



EPISODE 15: PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

HOW TO TALK ABOUT RACE AT WORK: DREW CLANCY, CEO + LORI BISHOP, CPO

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"I think this calls for leadership and leaning into it. To use this whole idea, right, of not being a racist, which is important certainly, but just not being a racist as a person I don't think is enough. This whole idea of antiracism and a much more proactive approach I think is what's called for. I think it's an opportunity for all organizations, to those who embark on this journey. I think it's a tremendous opportunity to ultimately strengthen the culture of the organization and have better conversations, better relationships, a stronger organization. That's my strong feeling."

Drew Clancy, CEO, PCI

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:01:03] LM: Welcome to Rise Leaders Radio. This podcast focuses on exemplary leadership, the type of leadership that brings about positive, meaningful change in places that matter. We explore how these leaders make things happen and the lessons they learned along the way. I'm your host LeeAnn Mallory.

[EPISODE]

[00:01:31] LM: The primary goal of this podcast is to share stories of exemplary leadership. So, those are leaders who are going above and beyond and making unique contributions to the places where they lead, in their communities, in their families, wherever that maybe. We are in a time right now that's calling for some pretty incredible leadership. My guest today is [Drew Clancy](#). It's his second time on the podcast already. He was here last fall in Episode 9. And I'm interested in Drew because

he's a culture enthusiast and his company has won best place to work several times. And it's just a core of what he spends time on. They're also a servant leader organization, which you'll hear a little bit more about even in the podcast.

Right now, though, the topic that's up is race; how to face the racial conversations at work. And so, Drew is here with [Lori Bishop](#), who is the chief people officer at [PCI](#), Publishing Concepts, which is the company that Drew is CEO of. We're going to hear today about the approach that they've taken and the structure that they put in place, which is really, really important to keeping these conversations going. Their whole intent was to open up the conversation about race and use these conversations as a way to build trust in the company.

For context, I want to tell you a little bit about PCI and the people who work there. PCI is Publishing Concepts, they are a 100-year-old, third generation, family-owned business, and their clients are colleges, and universities, high schools, the [military] services; anyone that would have alumni and membership are their clients. They work really hard with these organizations to engage and keep their memberships engaged and also to raise money. They've grown incredibly in the past five years - more than doubled their size and they're looking at about 50 million in revenue this year and they're poised for more growth. Their great ideas just keep coming, and they've got a culture that can pull it off.

Lori Bishop joined the company last October [2019]. So they were needing to level-up their people department, their human resources. And Lori was just the person to do that. She's going to be actually the first one that we hear from today and she's going to talk a little bit about how she got to PCI. But that's the background on PCI.

What's also important to know is the demographics. So, I'm going to share with you both racial and gender demographics so you can imagine that as these conversations are taking place via Zoom, because that's where we are right now, that these are the faces that you're seeing on the screen.

In terms of Race, at PCI, about 51% of the people identify as white. Around 27% identify as Black or African American. About 13% as Hispanic or Latino. A little over 5% identify with two or more races or having two or more races in their bloodline. About 3.5% identify as Asian, and then less than 1% identify as American Indian or Alaskan native. And this is about 383 - 385 associates there.

Right. So, from a gender perspective, about 56% identify as female. 43.5 – 44%, identify as male. And less than 1% did not specify their gender. So as you're hearing Lori and Drew speak, these are the people's faces that would be looking back at you on the screen if you were a fly on the wall. I hope that you enjoy the conversation today. As always, there will be links and resources in the show notes, and I hope that you gain a lot from this conversation. And as I said, we'll start with Lori, who talks about why she accepted the offer to come work at PCI.

[INTERVIEW]

[00:06:28] **LB:** Right. This was an ideal opportunity for me. I was about 25 years into an HR career, a pretty progressive HR career, and had recently started doing some consulting and was looking to start my own consulting firm when I got a call from a recruiter about the opportunity at PCI, and it was such a perfect fit for my background. Drew was such the ideal leader for me, and I almost thought I was being punked by her and I asked her that. I said, "Who told you to call me?" I said, "I know my friends know I'm trying to do this new business thing. Which one of them told you to call me and mess with me about this?" She knew I was serious because I was naming names. I'm like, "Did my friend, Alexis, tell you to call me?"

From that conversation, it led to a meeting with Drew, which I knew – we had to work together. The experience that we had in that moment in thinking about how we would work together to shape and really bring the full PCI culture he's envisioned to life for the organization add to what is already an amazing culture for the company was very similar to this opportunity that we had with the situation with the [Ahmaud Arbery](#) and then subsequently [George Floyd](#).

Drew and I had been working together. We identified how we were going to partner to take his culture to the next level. When these situations happened, we built enough trust that I knew it was safe for me to go to him and say...okay. I sent a text on Sunday. Everybody's sending these responses out to George Floyd's murder. I'm afraid that not saying something is saying something, because we'd already had the conversations where Drew had met with some African-American males, leaders in the company, about the Ahmaud Arbery situation, and that I think put us both in the mindset that 'this is not something we can look away from'.

When the tide began to turn and we reached out to our executive team and we started to hear that everybody was on a similar page, we began having some discussions. I brought in [Eric Mosley](#), who was going to help my team deal with some stress of this issue, of dealing with COVID, of frankly supporting everybody dealing with social injustice issues and dealing with COVID. The moment that we had with him was so revealing in that people were stressed. People were hurting. I have one associate get on the call and she said, "I'm not okay." She repeated that over and over to the point of tears. She said, "I can't keep coming in and pretending that everything's okay." She was speaking specifically about the racial injustice.

Eric took us through some breathing exercises. We did some meditation. Then Drew was scheduled to have a conversation with the African American male leaders that day, so I sent Eric in. I'm like, "This thing he does is unique to what we need." We didn't even know what to call it at that time. I was like, "Drew, you've got to let him facilitate your conversation because people are hurting. People are frustrated. People are in need of support in ways that frankly I knew nothing about how to offer support for."

His conversation went well. We ended up working with Eric to get the Meaningful Conversations going. That's kind of how it all began. This is not something I see as an HR skillset. HR has been doing everything it can to *not* talk about this stuff for the last 40 years, so we needed some unique support to dive into this.

[00:09:57] LM: Yeah. I want to pipe in here and say that I've had conversation with some of my African American female clients and I was already working with them before the incident with George Floyd. But after that, they started bringing that into our coaching conversations, and I found myself not knowing exactly what to say or do myself, and I coach for a living and I reached out to some people that do diversity work or whatever, because it is just such a different topic area and it's delicate. I found myself starting to coach as if it was just any other situation. I just stopped and said, "I don't know what to say here." I actually said that. I do think that it warrants coaching or bringing someone in with the expertise, even outside of someone in the organization. That's my own perspective.

Drew, I'm curious for you what it was like because you started the conversation with the African American men before George Floyd, and I think that was pretty bold. How did you go into those conversations and why?

[00:11:25] DC: Well, Lori had – we were talking I think in one of our weekly check-ins, and she shared with me that there was a sense in the Black community, especially among Black men, that with the killing of Ahmaud Arbery earlier this year, again, the latest in an unfortunate, a long line of these similar type incidents, that people were really hurting, that there was not an opportunity for people to talk about this. I thought it was an opportunity to connect and talk about a real issue that's going on and to see if there, in some way, I could support them -we could support them.

As Lori said, so this was before George Floyd's murder and just a couple of weeks before, and so we had had two meetings. Really, what I said to them that afternoon was I'm really just here to listen and I'm interested in your perspective. Many of these guys, we've worked together for many years but we'd never had a conversation about race or these types of issues, and it was very, I will say, for me, very eye-opening and just the level of frustration, the level of discouragement, the hopelessness in certain cases around what was going on.

Each of the men told some version of a story of growing up and a parent or maybe a grandparent saying, "When you leave this house, you need to be very careful: what you say, how you act, especially around law enforcement." After that conversation, it really struck me that the advice they were getting was you essentially have to be invisible. Again, good advice but what a message to hear. Then shortly thereafter, George Floyd was killed.

As Lori was saying, then we decided to have – first, we had one Meaningful Conversation and we had – again, completely voluntary. I think we had approximately 225 people join. It was we're all working virtually still during this COVID era, so we had about 225 people join a Zoom call. I shared some of my – the emotion I think I said was I'm just fed up, and we've reached a moment in time when action is required here. As businesses, as a for-profit business, perhaps businesses can be on the – we can be part of the solution.

Then we – as part of that, we called it a Meaningful Conversation. We then divided up into small groups. It was right afterwards, and so it was very raw, and we wanted to give people an opportunity to talk. As you said, LeeAnn, I mean, there's certainly sensitivity. But Lori suggested, what Eric suggested, and what made sense to me was *talk from your experience*. Let's not talk hypothetical. Let's talk from our experience, and that's very real and authentic. That's how this started.

[00:15:04] LM: Drew, were you ever nervous? Did you ever have to kind of prop yourself up and get yourself ready?

[00:15:12] LB: I was nervous.

[00:15:14] LM: You were nervous?

[00:15:15] LB: Yeah.

[00:15:16] LM: What were you nervous about, Lori?

[00:15:17] LB: Well, coming into this as HR, two years ago, I think I told Drew that diversity died for me. Diversity is just HR's way of being a diversion and not really dealing with race and issues that are preventing diversity and inclusion from ever coming to a fruition. The amount of fear around the conversation within HR was just something I didn't even want to be associated with. Drew may not believe this, but he will very soon, but I'm not your typical HR person. I'm a businessperson first and I figure out how to make sure that you're able to do business with all the complexities that come from people.

I was afraid. I said to Drew. I said I have learned that I'm going to have to take off some masks. I come to work, and Drew will tell you as unvarnished as you may think I am, I was wearing a mask. There was a level of safety and caution that I wasn't sure I can let go of and really embrace from a trust perspective. I had to tell myself as a black person, all the things that I've heard from growing up and how my safety depended on me, never trust in white people. I had to admit that to myself before I could help Drew on this journey.

I also had to admit that I don't have the skills to do this. We got to have to hire somebody that knows how to take us on this journey. Yeah, I was nervous. I was scared that someone, as you asked earlier, who would reject this, who wouldn't go on the journey with us. I was worried about Drew taking a personal risk. Just lots of concern about, 'would clients who don't feel the same way about black people act out and not want to do business with us?' I had all kind of thoughts.

[00:16:59] LM: Drew, did you have any of those same concerns about your client base and how they might see it? If they caught wind of what you're doing there with all of these conversations, is that a concern for you?

[00:17:12] DC: Not really. It just seems like it's the right thing to do. To the extent if somebody is – Honestly, if they have a real problem with it, I mean, it just may not – we may not be the best organization for them to work with. We've worked for a long time building our workplace culture here. I mean, our business strategy is to be a great place to work. Happy associates equal happy clients. I've done this – I've celebrated my 25th anniversary at PCI earlier this summer and I really wasn't that nervous. I –

[00:17:55] LB: It's just who you are, Drew. I mean, you do not have the same baggage that most people have around believing in people. It's the beauty of who you are, and I wouldn't have felt safe in this moment with anybody but you.

[00:18:11] LM: I do think it's so interesting that you've titled these Meaningful Conversations, and they're about race and trust. Trust is a, it feels like, a really core component of these conversations. Lori, you admitted that for you to do this work that you were going to have to take off some of your own masks. Are you finding that other people in the organization – as best you can tell... I think this is really difficult too that all of this is happening virtually - or maybe it's easier! I don't know how people feel about having these conversations, but are you sensing that people are stepping into the conversations and that they are unmasking as well and kind of letting things hang out?

[00:19:04] LB: Yes, most definitely. I'll say that the original conversations had breakout sessions when they were all-company, and people are very unvarnished and open. Now that we're dealing with this from the perspective of *White Fragility*, we're coming into this, and people are embracing it. They're asking questions. They're doing their homework. They're sharing stories. They're coming into levels of self-awareness that they never thought that they would have as people, and they're doing it at work. To be able to experience this with people has been incredibly fulfilling.

Our conversations each week, we answer questions from the reading guide that came with the book, *White Fragility*, and people are answering with real-life experiences. We've made that a rule because we don't want to start debating, as Drew says, politics and a bunch of *whataboutisms* and frankly just ways to stay stuck on either side of this issue. What was key in our figuring this out because that's

what we really did, Drew and Beth and I figured this out with Eric's help. We decided that trust was the only way to get there because trust is a superlative. It's a behavior like love and it's very clear. When you love someone, you know what you do. You know how you think, how you feel, and how you behave.

When you trust someone, it's just as clear. If we say we are going to trust that work, which Drew has made that our theme this year, then you can't trust people if you have biases about them just based on how they look. It forces us to say, "I can't just come to work and stay on one way and go home and be another way." That's not okay anymore. It's just not a thing. I firmly believe as an HR person that because of Title VII and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the workplace, when you add in, every company has values that they want to live in order to team and succeed as people working in groups and teams within an organization. Those two things are company's values and the requirement to treat each other fairly based on law makes the workplace the ideal place to deal with this racial issue.

[00:21:26] LM: Well, that's very interesting.

[00:21:27] LB: It's the one place where we've decided not to deal with it, which is just kind of mind-blowing.

[00:21:32] DC: That's interesting to me. We are a [Servant Leadership](#) company and have been practicing working on servant leadership for 20+ years now. There's a quote in the *Servant as Leader* by Robert Greenleaf who said, "A hopeful sign of the times." This was written back in the early 1970's I think. "In a sector of society where it seems least expected a highly competitive business, people building institutions are holding their own while struggling successfully in the marketplace." It seemed to me that just like with servant leadership, maybe the last place you would've thought, or one might have thought, that servant leadership would take root is in highly competitive business, but that's what's happened. It seemed to me that talking about and seeing this racial injustice through a different lens, as Lori is saying, maybe business is the perfect place to have some of these conversations.

Anyway, I mean, it really – I think companies and business and organizations. I mean, we – there's both a moral responsibility. There's also an opportunity because if you look at the metrics, if you look at the data, diverse organizations and not just racially but background and age and gender and experience. I mean, creating a diverse group of perspectives is critical to winning in business, and so I

think there's a moral imperative and I think there's frankly a real opportunity for the company to get better. That's certainly the spirit with which we're embracing this.

[00:23:24] LM: I believe it's in [Bob Kegan's](#) work around [Immunity to Change](#) and [An Everyone Culture](#) as well where he talks about there's another game that people are playing at work that takes up so much energy, and that is what's saving face.

[00:23:43] DC: Yeah, it's pretending.

[00:23:46] LB: The masking.

[00:23:47] DC: The masking, yeah.

[00:23:48] LM: Masking, creating an image, or projecting an image. It takes a lot of energy. When we're spending all of that energy on those kinds of conversations or that kind of protecting, it's not going toward innovation and creativity, and so we're already holding back. Those books were written in a different context, but it certainly applies to the masking that happens with, I think more than anything, that the racial conversations like showing up one way because that is the accepted way to be at work.

[00:24:32] LB: One of the leaders shared that what has happened in many conversations of these out of the discussion group conversations, people are reaching out and talking to each other. She said that an African American had said that she was always told she needed to straighten her hair before she did interviews, and that PCI was the first place she ever come and worn her natural hair because she felt comfortable doing so here. I could not tell her how big a deal that is and how I, a couple months ago had had an executive at another organization talk to me about the fact that her HR person told her not to wear her natural hair during a very big interview coming up, and to have HR complicit in perpetuating these ways of masking and these ways of continuing to perpetuate telling Black people you are not okay as you are. It was just astounding to me.

What we're creating here is, first and foremost, just living our values. Just being who we say we are to each other and digging deeper as it relates to the structural racism as a system that we have all been forced to live in here in the United States and recognizing how that showing up in the ways that get in

the way of the trust that we're trying to build and being courageous in dealing with the personal change we have to make, as well as the organizational change we're going to have to make to get where we're trying to go together.

[00:25:53] LM: I want to take just a moment here and just kind of recap some of the things that I've heard because I think they're really important. Lori, you were just talking about values, and I know, Drew, that at PCI you all have spent a lot of time creating those values. I want to marry that with what you are saying about experiences - that we're not going to talk about other isms and kind of theories. But when you blend the values and experience and look at how the values are being lived, you can even say in terms of today's unrest, the social unrest, what does it mean when we're living our values when we look at this particular topic?

I think that is something to take away, is looking at the values in terms of this topic but I think the other thing that you've done that's really helpful is that you didn't leave the conversations just to let them happen on their own, so you had a particular structure in place. I want to just make that obvious and I may not have it right, but you all had a particular way that you were having these conversations even before you started reading [*White Fragility*](#).

One thing that I heard is that they've been voluntary. Is it still a voluntary? People can join or not. Pretty much the whole company has joined in on the conversations.

[00:27:19] DC: Yeah. Just in terms of the – I had had the two meetings with our Black male leaders at PCI right before George Floyd was murdered, and then we decided that following week we had the first Meaningful Conversation which I think approximately 225 people participated in - completely voluntary. Then the next week or maybe it was two weeks, we had a second one. Again, we'd be happy to share the PowerPoints we used to the extent those are helpful to people. But then coming out of that, there was sort of a desire I think for, "Well, how can we continue these conversations?"

Lori had recommended or sort of brought up several different books we might read. We're a big – we like reading discussion groups. We're always reading books and talking about ideas, how to get better at PCI, so this is really in our wheelhouse.

[00:28:19] LB: Yeah. And so we are.

[00:28:19] LM: Yeah.

[00:28:20] DC: One of the books she had recommended was *White Fragility*, so our CEO counsel all read it or read parts of it. We pretty quickly agreed that this would generate some really good conversation, and so then Lori put together what we're calling, *Justice in July*. During here the month of July, we are reading this book, and so to go all the way back to your question, LeeAnn.

That is open to everyone in the organization, AND we are requesting that our leaders sort of – there's a group of approximately 70 of our associates who either manage a team, maybe they manage a client relationship, maybe they manage a project, but sort of extended leadership team, if you will. We are requesting that that group of 70 people participate, plus anybody else who's interested. We've now had two. We're doing them on Friday afternoons. We've had two reading discussion groups. We have two more to come this Friday and next Friday. That's sort of the timeline.

[00:29:30] LM: If I'm remembering when you first got started, too, that there was a kind of a flow to these meetings that you were having with the Meaningful Conversations where I think Eric was involved, and it seems like there was – Drew was involved, Eric was involved. There were some question set up and then there are some breakouts, and various leaders in the organization were actually coached to facilitate the breakout sessions. Would you go through that? Again, I think it's just so helpful for anyone who wants to do something like this to know, 'how did they cascade that and what was the structure of actually facilitating those conversations?'

[00:30:15] DC: Well, Lori did a great job. Lori, why don't you –

[00:30:19] LB: Yeah. I'll share it. First off all, Drew had credibility on this issue because of the culture that he's built. He had also started those conversations with the African American where he had some context. The previous Martin Luther King birthday, Drew set out a video. He's already got credibility in talking about just racism and the social justice and civil rights movements in America. When we started the conversations, we did so because we knew people needed to talk about this. Drew got us together.

In that first conversation, the structure was we brought Eric in, and he did a mindfulness meditation to start us off. He had us ask a few questions, answer a few questions. Those questions were in the space of, *what do you need? Have you experienced any type of racism here at PCI? If you're going to build trust working with people who don't look like you, then what's that going to take for you?* In the space of what you need, we also followed up with a survey and we got more insight on what people wanted.

The first thing they said was they wanted more of these conversations. They were blown away by the fact that we are having it. We spent time ahead of time getting the facilitators ready because the second half of that meaningful conversation was to break into discussion groups. I'd say Drew that probably of the 20 we had, 18 went great. Two had some folks in there who watched the wrong news channel, and we're coming in with a bunch of *whataboutisms* and just junk that wasn't helpful.

Our job is not to change people's minds on things that they've decided to believe, but I do feel that you've agreed to operate a certain way with your heart here at PCI. In doing that, and in a building trust, which Drew has been talking about all year, we want to challenge whether or not you can fully trust if you are carrying any type of bias, whether it's racial or sexual orientation, whatever type of bias. Is that getting in the way of true trust?

We were dealing with that with those facilitators guiding those conversations and we had – Drew will tell you we had an hour-long conversation after the conversation where facilitators were talking about their experience, and they were a little shocked at how passionate people got. In some cases, some people introduced harm, and we went back and had conversations with those folks. It wasn't to get them in trouble. It was really to say, "Okay, this is the behavior we ask for in this meeting setting. So if you're going to continue to come in, this is how we need you to show up because otherwise you're doing harm and here's how."

We got back together for the second conversation. We prepped again and got facilitators ready. Eric did a little bit more with us on journaling this time, so we did a lot of journaling in the space around our own thoughts, our own behaviors around racism. It was getting us prepared for the reading, and so we journaled our answers to four questions and then we went into the breakouts and we discussed those questions. I would say that that was as fruitful as rich, but it was different in that we did not

struggle as much from a facilitator perspective because we had the questions pre-prepared, so we learned something from that experience.

To Drew's point, we went out and started learning. Eric suggested the *antiracism* as a framework, but we knew that that was probably a bit in the political space, a bit more in the political space than we wanted to go. We had True Trust, which was, I felt, was a higher bar, and we got rolling with that. The structure of those conversations lends itself to you having some information coming in with a pre-prepared response to some questions that were pushing us towards each other and then discussing your responses from a personal experience.

Staying anchored in that structure has been critical because a lot of it creates the fear for organizations is that they worry that people are going to get political. People are going to say something that gets people in trouble. You can't not talk about this without some of that happening, but you can put some guardrails on it that make that safer and frankly more intentioned around what we really want, which is great working relationships.

[00:34:20] LM: That's brilliant because my experience is that people want to talk about the topic or the theory, not so much their personal experience with it. When you take it into the personal experience, it's not arguable.

[00:34:39] LB: It isn't.

[00:34:41] LM: It's just not arguable. Where we can argue about some of the concepts and theories, when you keep it at the experience level, it keeps it real.

[00:34:51] L: It does, and it keeps it proactive. You're moving towards trusting each other. Me sitting here trying to convince you of something you are 100% opposed to doesn't bring us together, and it didn't serve anybody. If we are supposed to love each other, then I shouldn't be looking for ways to divide us. We've watched enough bad leadership at the government level do that to us for the last three years and frankly even the media. You can't see a media story without them pulling one side versus the other. It's just a strategy for how they present information now. We're smarter than that as a nation, and we've got to leverage our hearts and our minds to get ourselves out of this.

The other big piece I will say we've left out is we did our homework. Drew had us all reading articles. We've been watching videos. We also watched a video at the kickoff of these Meaningful Conversations. We watched [Robin DiAngelo's White Fragility](#) video. We watched another video about an African American woman's journey in dealing with racism in her college and how she took action to make change. Hearing those stories from those perspectives, it grounded us that, one, this is a real issue, so let's not waste any more time talking about whether it's real or not. Two, we're not going to live on *whataboutisms*. We're going to talk about our real personal experience. Three, we're going to introduce information that helps us with this conversation before we go and discuss.

That's the been the format that has really helped us and then Drew leading it. That is the most critical thing. This cannot happen with HR people leading it, diversity people leading it. This is a CEO level exercise, because otherwise everybody is talking about stuff that you may want to do in the organization. But when the CEO is talking, you're talking about what you're going to do in the organization.

[00:36:43] LM: Well, and it's happening.

[00:36:45] L: It's happening, yes.

[00:36:46] LM: The fact that Drew was standing up there, it was happening. They weren't talking about it happening. It was actually happening. Lori, I believe that you're the only African American on the leadership team at that level, at the senior level. Is that true?

[00:37:01] L: That's true.

[00:36:56] LM: How has the response been on the CEO council and the leadership team? I can just imagine that people have different views of racism and justice, etc. I am curious how those conversations are going, Drew. Can you speak to that?

[00:37:22] DC: Sure. I wouldn't say everybody thinks certainly the same way, but I think there is a shared sense, I mean, of the injustice here. I mean, there had been some good candid exchanges certainly when the people – again, as I mentioned, it was this or called our CEO council. There are nine of us. We started reading *White Fragility*. I mean, it's strong coffee, so to speak. I mean, she has

a strong perspective. But, again, within our organization, I think there's a tolerance for let's talk about it and what is her perspective. I mean, again, it's not, everybody has to believe the same thing, but we can – her perspective is a compelling one I'll say. I mean, in my view, and that's what we want. We want – let's look at our assumptions and let's talk about it. How do we create an organization where trust is a real living and breathing reality?

It's all in – As Lori said, that's the overarching goal here is to become a better organization to create more trust within the organization. Build stronger relationships within PCI. I don't know if that answers your question completely but –

[00:38:56] LM: What is next? Can you see past the current activity that you're working on? You all are reading the book right now. Do you have a sense of what's next or are you just letting that reveal itself and you're just taking it one step at a time?

[00:39:11] DC: I think the idea typically when we finish a book, there is some type of actions are created that come out of it. We are not necessarily getting too far ahead of ourselves. We're having some really interesting, compelling conversations right now. Then I think we'll regroup and get together and see, "All right. Well, what are the next steps?"

[00:39:37] LB: Ultimately, what we want to do is measure trusts. We did a survey on trust. We rushed it out before we started the book club discussions and we're going to check in on the people who have been – everybody's taking it but we're checking in again on the people who are going on the journey on *White Fragility* to see if these discussions are impacting our ability to trust each other across races. We're going to continue the trust check-ins. But ultimately, the goal is to have people say, "I feel as comfortable trusting and working closely with colleagues who are of my same race as I do of colleagues who are not of my same race, in particular my boss." If we get that from people, that would be the ultimate win because that's that level of trust that frankly no organization has ever even tried to achieve. We have that level that is, *we're coworkers. We're going to work together. We're going to get along.* But that true trust that we're in pursuit of is our goal. That's what we want to achieve.

[00:40:41] LM: That's a mighty goal. We're coming toward the end of our time here, and I always like to ask, is there something that I left out that you want to be sure and say. Particularly knowing that this

is really up for a people, business leaders are struggling with what is the right action to take. I'm curious if there's something that we didn't talk about that we really need to before we close the call today.

[00:41:09] LB: Drew, I like you to talk about what you'd want to say to every CEO out there who thinks that this is just something that's going to pass us by, and they don't really need to do anything to support African Americans within their organization in this specific moment.

[00:41:24] DC: Well, I think deciding to do nothing is an action, and I think this calls for leadership and leaning into it. To use this whole idea, right, of not being a racist, which is important certainly. But just not being a racist as a person, I don't think is enough. This whole idea of antiracism and a much more proactive approach I think is what's called for. I think it's an opportunity for all organizations, to those who embark on this journey, I think it's a tremendous opportunity to ultimately strengthen the culture of the organization and have better conversations, better relationships, a stronger organization. That's my strong feeling.

[00:42:30] LM: What would you also say about the support that's needed to back you up?

[00:42:37] LB: Good question.

[00:42:38] LM: As you are talking to other CEOs, what do you need to request or make sure that you have available to you as the CEO in the organization, moving this conversation forward?

[00:42:50] DC: Just speaking from my own personal experience, I'm very grateful to Lori for her leadership and I think leadership working with, in our case, we call it the People Department, People Operations, or call it Human Resources. Call it whatever but that partnership is key. Lori said that HR –this shouldn't be, can't be an HR-led initiative. I think that's true, but that partnership is key, and so working closely with the HR department, working closely with the other leaders within the organization, it's an opportunity to make a strong statement.

[00:43:35] LM: Lori, any parting words from you?

[00:43:38] LB: I would say that this is a call to action. HR should focus on being the kind of team that can bring leaders to the table with support and encouragement that these are the right discussions to

have. It's about reeducating people in the workforce that this is a real problem. It's about finding ways within your organization to truly do it through the lens of living your values, because people will find that to be authentic and they'll also find it to be safe because it's safe to say what you've already said for however long you been in business. Now, you're saying it with a deeper understanding of what it means to live your values through the lens with respect to race in America.

HR must stop talking about diversity and inclusion and make those two words go away, because they are now barriers to avoid the real issues. It's ways to check a box and it's not ways to get results of bringing people together within real relationships that drive change. Because if people change how they show up at work every day, their hearts will change and how they show up in their communities will change.

[00:44:47] LM: I think that that's a perfect thing to end on. I want to thank you both, not just for being on the call today, but for the work that's being done and the fact that you all are providing a prototype for at least how to get started. Now, I think that that's one of the things that stops people is they don't know what the whole answer is going to be. That's not important. Getting started is important. I think that you've done a fantastic job and you're really paving the way for a lot of people. Thank you for that.

[00:45:19] LB: Thank you.

[END OF EPISODE]

[00:45:28] LM: If you like what you heard today and the direction this podcast is pointed, subscribe to Rise Leaders Radio on iTunes. Leave us a comment and five-star rating. You can also check out the Rise Leaders website at www.rise-leaders.com to find the resources I profiled in my coaching and consulting work, and that I find central to transformative leadership. If you're committed to leading with a clear vision and from core values and taking your team to the next level, then get in touch. You can reach me, LeeAnn Mallory, from my website. I'd be honored to hear from you. I appreciate you tuning in today and especially for being the type of person interested in learning more about how you could elevate your part of the world. Take good care.

[END]