

BWF Bart Wear Transcript

Bart Wear: [00:00:00] The world tells us a lot that we're not right. You know what I mean? It tells us any number of things that we've gotten too many breaks or that we're lazy or, you know, it tells us all these things and, and a seeming to me is just saying, hey, look at, you know, I don't know entirely who you are, but I know that you have worth.

I know that you have worth to yourself. You have worth to your, those people that love you. And you have worth to me. And I'm glad to be part of your life.

Tim Spiker: As leaders, the words we use and the actions we take are profoundly influenced by how we choose to see the people we are leading. I'm your host, Tim Spiker, and this is the Be Worth* Following podcast.

On this show, we talk with exceptional leaders, thinkers, and researchers about what actually drives effective leadership across the globe and over time. You just heard from Bart Wear, former company president, current humanitarian, and self-described freelance encourager. For 15 years, [00:01:00] Bart was the president of Casey Industrial, a construction company initially focused on the wood products industry.

I say initially because it didn't stay that way. Under Bart's leadership, the company diversified and expanded its construction activities into power plants and environmental upgrades. This led to a fourfold increase in the organization's revenue. But smart business expansion is not the only thing that gets Bart's attention.

Upon his retirement from the business world, Bart turned his leadership focus to humanitarian service. He founded Homes of Living Hope, a nonprofit which converts used shipping containers into health clinics, schools, and housing for under resourced communities. In this episode, you'll hear how Bart sees the world, in particular, how he thinks about the people he leads.

He'll also share his perspective on when leaders should trust the people they are leading. And you'll have the opportunity to feel his infectious spirit. But first, we get a chance to hear about one of the top [00:02:00] leadership influences in Bart's life. A man named Vern, who acquired the company that Bart owned, and then hired Bart to be his successor.

Bart Wear: One guy that really helped me a lot, I mean that I, I emulated so many times that my career was Vern Casey that I took over the company for

and I had the pleasure of getting to know him probably 15 years before they acquired us. So, I got to watch how he was with his own people, how he was, I was a subcontractor, how he was with me.

And he even shared with me some of the mistakes that he had made in trying to transition his leadership previous to myself coming. And so, so many times, even up until the time that I left Casey, I really tried to do a lot of things the way Vern would do them.

Tim Spiker: What was it that he did that got your attention?

Bart Wear: You know, the thing that I would watch Vern is that he cared about people. I mean, he knew every guy I think that worked for the company. He knew his name. He knew a little bit about his story and, [00:03:00] and he treated people like they were important to him, all of them. And I saw him come down hard with people too, but he always, he always did it in a way that I think, you know, you'd kind of watch and these people would walk away and they were, it was like, they just got scolded by their big brother or something. You know, I mean, he was he was just really unique with dealing with people. I loved his energy.

Tim Spiker: You know, one of the things that I hear time and time again, when the question is asked, who's the best leader that you've ever worked for?

And the answer, it comes in a variety of shades, but it's oftentimes the same story. And you said it here with Vern, it begins with, they cared about people, but almost every time when somebody is talking about the best leader they've ever followed, they also talk about this accountability piece that you're talking about.

They talk about this push. And it's really interesting to me to think about how we can help people grow and develop in really good [00:04:00] ways, even pushing them beyond what they thought they could do. If they know that we care about them, like Vern cared about his folks. And so there were times when he held the line and that was an effective way to hold the line because they first knew that he cared.

Bart Wear: You know, I one time I had an experience where, with a long-term employee there and Vern and I didn't talk a lot. One of the things he had communicated to me. That he had learned with his previous transitions was that he stayed too involved. So, his thing was, basically, he didn't talk to me unless I called him. And so well, I had this deal with a longer term employee and all that

and I was talking to Vern not specifically about it, but sharing with that and that he said well, why are you doing I said?

Well, I just want to be fair be fair with him, with Dan. And he said, well, remember fair is fair for everybody. And well, it just really stuck with me that, that I couldn't be fair to Dan and be unfair to all the people around him. You know, [00:05:00] and it just really stuck with me. I mean early in my career, and I just remember that, you know, over and over and over again that I needed to be fair to everybody.

Tim Spiker: That is such a thoughtful statement. And you're reminding me there's an executive in an organization within the last year that I was visiting with, and they had a long-term problem employee that they had finally gotten to a breaking point with. And this is a smaller organization. So, the board was relatively aware of some things that were going on.

And the, the senior executive was preparing for these difficult conversations where they were going to exit this long-term employee. And the plan was this. As the board members, if they were to push back on this, his plan was to visit with them and to say, okay, we can keep this person on, but I'm going to have you board member explained to every other person in this building, why they have to continue to [00:06:00] deal with this inappropriate behavior with keeping this person on. So, I think that's, that's what Vern was talking about. And it's really a, it's a sobering thought to say, Oh yeah, well, what about the impact that somebody is having on the rest of the organization and all those individuals?

Bart Wear: Well, and you know, for me, and I was fairly young when I took over at Casey.

So, I had a lot of things to learn. And it was interesting when I left Casey, the guy that took my place a year later, he said, wow, you know, the problem with you is you made this look too easy. I said, well, the product, let me assure you, I did make it look easy the first 10 years I did. I made it look incredibly hard.

When Vern said the fair is fair for everybody, I really realized that in my position, it was helping everybody to do their part and that, that if I was letting one person slide on their part in interest of being fair, because they had been there a long time, that it really wasn't being fair to [00:07:00] everybody else.

So, when you talk about the accountability piece, that was kind of the one that really closed the loop for me that holding people accountable to the organization and everything was being fair, you know, it was being fair to everybody.

Tim Spiker: Well, and let us spare people the hard messages that they need to hear. And then just watch how the very best of the contributors in our organizations will eventually find other places to work because they see that the standards aren't high enough here. And hey, this isn't the team I want to be on. I want to be on another team wherever they don't, wherever they don't put up with this garbage.

And I say that under the covering of the word care again, that becomes so important to be able to deliver those hard messages. This is a good segue into kind of the whole of your leadership at Casey. As people get a chance to, to learn from you here and hear your story. What is uniquely challenging about leading an organization [00:08:00] that works in industrial construction?

Like what are some things that would be good for people to know about the uniqueness of that leadership role?

Bart Wear: One of the real uniquenesses for us is we weren't overly large, yet we worked all over the country. So, we were one spread out group of people. And I think nowadays, people are pretty used to not working face to face.

But when we were doing this and out on these construction sites, it was a pretty face to face deal. And all of a sudden we're working all over. So that's, and I say we weren't large in that we didn't have this huge organization to do this, you know, so I mean, we were pretty thin, you know, at the top and, and by design, we had to really trust the people that we put out there because these jobs were 10 to 50 million dollar projects.

And I had a guy one day, I asked him what he wanted out of his career. He said, I want your job. And I said, well, you know, that's nice, but you know, you're king of your own [00:09:00] world. I mean, you're out here now and you've got, you are the end all to the whole conversation. So be careful what you ask for.

Tim Spiker: That brings up a really interesting question. Let's talk about trust a little bit, because you're talking about as a leader of an organization that is geographically spread out, and then, you know, let's go back in time in our minds a little bit here where the idea of being on a video call like we are as we record this podcast was not the norm by any stretch of the imagination.

How did you make discerning, you know, decisions about who to hand the trust to with 50 million projects? Because I can just hear like, we've got these dilemmas as leaders as, yeah, we want to extend that trust, but I'm not sure he's ready. I'm not sure she's ready for that level of responsibility. How did you make the decisions about whom you would hand those important levels of trust to?

Bart Wear: Well, first of all, I mean, I'm a guy that trusts first and you know, I've gotten burned a time or two doing that too. But I go into a [00:10:00] relationship trusting that until somebody proves that I can't, you know what I mean?

Tim Spiker: So, you start from there.

Bart Wear: That's where I start. So, I'm, my inclination is going to be to trust.

If we have a project manager or a large project and we, you know, by, workload or whatever. We have to put somebody less experienced out there. I'm going to be more inclined to trust. You know, I'm a guy you know, the whole character chemistry competence thing. I'm big on the character. I, you know, I always told people that I was living proof that you could teach anybody to do the job, you know what I mean?

But yeah. But you can't teach anybody to care about it. And so, you know, when I looked at the trust thing and I sent, you know, as I looked at these people going out there, it was really, what did I think of their character? Were they the kind of person that was going to do everything within their power not to fail because that was their character, not because it was their job. And so that was where we would start.

Tim Spiker: You know, [00:11:00] I'm guessing based on the way that you described that, that if you were add up, if you were to add up all of the wins by trusting first and then subtract all of the losses that came from trusting first, that you'd still have a really big number there at the end that's positive. Is that a, is that a fair guess on my part?

Bart Wear: Oh yeah. You know back to Vern again when they purchased our company and I was going to be the president, one of the last things I told the group as we were negotiating was I wanted to spend a day with Vern. And so, Bert and I were talking and he told me something and I, and I still think about it almost daily now, but he said, you know, my goal was to be a lifetime 340 hitter.

And he said, I was going to finish my career being known as a pretty, pretty good hitter. And he said, but that meant there was a lot of times I was going to strike out. But he said, every time I got, every time my dad, I just knew I had to get back up. And he said, you know, that's the way it is with the projects.

Not, there are not always going to work, but you just want to be known as a pretty good hitter. Yeah. And I thought about that. So, when you talked about that, you [00:12:00] were, when you asked that question, when you had them all up, you know, I felt like at the end of my career, it's a pretty good hitter, you know, I know I struck out a lot, but I don't remember any of them.

Tim Spiker: Well, that's interesting. Cause that was going to be my next question is like, what, you know, what do you remember from the times when you did initiate leading with trust and it didn't work out the way that you would have hoped, but you said, do you remember those times?

Bart Wear: You know, if I think about it, I remember sometimes specifically, I, you know, the, the times that it bothered me was when there was like a, you know, a character issue, you know, somebody stole from you or, you know, or, or the equivalent of it, somebody intentionally went out and, and didn't do their job.

Those are the times that I remember. And you know. I really felt like, especially over the length of my career, that I never let it change the fact that I was going to trust people first. And I never got that burned. [00:13:00] I, maybe a time or two with some customers, had never with an employee.

Tim Spiker: Well, as you kind of sit in this seat now and you get a chance to have a bit more of a, you look at the whole arc of leading an organization.

And I want to, in a little bit, I want to talk about some of the things you've been up to since you left that CEO position. But as you look at your, at that time of leading, what are some of the headlines, the major concepts that you would maybe even say, hey, here's what I understand now that I wished was, you know, as clear to me on day one as it is now, as you kind of look back on the whole arc of it?

Bart Wear: Well, you know, I was always a way more of a people guy. I mean, I love to be in a constructor. I love to build. building things. I love figuring things out, but I really was in it for the people. It was just the way that I was. And my mission statement is unleashing God's giftedness in others by encouraging, esteeming, and loving them.

And so, I always felt like it was this, [00:14:00] it just put me in this great seat. To try to unleash what other people had into them. And again, our company industrial, you know, it, it sounded really good, but we were a smaller company, and we were a group of overachievers and I loved being that I just loved, I loved the guy that he quit high school and went back at some point in time and got his GED and he started out as a, as a rigger and he worked himself up to a foreman and before long, you know, he's construction manager on a 50 million project and because he cared because he achieved, you know, and I really loved just being able to put that guy in that position.

And so, when I say, when I look back, if I had to do it over again, I would have even been more intentional that way. I mean, because it really, really, yeah, it really was what gave me my juice. You know what I mean? It was just you know, when I think back on my career and I really thought we did some cool things, you know, we did some pretty amazing jobs for a project for a [00:15:00] company our size.

But I think about two things. I think about the couple of jerk owners that we had; you know what I mean? And, and then I just think of these amazing people and that worked for us. I mean, I'm good friends. I have a guy right now that's helping taking care of my mom in Texas, who started with us as a 19-year-old kid and worked his whole way up in the company.

And he never did it because of me. He was just a neighbor of my mom's. And so, he would go over and he would help fix things and do all this. And he and his wife would pretty much just taken over to help him take care of my mom. And what strikes me about that is he's a good man. You know what I mean?

That's why he does it. He knew her before he knew me, you know what I mean? And so, it's just a, it's a cool relationship. And again, I would, I would just try to be more intentional about you know, because at the end of the day, I don't remember what we made on any of the projects, but I remember all the people, [00:16:00] you know.

Tim Spiker: Can you say your mission statement again?

I just want to make sure everybody gets a chance to kind of soak that whole thing in because there are to me, there's a lot of intentionality in what you just rolled it out there, but I just want to pause on it for just a second, because I think it's really telling. So, say it again, and I'm probably going to, I'm going to have another question or two there.

Bart Wear: So, it's unleashing God's giftedness in others by encouraging, esteeming, and loving them. And the, I almost am, I'm more focused on the second part of that than the first that my I don't bring out the best in others by telling them what to do and by ordering them around and all that but by esteeming who they are, encouraging them to be who they are, and then loving them for who they are.

And the thing that I've so enjoyed about it is it really fits every area of my life. It's work, it's family, it's friends, it's neighbors, it's everything.

Tim Spiker: I got a couple of words in there that I want to zoom in on. And I want to start with one at the beginning. You said it's more [00:17:00] about the second part, but the idea of unleashing What's the mentality around, I'm here to unleash something positive within somebody else.

Bart Wear: Well, you know, I mean, I'm a guy that believes that each one of us are individually gifted to do extraordinary things and extraordinary is really About the person that's doing them, not the result of it, in my opinion. And so the unleashing is, is that I need to give them enough freedom to be in their giftedness.

And then, you know, a lot of it is the encouragement. A lot of them is trying to put them into that place. Where they can use their giftedness and then encouraging them to, to rock and roll with it, you know what I mean? It's because you know, I even think some point in time, you were in a conversation that where you're having like this, but I'm a guy that thinks when, you know, we're all individually gifted to do amazing things and that when we put a team together to do it, that team is, is individually gifted, that the way that [00:18:00] it comes together is like no other team in the world and that the best thing I can do is try to, to stand out of the way and let them rise to their giftedness. And that's where I think you get incredible results, not just financially, but you know, just the way that things, the way that people work together.

Don't get me wrong when I say this, you know, because, the financial is a big part of it, but early in my career I figured out how to make money. And the rest of it is, I just think the whole work platform is this great place to bring people together, to help them, help them achieve more than to help us, the company achieve, if that makes sense. Now, the company does as they achieve, you know.

Tim Spiker: It's not usually an either-or proposition.

Bart Wear: But the unleashing is a super cool part. I mean, and you can, I've just watched it with people because, you know, there's, I mean, you know, we all know all this stuff. I mean, you know, the world, the parents, the school system, all this stuff, will tell [00:19:00] people what they can't do.

And then when you sit there and you've got, you know, like I said, this, this guy, you know, he's 23 years old, 24 years old, he's survived to get to that point. And he's got a wife and two kids and all he wants is a job, you know what I mean? And then all of a sudden you start saying, well, what do you think would work on this?

You know what I mean? And how would you set this up and stuff like that? And, you know, you see these people just light up about it, you know, and there's the business part of what would you do, but then, you know, there's a, Hey, I got Joe here and he keeps coming in, you know, drunk and all this.

And, and you're, and he's like, you know, I think we're going to have to let him go. I'm like, hey man, you know, no doubt. I mean, that's something that can happen, but you know, is there. Is there some, do you think Joe's worth saving? And you start asking those questions and it allows him maybe to move into a part of his giftedness that he didn't even know he had, you know, because nobody ever asked him, you know [00:20:00] what I mean?

Tim Spiker: Yeah.

Bart Wear: And, and I do believe that ultimately on those cases, the decision was mine. I mean, it wasn't that I was trying to push that off on them or whatever, but really trying to help them to be what they were created to be.

Tim Spiker: That's an amazing example and really interesting. I also find interesting in that statement of yours, the word esteem, the word esteeming, it's not a word that we use a lot.

You don't hear it very often. Talk a little bit about how that uniquely shows up in there. And from your perspective, because you've got encouraging in there as well. So, I'm curious as to how you see the difference between encouraging and esteeming.

Bart Wear: Well, you know, esteeming, to me, is it, it's just somebody's place, just somebody's place in life, you know what I mean?

And, and I can esteem somebody as being worthwhile. I can esteem them as being worth my effort. I can you know, esteem the relationships that they have that are important to them. [00:21:00] I don't ever feel like a negative or cynical guy, so I don't want this to come across that way. But you know, the world tells us a lot that we're not right, you know what I mean?

It tells us that, that we're privileged, or we're, you know, I mean, any number of things. That we've gotten too many breaks, or that we're lazy, or, you know, it tells us all these things. And, and esteeming to me is just saying, hey, look at, you know, I just, you know, I don't know entirely who you are, but I know that you have worth. I know that you have worth to yourself. You have worth to your, those people that love me and you have worth to me, and I'm glad to be part of your life for even this little bit of time.

Now the encouraging, you know, the encouraging is the one that we all, I think, you know, business wise, you get looked at a lot, but it's just seeing somebody for what they do and then just telling them, hey, look at man, I wouldn't have done it that way, but that's amazing that you figured that out. You know what I mean? It's, it's encouraging them to be that, to take a chance on themselves.

Tim Spiker: Yeah. All right. So, we've talked about [00:22:00] the other two words and we can't leave the word loving out. Otherwise, we're just avoiding talking about it.

So, say a little bit more. We've got encouraging. We've got esteeming. What is, what is loving somebody look like? I mean, we can talk about all contexts, but especially in the work context as you're, as you're leading an organization.

Bart Wear: I mean, loving is that you just really matter to me.

You know what I mean? And that, you know, no matter how this works out work wise or career wise or whatever, that I care about you and I'm going to do what I can to help you. And maybe that means help you somewhere else, you know what I mean? But it doesn't mean that. And it's always, I always felt really odd in this.

Industrial construction love isn't a work you'll use a lot. Unless you're talking about your Harley or something, you know. But, the fact of the matter is, that so many times, you know, you'll, you'll see these issues and you'll have a problem employer, you'll have a problem job or whatever, and things get very personal.

And they become very attacking. And [00:23:00] the only way you can get rid of somebody is to not like them anymore. You know what I mean? You, you'll work yourself up into that place to say, well, I'm just as glad they're gone. Well, what I needed to remember is that, you know, my mission was to love these guys and I could love them out the door too.

Tim Spiker: Say a little bit more about that, because I think there might be some people that are, that are listening that would say, all right, these things sound antithetical. You're talking about the times when people need to be moved on from the organization, and yet you're talking about loving them. What would you say to the person that would say, by definition, you can't love somebody if you're exiting them out of the out of the company.

Bart Wear: So, I thought of a story, of course, but, so I had this employee, I showed up on the job one day, we had this project engineer kind of a junior guy and they came and said, Hey, look, we're going to have to get rid of Billy Bob or whatever it is because he he's been drinking, he's been drinking, been showing up drinking all this kind of stuff.

So, I talked to them, like, hey, you [00:24:00] know, have we, have we worked with this guy? Have we tried to get him some help? Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. They, yep, this is his last deal. We've been written warning to everything else is last deal. So, I said, okay. So, the guy goes, but I want to talk to him before he leaves.

So, the guy, they terminate him for when he comes in and he comes over. And so, I just told him, hey, look at me. You know, you're, the reason you're getting terminated is because of the, you're coming in drinking and all that kind of stuff. And, and you know, is there some way we can get you some help? So, he would sit and say, hey, look at I you know, I've got the stomach problems, why I drink, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, you know?

And I'm like, well, you know, either way you can't be drinking. So, he leaves. So over the next couple of years, he calls me on a regular basis and he says, hey man, is there any way I can come back to work? Because I've lost my house. And so, I said, Hey, look at man, are you still drinking? He said, yeah, I'm still drinking.

I said, okay, man, that's the deal. You go get yourself some help. I'll back you up all I can do that. Then, you know, on [00:25:00] the next call, you know, I'm living on the street, and I've lost my car and one thing after another. And so, I

wrestled with a lot because I cared about, and I didn't even know the guy truthfully.

I can't even remember what his name was, but I cared about him. And I didn't want to see him destroy himself in this process, but I also knew that I couldn't do anything about that. You know what I mean? Other than I could just love him. I could let him know that I didn't know any of his story, but I could let him know that there was one person in his life that cared about him.

He could call me; I would do what I could do. Well, eventually at some point in time he stopped calling, but I felt, I'm not going to say good about it, but I felt like I had played my part that I had loved this guy all the way, you know, and maybe it never did register. But again, I felt like my part was to play my part and that's what I had done.

Tim Spiker: You know, for some people listening to that story, they might think it sounds as an extreme example, [00:26:00] but I don't think that it is. I think it gives that very tangible example of what it can look like to do the challenging things that we have to do in organizations. Because here's the reality that we're facing either on the job site or the marketplace.

And so, we've got some tough decisions that sometimes require. That we have fewer employees for whatever the reason, whether it's a personal one or more organizational, but that it is possible to do those things with respect and concern. And this case, it is possible to love people, even as you're showing them that they're not going to be able to continue to do these things here.

And, and I think, I think it's so important because we know that there are some practical realities in business that have to be addressed. And yet it's really not this either or binary that we're tempted to make it to be. It's the fact that there are some hard things, and you perfectly gave an example of how you lived out those two things at the same time.

Bart Wear: Well, and again, right back to what we first started. If it, [00:27:00] you know, it's gotta be fair for everybody. If it's, you know what I mean? And like in that situation, I couldn't put him out there because it wouldn't be fair for everybody.

Tim Spiker: I mean, you're, yeah, you're, you're, you're, obviously on a construction site and really anything, but especially in a construction, you're obviously creating grave safety situations.

And, and we don't have to talk, we don't have to justify the fact that you can't have people drinking on a job site. So that's it. I just love how tangible that example is so that we can kind of not live in the air of ideas, but boots on the ground. Here's what it can, here's what it can really look like.

Bart Wear: Well, one thing with the type of work, and again, like I said, we boomed all over the country. Doing this work and everything. Well, you attract a kind of person, a certain kind of person. So, you have a lot of life stuff that comes with them, you know what I mean? And that was a place that, you know, I mean, to use the word ministry, that's where I always felt my ministry was.

I mean, I really felt that I was in this place to work with these kinds of people and sure we needed to drive revenue and, you [00:28:00] know, all of that stuff was important, but it wasn't as. I'm not going to say as important. It just, it wasn't worth doing if we had to destroy people in the process. But again, we have lots of that.

I've had my fill of marital issues and criminal issues, alcohol, drugs, everything. I mean, I'm just like, wow. Yeah.

Tim Spiker: You know, you said something really interesting there in terms of. As people come into the organization that they really are people. It reminds me you know, I learned so much from our clients and years ago I had a client and we tried to source where this quote came from.

It's not mine, but it is good. And the quote was this, we were looking for employees and instead people showed up. And I just think that really epitomizes what you're talking about is that we can go into this business thing with the idea that we're going to leverage [00:29:00] FTEs in order to create dollars.

But the greatest leaders are the ones who don't look at it as FTEs. They look at it as people and they understand the connection between the environments they're creating and how those long-term successful dollars get produced. And part and partial in the middle of that equation is not an FTE that equals an employee, but it's a person.

And that we all come with baggage. We all come with, with damage. We all come with mistakes. We all come with imperfections and the same company that kind of shared that employee versus person idea. One of the same individuals involved in that conversation. We were talking one day, and he said, I was faced with this idea of, I know that life here is not going to be perfect and

that people around me are going to be imperfect at times and I have to be prepared for that.

And then he chuckled at himself talking about, and then when it actually happens and it doesn't go well and [00:30:00] everybody looks shocked and he's looking at himself saying, what did you think imperfection was going to feel like? Did you think, oh, it's like I didn't tie my shoe? No, it's probably going to be a little bit more significant. I just loved his kind of humility to say, well, of course, there's some pain that comes along with this because we are all flawed people.

Bart Wear: I think when you were like fresh out of school, you were working and helping us with our mission, vision, and values. And if, if you remember one of our values were people matter, And the way that we said that was that every decision that we made, we needed to remember that it affected people.

That if we came up and said, changed our health insurance because of costs or all of the things, all the business decisions we need to make, that we make, we needed to remember that there were people on the other side of them when we made those decisions. And it really worked well for us. I mean, I, I mean, when I say it, well, we're, well, we were [00:31:00] a company that wanted to feel really good about the way we did things, you know, and so it allowed us to feel really good about it.

Tim Spiker: Well, you know, earlier we have a podcast guest on, his name is Zach Mercurio, Dr. Mercurio, and he's actually not far from you. He's up the road at Colorado state and his work right now is centered on the issue of mattering. And how important it is for people to know that they matter. And so, you might say, well, this is the kind of company we want to be.

Guess what? It's also a great way to run an organization. It's not just that you looked at it and that it felt good. It also over the long-term produces a tremendous result. Why? Because it taps into something that's very core to us as human beings. We all. Want to matter every single one of us wants to matter.

And what happens when the place that we go to for the majority of [00:32:00] our waking hours, what happens when that place sees us as somebody who matters and what happens if that place is not? Sees us as somebody that doesn't matter. Like there is a, there's a world of, I mean, just the universe of difference between what happens in organizations where people matter and where they don't.

So, you guys really were ahead of your time in having that simple two word phrase to be a guiding force as you made decisions.

Bart Wear: It was always interesting to me as we made all of our money externally with customers, but we were an internal company. We were all about people that work for us. That was, that was really what jazzed us.

Tim Spiker: Does it lead into the idea that if we do a great job of taking care of our people, that they're going to do a great job of taking care of our customers?

Bart Wear: Yeah, and we, you know, if you remember, one of our other values was do the right thing. And so, we do the right thing and people matters, you know, and that was what we told people is, you know, told [00:33:00] our employees that, hey, look at, you know, given the choice, do the right thing.

You'll know what it is. We all know what it is. We don't always, we can rationalize it another way, but we all know what it is. So just do the right thing and remember that there's people on the other end of that decision.

Tim Spiker: Let's fast forward a little bit because your time as the president and CEO of Casey has passed now for a little bit, and you've given your experiences and your thoughts and your heart to some other endeavors.

So, let's talk a little bit about the things that you've been influencing and, and leading in a, in a matter of speaking, since you've, you've left your post there at Casey.

Bart Wear: You know, I retired. My last day was a Thursday. I figured I'd take a long weekend. And on Monday, God would have this amazing thing that he wanted me to do.

And obviously that didn't happen and it didn't happen the next week or the next month or a couple months down the road. My habit is to get up early and kind of have some quiet time, do some [00:34:00] reading. And, and so I was, I was sitting there, and I was just like, man, I don't get it, you know, because I really felt that the time was right for me to leave.

And I feel like I have something more to offer, but I have no place to offer it. And I had several years before a childhood friend, and I had started this little nonprofit called Homes for Living Hope where we would help groups convert shipping containers to clinics and stuff like that and send them around the world.

Well, we would, I always kind of thought it was just one of those great little party conversations, you know, like you could tell somebody at a party, and they just said, oh, this is so cool because it really wasn't hard. It wasn't really what I was used to doing. So that morning I got there and the other thing I did is when I had retired, I had all these peers, customers, vendors, things like that.

Now I was the safe guy and they would call me up and they would tell me, they would tell me, oh man, you know, it's like, I don't know how much longer I could do this kind of thing, you know, and so [00:35:00] I sat there and I, that morning and I thought, man, I have nothing to do other than this silly little container thing and then meeting guys for lunch and I thought to myself I thought well I mean and praying about it and I said hey God if this matters to you I'm gonna do it like it matters to me. And so I really drove into the container thing and if we built this nonprofit that that helps groups all kinds of groups, churches, schools civic groups, work groups, team building kind of activities. And we convert these shipping containers, and we send them around the world and we've sent medical clinics libraries, vocational training facilities. I mean all kinds of stuff. We've sent things to the Navajo Nation here in the United States. Lots of things like that.

But when we first started, we were going to help make the world perfect by giving them facilities to work out of it. Then quickly, we realized that it was about connecting people here, that that's what the containers were, was bringing people [00:36:00] together to serve other people that they never would meet.

It was just a. Straight out service project. Well, it just really took off and it really was a great, even during COVID it became they, a lot of the projects wouldn't allow people to come together and work on them, but they would come out as families and work on them. A family would sign up and the mom and dad and the three little kids would come out and paint and do whatever.

So, it really has turned into a great connecting. And then, you know, the other part with the meeting, you know, peers is that I just became way more intentional about realizing that I had a part I could encourage, esteem and love them love those people and that I could unleash, help unleash their giftedness and that too.

And I've really enjoyed it. I've is and I wouldn't say I do it like a consultant. I would say that I do it like a friend. Which not saying the two can't be the same, but I don't it isn't like I put out a shingle and I go and try to do that. I just I look for opportunities to come alongside people [00:37:00] and make the offer to, to be a friend and just go with it where it is.

And it's really been a cool next chapter for me. So those are the two primary things that I do. And I started by saying a while back that what I loved about my mission statement is it could apply to anything and as I transitioned into the next chapter of my life, I realized that people would say, what are you going to do next?

And I said, you know, I'm not sure what I'm going to do, but I know that I've spent my whole life being prepared to do it. And so, I really will tell you now, I really loved my job, my career, and I felt that I was pretty good at it, but I honestly feel that what I do now is what I was gifted to do. It gives me joy in a way that, and I, and again, I'm, I'm not a guy that had a miserable career. I enjoyed my career. But it gives me just a whole lot of joy being able to see how God can use me and somebody else's life to really [00:38:00] leverage them into amazing things.

Tim Spiker: When you listen to Bart talk about leading, don't you just want to follow him? I mean, that's my reaction when I think about getting to hear all that Bart shared.

I just want to raise my hand and say, I'm in, where are we going coach? And off we go following Bart. There are a couple of things in particular I want to emphasize as we wrap up today's episode. And I want to begin with the idea of leaders trusting first. Bart talked about extending trust to people with the anticipation that they will come through, not withholding it or saying, you know, you've got to run a marathon before I will trust you.

And we talked a little bit about the risk involved in that we talked about the fact that maybe sometimes and he said he's been burned a couple of times. But, on the whole, when you add it all up, that he's gained so much more from trusting first than the opposite idea. [00:39:00] And I want to point out the back side of that equation just for a moment here.

Which is to say, what happens when somebody that you are following, who you respect, what happens when that person comes to you and says, I am trusting you with something important? What's the normal reaction to that? The normal reaction to that is that we step up, we feel a sense of responsibility. We want to reward that person for having extended that trust to us in the first place.

We want to do well, that is the standard response. And so, for those of us that might feel like, oh, it's, it's tough to extend that trust. I want to encourage you to think about that equation. I have an example, a very simple one from my own life. Many years ago, I was helping one of my neighbors move. And the woman

of the house came to me and walked me into their child's [00:40:00] room and stood me next to a dollhouse.

And she said to me, there's something I have for you, especially for you to do. She said, the others I don't trust, but you, I trust. This is our special family heirloom dollhouse. And I would like you to be the one to move it out of the house and onto the truck. Now, as she shared that with me, with people walking all over her home, helping her and her family move.

How do you think I responded to that? Do you think I thought, oh yeah, I can take advantage of her. She's trusting me. Great. No, I have never moved a piece of furniture so carefully in my entire life before or since. And, you know, that dollhouse got into its new home in pristine and perfect condition, just as it was in the original house.

When she said to [00:41:00] me, I trust you and I have something very important for you to do. It took my focus and energy through the roof. So that's just an example of what normally happens when people trust us with important things. We normally have a very positive response. And that's why on the whole over Bart's career, he won significantly more by leading with trust.

Then withholding it. Now there's another part of what Bart shared with us that I want to talk about, which is this idea of worth and value. And it's a part of Bart's worldview. You heard it over and over again, that people have value intrinsically. They have value. They have value beyond what they can give to me as the leader or to the organization, the endeavor that we're invested in.

They just inherently have value and matter. And that type of perspective really [00:42:00] changes the relationship between the leader and the follower. When I see somebody as inherently valuable, that is they're, they're valuable. They're worth my care and attention just because they exist. When that's how I show up, when that's my worldview, then the relationship between myself and the person I'm leading, changes. It shifts from being a transactional relationship to a transformational relationship.

We have a different kind of relationship when that is my worldview about the people around me and the people. That I'm leading now, I have an engineering background and I can be painfully logical at times. And there are some assets to that, but there's also some drawbacks. And when this idea of inherent worth was put in front of me earlier in my life, I really struggled with it.

I had some thoughts about, well, what if we're not reaching our potential? What if we're not doing what we're created to do? You're, you're saying that we're [00:43:00] all of equal value, even if we're not using our gifts to their highest and best use. And then I ran across a book by an author named Chip Dodd. And the book is *The Voice of the Heart*.

And in the opening of the book, Chip Dodd is making the case that people have inherent value. The same idea that Bart was talking about. And as I read through the pages of it, it gave us very simple example. It said, think about a baby when that baby is born. What is that baby capable of doing? And the answer is nothing.

They are helpless. They are there to be served and cared for. And they are producing essentially nothing. And then comes the big question, which is of what value is that child? And I think about my own kids being born. And I'm, I'm stunned by this question of my goodness, they have so much value, even [00:44:00] though they don't have anything to produce or to give.

And in that moment, Chip Dodd, through this book, *The Voice of the Heart*, really woke me up. To a very logical way to look at, yes, indeed, everybody has value regardless of what they're producing. It's true, and it is a huge advantage to have that worldview as we approach the people that we are leading. And that leads me to the question I want to leave you with today.

And that is this, do you see the people you lead as being worthy of your care and attention, regardless of how much they produce for you? This is Tim Spiker reminding you to be worth and to follow us wherever you receive your podcasts. If you've heard something valuable today, please share our podcast with your friends and colleagues.

And if [00:45:00] you're up for it, leave us a five-star review. Thanks for listening.