent, I completely, you know,

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00:16:23.560 --> 00:16:35.990

Stacey Ileleji: agreed with improved workflow and horizontal collaboration, who wouldn't? But simultaneously, it was frustrating while learning to use the system. So, another message

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00:16:36.440 --> 00:16:38.600

Stacey Ileleji: That tells you why it changed.

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00:16:38.920 --> 00:16:43.320

Stacey Ileleji: another message telling me why the change was important. That wouldn't help.

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00:16:43.470 --> 00:16:54.589

Stacey Ileleji: You know, I already understood that part. But what was helpful was practice, support, and peer coaching. So, why I'm sharing that is that, in other words, the barrier

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00:16:54.630 --> 00:17:11.900

Stacey Ileleji: for, moving... for me as an employee moving forward, wasn't really my motivation. I was completely motivated. I understood why, I agreed with it, but it was really building the capability and confidence to use the system and working through the frustration of learning something new. So...

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00:17:11.900 --> 00:17:17.369

Stacey Ileleji: If I'm gonna wrap up, I would say, like, the science-informed approach to managing a sudden shift well.

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00:17:17.369 --> 00:17:29.000

Stacey Ileleji: It's really about bringing together the human and the business sides of change. And so, acknowledging and making room for the emotional cognitive transition that we go through as individuals.

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00:17:29.100 --> 00:17:33.620

Stacey Ileleji: And, defining... defining the desired new behavior.

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00:17:33.970 --> 00:17:42.959

Stacey Ileleji: Looking at the barriers that are preventing people from moving with the shift, and then matching the response to, to support people

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00:17:43.590 --> 00:17:47.010

Stacey Ileleji: through the changing priorities. That's what I would say about that one.

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00:17:48.270 --> 00:18:13.240

Callie Bradley: Thanks so much, Stacey. That was really insightful, and I love that emphasis on the human side of change. I think so often we focus so much on the business side and not on the human side, and Dom, I'm going to come to you now, as someone who will know a bit about the human side of a very quick change. So, you worked at the UK Department for Science, Innovation, and Technology, which was disbanded almost over

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00:18:13.240 --> 00:18:14.050

Callie Bradley: overnight.

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00:18:14.050 --> 00:18:22.399

Callie Bradley: So, I would love to hear from you. When that happened, how did you personally process it, and how did you decide what to focus your energy on?

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00:18:22.890 --> 00:18:41.400

Dominic Evans: Yeah, thanks, Callie. As you say, the department that I was working with disbanded overnight, but quite ironically, that department was also created in a very similar way, where overnight we were told this department was being set up and being pulled together from other departments, and one of those departments being one that I currently, or at the time, sat in.

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00:18:41.400 --> 00:19:05.330

Dominic Evans: So I think, just for a bit of context, for the colleagues on the call, particularly my... I'm sure my UK government colleagues may know a bit more about this, but we call these machinery government changes, or MOGs for short. And essentially how they come about is, I think in... well, in the case of my own MOGs, in this case, were political decisions. So I think, you know, to sort of what Stacey was talking about there, you know.

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00:19:05.330 --> 00:19:18.300

Dominic Evans: From my perspective, there wasn't a kind of rational decision, you know, beyond a kind of, like, why in my business area we were changing. It was a political decision was made, and it was sort of on the cusp. As soon as that decision had been made, this has to be enacted.

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00:19:18.300 --> 00:19:40.969

Dominic Evans: Of course, that's not, you know, it doesn't click... you don't click your fingers, and suddenly everyone's in the new area, or in the new organization, all the new IT kit's been rolled out, etc. It's a long, process, and I think it's fair to say that, you know, it at least disrupts you for 6 months to a year, in terms of some of the delivery, and what that means is for six... all that 6 months or to 1 year period, you are dealing with

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00:19:40.970 --> 00:19:56.000

Dominic Evans: the... how can I... what can I control, I think, is where my mind went to. You know, I can't control the fact that where I was working was changing, and that my job title would change, my department would change, the people I worked with might... may change in that process as well.

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00:19:56.000 --> 00:20:10.540

Dominic Evans: But it's looking at, what can I change in this scenario? What can I take control of? And some of that may be, I could, you know, I put forward, this is what I want to work on in the new organization, what are the opportunities there in that space that I could go into?

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00:20:10.750 --> 00:20:24.079

Dominic Evans: And also, what are some of the work that potentially I may want to deprioritize as part of that, or the team that I was working? Are there things that we can do differently? And I think it does give you... I think there's two natural responses, I guess, and I think

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00:20:24.330 --> 00:20:40.060

Dominic Evans: I think everyone experiences both, but I guess it depends which one sticks to you the most. And one is a fear, and the kind of unknown, the uncertainty, or one is the opportunistic, kind of, what could I make out of this, or what could we do with the work, with this sort of side of things as well.

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00:20:40.060 --> 00:20:48.229

Dominic Evans: And I think that, sort of, what I would say, as more of, like, the final reflection just on my experience with those machinery government changes, is that

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00:20:48.280 --> 00:21:12.249

Dominic Evans: being honest that it is really hard, and, you know, no one is going to be 100% motivated from, from the get-go. You will sort of wax and wane in terms of your motivation levels, and that is completely okay, and it's completely honest to say to yourself, to your colleagues, to your line manager, you know, I'm a bit unsure today about how this is going,

maybe I don't agree with some of the decisions that are being made as a consequence of that change.

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00:21:12.380 --> 00:21:18.140

Dominic Evans: And that's totally fine and totally acceptable, which I think sometimes we don't necessarily talk about in a really.

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00:21:18.140 --> 00:21:34.099

Dominic Evans: kind of open way, in that sense. And I think everyone will experience them slightly differently as well. So some colleagues will be really happy, and some colleagues may be very stressed and very unhappy, about the decision, and you have to kind of navigate that as well, in my experience.

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00:21:35.480 --> 00:21:43.279

Callie Bradley: Yeah, thanks, Tom. I appreciate you speaking to that range of emotions, and I can see in the chat that resonates with some people as well, because

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00:21:43.280 --> 00:21:58.889

Callie Bradley: yeah, it really can vary. I do like what you said about the new opportunities and potential to deprioritize some certain work. I think that's a really helpful kind of way to look at that change.

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00:21:58.910 --> 00:22:14.689

Callie Bradley: So, Joe, I'm going to come to you now, speaking of sort of political turnover, you've worked through a lot of it in your career, sometimes with the new leadership every year or two. So I'm wondering, how did you keep your team focused, and how did you deliver through that?

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00:22:15.270 --> 00:22:18.480

Joseph Castle, PhD: Yeah, good, good question,

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00:22:18.540 --> 00:22:28.059

Joseph Castle, PhD: Dom and I had this... had a conversation about this recently, and... and and I said, you know, through my government tenure, I went through four

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00:22:28.060 --> 00:22:47.049

Joseph Castle, PhD: presidential administrations. And I recall him saying, and Dom, correct me, but I recall him saying, four... I went through 9 in, like, 10 years, or something. So I was like, oh, okay, that's different. Me being in the States, we're on a, you know, a 4-8 year cycle.

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00:22:47.050 --> 00:23:03.290

Joseph Castle, PhD: For presidential, administrations, or governors, or what have you, if you're at the state level. My career spanned mostly the federal, obviously doing more with the, with the state now. But, yeah, I mean, a lot of it, I...

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00:23:03.490 --> 00:23:22.220

Joseph Castle, PhD: A lot of it really, for us, and going down, and I talk about my team, I ran an open source program office for a period of time, and we had a lot of change, actually, in the Trump administration the first time around, but kind of through that period, but also within that one in particular.

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00:23:22.390 --> 00:23:42.169

Joseph Castle, PhD: Where we had, like, different political appointees in very short periods of time. But we did have our career, executives that kind of stayed and kept us going. But one of the things we did, and they were actually supportive of our program, so it wasn't like... it was just the leadership kept changing, but the overall, like, top leadership was supportive.

122

00:23:42.200 --> 00:23:48.090

Joseph Castle, PhD: In, in, you know, letting us keep moving forward and what have you. And so one of the things we really...

123

00:23:48.090 --> 00:24:10.459

Joseph Castle, PhD: tried to do was really just focus on, like, what we control, right, and what we're responsible for. So, you know, as an open source program office, we were, trying to... trying to grow the number of, software, you know, code repositories, you know, visibility of code within federal agencies across the 24 CFO... we call it CFO Act agencies, the Chief Financial Officers Act.

124

00:24:10.460 --> 00:24:14.319

Joseph Castle, PhD: agency, so the sort of cabinet level for the U.S. government.

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00:24:14.340 --> 00:24:29.979

Joseph Castle, PhD: really just creating awareness, having, engagement with that code, hackathons, and other things. And so, you know, there were times, obviously, and we would have team discussions about this, of, like, it doesn't seem like, you know, we're supported that well, or we should be...

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00:24:29.980 --> 00:24:34.830

Joseph Castle, PhD: You know, we can't go out and do these things as publicly as we want to do or had once done in the past.

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00:24:34.830 --> 00:24:47.929

Joseph Castle, PhD: But then it was kind of like, okay, well, what can we do, right? And we're all still very passionate about the program itself and open source software and being transparent as a government entity with that code.

128

00:24:48.130 --> 00:25:00.019

Joseph Castle, PhD: Let's focus on what we can do. And so a lot of that turnover through my 18-year tenure, and then also just within the 4-year one as well, was really always get back to the mission.

129

00:25:00.170 --> 00:25:14.569

Joseph Castle, PhD: Focus on what you can control, what excites you every day to, to function. And it may not be exciting to others, and that's fine, but it's like, give... if it gives you motivation to continue doing what you're doing, that's what's important.

130

00:25:16.170 --> 00:25:27.079

Callie Bradley: Yeah, thanks, Joe. The three of you guys are really so aligned on this point of, you know, sort of, you may not agree with the change, you may not feel motivated, and that's okay, but the

131

00:25:27.140 --> 00:25:37.869

Callie Bradley: focusing on what you can control and how you can move forward is... can be really helpful in these disruptive times, and yeah, I think... I think that's... that's really great advice.

132

00:25:38.050 --> 00:25:54.749

Callie Bradley: Stacey, I'm going to come back over to you now, so that we can focus a bit on, kind of, practical next steps in these situations. So, when everything feels confusing and frustrating, what's a practical first step to start making sense of it and moving forward again?

133

00:25:55.650 --> 00:26:15.360

Stacey Ileleji: Yeah, that's a great question. Great follow-up, because it builds on, everything that my colleagues have been talking about. So, when things are feeling confusing and frustrating, I know that, sometimes the first instinct is just to, oh my gosh, we've got to solve the whole situation.

134

00:26:15.430 --> 00:26:21.900

Stacey Ileleji: I try to scope it in, right? So, scope in what the, project, what's...

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00:26:22.460 --> 00:26:26.729

Stacey Ileleji: Whatever it is that we're dealing with right now. And starting with

136

00:26:27.240 --> 00:26:36.360

Stacey Ileleji: Once again, go back to the human, because if you don't acknowledge your feelings, they're just gonna get in the way. So, starting with 3 questions. So, what am I feeling?

137

00:26:36.690 --> 00:26:38.589

Stacey Ileleji: What do I actually know?

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00:26:38.860 --> 00:26:49.539

Stacey Ileleji: And what is the next useful thing I can do? And I heard that theme running through, Joseph and Dom as they were sharing their examples. So, first.

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00:26:49.680 --> 00:26:57.680

Stacey Ileleji: name the reaction. So, are you frustrated? Are you worried? Are you disappointed? You know, these are not automatically

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00:26:58.230 --> 00:27:10.880

Stacey Ileleji: resistance, right? So, and I believe Dom spoke about that, that, you know, address how you're feeling, give space for that, and support your colleagues.

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00:27:11.180 --> 00:27:12.040

Stacey Ileleji: So.

142

00:27:12.150 --> 00:27:31.409

Stacey Ileleji: let's say I can be frustrated by a decision, but I can still understand it and behave constructively. Even if it's not... even if you don't agree with the rationale, you know, you have a job to do, so you can still behave constructively. So acknowledging the emotion, but without letting it become the entire interpretation of the entire situation.

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00:27:31.560 --> 00:27:36.210

Stacey Ileleji: And then sort out the facts from the story, right, that's building.

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00:27:36.370 --> 00:27:55.439

Stacey Ileleji: So, what has actually been decided, and what remains unknown, and what am I maybe personally assuming? And then, that's another reason to have those conversations, to, give space for, not just talking about your feelings, but also to talk about what are others assuming.

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00:27:55.860 --> 00:28:03.920

Stacey Ileleji: So, you know, a good change management, discipline helps here, because it forces us to distinguish, to be

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00:28:04.510 --> 00:28:08.579

Stacey Ileleji: Rigorous and systematic about how we're

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00:28:08.650 --> 00:28:20.619

Stacey Ileleji: moving through the change. So, it helps us to distinguish the decisions, uncertainties, and assumptions, rather than communicate... communicating, you know, speculation as fact.

148

00:28:20.620 --> 00:28:33.239

Stacey Ileleji: So I had, like, one experience, let's say, that, I could share is that, during the government-wide HR change that, you mentioned when you were introducing, or going through my bio.

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00:28:33.250 --> 00:28:40.900

Stacey Ileleji: we were a well... we were well into executing our project plan, and this is, like I said,

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00:28:41.110 --> 00:28:53.420

Stacey Ileleji: we're the central agency, and so we are trying to move along this project to implement this HR modernization piece for 60 other organizations. And the work is really happening mostly

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00:28:53.780 --> 00:28:59.460

Stacey Ileleji: Boots on the ground in the other departments that have their own complete, you know.

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00:29:00.070 --> 00:29:11.500

Stacey Ileleji: authority structures and so on. Anyhow, as we're going through this plan, rumors surface that a major infrastructure initiative might take priority over ours.

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00:29:11.620 --> 00:29:19.749

Stacey Ileleji: And if that were true, it would have affected our timelines and our stakeholder confidence that we were going to actually finish this project.

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00:29:20.210 --> 00:29:33.899

Stacey Ileleji: But no decision had been made to stop our work. So we had a choice, we could react to the rumor, or just work from what we actually knew. And so we held the course, and we continued on with the work in front of us.

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00:29:33.950 --> 00:29:45.589

Stacey Ileleji: And ultimately, that other project shifted its timeline. So, that leads to, I guess the final thing that I'd like to end with is shrinking the problem. So, instead of asking.

156

00:29:45.790 --> 00:30:00.049

Stacey Ileleji: how do I deal with all of this uncertainty, and maybe letting emotion get the best of us? First, we acknowledge how we feel, we deal with that. Then we ask, what is the next useful behavior I can, do today, or can take on today?

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00:30:00.060 --> 00:30:19.129

Stacey Ileleji: And I heard, Joseph and Dom, say that in, you know, as they were going through their examples. So, do I have the information, the time, the tools, and authority to do what I need to do today? What needs clarification? What needs escalation? And what can wait?

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00:30:19.530 --> 00:30:26.170

Stacey Ileleji: So, for managers, you know, you could take that approach with your team, you take that approach with yourself.

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00:30:26.430 --> 00:30:40.799

Stacey Ileleji: And if I'm gonna wrap it up in a nice little formula, it would be name it, sort it, shrink it. So name the reaction, sort facts from assumptions, and then shrink the uncertainty down to the next action you can actually take.

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00:30:42.880 --> 00:30:46.229

Stacey Ileleji: Yeah, I'd love to hear what my colleagues have to say as well, yeah.

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00:30:46.750 --> 00:30:58.229

Callie Bradley: Awesome, yeah, thank you, Stacey, and that is an excellent graphic. You got some praise for that in the chat, a really nice visual of all the points you made, so thanks for that.

162

00:30:58.320 --> 00:31:18.410

Callie Bradley: it's really helpful to hear the approaches that individuals can take to navigate this uncertainty, and now I want to shift a little bit to what do you do when you're leading a team? And it's not just about how you are reacting and dealing with things, but also how the entire team you're responsible for navigates this change. So.

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00:31:18.410 --> 00:31:22.979

Callie Bradley: Dom, let's go to you. You had to lead a team through uncertainty.

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00:31:22.980 --> 00:31:27.450

Callie Bradley: How did you communicate with them when you didn't have all of the answers yourself?

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00:31:28.130 --> 00:31:52.190

Dominic Evans: Yeah, great question, Callie, and I think, I'm slightly reassured, I think, that based on Stacey's last graphic, that I don't think I was too... well, I hope I wasn't too far away. We'll have to ask my ex-colleagues on that one. But I think, as you say, it's very different when you're managing your own emotions, I think, to those of your colleagues or your team members that, you know, you're responsible for in many respects.

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00:31:52.310 --> 00:31:56.180

Dominic Evans: I think, from my perspective, the first thing is...

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00:31:56.260 --> 00:32:14.689

Dominic Evans: for me to recognize in myself, like, how do I feel about these changes? How, like, what do I know about the changes? And again, what is the fact versus fiction versus gossip, I guess, on some of that stuff? Because, you know, the rumor mill does start quickly when these things happen, and, you know, I think that's part and parcel of change as well in many ways.

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00:32:14.690 --> 00:32:34.799

Dominic Evans: But what do I know, and what do I have the authority over as well, I guess, is really important to use some of Stacey's language there on that one. And I think the important thing, I think, in all changes, and I think this applies outside of work as much as in work as well, is just be empathetic and be really, you know, on level with people.

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00:32:34.800 --> 00:32:48.999

Dominic Evans: I think the most important thing you can do is just give them the space to maybe vent their frustration, or at least express, you know, how they feel, and what they want to tell you as their line manager, and also what have you got to say on the matter as well.

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00:32:49.000 --> 00:33:11.659

Dominic Evans: And I think the... one of the things I think is really particularly important is to do that verbally. You know, we are all... lots of us are working from home, etc. now, but I still think it's really important to jump on a call and have, like, a video call with someone, rather than sort of do it via... via text, because you do... you do miss some of the meaning, some of the, you know, context around that, deliver that. So I would definitely say

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00:33:12.380 --> 00:33:25.269

Dominic Evans: I guess I would advise to have a verbal conversation, you can be more empathetic, you know, and they can be empathetic with you as well, in many respects. It's just as cathartic for you as it is for them, I would say.

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00:33:25.350 --> 00:33:50.290

Dominic Evans: And they understand the tone and the emotion a bit better around, you know, the decision that you're trying to convey to them, that you understand. And then, I also find it helpful to write up in a written format after the call, so it's clearer, but it's within the context of what you've already said, if that makes sense. So they've had the... they've had the verbal explanation, and now you've written it up, so they've got that to refer back to... to later on. Obviously, the real important bit of that is to ensure that that is accurate, and it is

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00:33:50.290 --> 00:33:58.949

Dominic Evans: is correct, because the last thing you need is for that to be wrong, and then they come back on you a bit later on. So, really important step there is to be true on that. And again, I think...

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00:33:59.140 --> 00:34:13.420

Dominic Evans: as I said in my first answer, being really honest, and not to give false hope, because the last thing I think that you want to do is to give your colleagues a sense of everything will be fine, but for all you know, potentially, and for all, you know, your colleagues know.

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00:34:13.420 --> 00:34:20.759

Dominic Evans: there could be things like job losses along the track. Fortunately, I've never gone to that change myself, but, you know, with these types of organisational changes.

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00:34:20.760 --> 00:34:43.990

Dominic Evans: everything is on the table until you know that it's not, I guess, in that sense. And I think lots of my civil servant colleagues will relate to this, not just from an organisational change, but just from the... when a ministers change direction with some of their work, or it has to stop for whatever reason. All these things still apply. I think just being empathetic human is a really core part of managing change as a leader.

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00:34:43.989 --> 00:34:59.710

Dominic Evans: And to embody that as well when you're dealing with your own seniors, if you're, like, the middle manager, like I have been in many of these situations, is to also try and influence that upward change, in the organization as well by saying, look, we need to do this, we need to do that, et cetera, et cetera, on this front too.

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00:34:59.710 --> 00:35:04.189

Dominic Evans: So that's, yeah, that's how I've... something I've deployed, Callie, I think, in my experience.

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00:35:04.190 --> 00:35:05.749

Dominic Evans: With... with managing change.

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00:35:06.650 --> 00:35:31.620

Callie Bradley: Great, thanks, Dom. I love what you said. Focus on the facts, firstly, Stacey really emphasized that as well, and then, yeah, be empathetic. It's a really great reminder, and I love that throughout this panel, you guys have emphasized the human side of change over and over, because it is so important. There was a comment in the chat that I'm going to read that really aligned with what you said, Dom. People really value openness, so even if you can't provide a full answer, just being

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00:35:31.620 --> 00:35:35.170

Callie Bradley: Your authentic self and being honest are hugely important.

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00:35:35.170 --> 00:35:46.980

Callie Bradley: And, yeah, I think that's so true. Stacey, I'm going to come to you now. So, I'd love to hear... we've talked about kind of how to

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00:35:46.980 --> 00:35:59.979

Callie Bradley: Understand change from yourself, how to discuss it with your team members, and then what's one concrete thing a leader can do to help change actually take root on their team, so beyond just talking about it?

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00:36:01.040 --> 00:36:01.690

Stacey Ileleji: Yeah.

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00:36:02.010 --> 00:36:20.480

Stacey Ileleji: And we all grapple with that, right? And... and just, I'd like to, you know, point out that leader... leader is not necessarily a position. So, it could be... a leader is anyone who's willing to, you know, step up to the plates, right? And... and try to move things forward. And,

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00:36:20.620 --> 00:36:24.899

Stacey Ileleji: So... As if you're the formal leader, however.

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00:36:25.060 --> 00:36:30.910

Stacey Ileleji: The first thing is to recognize what's happening in your team right now.

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00:36:31.170 --> 00:36:43.239

Stacey Ileleji: So, I'm gonna, once again, take a little bit of the academic piece, and just mention the Tuchman model, which is a useful lens for looking at your, your team.

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00:36:43.240 --> 00:37:00.719

Stacey Ileleji: If we get a chance to throw up that third graphic, that would be good, too. So, teams can move through periods of forming, storming, norming, and performing as, roles, relationships, and ways of working evolve, right? So...

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00:37:01.340 --> 00:37:10.879

Stacey Ileleji: you go... in general, that's what the Tuchman model is about, is that we start out with, you know, forming, and we're polite and nice, and then...

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00:37:11.200 --> 00:37:17.239

Stacey Ileleji: As we move along, where you start to get into, like, some friction in the storming, phase.

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00:37:17.410 --> 00:37:36.630

Stacey Ileleji: And then that kind of normals out, and we start to perform. So a sudden shift can create even new friction in a team that was well-functioning and, you know, well into the performing stage. So it's good to know kind of where your team is at, so that you can,

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00:37:37.290 --> 00:37:46.149

Stacey Ileleji: Work to, fit your response, let's say, to where... to where your team is at the moment. So...

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00:37:46.270 --> 00:37:53.000

Stacey Ileleji: if I had to choose one concrete thing, though, I would create a regular protected

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00:37:53.110 --> 00:38:01.239

Stacey Ileleji: you know, space. So, not necessarily update meetings. I mentioned before that, creating space to talk.

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00:38:01.400 --> 00:38:07.219

Stacey Ileleji: So, and this is a space where the team can basically make sense of the change together.

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00:38:07.480 --> 00:38:08.520

Stacey Ileleji: So...

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00:38:08.710 --> 00:38:24.170

Stacey Ileleji: four questions, you know? Once again, we talk about what do we know, what's still uncertain, what matters now, and what is getting in our way. So that creates awareness, but it also creates engagement as we try to work through those questions together.

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00:38:24.370 --> 00:38:41.890

Stacey Ileleji: And it recognizes that, and I heard my colleagues say this, that different people may need different things. Some are really excited about the change, some are frustrated, some are just, you know, not even sure what the change is. So one person may need clarity, some may need practice.

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00:38:42.580 --> 00:38:45.419

Stacey Ileleji: Someone else, they may need to understand.

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00:38:46.080 --> 00:39:05.500

Stacey Ileleji: Anyhow, all of these things, if you create the space, it gives you a chance to engage and to, for people to, lend what they have to bring to the table to move the change forward. And so, once again, I mentioned the, the HR modernization initiative that I was working on.

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00:39:05.510 --> 00:39:08.640

Stacey Ileleji: And one of the, like, one...

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00:39:09.170 --> 00:39:12.359

Stacey Ileleji: Let's say, change that we had to work on together.

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00:39:12.510 --> 00:39:19.950

Stacey Ileleji: for the success of the organization was changing a little bit how our central agency engaged with the,

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00:39:20.400 --> 00:39:38.449

Stacey Ileleji: the teams, the project teams. Usually, we don't work directly as a central agency with the working-level project teams. And, making that suggestion to... to change and shift and work directly with them so that we could, help to move the project along,

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00:39:38.500 --> 00:39:47.859

Stacey Ileleji: You know, and waylay some of those rumors and uncertainties directly, it kind of pushed the team back into storming.

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00:39:47.920 --> 00:39:54.150

Stacey Ileleji: You know, it created more friction. But rather than backing away from the friction,

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00:39:54.550 --> 00:39:59.010

Stacey Ileleji: Having those meetings gave everyone a defined, a chance to

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00:39:59.140 --> 00:40:02.040

Stacey Ileleji: work through it together, and we...

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00:40:02.410 --> 00:40:11.329

Stacey Ileleji: Defined roles on how we were going to engage, and that suited the strengths of the teammates around the table.

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00:40:11.330 --> 00:40:27.300

Stacey Ileleji: And we used our weekly meetings to work out obstacles, and over time, things shifted. Like, the team began to remove our safety nets, like our scripts and our fixed agendas, and they were moving toward Ask Me Anything sessions, where the, you know.

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00:40:27.380 --> 00:40:32.170

Stacey Ileleji: The representatives from those 60-plus organizations could just

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00:40:32.480 --> 00:40:40.520

Stacey Ileleji: ask a question, and they were feeling more confident. So, they were improving the idea, right? So.

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00:40:40.640 --> 00:40:43.280

Stacey Ileleji: Just an example to say, you...

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00:40:43.400 --> 00:41:03.149

Stacey Ileleji: we don't just announce a change, we give people a chance to make sense of it, work through friction, expect friction, you know, and be clear where you can legitimately influence some decisions. As Dom, I believe, and Joseph has mentioned, some decisions are already made, they're out of your hands. And then, you know, turn the change into something that you can

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00:41:03.170 --> 00:41:06.849

Stacey Ileleji: actually move... move forward together.

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00:41:07.500 --> 00:41:10.090

Stacey Ileleji: Thanks so much! That's what I would say about that one.

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00:41:10.880 --> 00:41:34.969

Callie Bradley: Awesome. Thanks for another, incredible graphic, Stacey. Those are... those are so helpful. And I think what you said pairs really well with the advice that Dom gave on, you know, how to deliver sort of a one-to-one empathetic conversation about change, and then yours is sort of a nice follow-on step of creating that space for... for a team to work through it together. So, yeah, that's... this is just such

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00:41:34.970 --> 00:41:57.579

Callie Bradley: such practical and useful advice, so thank you guys for that. And now we're shifting towards the end of the panel, and I want to talk a little bit about protecting yourself through change. You know, we've talked so much about how to handle this when you have a team to lead, but, like, it is so important to, yeah, be able to protect your own motivation and your own feelings.

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00:41:57.580 --> 00:41:59.799

Callie Bradley: Joe, I'll come to you first.

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00:42:00.000 --> 00:42:10.119

Callie Bradley: Experiencing change is also about managing your own motivation and energy levels. So, in those moments, how have you protected your energy and stayed motivated?

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00:42:10.720 --> 00:42:17.180

Joseph Castle, PhD: Yeah, thanks for the question, and, Stacey's last picture, that was us preparing for this

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00:42:17.190 --> 00:42:31.960

Joseph Castle, PhD: For this panel, and I like the guy who's, like, screaming, but his coffee mug says, deep breath. That's perfect. That was me at the day. No, I'm just kidding. But great graphics.

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00:42:31.960 --> 00:42:41.090

Joseph Castle, PhD: One of the things, before I answer the actual question real fast, one of the things that Stacey touched upon was leadership comes from

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00:42:41.090 --> 00:42:57.319

Joseph Castle, PhD: different places, and that is so true, right? Like, there's... there's leadership by the position itself, and then there's individuals that take on certain things. Yesterday, I was speaking, to a person that I'm advising who's an elected official in the state of Maryland.

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00:42:57.320 --> 00:43:16.419

Joseph Castle, PhD: And she said to me, about AI, like, this is all... she was reading some articles, and she's like, this is really crazy stuff, and we have a lot of work to do. So it's not lost on anyone. What I thought about was, like, oh my gosh, it's not any... am I helping to advise on AI within the state, it's also how do I present myself in

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00:43:16.420 --> 00:43:23.389

Joseph Castle, PhD: presenting that information, or working with individuals, because now, all of a sudden, it's causing that uncertainty, but then

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00:43:23.390 --> 00:43:36.569

Joseph Castle, PhD: I also am the... in the, you know, the messenger in some sense, and so it's how do I help them to... to understand, kind of what's happening, and... and that causes, you know, there's already change being caused, but how can I...

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00:43:36.570 --> 00:43:55.709

Joseph Castle, PhD: maybe soften... soften that a little bit. One of the things I've... I think about a lot is agency. I have actually lived through a layoff in my career. I was in government for a long time, never even thought about it. I was a career civil servant, you know, job for life. I was like, this is awesome, I'm gonna retire like my parents did.

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00:43:55.710 --> 00:44:20.550

Joseph Castle, PhD: And then I left government, you know, went to a software company, did some other things in tech, I've always been in tech, and, you know, I've been in and out of government, but I was there for a while. And I went to a company, we had some layoffs, and I was a part of that, which was a huge shock, right? It's a huge, you know, it's a personal shock, it's a professional shock, and there's a time for a lot of self-reflection, really.

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00:44:20.550 --> 00:44:22.299

Joseph Castle, PhD: And it's sort of like...

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00:44:22.350 --> 00:44:30.809

Joseph Castle, PhD: okay, now that you're in this predicament, what do you really want to do? And where do you see yourself, providing impact?

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00:44:30.900 --> 00:44:39.189

Joseph Castle, PhD: Longer term. And so, it's actually really nice, because now I have a new set of goals, and there's certain things that I'm invested in these days.

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00:44:39.190 --> 00:44:54.400

Joseph Castle, PhD: I'm a veteran, I do a lot of veterans outreach and community, working with elected officials for technology and that sort of thing. So, how do I stay motivated? It's really an agency, right? My own personal agency and the things that I want to focus on

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00:44:54.410 --> 00:45:12.740

Joseph Castle, PhD: Whether it's, applied AI with government organizations today, or helping veterans within the community, or helping elected leaders and other folks. So it's, doing, what makes me happy, regardless of the circumstance. Now, I'm not, obviously.

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00:45:12.940 --> 00:45:15.679

Joseph Castle, PhD: Oblivious to what's happening around me, and...

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00:45:15.700 --> 00:45:34.069

Joseph Castle, PhD: You know, I still have, you know, challenges every day in my work life as well, just like everyone else, but... but I often have to step back and say, what are you in this for, right? Like, what's your purpose, regardless of what's happening? And then what's your move? What are you gonna do about it?

238

00:45:34.240 --> 00:45:43.789

Joseph Castle, PhD: In your situation, the best that you can do, you know, with where you're sitting today, and then where do you want to be, you know, 2 years, 4 years, 10 years down the road?

239

00:45:45.440 --> 00:45:56.310

Callie Bradley: That's... that's great advice. Thanks, Joe. I like the sort of positive spin of, even though these predicaments can be really challenging and stressful, they can also lead to a new set of goals.

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00:45:56.310 --> 00:46:06.549

Callie Bradley: I like that a lot. And Dom, I'm gonna come to you now, sort of on that positive note. You've experienced two huge machinery of government changes.

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00:46:06.550 --> 00:46:10.279

Callie Bradley: So looking back, has anything good come out of that disruption for you?

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00:46:11.280 --> 00:46:15.949

Dominic Evans: Yeah, and I think just to build a little bit on what Joseph was saying there around,

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00:46:15.950 --> 00:46:39.179

Dominic Evans: you know, looking for the opportunities, I guess, and it does make you reflect, I think, when you kind of... you reach this crossroad, which is, you know, your department has changed, you don't know what you're going to be doing potentially tomorrow, let alone in 3, 6, 9 months' time, or whatever. So I think there was a bit of self-reflection, I think, sort of immediately after that for me.

244

00:46:39.250 --> 00:46:58.839

Dominic Evans: And ultimately, I think where that ended up, in my personal experience, is that by taking the, I'm gonna be... I'm gonna use this as an opportunity for me and for my career, has resulted in actually me getting a promotion, but also working in a part of the organization that I never thought that I would work in prior, so...

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00:46:58.840 --> 00:47:11.870

Dominic Evans: for a bit of context, I've... I would consider myself a policy civil servant, so, you know, having worked on... on policy and Welsh Government, et cetera, previously, before moving to... to UK government and for the machinery government change. But we're...

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00:47:11.900 --> 00:47:19.600

Dominic Evans: what I quickly realized was, once the first machinery government to change had happened, was

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00:47:19.600 --> 00:47:44.109

Dominic Evans: that I began to ask myself, surely we can do these things differently? You know, some of the pro... I was writing briefings a lot for our Secretary of State at the time, and some of those processes had a lot of people involved, they're a bit clunky, you know, people were going through change themselves, there's quite a lot of, you know, dysfunction, I guess, in the system at that moment in time. So, to cut a long story short, I ended up automating these processes for

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00:47:44.110 --> 00:47:46.729

Dominic Evans: Some of our briefings.

249

00:47:46.730 --> 00:48:11.720

Dominic Evans: And ultimately, that kind of led me down the path of, well, if I can do this for my briefings, what can I do for briefings across the department? And where that ultimately led me to is, well, I applied for our innovation team to work internally on how can we do things differently in our organization, as a promotion, and then moved on again for another promotion to become the head of rolling out, Copilot within, the organization and other AI tools as well.

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00:48:11.720 --> 00:48:27.329

Dominic Evans: So, yeah, I think where I ended up was having a whole new range of skills that if you'd told me 3, 4 years ago that, Dom, you'd be leading the role of co-pilot in an organization, I would have told you, no way, like, I wouldn't know how to do that, I wouldn't know what you're talking about.

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00:48:27.360 --> 00:48:34.979

Dominic Evans: But I think if it wasn't for the machinery government change, or the organisational changes, I wouldn't have ended up in that position.

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00:48:34.980 --> 00:48:52.149

Dominic Evans: But I think a lot of it comes down to your mindset, and your motivation, and how you spin some of the opportunities, as I saw them, in that way. Don't get me wrong, there was lots of hardship involved in, you know, those changes, uncertainty, is my job secure, particularly in those early days, et cetera, et cetera.

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00:48:52.150 --> 00:48:56.639

Dominic Evans: But I think, you know, looking back now, reflecting on that as part of this question.

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00:48:56.640 --> 00:49:14.840

Dominic Evans: Yeah, 100%, it's something that I'm grateful for in many respects. I'm sure many of my civil servant colleagues would not put those words in the same sentence as machine and government change, but yeah, I'm, you know, it worked out for me, and I'm sure for many other of my colleagues in government as well, when these opportunities come up.

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00:49:15.920 --> 00:49:22.700

Callie Bradley: Great, thank you, Dom. I think that's a really nice note to wrap up our panel on. I do want to shift us

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00:49:22.700 --> 00:49:43.960

Callie Bradley: towards the Q&A, so thank you guys so much for that panel. Everyone in the audience, just remember to keep sharing any questions that you have for today's speakers. We have a lot from you already, both pre-submitted and in the Zoom Q&A, so to ensure your question gets seen and not lost in the chat, please submit it through the Q&A tab, which you should see at the bottom of your Zoom screen.

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00:49:43.960 --> 00:49:48.629

Callie Bradley: And also feel free to go through and upvote any questions that you see and resonate with.

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00:49:49.040 --> 00:49:57.929

Callie Bradley: And just before we dive into the questions, I want to let you know that we've also created a great follow-on resource to today's topic that we think you'll find useful.

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00:49:58.050 --> 00:50:07.610

Callie Bradley: This is a first look at our course, People Management for Public Servants, exploring why people management matters, especially when everything else around you keeps changing.

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00:50:07.930 --> 00:50:24.090

Callie Bradley: To receive your link to the course introduction, go to the Life and Government community after the event, and leave a comment on the post pinned at the top of the page. We will send you the resource by email after the event. My colleague is also posting a link to that thread in the chat now.

261

00:50:25.080 --> 00:50:41.430

Callie Bradley: All right, let's move on to the Q&A. So, Joe, I'm going to go to you first. We touched a little bit on this, but I think a lot of people might be thinking it, so would love to hear a bit more in depth.

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00:50:41.620 --> 00:50:51.449

Callie Bradley: As a manager, how do you support your employees through a change that you do not agree with? Would love to hear some more tips on that.

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00:50:52.630 --> 00:50:55.429

Joseph Castle, PhD: Yeah, good question.

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00:50:56.120 --> 00:51:07.510

Joseph Castle, PhD: Yeah, for me, I'm probably more of a hard-on-the-sleeve kind of person. I probably... my wife tells me I share too much information. So... so there's a lot of,

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00:51:07.510 --> 00:51:16.199

Joseph Castle, PhD: if I don't agree with something, I'm probably actually saying it, which isn't always the best tact when you do have people and you're trying to

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00:51:16.200 --> 00:51:28.489

Joseph Castle, PhD: keep spirits up and motivation high and, you know, things moving forward. But I think there is some... some... some help to that, in the sense that, like, we're all human. It's a natural response.

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00:51:28.530 --> 00:51:33.939

Joseph Castle, PhD: So, yeah, I think Dom was talking about this a little bit, too, about the communication.

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00:51:34.030 --> 00:51:51.069

Joseph Castle, PhD: being virtual, I... I've definitely noticed a shift just in team communication and... and how we, work together, here as well, and I think that's really important, you know, and I think... and I think being honest, with...

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00:51:51.070 --> 00:52:03.379

Joseph Castle, PhD: okay, I may, you know, we may not agree with this change, but what can we do? Like, kind of trying to spin that in... but in a positive way, not just spin it to spin it with your people to get them to buy in, but really,

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00:52:03.380 --> 00:52:17.030

Joseph Castle, PhD: I usually... for me, I always think of change as opportunity, but I'm like everyone else, like, when it first comes on, you know, I take it the way I take it, which is usually in a negative wave, kind of like, no, what am I gonna do? Why did... why did this happen to us?

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00:52:17.030 --> 00:52:30.139

Joseph Castle, PhD: they don't see the value in what we're doing, and, you know, all those sorts of things, and then I think... I go away, and I think about it for a while, and that's probably where I share too much information. I go away, I think about it for a while, and then I come back and I say, you know what? There's probably a lot of things we really could do

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00:52:30.180 --> 00:52:46.640

Joseph Castle, PhD: now knowing what we know, or... or at least go find out more, and see how we can, you know, be impactful, or continue to be impactful, or what have you. So, not as concrete, but it's really, that shift in mindset, and then, you know, being

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00:52:46.640 --> 00:52:50.919

Joseph Castle, PhD: Open and honest with... with the... your team and the people around you, and...

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00:52:51.060 --> 00:52:55.010

Joseph Castle, PhD: You know, and then just thinking about how to move forward, really.

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00:52:56.620 --> 00:53:11.109

Callie Bradley: Yeah, thanks, Joe. We've heard echoed throughout the panel and in the chat the value of authenticity. I think that is really, really important to people when they need to get on board with something. So, can understand why you've emphasized that.

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00:53:11.110 --> 00:53:36.079

Callie Bradley: I have seen a few questions about sort of the same topic. Stacey, I'm gonna give this one to you, where people are asking for advice when a change has resulted in their team not having much work to do, and therefore not feeling like their work has value, and feeling unmotivated. So they're sort of asking, how do I motivate a team who doesn't really have anything

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00:53:36.080 --> 00:53:37.210

Callie Bradley: to do right now.

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00:53:38.290 --> 00:53:41.030

Stacey Ileleji: Yeah, that's a great question, and

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00:53:41.610 --> 00:53:51.030

Stacey Ileleji: first of all, I'm sure, that it doesn't feel good. You may feel, underviewed and so on.

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00:53:51.440 --> 00:53:55.210

Stacey Ileleji: This is where I would say leadership, informal leadership.

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00:53:55.280 --> 00:54:13.679

Stacey Ileleji: I would say look around. What is... what can you help with? Can you reach out to other teams? One of the things that I've, noticed in public service is that we're not as nimble in terms of putting our resources to where we need them to go.

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00:54:13.750 --> 00:54:21.809

Stacey Ileleji: If we... if we need to pivot really quickly. We could use... we could be a little bit more nimble that way, in terms of...

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00:54:22.250 --> 00:54:29.780

Stacey Ileleji: You know, if your team is, is a little bit on a, you know, experiencing, Perhaps.

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00:54:29.930 --> 00:54:33.060

Stacey Ileleji: Your volume is a little bit down, then

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00:54:34.120 --> 00:54:50.109

Stacey Ileleji: if it's within the authority for you, or ask your manager, ask your authority structure, if it's okay, if you can contribute... I'm sure you have transferable skills in your team that could support another team that is very possibly drowning.

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00:54:50.110 --> 00:54:57.720

Stacey Ileleji: In, in priorities. Failing that, sometimes these downtimes are a perfect time to learn.

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00:54:57.720 --> 00:55:00.999

Stacey Ileleji: I used to take downtime to learn all the time.

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00:55:01.000 --> 00:55:08.159

Stacey Ileleji: Learn new skills, learn about what's going on in the organization, learn,

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00:55:08.680 --> 00:55:13.440

Stacey Ileleji: Learn something new, learn as a team, learn as an individual.

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00:55:13.460 --> 00:55:29.359

Stacey Ileleji: That's also a possibility. And align it, not just learning in general, but align it to where, you know, start reading... it's a great opportunity to read your organization's, you know, departmental, let's say, reports or priorities.

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00:55:29.380 --> 00:55:35.079

Stacey Ileleji: And try to see, anticipate, oh, I think we're heading in this direction, maybe I wanna...

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00:55:35.560 --> 00:55:50.090

Stacey Iileji: I don't know, bone up on AI. How do I program an agent, let's say? Or, something along those lines. That's, that's, that's what I would say, but I'd love to hear what others have to say about that, too.

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00:55:51.250 --> 00:56:07.749

Callie Bradley: Great, thanks, Stacey. The... the downtime, to learn advice is really helpful. Dom, I'll turn to you quickly. If you... if you want to respond to the same question, actually, yeah, would just love to hear a piece of advice that... that you would have.

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00:56:07.970 --> 00:56:10.579

Dominic Evans: Yeah, definitely. So I think,

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00:56:10.580 --> 00:56:32.340

Dominic Evans: I would agree with basically everything that Stacey said, and I think that in the past, when I've gone through these types of changes, I've 100% leaned into the kind of lull by saying, right, well, what skills do I need for my next career move, or what are the type of things that, you know, I need to be a better civil servant, potentially, you know, and review that offer, I think, and be...

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00:56:32.340 --> 00:56:34.319

Dominic Evans: totally honest with yourself, because I think there's...

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00:56:34.320 --> 00:56:48.590

Dominic Evans: to be honest, I think sometimes there can be a bit of a culture of, if you're doing that, then you're not doing work, but that is part of your... as you, as a person, as a public servant, you need to be on your A-game in terms of the skills, the knowledge, as well as just being able to deliver.

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00:56:48.590 --> 00:56:57.660

Dominic Evans: So I think, you know, having that, is really important. And I think this, you know, I've seen this a few comments, some of the Q&A around using AI as well.

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00:56:57.770 --> 00:57:14.390

Dominic Evans: I think that's a perfect opportunity for you to sort of understand the role of AI, and with my AI... my old AI hat on, I'll just very quickly say, Callie, because I appreciate we're coming up to time, is that AI will not be the be-all and end-all, and I'm sure many of you are recognizing your organizations, already.

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00:57:14.390 --> 00:57:30.819

Dominic Evans: But what you can do in this time is understand, and I think this is how I've tried to approach it with my own team, is what are the human tasks, and what are the AI tasks? What is the thing that can get you from A to B quickly? But to get from B to C, you need the human to do that thing, and that's, like, probably all the checking.

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00:57:30.820 --> 00:57:34.509

Dominic Evans: adding the human lens, adding the context to that. I think...

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00:57:34.560 --> 00:57:59.250

Dominic Evans: And for you, it's an important skill, as someone watching this, is to... how do you communicate that to your senior leaders when they're saying, you know, change, you know, AI is coming, you need to use AI in your processes? It's about you understanding how AI actually works, and then explaining that, and influencing that in your organization or within your team. That would be my, kind of two things that I would do if there was, like, a down period or a bit of a lull in your kind of workload and that.

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00:58:00.660 --> 00:58:13.049

Callie Bradley: Perfect. Thanks so much, Dom. Okay, we've had some incredible wisdom from each of our speakers, so I'd like to ask you all to join me in giving Stacey, Dom, and Joe a virtual round of applause.

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00:58:13.150 --> 00:58:32.259

Callie Bradley: And most importantly, thanks to you, the audience, for investing and learning and being so engaged in this topic. Wow, lots of virtual hands and hearts, going off right now. So, our team is going to pull up a quick poll to see how you felt about today, which will help us continue improving our content, and we really appreciate your responses.

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00:58:32.650 --> 00:58:47.809

Callie Bradley: Before you go, and while you're responding to that poll, I want to share a couple more events that you can register for to join us at again soon. If you're not available to be there live, remember that you can always register for the event in order to get sent the recording to catch up whenever suits you.

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00:58:47.950 --> 00:59:04.309

Callie Bradley: So next week, we have How to Scale Government Innovation Without Losing the Edge on progressing innovative solutions to complex problems while working within government guardrails. And later in September, we have our next Career Moves event on how to get the feedback that actually helps you progress.

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00:59:04.900 --> 00:59:17.270

Callie Bradley: Alright, that is all we have time for today. We hope you found it helpful, and we want to say a huge thank you to our speakers, to everyone who's made today happen, and to you for taking time out of your busy days.

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00:59:17.400 --> 00:59:30.220

Callie Bradley: Keep an eye out for the email coming your way with today's recording and resources. Don't forget to find my post in the community, and we hope to see you at another Apolitical event very soon. Have a great day. Goodbye.