

Fractal_Friends_Podcast- Alla_Weinberg_episode

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SPEAKERS

Alla Weinberg, Duncan Autrey



Alla Weinberg 00:00

I think this speaks to me about the three types of relationships that all of us are always in. And it's the relationship to ourselves. Number one, how do we think about and feel and behave towards ourselves? What I'm saying is the core work of leadership is to get into right relationships with ourselves first. So that we can have great relationships, one-on-one with people, right, with individuals, other individuals that we work with, and then have a great relationship to the team or to your organization as a whole. And so relationships are fractal in that way. And as leaders, it starts with shifting the relationship to yourself, one another and then to a team and then to an organization. And I think it's important to talk about that. And I think in many businesses, people understand that relationships are important, but don't really have any strategies, or mechanisms for how to work on that, how to improve that, how to shift that when you're not in right relationship with either yourself or others that you're working with. And I think that's the core of what we offer in the work that we do.



Duncan Autrey 01:16

Hi, there. My name is Duncan Autrey, and you are listening to Fractal Friends, the podcast where we explore our self similarity across our diversity. We all have a role to play in the whole and the purpose of fractalfriends.us is interview people with interesting

perspectives on the world and see what it is that we can learn from one another. In this episode, I talk with Alla Weinberg. Alla is my business partner. We are the co-founders of Spoke & Wheel. We started our company a year ago, in August of 2019, right after Alla's first visit to Fractal Friends, Alla is an executive leadership coach, and I am a conflict transformation catalyst. And together we call ourselves the workplace relationship experts. In this conversation, we talk about our vision of the future of work, where people are excited about the work that they get to do and are nourished by the people that they get to work with. We talk about how teams companies and organizations are constantly navigating a balance between the interdependent polarities of power and love, and how they become generative. When they can strike a balance between being productive and effective on one hand, and inspire a sense of connection and belonging on the other. We talk about Alla's new book, A Culture of Safety, and consider the essential ingredients for creating a safe and trusting team. And we talk about practical strategies that leaders can take to create and transform culture. And we talk about complex systems theory and spirituality, and crochet. This episode fits nicely into season three, because it shares practical and inspirational ways that we can transform culture, and work together to build a world that works for all of us, while being effective and productive. And while caring for one another. Thank you for listening to Fractal Friends. If you enjoy the show, please subscribe to the podcast wherever you're listening to it and give it a review. And also come visit fractalfriends.us where you can get more information about all the things that we discuss in this episode. And there are an episode page you can get resources from Spoke & Wheel and learn more about our work. And I also encourage you to check out the archive of Fractal Friends that now has over 50 episodes. I'm also excited to say that is now possible for you to support Fractal Friends, you can make a donation through PayPal, or you can become a patron of Fractal Friends through Patreon, where you can subscribe to make a monthly contribution to this project. And if you do decide to become a patron, you will receive goodies from me and I'll give you access to exclusive content. You can find buttons to make contributions and donations on the episode page at fractalfriends.us and of course as you heard, I am professionally dedicated to helping the world improve its capacity to communicate across our differences. This episode is a deep introduction to all us and my work as Spoke & Wheel if you like what you hear, come check us out. We offer free initial calls at our website [Spokeandwheel.co](https://spokeandwheel.co) that spokeandwheel.co and now let's get on with the show. This episode is recorded in August of 2020. And now please enjoy my conversation with Alla Weinberg. Alla, thank you so much for being back on Fractal Friends. It is so good to be talking to you in this context.



Alla Weinberg 04:47

I'm so happy to be back. Thank you for having me.



Duncan Autrey 04:49

You were a guest episode went out August of last year. And what was amazing is that immediately after that conversation or within a day or so, we just To become business partners, we have been working together, you know, as colleagues and so forth. But we decided to be business partners, and we started a company called Spoke & Wheel. And it's been around for a year now. So, congratulations to



05:13

Congratulations to you. Whoohoo, we made the year.



Duncan Autrey 05:19

Yeah, it's been been really a powerful experience for me. And one of the things that was really meaningful to me and coming into, like business partnership, initially, was to really allow myself to just like, focus on something and to really believe, you know, because doing conflict transformation, I just like, whatever your human, there's probably something I can help you with. And that's great, but it's not really easy to market. And then so you know, and then, you know, so like, focusing on like, teams and organizations and businesses, it's like, wow, this is actually like, what are that? Do you know, the Iki? Guy concept? I do? Yeah. So what is it? It's like, you know, what is your passion, your skills, what's gonna make you money and what the world needs? Like? Yeah. And so that's exactly where this is, this is like our he guy, right? And so, yes, but the thing that's been really meaningful to me also, is to recognize that like, being in partnership is also about bringing our full selves, and really recognizing that this is in a way, like a, Jesus is a lifetime thing. You know, I mean, ventually, maybe we'll move on, or we'll sell it, you know, or who knows what, but in the meantime, it's like, it's a very special kind of relationship. And I just want to say, I'm really grateful to be in this relationship with you.



Alla Weinberg 06:35

Oh, thank you, Duncan, I feel the same way. And I feel that, you know, given that our business is so relationship based, and being in relationship together, doing this business is so important, and I feel both of us have transformed a lot over the last year as a result of this partnership, this business partnership and the relationship that we have with each other.



Duncan Autrey 06:59

Yeah, I know that like, I mean, I've grown a lot. One of the things that's been really powerful, it was like not too long ago that we had this like, kind of powerful conversation about, like, really recognizing our strengths, and what is playing to what we're, like, really good at. And, and that was really meaningful to me. Because, one, it, first of all, we have like really great complimentary strains, you know,



Alla Weinberg 07:24

I know. It's so lucky.



Duncan Autrey 07:27

And that's like, a good part of like, making a good team is making sure that you have all the different things on, you know, all the different elements in play. But it was really meaningful to me to kind of give myself permission to like, play to my strengths, and to really let them shine and think about like, how can we actually change what we do? Or how we do it? In order to work for me, you know, and yeah, and that's, I think, really an interesting piece is, and this will probably end up being like a theme across this whole conversation is like, how does the organization influence the individuals and then how the individuals influence the organization. But anyways, just to like, get things going, like, why don't you tell us a little bit about sort of, because this was originally sort of like your spark. And this was like a dream that you really wanted to fulfill, and you invited me to join you with. And we want you to tell us a little bit about sort of, like how you got here. And you know, how you got to this dream,



08:31

I think it's a bit of a winding road, to be honest.



Duncan Autrey 08:36

That's always true.



Alla Weinberg 08:37

As All things are, right? I guess, I'm... I find myself to be a creative person, I've always had a lot of ideas. And I've always been entrepreneurial. But there was never an idea that I really

felt was mine to execute to, to hold dear to my heart. I thought that ideas were cool, but they were never my thing. And when I hit upon Spoke, & Wheel and really focusing on helping people have better relationships at work. And really approaching the world, just from that lens from that perspective. Not only did it feel different to me than than everything that I've seen out there, but it felt like oh, this is the one I meant to carry forth in this world to bring about to do the work in and I get so I guess it was a much more of an intuitive kind of feeling. And, you know, it also stemmed from my experiences in the workplace, where I didn't find them to be terribly caring or honest. I'm just going to go and say loving again, and I feel like people deserve more love at work, not less. And we spend Average and average person spends 90,000 hours at work over their lifetime, which is doing more than anything else in your life. And you're spending more time at work than doing anything else in your life. And I just really, I personally really wanted that experience, to feel nourishing, to feel loving to feel meaningful and fulfilling. And I want to help create that for other people, too. Like I haven't, I have experienced it, but very rarely in the workplace and want that to be the norm like to be the regular thing.



Duncan Autrey 10:34

I mean, it's such a powerful, you know, division, that one. And, you know, I remember in the last, the last time we spoke on the podcast, you said something that was really, really moving, which was like, imagine getting to the end of your life. And generally people will say, like, no one says, like, Oh, I wish I had worked more. Yeah. But like, what if people got into their life, and maybe didn't necessarily say, like, I wish I had worked more, but said, like, I am so grateful for like, all of the time, I got to be like, co creating something awesome with amazing people that loved me and cared for me. And then I got to, like, be in relationship with. Yeah, I've also been, you know, like, wrote that piece recently about, like, the vision for 2030. And like thinking about, like, what work looks like. And like, not only do we want this to be a place where people are feeling loving, and they're like, feeling joyful, but there's also this aspect of like, we all knew that our work was like doing something really good for the world. And we all recognize that. And we were like, grateful to each other for that. Being able to say like, well, thank you for what you're doing in this world. And I'm glad that you're there. And, you know, whatever it is, like, I remember feeling so grateful for being in like an airport once and just being like, thank you so much for making food for me while I'm on a layover. in this town, you know, like, the person who's having a miserable day. And I was just, like, just tried to, like, beam them with gratitude for just like, right, doing something that I couldn't do. And I needed someone to do it for me. And I wanted to let her know, like, this isn't a gift that she's doing.



Alla Weinberg 12:07

Yeah. And I think it just has a ripple effects to our families to our communities, right. Like if people are filled up at work, instead of drained if they feel like work is meaningful that their contribution is doing something really good for the people around them in the world. They're going to come home. And you know, they're going to have a lot of love to give to their family and back to their community. And I guess in my small way, this is how I want to change the world.



Duncan Autrey 12:36

Yeah. And it's so needed. And, you know, and it's a massive way that change the world. Because, I mean, there's interesting how like, just even idea that just the word work, almost has like a negative implication. Right? Yeah. Like, oh, man, I've been working a lot these days, you know, and it's like, that person's not saying like, well, I am so jammed about all the things.



13:01

I guess my hope is that the work, like through our work together, the word work will start to become synonymous with joy. That's what I want.



Duncan Autrey 13:11

Yes, please. Um, I was actually listening to this podcast called Teamistry. And it's like, it's done by Atlassian. And the episode I was listening to is called the wizards at Menlo Park, and it was about Edison, Thomas Edison. And, you know, we think about Thomas Edison and light bulb, but like, not only do he like not really invent the light bulb, he just improved it. But it wasn't just him that improved it, and one of the things that they made this point of is that like, it wasn't like they invented the light bulb, or even the electrical grid, but that he invented how teams work together. Like he got together this amazing team of all these different skills, machinists and electrician, you know, like, there weren't even electricians yet. But like, whatever, you know, chemists and all these different people, all these different skill sets. And he got them in this giant room, all interacting with each other and doing things together. You know, one of the things that was like, really powerful is in this shared workspace, he also really helped people like emphasis on like, what their ability was not necessarily what their title was. And so as people had interest on different things, they were encouraged to sort of get involved with different pieces. And even, like, did a lot of things where he was, like, he recognized like, Look, if you're the one who's good at this,

like you tell me what to do, like making suggestions and all this. But he also had them all have lunch together and all like, you know, brought beer and they all like hung out together. Because he also recognized that it was the time when they were not working. But being in relationship that like a lot of magic happen. But one of the things that I really enjoy this person was writing the letter home about like their experience of working there. And he says that the work was both strenuous, and joyous. And I'm like, oh, like that's amazing how many people get to write home about their work life and say like, wow, I'm working really hard, and I'm having so much fun, I enjoy this.

A

Alla Weinberg 15:05

I want that to be the norm, I want folks to be able to say that about their work. And what this brings up for me is something I've been thinking a lot about, which is, companies nowadays often want to hire the best talent, which I understand like the most talented, the smartest, the people with the most experience, they want to attract that those kinds of people, they want to hire those kinds of people. But what folks are missing, I think, is understanding that you can hire the best people, but you're not going to get the results you want, unless all those people work well together. And all of the work that, you know, you know, we're doing now currently in the world, and you have to do it together with other people. And so it's actually how those people are related to each other how they work together, that makes much more of a difference to businesses, then the individual talent or intelligence or experience itself, just by itself. So that collective that team that makes that magic that, that has that intelligence.



Duncan Autrey 16:09

Yeah. And it's interesting, because like, yeah, you can have a bunch of smart people, and they need to work together. And you can't just like put them all in the same, you know, space, and then just be like, go do it. There's something about how you have to like actually create the culture that will make that happen. And this is like kind of part of the role of leader and you know, and something, of course, that your new book that should be coming out soon that you've written, the culture of safety, like really talks about this and actually love that. It's like, it's the club culture of safety, building an environment for people to think collaborate and innovate. And like, no one might not recognize that like having the space feel safe and trusting and having there be like a very special culture there is what helps those people begin to be able to think and collaborate and innovate. And I think this is like speaks to like, I think one of our one of our core philosophies, and something that's been really important to us is like, we it's like that balance between? Well, we talked about, like the power between power and love, and that we've like adapted and politics, definitions of power and love. And we have now as like, powers this

drive to act to achieve a life affirming purpose and to realize and impact in the world. And then like love is this tribe to integrate and unite with each other in service of what the world needs. And we need both of those to both be able to feel like we're connected and collaborating and communicating. And we're there's like a diverse set of people that have great minds. And then that is what gets the organization to be able to make money, get things done, be powerful, be creative, be innovative, and that those things are in a dance with each other. And then the thing that I think, is why I like the idea of like thinking about relationships is so powerful, is because like relationships is what connects all these amazing individuals in service of that higher life affirming purpose.



Alla Weinberg 18:08

Yeah, absolutely. and i, you and i think about power and love these dimensions, as a polarity. I'm wondering if you could speak a little bit about that. What is a polarity and how we're thinking about



Duncan Autrey 18:20

that? Mm hmm. Yeah. Well, this is one of my favorite things to talk about. So



Alla Weinberg 18:24

I know, that's why I'm like "Duncan!" And I think it's a very different perspective that we're holding here, then what has, you know, been out in the world so far. And so I think it's important for us to touch upon that and say, This is how this is the lens through which we're looking at the world, and how we work with our clients and how you see the world through this way as well.



Duncan Autrey 18:47

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, it definitely cuts across all of our, of our work. And it is, yeah, it takes a moment to explain, but I think people can feel it intuitively. You know, so if the idea about a polarity and the specifically the interdependent polarity is that both sides of the polarity are important, and they give each other meaning. And when held together, they become generative because they're both supporting each other. But when one chooses to sort of focus on just one or the other, it tends to become degenerative or destructive. So there's a whole lineage here on this, like, power and love piece, where like Paul Tillich was a theologian who first identified this as like a drive of living beings. Martin Luther King re studied this for his seminary thesis, and he said it really well. He says power

without love is reckless and abusive, while love without power is sentimental and anemic. And so for a while a lot of organizations might look at an organization and say, one might even think that what we would do is like we go into an organization and say like, Wow, you are focusing on like profit and getting things done, but you're losing track of like the human race. And so let's help you figure out how to communicate and collaborate and play and have more fun. And so this becomes like this linear solutions someone's gonna go towards, let's just go towards more love or connection and unity. And one might find in resistance to that. Because if we like only focus on everyone, just having a good time and feeling really comfortable, and we go too far on that, then we might actually lose track of becoming a profitable, effective business achieving things. Now, of course, if you find an organization, which I know some of to where everyone's so focused on everyone feeling so comfortable, and just like making sure that everything feels really safe and good, and everyone's all connected and relating, like, and that's a main focus, you might lose track of power, and like actually getting things done. And you could actually, in a way, like destroy a culture of a place by just saying, like, let's all focus now on productivity. So what happens is, these things have to be in balance with each other. And part of that balance is finding one that they both have like a shadow side and a positive side. And that the negative things have like, too much connection or too much love, are solved by the positive qualities of power, while the negative qualities of power are solved by the positive qualities of love. And so what you want to do is you want to get your organization to be a place where it's like, kind of constantly sort of like balancing back and forth in between these. And again, we can see this happening in good organizations, like there's like the Thomas Edison team, it was just like, they had like a serious goal, and they know what they're trying to accomplish. And they have a checklist. And they also are all in relationship and communicating and talking with each other about how they can accomplish whatever they're trying to accomplish. And making sure that they're relating to each other and trusting each other, and sharing the work. You know, so they're saying that the we did it. And so, you know, this is, you know, the piece will note like, you know, where it shows up with our work is like, we have our like team relationship assessment tool. And what it does is it we've broken down, like power and love into these different like dimensions. And then we like are actually trying to capture, like, how much is the negative quality of this showing up in your organization? How much is the positive quality, and then we're able to sort of like map it as a way to show like, Wow, it seems like you're really getting a lot of the good stuff out of power and a lot of the negative qualities of love, or maybe, you know, we can sort of help them sort of see where they are, and like that dynamic flow and help them sort of recognize, like, what is the way of finding that balance?



Alla Weinberg 22:48

I love how you describe it as a dance because it's never you're done, right? You don't you know, even if we come in and help a spoken, we'll help you rebalance it, that's just the beginning of the dance kind of constantly have to reflect, you know, how are we doing on each dimension Are we still balanced what needs to get rebalanced, and it's a very active undertaking, it's not something that you're like, Okay, check done, we're good, we can rest on our, you know, we can rest now there's nothing to do here anymore. That is a constant work in progress, that constant rebalancing, just like if you're driving a car, you know, you're constantly even might even micro adjusting the wheel so that you're driving strict, right? And this is the same like you're hopefully we can help organizations get on the road, start to drive straight help, you know, rebound some of those axles or, or whatever that might be out of balance. But as you did, as the organization continues forward and drive, you still have to make sure to continue to address the steering wheel so that you're headed in the direction that you're wanting to go. And and so you can't just take your hands off and like okay, we're good. We're heading straight in, because the road tends to wind and we need to keep up with that.



Duncan Autrey 24:05

Absolutely. And, yeah, I really do try to think about this as this dance, you know, that I'm always trying to figure out different ways to talk about conflict with which is where I'm not actually saying the word conflict, because people tend to no one wants that. But, you know, that tension between like, you know, do we get things done? Or do we enjoy doing it? There's a conflict there. But we could think about it more as like a dance or attention or a dynamic, you know, balancing. And yeah, there's always this correcting that's happening, which is part of why are we think about, like another thing I think that we do that's maybe different than other organizations that work with businesses is we're really thinking about how can this create a sustainable change? Like it's not just about coming and teaching someone something and then leaving it's like, we He really seemed like the best way for us to work with organizations and companies and teams is to do like a program, we actually work with them over a period of time to help them not only learn kind of all the different facets of a thing, but also make sure that each individual is like learning the piece, but then also learning in their culture, how they want to be making that change, I've noticed this, like or how they can continue to be doing that change, right? Like, we want to make sure that the skills are something that can be going forward, because nothing is an immediate fix as we don't want any organization to be static.



Alla Weinberg 25:40

And I think this is why we offer a combination of coaching, training and facilitation work,

because no single modality is going to create that sustainable change within an organization. And what we do is we create custom programs that have a mix of training, have a mix of coaching, have a mix of facilitation, to help people learn how to actually how to relate to each other differently, and do that in a lot for our long term basis. So that that habit of relating actually sticks. And, you know, I define culture as an emergent property that arises out of how people relate to each other. And then I think even the word will late, what does that even? You know, I think a lot of folks, we use that word, well, how do you how are you relating to that habit kind of relationship where you have a we don't often know, but even we're saying when we say that, and I think of relationships and relating as how you think, feel and behave towards another person. And what we do is we shift that, and, and shifting how we think how we feel how we behave towards each other, in a sustainable way, in a permanent way, in effect, changes the culture because culture arises out of those relationships around how we think, feel and behave around.



Duncan Autrey 27:10

Yeah, I love that. And, exactly, and I think it's just like, it's, you know, with like that, like training, you know, facilitation and coaching. There's about like, helping inspire individual change, helping change the system's like we think about, like, how do we change, like the way you have your meetings, and then also getting people, giving people the lived experience on how to have a different way of relating, and then teaching them how to have a different way of relating. And, you know, you talk about this. And then like something emerges out of this, I wonder if you'd be willing to talk a little bit about emergence and like it, because I think that that's a term that maybe people will hear but maybe don't totally understand. Or why don't you just tell us a little bit about what emergence



Alla Weinberg 27:58

What is emergence? I'm just trying to think what's the most accessible way to, to talk about that. So when I think of emergence, it's, I literally think of something arising out of, in my head, I literally imagined like something arising like literally coming up out of different parts. So when I talk about culture being an emergent property, what I mean is that you can't look at specific individuals and say, Oh, this person has this skill set, and this person has this skill set, and this person has this experience. And this is the culture we're going to have. Because we have these three people with these skills and personalities, you will you can't set that yet. But what you can do is, you know, put those people together, and the relationships that they have with each other, we'll start to create the culture. So if they're competitive with each other, you're going to have a more competitive culture. If they're more collaborative with each other, then you're going to have a collaborative culture. So

it's something that gets co created in the interaction of things or people. And so it's not something that you can make happen, is that something that you can check out again, check off that list, it doesn't mean you can force it, but it's something that literally gets, I almost want to like, I'm not sure how to I can we can help me. I'm not sure how to approach this in an in a way that makes sense.



Duncan Autrey 29:37

You know, one of the ways that I think about this, and this is I think one of the things that was like fun, there was so cool overlap of ours is you know, I watched a talk of yours that you did where you're talking about like murmurations at these like flocks of birds, like all flying together and it's like beautiful, beautiful patterns. And then of course, like fractals is like my you know, jam and What happens with like a fractal or murmuration. And these are all kind of considered different forms of complex systems. And what's going on is that there's basically like, the repetition over a large group of following a certain culture or way of relating, or a way of being in relationship, that that quality of that in a self organizing system creates a bigger pattern that's somewhere beyond that. And an example that I use sometimes, I learned to actually watch the TED Talk a while ago about the discovery of this mathematical model through crochet projects, these, these women were crocheting these coral reefs to tell people about climate change. And a mathematician was invited to come help out, because they were just trying to crochet like, millions, thousands of things as needed someone to help and do something. And this mathematician was like, sitting there, because their sister teaching her how to crochet something that she's like, Holy smokes, we just made a model for hyperbolic space. And people have been trying to figure out if hyperbolic space even existed for centuries. And I was like, Wow, that sounds fun, I'm gonna learn how to do that. So I ended up getting into crocheting. And what happens is, you're just doing like stitch a certain steps or certain stitch in certain stitch, and then you just make a very, very slight change in how you do the stitch. And then the whole shape of the thing changes. And so I like to think about this with an organization or a team is like you have a team that in a way that might not be functioning at its best, or maybe as dysfunctional, you don't need to change the whole team and like fire everyone or anything like that, if you could make a tweak, and how those people are relating to each other in a moment to moment basis, the entire organization will start to change, the culture will change. And sometimes that can kind of come down to just like a leader, just like speaking to colleagues with like, a little more respect, or making sure that they listen a little bit more. And in that quality of listening will sort of trickle out through an organization. And everyone just starts to listen to each other more. And all of a sudden, you have a collaborative functional system. And so, you know, basically, when I think of emergence, it's like, it's like something, a pattern that's happening, because of like, a small

thing that's recurring a lot, and then a lot and a lot. And all those connections.



Alla Weinberg 32:27

I really love, Duncan, that perspective of like, you just have to, especially this fishing analogy, like you just have to make a small shift, and the whole structure changes. Right, right. And for us, what we do with with organizations is we'll look at how we can shift the meeting, and how people meet with each other. And that's like the small shift that we can make, to help really impact the culture and the structure of the rest of the organization. And what we do is we'll create a meeting audit to really understand what kind of meetings people are having? What are people talking about? What are people not talking about, in those meetings, who's talking and who's not talking, what kind of topics are being covered, and not being covered. And just making small tweaks about even just checking in with how folks are feeling at the beginning, and we're getting just a very small tweak to an existing meeting, starts to create a different shape of culture starts to affect the emergent property of what the culture of the company is, in that moment.



Duncan Autrey 33:37

Yeah, in your book, you have this part where you're like, in this section, we talk about culture, and, you know, like, it's, again, so called culture of safety. And so you talk about, like, what is safety, what is culture, and then sort of like how to shift a culture to be more safe. And also, there's a good section on fear, too, when the part where you're talking about culture, you also have an exercise that a leader can do, or a practice that a leader can do to sort of think about how to implement something. And in the culture section, you have the leader visualize, like, if my team or my group or my organization was like, a creature like some sort of organism, what would it look like? What would it do? Like? What would it feel? What would it want? Like? What would it like start imagining this, like this kind of organism, this kind of beast of something? And then like imagining, because that's basically just imagine, like, the emergent quality of this thing? And how could it change in this emergent way? And then those qualities of like that bigger organism, then tell you about? What are the qualities that I want to be able to interact with something?



34:46

I just think you might be fun if you and I talked about what that creature would be for our business, huh?



Duncan Autrey 34:53

Yeah. And that let's imagine that right now. Right? Yeah. Well, I really I like this creature is dreamy, you know, like, it's like dreams a lot and like has a lot of great, you know, visions and, and with like a lot of heart behind them, but then also is very skillful and you know has a very, like there's a lot of practical skills that this creature has. So it's not just like dreaming it's also able to it's very dexterous.



Alla Weinberg 35:26

Yeah, I'm feeling similar. I imagined almost like a lion cub is a big open field. And I think a con because we're only a year old. Yeah, so we're still in that phase, but being very playful, but also, you know, a predator like somebody who's skillful and dexterous at hunting. And that's what it felt like to me.



Duncan Autrey 35:50

Yeah, I mean, there's definitely like, the cat qualities, I think are really interesting. You know, that's like, it's, you know, independent, yet, you know, like that level of, like independence. And just, it's like thinking, and it's like, own way, I'm just like, having a cat. It's like, one of things I appreciate. It's just, like, it does not need anyone to tell it how to do its thing. But then also just being like super skillful, like little Ninja, but then also like, having that quality of like, and now I'm gonna rest, I'm just gonna lay in the sun for like, four hours, you know, again, totally knows how to take care of itself.



36:24

But also, I'm really curious. And I know, we still have a lot to learn. And as we grow, and so there's a curiosity of, and skill development for for us as well.



Duncan Autrey 36:35

Yeah,



36:36

Like, Oh there's more to learn this other skills that I, that I don't know how to do yet, but other people know how to do and I'll, as I grow, I'm going to learn how to do those.



Duncan Autrey 36:44

Yeah. One of the things that I'm like, in, like, inspired by like, just like learning, you know, about us, or is a possibility here from this lion cub metaphor is that, you know, like, they do like to play fighting. Yeah. And



Alla Weinberg 36:58

that's literally what I was imagining in my mind.



Duncan Autrey 37:00

Yeah. And it's like, right there, like learning the skills that it'll take to like, do the things are going to do as they get older, by trading, like practice, versions of that, it makes me think about how can we, I don't know, like, interesting, like, play, and do think of just like a, like, some sort of massive company. We could do like a mock spokeandwheel.co program for like, the US Gov. Government, or, or like, or, like just company like that. I mean, it seems like a really interesting way that we could like here, just, you know, as we have teams that we're already working with, and but we can be fun to play with that. And I also know that like, like, upcoming thing for us, like super soon is to do our assessment, like on ourselves.



Alla Weinberg 37:48

Yes, yes. And so something that becomes that's initially not very tangible, right? Like, what is this culture? People talk about culture? Oh, its values or its norms? Or when we say it's relationships, right? How do you really kind of get a handle on it? And this, imagine, just like what we just did, just as imagining it as a creature, as something that makes it some kind of organism, right, makes it come alive. And now we can start to pinpoint Oh, we have a little bit of this. And we have a little bit of that. Whereas before, it's previously it's a little bit. I think it's it's tough to even just conceptualize it's such an abstract term culture feels like a very abstract sort of term for folks.



Duncan Autrey 38:28

Yeah, absolutely. And it also, you know, and so one of the things I also appreciate about your book is that like, it's, it's moving this dance between, like, this individual, and the team. And this is something that we also sort of believe a lot in our work that the way that individuals are thinking about their purpose, and their relationships, is reflected in how the team is thinking about its purpose in its relationships. And that fractal quality is something

that's important. And so I'm also thinking about, like, individually, noticing how I can both like, dream into like, in like my fears, you know, grown lion capacity. And also, like, have compassion about how I'm kind of like clumsy and trip over my like big feet. Sometimes there's something you know, I just like remembering to like be, you know, that like, I can also live those qualities. Right. Yeah. Something you said earlier, you're talking about using this metaphor of like a car and you know, like, just kind of constantly correcting. And then we even mentioned, Axl, actually want to talk a little bit about why we call ourselves Spoke & Wheel. This was a term that was up for you already. Yeah. And it was inspired by music like a poem by Mark Nepo or something.



Alla Weinberg 39:50

Yes, it was a poem by Mark Nepo. And what really resonated for me in that specific poem that he wrote is that it does honor both individual and the whole that the the spokes in a wheel artists are represent individual, like we were all spokes, but we're connected in this hub to something greater, we're part of something greater. So we still can hold on to our individuality, and yet are connected to something larger, which is the wheel itself. And furthermore, I think, you know, especially lift that take a bicycle wheel, for example, right? This, each spoke has to have the right tension and carry its weight in order for the wheel to stay true. And to be able to move straight, right like so that it can actually roll in a straight line. And so, again, it's that dance between the individual and that responsibility each individual has, and that we're all interdependent that we're all connected to this greater hole. And when we all work together, we can really roll I guess, we can we can really move fast. We can roll forward. Yeah. Curious for you How? Because I know you have a slightly different perspective on it. How does it resonate for you?



Duncan Autrey 41:13

Well, I mean, it definitely is something that like this part of the things that it emphasizes, you know, definitely that, like, there's that coming together, I was always moved by in Taoism, the talk about how it's like the space is what makes something useful. It's not the cup that's useful. It's like the space in the middle of the cup that makes the cup useful. And they also talk about how like that space in the middle of the axle, in the center of the wheel is what makes it useful. That's like the thing that can all move around. So that's like something I think is like really powerful. Also, I mean, that space is in a way this link. unspeakable, kind of like the Dow like this unspeakable thing. And we talk a lot about just like having an organization needing to have like a life affirming purpose, and how like this is the reason for being the reason for coming together, that makes all of these spokes, these individuals sort of like unite is something in a way that's beyond them. And in a way is a very sacred thing. And this also speaks to like making sure that like your, whatever

your work is, is doing something positive in the world. The other part of the spokes, though, as you said is like each spoke at different moments, either is on the bottom, and is like getting compressed and like under pressure, or is on the top and is like having this holding tension. You know, it's like it's either being pulled or pushed. And so you need to make sure that every spoke is taken care of and is strong, and has the capacity for both tension and pressure, compare tension and compression. And there's another one of those team history podcast episodes was talking about the team that made this spacesuits for the people who went to the moon for the first time. And basically, this is like a spaceship that the humans and right has like super airtight, and I protect you from the thing and keep you warm and just do all these things. So they have like these engineers with all these crazy levels of things. But they had to get a team of seamstresses on there as well, like women who were like really good at sewing. And they also had, you know, like a black woman on the team. It was like in the 60s, it was like kind of a big deal. And what was interesting is that they made it really clear that the engineers were never talking down to the seamstresses. In order for them to be able to do this task. The seamstresses had to be like, Look, look, if we'd like to have seen like this, it's gonna tear, it can't be that way. And it required those who like knew all the engineering space stuff, to be able to recognize the need to have expertise on their team, that not only did they not have, but they didn't even know they didn't have it. Right, they only like they don't know enough about sewing at all. And so they need someone there. And so there was the created this a culture of like respect, but then also, the way that they kept themselves focused, was that they had pictures of the astronauts that are going to need to survive inside these suits. And so they always kept on coming back to like, this is keeping someone alive. someone's life depends on this. It's not about my ego, or your ego. And so like with the wheel, it's like, they're all coming together around this, like, we're going to create a life bubble for a human together. And all of us have to be really good at what we're doing. And I don't even know what you do, but you be good at that.



Alla Weinberg 44:43

I love that. They really kept the humanity close to them that they're These are real people, real human beings out there trying to keep alive in outer space. Yeah, I think sometimes we lose that connection. If we're focused a lot on tasks and our data They work that there are real humans out there that our work impacts their life, like the quality of their life.



Duncan Autrey 45:09

Yeah.



Alla Weinberg 45:11

I love to read a little bit of the, of the poem that Mark Nepo wrote, if I could, yeah, that sparked you know the the name for me which is Spoke & Wheel. So Mark Nepo writes, "Imagine that each of us is a spoke in an infinite wheel. And though each spoke is essential to keep the wheel whole, no two spokes are the same. The rim of that wheel is our living sense of community, family and relationship. But the common hub where all the spokes join is the one center where all souls meet. So as I move into the world, and live out my uniqueness for when I dare to look into my core, I come upon the one common center where all lives begin. And in that center, we are all one in the same. In this way, we will live out the paradox of being both unique and the same for mysteriously and powerfully when I look deep enough into you I find me. And when you dare to hear my fear in the recesses of your heart, you recognize it as your secret that you thought no one else knew.



Duncan Autrey 46:37

Hmm, thank you for reading that.



46:40

And, and even in that he talks about the paradox, which is the polarity of being both that all of us are both unique and the same.



Duncan Autrey 46:52

Hey fractal friends, sorry, for the interruption here, I don't need to tell you much more about the work that I do, because that's what you're listening to in this episode. But if you do want to get a hold of Alla and I, you can sign up for a free call or explore our resource resources at spokeandwheel.co. That spokeandwheel.co. Okay, now back to the conversation. It's interesting, like, the polarity things kind of become a problem for me, because it definitely has that effect of like, every, once you have a hammer, like everything looks like a nail, like I just see it everywhere. And it's kind of like what makes good story. It's part of, you know, like, we can find these kinds of tensions, you know, all over the place. Episode that I'm going to put out on Tuesdays with Steve McIntosh. And he talks about, like, one of the key polarities is integration and differentiation. Yeah, and that that's something that cuts across, like, everything from like, the Big Bang, you know, and atoms to cells and species and communities and organizations. And it's like, we're constantly in this tension of like, I want to be individual Oh, actually, I want to be in relationship and power and love over all over again.



48:14

Yes.



Duncan Autrey 48:16

But that isn't really nice. Thank you for sharing that. I love how much that like any good poem. It's, it's like always growing on me. And it's like richer and has more meaning every time.



Alla Weinberg 48:29

I haven't revisited in a year, I think. And it's interesting, because I definitely have a different experience with it today than I did a year ago when we started.



Duncan Autrey 48:40

Yeah. So we've talked a bit about, you know, how we create this culture and how we, you know, just this quality of this emerging quality of culture and, and, you know, the individual and the group and relationships, I would love to talk more about just safety and why this is something that, you know, it's really come for, for you as something to pay attention to. And like why it actually is really important for organizations and maybe just like a way to frame this is like, why do we care about why would an organization really or a leader like one I really care about safety? Like how, what are the dangers of people not feeling safe? Why do we care about safety?



Alla Weinberg 49:26

Why do we care about safety? Well, although, you know, a lot of our technology has evolved, especially in the last, you know, 15 years tremendously. And we at the end of the day, were we working with human beings and our brains have not evolved that much over the last, you know, 10,000 years. And our brains are hardwired to help protect us to keep us safe meaning to ensure our survival. And what happens is when we're in a work environment that doesn't feel safe. We have mechanisms, neurological mechanisms in our brain that will work, you know, unconsciously instantaneously to help protect us. And that's the I don't many folks are familiar with a fight, flight freeze and faint response. So when, and our brain cannot tell the difference between a hungry lion trying to eat us and an angry stakeholder yelling at us, or sending sending us an angry email, all of that is a threat to our brain. And so what happens in that moment is our brain will take the

resources, you know, will take resources, and actually like turn down the volume on the like the part of the brain that does thinking that is creative, that can come up with that can analyze the rational part of our brain, like, our brain will literally turn down the volume there, it will actually give it less blood supply. And it will regulate our system in such a way that it's ready to fight, flight, freeze or faint. So we will take resources away from our thinking brain and put it towards surviving towards protecting ourselves. And so literally, if you do not have an environment in your organization that feels safe for people, peoples operating IQ, meaning IQ that they use, you know, on a day to day basis, literally drops by half. So a normal operating IQ when somebody is feeling safe when they're feeling calm, is about between 100 and 120 IQ points, when somebody doesn't feel safe when that process kicks in. IQ literally drops in half, to 50, between 50 and 60 IQ points. So there's just no way that you're going to get the full intelligence of, of people, the human beings on your team, if they do not feel safe. And also a lot of the work by Professor Amy Cuddy on psychological safety talks about how when folks don't feel safe, they're not going to speak up with new ideas, ideas that could have created additional value for your customers, a new product line for your business. it directly safety directly impacts a company's ability to service their customers and literally the company's bottom line. So we I mean, sometimes we just become dumb, like because, you know, it come down when we feel safe. Because our you know, our brain is using those resources not to think but to, to stay alive. That's its main function is to keep us alive.



Duncan Autrey 52:53

Yeah. You know, it's interesting that like, I've heard about this, like three parts of the brain, like lots of different times. But I'm like, really understanding like, the content of a new level right now is, especially like, if you've done the work to get a really great team of people together, right? Like, you have these people, they're really smart. They have all these great skills, you guys are seamstresses, you got your engineers, you know, you got the, you know, like, all together. And the reason why you did that is because you want to be innovative, cutting edge and be doing like, whatever that is you're trying to do in the world, make your moon Good work. Yeah, you want to make it as great as possible. And you need that neocortex that like the human part of the brain, the mammalian part of the brain, the very thing that we have most developed as humans to be fully operational, who is creative thinking, lateral thinking, and that only is working when we're feeling safe, and respected, and honored, and so forth. And so then, and of course, we have this like, you know, wonderful, like survival brain, but the survival brain is like, trumps the thinking brain, because because survivin is way more important, you know, evolutionary and such. And it's interesting, because you could imagine, like an organization, you know, like, I've seen this before, you think, Wow, we want people to work more. And so like, let's put them under some pressure, you know, and like, let's give them some quotas, or let's live, give

them, you know, some deadlines or like, let's criticize something that they did wrong. And like, all of these ways of trying to get someone to work better, might get them to sort of maybe work harder, but it's not getting the work better. And if you're like acting in certain ways that undermining people's safety, you're just like actually taking offline, the part of their brain. That is the reason why you have them there in the first place. And, you know, you also talk a bit in the book about like, Taylorism and, you know, Frederick Taylor. Yeah, that and just this idea of just like assembly lines, you know, so do that. Workers are just there to like, do some function. And this is a really dark stuff about just like seeing these people, it's just like machines and they don't really even know or care or have any their own feelings and but it's interesting how we like still do that where it's like, if you treat your workers also like they are just doing some sort of function, like up some sort of machine, you know, then sure you're not needing to rely on their creativity or their suggestions or their pieces. But in order to sort of really create the world that we want, and to create this, like beautiful new kind of workplaces, where people are like joyful and engaged and do things they love, and like really serving the world, you need really everyone to be able to feel safe, so that they can bring that innovative part of their brain.

A

Alla Weinberg 55:47

Absolutely. And companies are paying so much money for these people, you know, for the most talented people to come and work, like we were mentioning before, how we work together is just as important as that talent, and people are a part of that how is people feeling safe with each other. So it's being able to say to each other, hey, you know, I really felt hurt by the comment that you made in that last meeting. I just wanted to clear that with you. And instead of holding on to that resentment, and then maybe even working against that individual in the future, which is ultimately working against your organization.



Duncan Autrey 56:27

Yeah. What's interesting also that like, is, you know, just again, in the way that like, the individual reflects the organization, you know, if you have someone feeling unsafe, and their IQ is dropping, like you're also dropping away your like, team's IQ. Absolutely. And a really good team, you want to have like that synergistic quality, right, you know, so that the engineer can say, like, this is what need to happen. And the seamstress is like, Look, I can tell you exactly the best way to do that. You know, and he's like, okay, cool, let's do that, you know, and, like, via, like, so that they can, like actually build on each other. But if you are sitting there, someone's saying, like, I don't actually feel safe to be here. I'm, I'm not speaking up. Like, the, if you think about each of like, the individuals is like a neuron and like a bigger brain, like, you're not like, your team's IQ is lower. And you could imagine

that also becoming like a, if the culture is something also where there's like competition or repercussions or resentment, like that could also downward spiral, you know, yeah. Yeah.



Alla Weinberg 57:38

And it's also, you know, from the story that you said about the engineers and the seamstresses, it was important that nobody was looked down upon, right, that each contribution each skill set was valued. But let's say the engineers did, for example, devalue the seamstresses, and they're like, Oh, that's, you know, they're just lowly seamstresses, for example. Then the seamstresses would not feel safe then to speak up when the engineer said, Well, I need this thing. And then they would say, Okay, well, it has to be like this. And then you're just like, no, it has to be like that, like, Okay, and then they wouldn't say anything. They wouldn't fight like they wouldn't push back. But that would literally endanger the life of astronauts.



Duncan Autrey 58:22

Yeah, exactly. I mean, Neil Armstrong goes up there. And he like, turns, take a picture. And this thing rips open. Yeah, yeah. It's like the worst, worst day in history.



Alla Weinberg 58:33

Exactly.



58:35

But then, you know, they really wouldn't if they didn't feel that their expertise, their ideas were respected, were included, were really heard. They would not offer that.



Duncan Autrey 58:47

Yeah, and I think this is like, I mean, and this is, like, super important. Especially as like, organizations get larger and larger, think that leadership is not on the front lines, right. You can imagine the people in the boardroom, they are not in the store, the edge of the retail outlets talking to the customers. And like that person who's like, just on the front lines, talking to customers about something, like they're gonna have ideas about, like, you know, what, like, putting this here doesn't make sense, or like, people keep returning this darn thing. And if that person doesn't feel like that, they matter. Like, if that spoke isn't strong enough, you know, and they're just like, whatever I'm out of here, this place sucks.

Like, they've lost that information. And instead by creating that culture of sort of safety, and the way you create that is also by just creating these relationships that where people know that they someone's got their back, and that it's like, okay for them to speak up and that they are valued and they're honored in so many different pieces to that. Yeah. What are some of the things that you like? What are some of the indicators that like one might see in an organization if like, people aren't really feeling safer? You've seen?

A

Alla Weinberg 1:00:02

Yeah, I mean, some of kind of going back to the meeting, discussion we had earlier why we look at meetings specifically is, this is where people will show up. And we'll show you whether they've, you know, those interactions and meetings is the best indicator of, you know, people feel like say, so for example, if people don't ask many questions, during meetings, there's just one person doing most of the talking. And if the executive or team leaders dominate the meeting discussions, that's it's an indicator inside a very safe relationship, because nobody's speaking back up. And if the team avoids difficult conversations in meetings, or just even between two people with each other, then that they don't feel safe to have those conversations. If in meetings, people start to place blame on others for mistakes, oh, it's those seamstresses whose fault You know, they didn't do their job. Or it could be, you know, it's the sales departments fault, or it's the developers that are wrong, and all of this, that's an indicator that there isn't really a lot of safety there. Um, people don't ask for help with from one another when they need it. People don't venture outside of their department, or even maybe their job description. Well, that, you know, if you hear that, well, that's not my job. And that's a huge indicator that there isn't a sense of safety in the workplace, or, you know, the need to collaborate with somebody in a different department. They need that input, but don't want don't seek that out, but don't actually, you know, create a relationship with that individual. And they don't feel safe to do that. But in but interestingly, if there actually aren't any disagreements on the team, if there isn't any conflict, that means people don't feel safe to have it. And that's a very, very big indicator that there isn't any common because people don't feel safe to disagree with each other to say, Well, I don't think that's going to work to push back right to say, Oh, I think we're headed in the wrong direction or a dangerous direction. Have you thought of X, Y and Z? Right. And so I guess the, you know, the biggest indicator is how much silence there is, if there isn't many questions, if people aren't speaking up, if they're not disagreeing with each other, they're not asking for help. The larger the silence, the more unsafe an environment is.



Duncan Autrey 1:02:41

Yeah, that's really powerful. Long time ago, I at college, I guess I had this observation, that, you know, that there's a certain balance for people to speak up of, like, passion, and confidence, right? Like, if someone cares a lot about something. And they're, like, afraid, like they'll do, they'll speak up about it. And then there's like, also, like, if they like, feel really like I feel super secure myself, I'll speak up about anything, even if I don't really care that much, you know, but I'm just like, noticing that, like, there was that's missing an ingredient, which is like, the culture or the system that you're in, like, is a huge part of that, right? And so there's a way that a good culture is going to both, like, get people to care about the thing. So they know, like, wow, you know, I'm gonna take responsibility for this, or I'm gonna take responsible for the ability for speaking up. And so it's both instilling passion and confidence. And, you know, in your book, you have this a great story of Captain Mark Mark hat, who's this us submarine captain? And he gets like, put on this, he gets transferred from like a submarine to like, like the worst performing janky as us submarine in the US or something. And he's like, doesn't it like, and then just like, starts the job like that right away? And here's the strategy that shifts the whole culture. Like, do you feel like you could speak to that story?

A

Alla Weinberg 1:04:15

Yeah. Oh, it's my favorite story. I absolutely can speak to it. Yes, so Captain Marquette he studied a specific submarine, the USS Olympia for an entire year. So he knew how that submarine worked inside and out right, all the functions of the submarine. And in the last minute, when he was supposed to go, you know, be the captain of that ship. He got reassigned to a different ship the USS Santa Fe. And that ship was ranked the absolute lowest in the entire Navy. It had the lowest reenlistment rate in the Navy. It was a horrible like it just was the worst performing ship in the entire Navy fleet and he didn't know anything About that submarine how that submarine worked. And he had no control over the people that were in the submarine, he couldn't fire anybody to replace anybody. And he had no control over what role they play on that submarine, you know, so the engineer was the engineer, and whoever that person was, was who that person was, like, he just had no control. The only control he had was how he related to each individual.



1:05:27

And so what he did, which is very different for the Navy, was to give the power of decisions back to the people who are on the submarine who actually know how the submarine worked. So instead of giving orders, which was very normal, in the just how people you know, operate in the Navy, the captain gives orders and people follow the orders, right, he couldn't give the orders because he did not know how the ship worked.

Like literally the you know, the technologically mechanically how this ship work, he could not do it.



Duncan Autrey 1:05:58

Well, and he recognized that which is



Alla Weinberg 1:06:00

He recognized it. Yeah, yeah. And, uh, no. And normal leaders would might may try to fake it till they make it kind of approach, I think that would be normal to be like, Oh, I'm the captain, I have to figure it out. And I have to put on a face like I do know what I'm talking about. And that could actually endanger a lot of people on the ship. Although that would have would have been a strategy that some leaders would have gone with. Instead, he decided to give the power to the people that actually know what's going on. And so he said, If I'm not going to give any orders, if you want to do something on the ship, you come to me and you say, Captain, I intend to immerse the ship. And he will say Yes, okay, and then you go forth. And you and you do that you do your job. And this curry did. And so he, his whole goal was to create safety on the ship, because he did not know how the ship operates. He wanted people to feel safe to take action based on their expertise. And so this was very weird for the crew, you know, for the first month or so, right? They're like, we're used to taking orders, what are we do, you know? And so they will come to him? And they would say, Well, can we do this? And he was saying, Well, if you were the captain, what kind of information? Would you need to make that decision? He didn't make the decision for them. Right? Or he could say, well express that on probabilities. What's the probability of this going well, versus now you know, he helped people think through it, he didn't shoot down any idea that anyone had. And through this process, what ended up happening is people had to start working like different stations in the submarine, people had to start working with each other and communicating with each other because there wasn't just one person telling them what to do. And so what ended up happening is everybody on the ship, which had never happened before, everybody on the ship knew what was going on in every other station on the ship. And so because there was this, because they had to coordinate with each other and make those decisions, and they felt safe enough, over some, after a certain period of time to come to the cabinet and say, Hey, we intend to do this. We talked to, you know, the engineering team, or we talked to the this other team that we need to talk to, and you know, we're all in alignment with what needs to happen. And then he, he would just be like, Okay, then go do that. Right. He was just basically a final gut check on it. Right? What ended up happening is, by him creating the safety by letting people be safe and taking and taking action, helping them think through that action, helping them coordinate with other people and other stations, right?

This in two years time, this ship became the number one ranked ship in the Navy, and it had 100% reenlistment rate. And it actually broke maybe records for performance went from last to like Namie record breaking first. Yeah, yeah, it's funny, cuz all of the other captains would call him up and call up my Academy would be like, what, you must be giving some great orders, like, what are you doing? And he's like, I'm not giving any orders. And they're like, What? What are you talking about?



1:09:23

And that was the big change. He wasn't giving any orders. He was creating safety for people to be able to think, at 100% you know, and 100% iq level at their highest operational level, and trusted them to do their job.



Duncan Autrey 1:09:39

I really love that story. And I love hearing that like the, the, you know, the audio version of it, too. And there's a couple things I you know, like, you know, sort of like hidden in that story. I think they're just like super important, like one is that he was teaching people how to lead right like, so. They are coming to him and saying, you know, can I do this or whatever? And so he helped him say like, Okay, well, you know, what other information do you need to build to be able to do this? You know, like, you know, like, what do you think the probabilities are? So he's like, helping them consider, like, what are the kinds of things that he might be considering? Because maybe obviously, he's, like, trained and as a captain and you know, has, you know, maybe certain skills, and so he's helping them, like develop these skills, but then, with the kind of in product is, is just creating again, like this organism. And then of course, turning a ship into, like, a interactive organism is like a very powerful thing, right? Because that way, you know, they're in crisis, or, you know, 100 attack or something like that. The people who are, you know, in the engine, or people who are in whatever are able to be like, Oh, I know exactly what to do. And I know how to get the information I need to about what to do here, so that you could have that confidence, you know, in that space. What I think was also interesting is that, like, he had to like, these people at first were like, I don't know if I can do this, right, because like, they were already so disempowered. So he had to get them to sort of overcome their fear of their own capacity.



Alla Weinberg 1:11:14

Yeah. And this is the biggest, I think this is my biggest aha and writing the book. And in related to the work that we're doing, and my biggest aha is, as leaders, the number one

job as a leader is to be able to feel calm, and centered and regulated in yourself, so that when others other people come to you, and they feel afraid, like because of the way our brains work, we have mirror neurons, and their nervous system can calm down, and they can have access to their full intelligence. And they do that just by being around, literally just being in the same presence in the same room next to someone who feels calm, who feel center who's regulated themselves. This is the core work of leadership is learning how to regulate your own nervous system. So you can also that you can lead and help regulate others, that they so they can have access to their full intelligence, and then collectively, the team can have full access to their intelligence, and take the action, or create something together that the business is trying to create. And this was my big realization of really what true leadership is, is that, hmm, so I think that's what he was teaching folks.



Duncan Autrey 1:12:41

Yeah,



Alla Weinberg 1:12:42

to trust themselves, to feel confident, to feel centered, to know how to regulate their fears and their nervous system, so that they can access all the knowledge and all the intelligence that they have, and then therefore become leaders to others.



Duncan Autrey 1:12:57

Yeah, I really, I mean, that's a it's such a powerful insight. And, and also, I mean, there's something, there's a deep lesson in life, which is like, if you want to really help someone, you know, change or something like that? Well, first of all, just make sure that like, you got that quality going on in yourself, right, you know, like, you have to do the inner work. Yes, you know, first, you know, before you can expect other people to do it. And then just actually, having made the personal change is the kind of most of the work that you need to do to help other people change, because it's going to be the thing that really helps them. You know, you're creating, you're becoming like a living model of this. And I think what's interesting about this fear piece, and it's something you said in the book that was kind of an insight for me was just the act of changing the culture of your organization, you know, going against the grain of a century of command and control leadership, and starting to think about how do we be more relational? Or how do we create space for emotions, for a leader, that's scary. And as a leader, trying to sort of make change in how you operate your organization, you will run into fear. So in the very process of changing your capacity to be courageous in the face of something that's scary, and to also be calm.

And I think this is really great for like leaders, you know, fear helps you slow down, you know, like, just like a reminder to be like, regulate yourself, like, take this seriously. Calm down, and, and I know, you're like influenced a lot by Bernie Brown. Well, I am. Everyone is at this point, but but, you know, the best idea is like the courage is not about not being afraid. It's about like being afraid and then moving and then in through it. So it's like, it took a lot of courage for that Captain to do that. And that was part of what he was demonstrating. Yes, to be able to say like, I actually don't really know What to do?

A

Alla Weinberg 1:15:01

Yes. And I think this speaks to me about the three types of relationships that all of us are always in. And it's the relationship to ourselves. Number one, how do we think about and feel and behave towards ourselves? Right. And this is, what I'm saying is the core work of leadership is to get into right relationships with ourselves first, right? So that we can have great relationships, one on one with people, right with individuals, other individuals that we work with, and then have a great relationship to the team or to your organization as a whole. And so relationships are fractal in that way. And it starts with shifting a relationship as leaders, it starts with shifting the relationship to yourself, one other than then to a team and then to an organization. And I think it's important to talk about that. And I think in many businesses, people understand their relationships are important, but don't really have any strategies, or mechanisms for how to work on that, how to improve that, how to shift that when you're not in right relationship with either yourself or others, that you're working with. And I think that's the core of what we offer in the work that we do.



Duncan Autrey 1:16:20

Yeah, for good time. Now, you know, talking about just like the fractal nature of conflict, I just love pointing out that it's like, you know, this is same thing across all these different scales, but the internal one is the one that's easiest to miss. And I would say like, as a mediator, oftentimes, a lot of like, the secret work that's happening is like helping someone, actually the individual figure out why they care about whatever the issue is, because they're having their own internal thing, you know, and that process of sort of externalizing, like, whatever the problem is, you know, like, this is the problem, and this is the person, but like, the person is the problem, right? Yeah, exactly. That's a very common thing. And, you know, and like part of the work is to get away, this other person is actually someone's in relationship with you. And the problem is another thing, the two of you have to figure out how to do together. But before that, can you even understand why you care about this? Like, why is this important to you as an individual? And and what internal conflict you have about? And can you reconcile your own internal conflict about this? First, because otherwise, it's going to be hard for you to expose yourself to this other person?

Right? Yeah. And it's can actually be necessary that you actually are able to do this. One of the great questions that like, Can cloak and also like people in the central partners, which used to be called the public conversations project have is this question of like, can you consider what are the edges of like your opinion about something that you aren't totally sure about? Hmm, I mean, it's a very vulnerable question to ask someone to admit to someone else, even for someone just to admit to themselves, you know, like, I actually don't really believe this. But I recognize that like, I'm not really sure about this part of it, or, you know, like, I feel like, I'd know that I've acted differently than actually think I'm supposed to act, you know, those pieces. The question that I asked everyone on the show is, given your life experience, the windy, windy path of Alla, what is something that you might invite people to pay attention to, as they're trying to make a better world for themselves and for others.



Alla Weinberg 1:18:36

And this may be because this is what we just talked about. But really, the first thing that comes to my mind is, how am I to pay closer attention to how you're relating to yourself, how you're thinking, feeling and behaving towards yourself. And I just find that people are often so harsh, so mean, abusive, sometimes even to themselves, and embrace my heart. And I want people to relate to themselves in a loving, respectful, caring way. Because that will, again in this fractal nature ripple out to everyone else. So pay attention to how you're relating to yourself. Have a nice day. Mm hmm. And my wishes with compassion.



Duncan Autrey 1:19:20

Yeah that compassion for self. You know, I've said, a lot of times, I can't remember how I figured this out, but it was definitely, you know, through a journey of compassion, but it was something about like, self forgiveness is kind of the solution to everything. Yeah, in a way that it's like, Okay, can I just like give myself you know, forgiveness for my flaws. And just like, which creates space for me to be able to improve, to find that equanimity, that calm in the face of fear and then becomes a demonstration for those around me. And if I actually understand the process have gone through, I can maybe even show other people about that. They get to make their own changes because they have to go through their own journey. yourself compassion. And then you could imagine like this mirror neurons would ripple out. And you have like this team in this group that is now working well, finding their own internal sense of compassion and care, and, you know, getting things done and making them effective, good team. And then of course, maybe like that team and wide organization like that can ripple out to that organization. And like that organizations, part of a good network of businesses and companies, and then that has

ability to ripple out like the, you know, the just kind of bringing it full circle, it's like, this is how the world gets changed. And, you know, in the given work is the thing, we spend most of our time out of all, like, you know, if we can change the way we are with ourselves, we can change the way we are with our teams, we can change the way we are with our work, how we relate to the world, and



Alla Weinberg 1:20:50

with our families and our communities, where we live, in our planet.



Duncan Autrey 1:20:55

Um, and I think like one of the things that's like, not so obvious, sometimes it's like the way that the world changes or like people change the world, is by showing that they've come up with a way better way of doing something than the what's already happening.



Alla Weinberg 1:21:08

Yeah, I believe that we have. Yeah, you and I have, and I want to share that with the world.



Duncan Autrey 1:21:14

Yeah, I think it's powerful stuff. So let's see, if folks want to get in touch with us. How do they do that?



Alla Weinberg 1:21:22

They go to www.spokeandwheel.co. And they're contact forms that folks can use and they can email us, it's pretty easy. It's either Duncan@spokeandwheel.co or alla@spokeandwheel.co We look forward to hearing from you.



Duncan Autrey 1:21:45

Now. I also encourage folks to poke around we're like continuing to add more goodies and resources there. And there's like a learn with us page with different videos when we have a really great effective communication tool. There's actually links to Fractal Friends episodes that are very specific for spokeandwheel.co audiences. And you know, it's the

best way to get in on our newsletter. And stay tuned for Alla's book that's coming out. And all sorts of we're putting together all sorts of great little tools. And you know, we offer free calls. So folks are welcome to reach out and no pain just to like, get on the call with us and talk talk about, you know, your team or group or organization, whoever you are, if you want to do something great in this world, and you want to do it with other people. We got your back. Thank you Alla.



Alla Weinberg 1:22:36

Thank you. Awesome.



Duncan Autrey 1:22:40

Thank you again for listening to this episode of Fractal Friends with Alla Weinberg. You can find more content links and resources about this episode, as well as other episodes at [Fractal friends.us](https://fractalfriends.us). And while you're there, sign up for the newsletter and get updates on new episodes, as well as learn more about all of my work as spokeandwheel.co. Also, please consider donating to fractalfriends.us or subscribing to become a patron you can find buttons for that on the website. You can find out more about Alla and myself and our work at Spoke & wheel.co. And if you'd like this episode, please take a moment to share it with someone texted to a colleague. Share with your friends, share it on LinkedIn or Facebook, send an email, tell your mom about it. I'm doing my part to amplify these voices. And I would love to have your support and spreading the word. And as usual, I'm going to close this out with a song. The song I want to share with you is called you are always held and it is by my friend joyous dawn. I'm happy to share her beautiful music with you because it is a profound reminder of how much we all long to be held in love. Thank you for listening to Fractal Friends. And remember, we all have a role to play in the hole. Have a nice day.