

BWF_Mary Shippy_Transcript

Mary Shippy: [00:00:00] In a fast-moving world, it's hard to slow down, and we have to slow down to have those conversations, right? We move so fast that we think if I'm heard, it's that you agree with me, whereas slowing down allows me to really hear you and say, I hear these points and I hear these points, but these points I'm not sure about. I think that's tough in a culture right now that wants to move at warp speed.

Tim Spiker: If fostering healthy and effective relationships is a priority for us as leaders, and to be clear, it needs to be, we need to be more like crock pots than microwaves. 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 Dr. Mary Shippy, a veteran executive coach, leadership consultant, and a dear friend of mine. [00:01:00] Dr. Shippy has a distinctly international bent to her work.

Her doctoral thesis was anchored to a multicultural issue, her master's degree is in multicultural studies, and her last 15 years have been spent working with senior executives in Europe, Australia, North America, and Africa. During our conversation, you'll learn the single word that represents the core conclusion of Dr. Shippy's entire doctoral thesis. You'll hear her share about a powerful relational concept that rarely gets discussed in executive leadership circles, and you'll hear how she personally changed my life for the better while standing in a creek outside the office building we shared. But first, you get to hear about three distinct individuals, each of whom influenced how Dr. Shippy thinks and leads today.

Mary Shippy: Harvey Zink, Jim Westgate and Deborah Dale [00:02:00] Brackney. So, Harvey Zink was the Dean of Students in my college when I went to school in Canada. And he is the one that was, had to talk to me because I came into this fairly conservative school as a very liberal woman, and I wanted to run for president of my class.

I think I really pushed him around that, and he allowed me to do that. I was the first woman that had ever been a president of the freshman class ever. I finished my year, I had a blast. And then I went to run for the position of president of the student body. And he's the one that had to have the conversation with me to tell me that women can't be in that position and that I could run for secretary or treasurer.

Tim Spiker: Here's what I'm like, I'm not, I hope everybody else is on the edge of their seat too, because I'm [00:03:00] like, wait a second. He's on the list. This sounds like a story that would not get him on the list. So, tell me more.

Mary Shippy: Yeah, it was my first encounter, Tim, with someone who thought differently than I did. With deep conviction, it set me on a personal journey of really asking very curious and important questions about life and what is possible and what is impossible.

And I think that it was because of that conversation that he had with me that I am where I am today. Because I don't take no as an answer, I take no as a maybe or not quite yet. And he taught me about that. And I thought to myself, what am I going to do with this? And how is this going to shape me?

Tim Spiker: [00:04:00] Wow. Alright, let's go on to Jim. How does Jim make it onto this list for you?

Mary Shippy: I graduated from college, went home to Minnesota, and met a man, Jim Westgate, who was my boss, eventually my boss, in an environment in which he saw me and saw my potential. In a space and time where that potential may not have been seen or realized. And so Jim is still alive. He's had a heart transplant. But I was a, a young 20-year-old. And I was in, again, the church, it was a church, very conservative environment. And Jim was a professor and he had come on to the organization that I was working for, and he just opened doors for me. When [00:05:00] other people possibly would have said, no you can't do this, Jim said, yes, I think you should do this.

It was because of him that I got my master's degree. It was because of him that I taught at a seminary a class. It was because of him that I went where many people wouldn't have gone, and he blocked and tackled for me. And I never knew it. And there is real power in a leader who's willing to see the people really see their potential, their possibilities and to block and tackle for them.

Tim Spiker: We hear time and time again. When we look at our own lives, they're so often as somebody who sees potential in us that either others don't, or sometimes we don't even. And then they take that potential, and they don't do all the work for you, but they do these two things that you've talked about. They open doors, and when you say block and tackle, I think [00:06:00] about removing obstacles. Like I'm going to, I'm going to create space. I'm going to, I'm going to hear you can go now. You still have to go, you still have to go do it, but I see potential in you, and I'm going to open some doors and remove

some obstacles. So many of us have wonderful stories about that. So many good principles wrapped up in that, in that nugget with Jim, which brings us to Debra.

How does Debra make it onto this list for you?

Mary Shippy: Debra Dale Brackney was the first woman leader that I ever worked for. And so, as a woman who was raised in the 70s was born in the 50s, you know, went through my very young ages in the 60s. It wasn't a lot of really well-developed women leaders that I ever saw.

I worked in a predominantly male dominated environment. And when I went to work for this training and development company, Debra was my boss, [00:07:00] and she really taught me the importance of caring for and really developing, cheering. You know, Tim, we talk lots of time when we work together about setting direction, aligning resources, and motivating and inspiring.

And I would say that she taught me what it meant to motivate and inspire. I did a lot of training. I probably trained like 14 or 15 classes a month. So pretty heavy duty. And I remember one morning coming back from a training class and on the time, we didn't have cell phones, we had messages left on our desk phones.

I had this message left on my phone by Debra. And the message was something to the effect of Mary, I just want you to know that I met with one of our clients and they shared with me about how great of a job that you did. [00:08:00] And she went on to tell me very specific things that they had shared with her about my development and training with their employees.

And she thanked me for the good work that I had done. And I had never ever in my life, and I was in my 40s at the time, ever had a boss that was that ever left me a message, you know, to tell me what they had heard. That was pretty phenomenal for me and was a real change point in recognizing that how important that is in a leader's ability to be able to be appreciative and specific with their employees.

I carried and held that message for over two years. I saved it. Because I kept on going back to it and listening to it over and over and over again. It touched me so deeply.

Tim Spiker: We could almost just say, hey, great episode right now. We could just stop and say, just to hear a little bit about, [00:09:00] about each of these

leaders. And, and in some ways, not to oversimplify, but you think about what you're sharing regarding Deborah gosh, we can make it rocket science, but what would happen if we just told people on a regular basis- Genuinely, specifically, as you noted, here's what you did really well that made a difference and we had an intention of that as leaders to really understand the impact and influence that we have and then to live like it, to lead like it, to, to share a message like that with somebody and the fact that you and I are talking about it today.

Just shows how significant it is well beyond even the two years that you saved the message. It helped to land her on this list among other things. And yet here we are talking about a specific voicemail message that you got decades ago. And it just speaks to the profoundness [00:10:00] of seeing people and noting what they've done to reinforce, to encourage, and back to the word that you use there again, to be specific.

Not hey, good job. Not that hey, good job's a terrible thing, but hey, what, what good job? Like, what did I do? What, which part mattered, which part didn't matter. And, and the fact that Debra did that. So that's wonderful. Thank you for taking this on a little trip down Mary Shippy memory lane there to help us think about Harvey, Jim and Debra.

Before we get into some of the content stuff that we want to dig deeply into, I do want to do just another little history piece with Mary Shippy. And that is the part that makes you Dr. Mary Shippy. So, a number of years ago, you said, hey, I'm gonna, I'm going to go do this thing. I'm going to go get my PhD.

And for a little bit, as we start to go into our conversation today, I'd like you to share just a little background on where your studies [00:11:00] were focused and some of the key takeaways that you had from your doctoral studies.

Mary Shippy: I would say that my PhD. started because I was asked to put together a leadership program. It was supposed to be a yearlong leadership program. And I started to do research into leadership. And I realized if I was going to do this, I might as well get some benefit out of it. And so, I decided to do this officially and go for a PhD. I was in my forties at the time. And so, you know, I had an undergrad degree in education, religious education.

I had a degree in intercultural studies, which was really fascinating. And then I had had all this experience in different leadership roles and was doing a tremendous amount of research around really what makes a leader and how a leader develops. What I did with my PhD was it was a interdisciplinary Ph.D. So I brought [00:12:00] together some of my understanding around cultural

differences, because we talk about cultural differences from maybe language groups, but there's also cultural differences in companies and organizations.

There's cultural differences in family culture can have both breadth and depth. A little bit of the work that I did was around some of the probably pre-DEI work, literally, around differences between gender and, you know, the way women learn versus the way men learn. You know, the learning minds and all the studies that were going on at the time.

And I brought that together with management development and a little bit around also psychology. My dissertation was cultural fluidity. And so basically, how does, how do we become more fluid in the way that we absorb and see and observe [00:13:00] what's going on around us? Because that's the only way they get tips, is to kind of be able to read the people that are in their cars. And they're oftentimes an international group of people that drive taxis.

Tim Spiker: What were some of the biggest takeaways as you zeroed in on this idea of cultural fluidity?

Mary Shippy: Curiosity, I feel like, is a mindset. You know, Carol Dweck talks about mindset and the ability to be able to have an open mind or a closed mind.

And an open mind is curious. It sees possibilities where people don't see possibilities. All of our inventions, all of our innovations have come because people have been curious about what is. And the ability to be able to ask questions. Which is like a mindset. I think that, that's really what makes people fluid, is that ability to be able to suspend judgment and to be curious.

Tim Spiker: So when you talk about the ability to ask questions, there's two things that come to mind [00:14:00] as you say that for me, and I'd love to hear your thoughts on it. Part of it causes me to think about the skill of asking questions, but almost always when I think of the word skill, I end up getting a kind of a check in my spirit to say, well, what about the attitude behind the skill?

I feel like if I'm genuinely curious that can cover. And make up for the fact if I'm not particularly skillful in how I ask questions. Now you studied it, so you can, you can verify or deny that. But I, I kind of see two buckets emerging out of that. That is, you know, between, you know, the will and the skill, the true heart desire to, to learn, to know, to understand things they don't know.

And then the more perhaps technical aspect of which words that I choose and how did I ask the questions? Can you talk a little bit about those? Two ideas and in light of your in light of your studies.

Mary Shippy: A bit of [00:15:00] that came from just my experiences. Like, let's just talk about Harvey. I knew that he had a very distinct belief about around the role of women and gender and in leadership, and it hurt.

But it also made me ask the question why? Like, what is he seeing that I'm not seeing, you know? What is the color that's being painted here? I, I can't see it. I don't understand it. Like, I can look at the exact same thing he looks at, and I see something totally different. There's been a lot of people talking about curiosity, and Carol talks about the difference between a fixed mindset and an open mindset.

When you say someone is a man or a woman, versus someone has a different way of thinking. All these kind of physical features that can kind of frame and create boxes for us. And do we accept the boxes? You know, and maybe I was just always a child of [00:16:00] curiosity, but when I read the research that Dweck has been doing over the last 40 years, and her work has, you know, continued on, it's when we honor people around, not the boxes, but it's more the curiosity stuff.

It's like, oh, wow, you work so hard on this. I love the way you came up with this solution. Versus, oh, you're so smart.

Tim Spiker: Something you can do something about versus something you can't do anything. I can't do anything about whatever my intellectual gifting is, but I can do something about using it and working hard and having perseverance and that you're there like, okay, am I going to praise the person for the thing they can't control or the thing that they can?

Mary Shippy: Yes, Tim. And that's the fixed versus learning mindset. So, when I was reading this stuff and working on my PhD, I took my niece as an example. I was playing with her at Christmas time, and we went ice skating. I was raised in Minnesota. I'm a really good ice skater and I know that. She had [00:17:00] never been on skates before.

And so, I spent a whole hour on an open skate telling her how proud I was of the way that she kept on trying things. And you know what? She skated for the whole hour and a half, and she didn't want to go home.

Tim Spiker: Yeah. You're leaning into what she was doing well, even though that she probably looked like a baby fawn who was just born.

Mary Shippy: Yeah. Instead of saying, oh you're doing that wrong. Or you should do this. You know, and so she would ask me questions around how to, how I turn backwards. So, we just danced together and she thought that was so fun. I could have been technical with her. I could have told her lift up your right foot and put it at this angle, but I didn't, you know?

And, and so again, just that kind of experiencing. And I think it's the way that I still work today with people who are learning things is how do I see the [00:18:00] things that are possible? Like, how do I praise the things that can change? Not the things that can't.

Tim Spiker: I want to segue that into, you know, as we talk about this, we're talking about studies we're talking about your studies and we're talking about ideas that can be applied, but I want us to take this step now and go to a very practical application.

Of your work around curiosity and influences this idea of cultural fluidity, but as you've noted, culture can mean a lot of different things, not just kind of our classic definition, but different families and different companies and different departments within the same company, all kind of having different cultures and to make it super practical.

I want to share a story. With those of you that are listening about something that Mary did for me in my life a couple of decades ago, and you can't see her right now. She's smiling because she knows the story that's coming. But Mary and I were working together for a consulting firm, and she was generous enough to take me under her wing [00:19:00] and do some coaching with me.

And she recognized that I had what I would call today, a pretty major flaw that was getting in the way of a lot of things. And so, one day by our office, there was a little creek. And this was the exercise that, that Mary did with me. And ultimately I'll share the impact that it'd have, but I want her to talk about it as well.

She actually took her shoes off and she walked out into the creek and she said, okay, I'm going to do something now. And then I'm, I want you to tell me, you know what you see, Tim. And so, she, she went about, oh, she went about 10 yards away. And then she came at me very quickly. Very, I would even say aggressively, she marched up to me in a bit of a huff.

And then she asked me to describe what I had seen. And that is when I outed myself. That is when I proved [00:20:00] just how much work and development that I needed, because I didn't describe a woman who walked towards me aggressively in a huff. I wrote a whole magnificent story about motive and intent and what must be going on.

And I was so oblivious. That I was inventing these things. I mean, I was totally clueless. And so, I went through my explanation with Mary and I remember you simply said, no, Tim, no. What you saw was a woman who walked towards you aggressively in a huff. And the rest of it, you just made it up. I think you said it a little more skillfully.

You probably put a little nicer, you put some cream and sugar on it so that I could, I could receive it. But that was the essence of the story. And it was such an important moment for me in my life. [00:21:00] To see the assumptions and judgments that I had towards other people. It was hurting my relationships. It was hurting my work.

I mean, there really wouldn't be any aspect of life that it wouldn't hurt. And from that day forward. The impact of Dr. Mary Shippy in my life has been profound because that little time that we had together in that tiny Creek behind the office building, where we worked has just stuck with me to remind me, watch the story writing, careful what you assume and getting back to the thing that we're talking about here is be curious. and the end result of that kind of encapsulated in a, in a very tiny phrase that has gone with me since that day that I probably wear out in my life. And if you're really paying attention, you're going to notice what I said.

And that little, tiny, wonderful, awesome phrase is tell me more about that. There's a hundred variations on that that work very well [00:22:00] as well, but tell me more about that simple idea that even when I disagree with somebody, even when I think that they're completely off the rocker, maybe especially when they appear to be completely off their rocker to say, tell me more about that, which has led me to a whole nother application in my life and hopefully in the lives of leaders. We influence it, which is this when something doesn't make sense. There's something I don't know, as opposed to the previous temptation, which was when something doesn't make sense. That person's crazy. That person's insane. That person's dumb, whatever, however you want to fill that in.

But instead saying, hey, When there's, when something doesn't make sense, there's something I don't know. So, why don't I try to understand the thing that I don't know? So that's a long story, but it deserves a long story for a couple of

reasons. The first one is I am eternally thankful to you, Mary Shippy for spending that time with me that day. It affects. [00:23:00] Everything that I do now, including my marriage and our relationship with my kids, which isn't to say that I handle it perfectly now, but I promise you, it's better than it would have been. But on top of that, that goes forth through me now and makes its way into all of the leadership development work that I do.

And so, I am so, so thankful that you did that with me, but as I unpack that story and share those things, I would love for people to hear more about this idea from your perspective, because you had the insight that you've continued to have insight around this idea in helping people like you helped me to be more curious.

Mary Shippy: Yeah. So that little model it's called the Ladder of Inference. And if you go online, you can find lots of pictures of the Ladder of Inference. It is kind of a core feature to a lot of books and a lot of writers coming out of the late nineties. [00:24:00] Into 2000, and it just basically talks about the fact that we are meaning making machines, and I used this still in my work today.

I was just in a conflict resolution with two different teams, and I actually brought a ladder into the room. And I climbed the ladder as I talked about the Ladder of Inference. Because what had gone on with this team is they had just made all these assumptions. They had seen a little bit of data, and they had gone on to write a whole story about it.

And once you write the story, then you only see the data that's going to support your story. Yeah, and that's how conflict happens. And it's interesting to me because in 2016, I think I went and did some work with Brene Brown, and she's a researcher that has also works on leadership and it's done her PhD in her life study on shame and how it shows up.

But she has a line that she used. So, mine was tell me [00:25:00] more. Hers is the story I'm writing is It's the same ladder of inference it's the same concept, is that our minds are making up stories and we need to back them down to see all the data set that is there. Just one more piece of information for your listeners, you know I've also done work with David Rock and the Neural Leadership Institute. And they also speak about this as well. And now the brain science can come into us and there's data points. And our minds are so quick. Our neocortex is so quick that it is really true. We just write stories because we need to make meaning. And it is the ability in the midst of that to hold back and to be curious to open our minds and recognize we just make stories up because we want meaning and we oftentimes don't have all the pieces.

So those are some just research data points that continue to [00:26:00] fine tune the story, Tim, that in our experience in that small little creek.

Tim Spiker: Yeah. Let's, let's take it very specifically into the space of leadership. That's where you do work, your work. That's where I do my work. And we think about this idea of, of being curious kind of walking back our desire to make too many inferences and write stories.

As you think back on your career. And watching leaders lead some, exceptionally well, and some exceptionally not, what does it look like for leaders when they are not curious enough? What does it look like for leaders when they do that work internally to not just jump to the conclusion and stay curious?

Mary Shippy: When I see this not evidenced in leadership and in high leadership in companies, what I oftentimes see Tim, is a combination of [00:27:00] hubris and arrogance and a little bit of ignorance. Maybe that's the definition of hubris is arrogance and ignorance kind of married, but it's just the idea that they don't know what they don't know and they act on it.

You know, oftentimes when I'll do organizational development or come into a situation, it's because a leader is having a problem. Not because everything is wonderful. And I think that there is this feeling, which is really intriguing to me. And maybe it is kind of our desire in our country right now to maybe have someone who can save us. But I think the people who save us is ourselves. And so, this is what I think is really important for leadership. And that is the ability not to know and not be afraid of it. I think that we are in a culture sometimes we get into this kind of fear frame, Tim, that we feel like we have to know everything and so we make up answers.

And we see little pieces of data points and we [00:28:00] have to speak to it versus saying, you know, that is an excellent question. I have been thinking about that and I don't have an answer right now. We're going to have to kind of walk through this one step at a time. There are a lot of factors going on. That's a more truthful answer than to say, well, you know, we've had some hard times, but you know, I'm looking forward to the future and we're gonna just nail it, you know, and I'm looking at, I'm looking at the leader and I'm looking at what's going around, we've just laid off, you know, 500 people and that doesn't help me. But what does help me as a leader says this is a real tough time. I don't have all the answers, but we're going to walk through it together. I'm willing to do that. And I think that's a combination for me, Tim, that humility, the recognizing as a leader, kind of that right sizing of myself that I'm not over

egoed or under egoed. I know what I'm good at. I know what I'm not good at everything that you talk to.

Tim Spiker: It's [00:29:00] amazing to me when we think about the complexities of the world and the complexities of organizational life, the complexities of leadership and how Such a simple and not necessarily easy, but such a simple idea as curiosity, how that can show up and bridge gaps, big gaps, relationally, even between people who don't necessarily agree.

To say, you know, maybe at the end of this conversation, we don't necessarily agree about the direction for the department and where we're going to head. But rather than be in a blind conflict with you, I'd rather be in an educated one where we both really do understand each other, even though we're going to go another direction and how that creates, Even some cohesion amongst a lack of agreement, at least some relational cohesion where you're seeing the other person and say, okay, I'm going to have to go along with a strategy I don't agree with, but at least I've been heard. At least I've been understood. At least I understand where, and yes, there are complexities, but it's amazing to me how so many times the [00:30:00] solution to the complexity is actually something quite simple and, and in this case, it's, can I check my need to have an answer in my ego long enough to say, Hey, tell me more about that. Or here's the story that I'm writing and getting into that.

Mary Shippy: And I think, Tim, in a fast-moving world, it's hard to slow down. And we have to slow down to have those conversations, right? We move so fast that we think if I'm heard, it's that you agree with me.

Whereas slowing down allows me to really hear you. And say, I hear these points and I hear these points, but these points, you know, I'm not sure about, I think that's tough in a culture right now that wants to move at warp speed.

Tim Spiker: Well, I want to take it from there to another word, and that is the word forgiveness.

And we don't talk very much about forgiveness, especially in for-profit business world. What does it mean? And what role from all [00:31:00] of your years of education and consulting, what is it about the word forgiveness that you feel like we as leaders need to keep in mind and have at the forefront in order to help us be more successful?

Mary Shippy: I think the word forgiveness is so difficult, Tim, because I don't think we have a really great understanding of it. I think that there's a lot of

moral and religious overtones, you know, some boxes, some fixed mindset around forgiveness. So, I'm just gonna share not very eloquently, what I think it means for me.

Okay. And I, I think especially in the environment that we work in, in organizations, because basically, organizations are a network of relationships. And those relationships are less than perfect and less than predictable. So, for me, perhaps [00:32:00] a word that I land on with forgiveness is the word grace.

And so, I think that grace is at the heart of forgiveness. And basically, I've come to believe that it's the ability to see that anything that someone else's does that hurts or pains me or is difficult for me to understand could also be something that I do in the right circumstance, in the right situation.

It's the humility to see myself as not so much different than the other person. I would say that this has been my probably my deep work over the last three to five years in my family. And it is that every time I hear my youngest brother, who I dearly love and sometimes I don't like, rage about what he hates in this world, [00:33:00] I ask myself, what about that is in me? What about that is in me? I am him, and he is me.

Tim Spiker: It reminds me of a phrase that many of us have heard before, but the simple idea of, but for the grace of God, go I.

Mary Shippy: Yes, Tim. And I may not be able to say that, you know, necessarily in my corporate environments, but that's what I'm thinking. And it's not just something that I teach or coach, but it is come back to me in a very divisive world that we live in.

I don't, doesn't matter where you fall on the spectrum. How do I find mercy and grace and the ability to see that what is happening in this world is not so far removed from and, you know, it's easy to make everybody it's versus human. And how am I? That same piece of things, and I think maybe Tim, honestly, there are a [00:34:00] couple of things that I just want to say that I've learned from you.

I think the other thing that is a part of this whole concept of forgiveness and it intertwines, I don't think that it's as easy as just a word. There are so many things that are involved in this, but the willingness to start over with people. You know, and I've seen, Tim, you do that with me, like there are times when we haven't agreed and you wish I would do things different, but the ability to receive your input.

You know, your input into me and not dismiss it, but say what's the insight and what are the things that I'm missing that Tim sees that I need to work on, you know, and so I want you to know that you have taught me a lot over the years as I've worked with you in different situations in different settings, like it's not just this one way.

But you have also been my teacher, and I think that's really also a part of that [00:35:00] humanizing and what allows me to forgive and have mercy and all those things, like, you know, it's not just one, but I think it's the openness for leaders to receive feedback, to look for the glove compartment of truth, not to dismiss it not to get past the hurt of all receiving feedback, you know, because it always hits us in different ways and to see what's really there that I'm not seeing.

Tim Spiker: Thank you for your kind words, but the what part of this is true? What part of this is something that I need to at least pause on? Maybe I don't agree with what you're the feedback that you're giving me, but you are at least telling me that how the two of us collide results in this type of experience for you.

You know, even if you're kind of placing blame at my feet in a way that I don't agree with, at least you're telling me about how you experience in me, which is, that's valuable in and of itself. Now, as, as we talk about forgiveness and [00:36:00] grace, and I'll remind listeners, Mary is a leadership consultant to for profit organizations.

And so, in the for-profit performance based space where we have to at some level, when, how does this idea of forgiveness and grace, how does it mix into the idea of performance? How does it mix in with the idea of accountability as you talk with your clients and I'm just, I know that they're asking the question.

I know that people listening are asking the question that it's okay, this sounds really good, but what about performance and what about accountability?

Mary Shippy: A couple of things come to mind, Tim. I have been pulled into situations where literally \$82 million is going to be lost because of a project that is 9, 10, 12-months behind schedule.

And when you go back and look at how this got there, it had a lot to do with story writing and lack of [00:37:00] communication. People digging in their heels, refusing to listen to other people, and that is a lot of money to lose. And so, I see it happening all the time and I actually went in that way, I went in with

that ladder exercise to this organization that had created camps on either side of the river and we're basically lobbing stones back across one another and in the process was losing millions of dollars. This stuff is that we feel like it's so soft, is the stuff that creates a lot of times in organizations huge potential for loss of profit. And it's hard to imagine that it is comes down to these things about, can I really forgive someone?

You know, am I willing to stop throwing the stone? No, you stop throwing first. You know, I feel like lots of times [00:38:00] like we're on the playground right with adults in these environments and trying to create win-win solutions.

Tim Spiker: Is it hard to get people to think about and talk about forgiveness and grace after you say look, here's the amount of money that's on the line, and I think this is at the heart of the issue, are they, are they still resistant, or are they like, okay, let's talk about it?

Mary Shippy: I would say it's hard, Tim, because it means that I have to own up to my own culpability. That there were some things that I did wrong. And, you know, I sat in the, this, this meeting and I literally watched one of the directors say, you know, I'm just going to raise my hand, and this is leadership to me. Raise your hand and say, I am sorry. I am sorry for not having these conversations sooner with you for the things I and my team did that has brought us here today. [00:39:00] And so when a leader is willing to take the stand, what you see is this collective breath happening in the room. You know, it's like everybody all of a sudden lets out their breath at the same time and then the conversations really start. The real conversation start.

Tim Spiker: I bet that everybody listening can not only hear those words but can feel like I am right now what it's like to be in a room when a leader has the has the willingness, the humility, the courage to say, Yep, we've contributed to this. I'm sorry for how I helped to get us here.

Mary Shippy: And it takes multiple steps to get there. Like I met with each of the teams and spend time with them saying, what do we have to shift? To make this culture, to make this project successful. So getting them in a room and talking to one another and having those conversations and opening the doors for themselves with [00:40:00] each other, like the in one of these rooms, literally listening to the leader say the senior leader, see, you know, the top guy, the president leader say to a project manager, I apologize for not hearing you.

You saw this problem coming and I literally heard what you say, but I feel like I dishonored you because I didn't take it as seriously as it needed to be. So that

happens in the private room, right? You know, it happened on both sides. Like there has to be cracks and the willingness to see both culpability on both sides.

And then you bring them together and you have a leader do this. It is a mic drop, you know, but you've also kind of prepped them. That it's not just as simple to say that it's all your fault or all your fault or I'm right, you're wrong and move into that situations where we're willing to say I did some things right and I did some things not so right. And then [00:41:00] to be able to lay an environment where shame is not there. It's not about an individual being bad, but it's about some behavioral shifts and changes that needs to happen to him. You know, taking it off of, you know, as Brene would say, shame is all about me being defective.

Whereas, you know, what we really need to talk about in these projects, in these situations, it's not about me being bad, it's really about what are the behaviors. you know, that kind of little bit of being able to really look outside of thinking that it's all about me and my ego. It's really more about me and my behavior.

This is what makes me believe in people, even the most hardened people. You know, I went into the, the leaders of this project went in thinking that there was no way this, anything could ever happen. And this really makes me believe in the potential of who we are as human beings. [00:42:00]

Tim Spiker: It is so fun for me to get to share with you Somebody who has made such an important impact on my own life and somebody who is out there in the world doing great work Around leadership development.

So, I am so glad you got to hear From Dr. Mary Shippy today, there are a couple of things I want to emphasize for us. As we wrap up this episode, of course, we heard a lot about curiosity and forgiveness, but there was a phrase in there that Mary mentioned that I think is so important. For all of us to just note for a moment.

And she said this, organizations are a network of relationships. You know, that's not a complicated idea. It's probably not even in any way, a new idea. And yet it really caught my attention as we were visiting. And I want it to catch your attention as well, because here's the bottom line for that. As we think about leading [00:43:00] people, as we think about leading organizations, we have to keep this in mind that organizations, or you could say departments, or you could say families, these are a network of relationships. And so, anything that we can do, anything that we can work on, anything that we become that will foster healthier relationships around us and within that network is something that's

going to make that group, that company, that department more effective. And I would even take the next step to say anything that we can do to foster exceptionally healthy relationships is not only going to make us more effective, but it's going in the long run to make us more efficient in whatever it is that we're doing, including in the for-profit business space.

Because if you were to extract, just think about this for a minute. If you were to extract all the unnecessary mayhem. Time and energy and yes, [00:44:00] even money that gets spent through opportunity costs of broken relationships and organizations. If our organizations were just filled with healthy relationships, wouldn't we then be putting all of our time and energy.

Towards solving problems instead of coming at one another instead of really inefficient interactions instead of having to tiptoe instead of wasted energy and effort by the meeting that happens after the meeting, you know, those meetings, the one where we talk about what we really should have talked about during the meeting or the meeting that happens before the meeting where we have to have a meeting in order to make sure that the meeting goes well.

See, when we have exceptionally healthy relationships and organizations, we get to extract from our activities, all that sideways energy, which makes us both more effective and more efficient, even in the bottom line of what we're producing. And so just keying off of that [00:45:00] phrase from Mary, I hope it gives us a little pause to remember that organizations, any organization truly is a network of relationships and whatever we can do.

As leaders for us ourselves to be healthier in those relationships and to encourage greater development, greater human development so that others have healthier relationships as well. Anytime we make those investments, we are going to be making the enterprise better. So that leads me to the question I want to leave you with today.

And that is this. Are you looking at the places where you lead as a network of relationships? This is Tim Spiker reminding you to be worth following 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 you're up for it, leave us a five-star review. Thanks for listening.[00:46:00]