BWF_Peter Anderton Transcript

Peter Anderton: [00:00:00] **There is no waiting for, I need to hear something new. And I get frustrated sometimes when it comes to leaders, it's like they want to learn the new thing because they want to know something new and they're not applying what they already know, and it's not changed them. And what we've got to recognize in leadership is that we have to change if anything else.**

Tim Spiker: Is it possible that most of leadership could be summarized by just two simple rules? Our guest today says, yes. 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 Peter Anderton, executive coach, keynote speaker, and designer of high performance teams. Peter was educated as an engineer and began his career in systems and process management. He then [00:01:00] made the unique move, especially for an engineer, into an organizational development role while working for 3M.

He eventually launched his own consultancy called Internal Alignment and, for more than a decade now, has helped senior leaders and their teams realize the fullness of their potential. What does that look like? Well, it means helping them become far less miserable to themselves and to others, while producing clarity, alignment, and typical ROIs of over 2,000%.

Oh, and by the way, Peter has a TEDx talk that has been viewed online over a million times. In my discussion with Peter, you'll get a taste of Peter's early days as an overconfident plant manager whose hubris literally created a mess. You'll hear the two simple rules he believes every leader needs to live by, and you'll hear how to pursue mastery of those two rules.

But before all that, we begin with two teachers [00:02:00] Peter had early in life, who, when combined, create an exceptional example of leadership that Peter draws from even today.

Peter Anderton: I can find my thinking going back to my school days, actually. I can remember there were two particular teachers that stood out for me at school, and they were very, very different characters.

One was my English teacher, Mrs. Hughes, and she taught me to articulate what I was thinking. She, she got me on the debating society and we get, you know, we get involved in all sorts of interesting stuff. And she really encouraged me to think. And that was a really, really important part of my grounding.

But the other one was my chemistry teacher, Mr. Bowen. And he was a very stern teacher. He was a very fair teacher, but he was a very stern teacher. And there's almost, in my head, I've got this like alter ego. I've got the encouraging Mrs. Hughes, and the, I'm not going to take any [00:03:00] messing Mr. Bowen. And I think when I bring those two things together, there's a really nice combination in terms of what leadership is about.

Because we get a lot of stuff coming through with leadership about, kindness, and I think it's a really important part of leadership, but a lot of people confuse kindness with niceness. You know, the nice leader doesn't have the tough conversation. The kind leader does because they know that it needs to be had.

Mr. Bowen was kind. He didn't take, he didn't take any messing, but he'd have the conversation. I can remember. I don't know if it's the same in the state, we'd have mock exams and my particular result for a key grade for chemistry was disappointing. And he sat me down and told me in no uncertain terms how disappointed he was with me and how I needed to sort myself out.

And he absolutely got me and I worked, he would do anything he could for the students. If anybody wanted to learn, he would provide any support that he [00:04:00] possibly could. He worked incredibly hard for them, but of course I had to play my part. I still remember, as I said, from the school days, this, almost this balance of the two things, the two, the two perspectives on leadership of the challenge and the support, they've shaped my view of leadership, and they've also shaped how I work with my clients as well.

The key thing for me is I care, genuinely care about the clients that I work with. I provide a lot of support, but I'm not going to give them an easy ride. I am going to challenge them. I am going to prod them. I am going to poke them. I am going to hold up the mirror. To make sure that they get the shifts that they need. Does that make sense?

Tim Spiker: 100%. And as soon as you started in there with kind versus nice, I knew that we were gonna have a lot of fun today because you know, I have, there's a certain segment of the United States that has a reputation for being particularly nice. And from a hospitality standpoint, it's wonderful.

It's great, you know, to give you [00:05:00] the shirt off their back and really be caring. But I've lived in that environment for a little while and watching the nice come out, which means we don't have those hard conversations. And it's certainly not true of every person in that particular geography, but there was a real pull to have conversations about people rather than with people.

And, and ultimately it wasn't kind because people didn't get the feedback that they needed. And the irony of it is that they didn't get to hear what they needed to hear because the leader frankly was in most cases afraid to have difficult conversations. They were in this regard, this would be a little bit of a harsh analysis for me, but I would actually call that leader selfish.

They were so committed to avoiding an uncomfortable moment for themselves that they would spare. Professionals, the feedback that they needed to hear in order to get better. And boy, when I choose my short-term comfort [00:06:00] over your long-term development. I don't know of another word to call it besides selfish.

Peter Anderton: It's absolutely the case and I think that's what drives a lot of poor leadership that we see in the world around us today. Where we're focused on ourselves and the more we are focused on ourselves. The less we've ever got the potential to actually create the relationships we need, help people be the best that they can be and get them moving in the right direction.

We've absolutely got to turn that whole thing on its head. But of course, you know, you know, you know my view on rule number one of leadership. The first thing that as leaders we need to understand is it's not about us. And until we get our heads round that fundamental principle, we will never be what we have the potential to be as leaders and we'll never have the impact that we could have.

Tim Spiker: So, we're going to go on to rule number two. So just teaser for everybody. We're going to, we're going to get there, but let's stick with rule number one for a moment. It sounds very, very simple. And I would imagine that most people listening and be like, [00:07:00] yeah, sure. That makes sense. It's going to be about the people you're leading.

It's going to be about the mission of the organization. It's not going to be about yourself. Very easy to say. People rarely disagree with that, but let's talk about the practical realities with your clients. When you step into circumstances, and you see that people are not leading by rule number one.

What, what does that look like? And how do you hold up the mirror? To help them see that rule number one is not currently being followed.

Peter Anderton: Well, it's a really interesting exercise. If anybody listening to this podcast just gets a piece of paper out for the moment, and puts two columns, and thinks about, okay, then, in the left hand column, the worst people

you've ever worked for, you know, what sort of things did they do? Okay. And how did you feel? And then the right hand column, the best people you've ever worked for and what kind of things did they do and how, how did you feel?

And what's really interesting is how rule number one [00:08:00] comes into sharp relief because at the moment I've kind of plucked rule number one out of thin air Yeah, and we and we were talking earlier on the others I could go back to all sorts of examples from ancient history to understand how for millennia There's been an understanding that leadership is not about dominating other people.

It's an act of service, but I don't think we even need to go to history to understand that we can look at our own experiences. So, if we think for a moment, I think it's the worst person you've ever worked for, and if you don't have to name them, it's probably best if you don't just in case they're listening, unless you want to name them in which case..

Tim Spiker: no no no, but I, but I, but I do have somebody in mind, go ahead.

Peter Anderton: You do have somebody in mind. Okay. Do just tell me a couple of things, you know, two or three things that they used to do.

Tim Spiker: Well, the number one thing is the thing that I, that I just mentioned a second ago, talked about people instead of with them repeatedly and involved droves of people in problems rather than just having the conversation with the individual that [00:09:00] needed to be had.

Peter Anderton: So that's a key one. And that, and that all comes together then, is avoiding the tough conversations, talking about people rather than with them, bringing a whole lot of people into a problem, making it much, much bigger than it needs to be, when it could have just been a conversation with that individual.

So that's a good one. Give me another one.

Tim Spiker: In this particular case, this person, and I know this from direct conversation, but carried enormous amounts of insecurity. Was just not convinced that they belonged in the leadership position that they were in and in that I had some empathy towards that in my better moments, of course that was a lot tougher when that impacted me personally, which it did.

Peter Anderton: And what how did that manifest itself in their behavior? What sort of things were they doing with you and with the team that kind of belayed that belied that insecurity?

Tim Spiker: Well, a little bit of it showed up in the earlier thing that we were talking about because there were so many other conversations than like, I don't necessarily think if I'm that person, I don't think that my words carry enough value.

[00:10:00] So I've got to, I got to get a bunch of other people to back me up before I'll just have the conversation with you. So, I've involved 10 other people in what was a minor issue primarily because I'm insecure just to tell you that you're underperforming or this isn't going well so that it would show up in that way, but it would also show up in silence in meetings.

Because of essentially, you know, fight or flight or freeze and, and freeze was the path for that particular leader. And so there we would be an important senior leadership conversation, and there was literally silence coming from this person, we didn't get to hear a perspective that needed to be heard.

So that, that insecurity would show up in a couple of different ways.

Peter Anderton: Yeah, that makes sense. Okay. And then obviously in that scenario when you need them to speak out in support of the team, when you need them to have your back, they're just sitting there in silence because they're too afraid to say anything.

Let's switch over because there is a point here. So, bear with me. Let's switch over to the best you've ever worked for. Okay. Tell me a couple [00:11:00] of things to the best person you ever worked for. And it could be one person. It could be a mix of different people. What kind of things did they do?

Tim Spiker: Yeah, I think of one person in particular who really took a lot of fire from above him in the organization wasn't concerned about his own upward mobility.

He was just kind of standing in front of our team, encouraging us to do what he considered to be great work. And if anybody above his station in the organization came after us, He didn't, he didn't concern himself with his own promotion possibilities. He just encouraged us to continue to do what he thought was really, really great. And he, he basically took the fire for us without concern for his own his own promotion possibilities.

Peter Anderton: I love that. And, you know, in passing, any manager that wants to deliver change in their area, if they're not prepared to do that, they're never going to deliver change because you, you have to take fire for your team if anything's going to shift. So that's a lovely example. Give me, give me another, give me another one. What else did they do?

Tim Spiker: Another one would have [00:12:00] been, this is from that same individual, he had an opportunity. It was so perfect for him an elevated leadership position in an industry he was completely familiar with significantly better compensation and I still remember i was in the car driving when he called me he didn't call me to tell me that he was taking this job he called me to make sure that I would be okay if he took this job. And it was just, it was an amazing moment because of course I was like, man, you have to take this job. Are you crazy? But he knew how much back to the cover issue, he knew how much support he was giving me organizationally. He knew how much cover he was providing for me.

And he knew relatively speaking, what was going to happen or what could potentially happen. And so, he called me to ask me if I would be okay if he took this, it took this position and I just, I'll never forget it. I still, I'm still kind of blown away about it, but that's, that's the kind of person that he is. [00:13:00]

Peter Anderton: That's fantastic. I mean, this just says it all. So, let's, let's just contrast. I mean, we could keep going with this, this, but just contrast the two for now. So, so the worst one you ever worked for. You know, they'll talk about people, not with them. They'll involve everybody else in a problem that could have just been dealt with by having the tough conversation. They're insecure. And when you need support from them, they're silent. Nothing's forthcoming. There's, there's nothing there. And actually their focus in the organization is just to tell the layer above them, whatever they want to hear rather than actually sending the truth. In any, in any scenario, a lot of self-preservation.

Yeah, absolutely. And the, and the, and the word here is self here, because the question is when you think of the worst person you ever worked for, where is the focus of their attention? Is it on you or is it on themselves?

Tim Spiker: Yeah, it's on themselves. You know, what's amazing about this as we unpack this, Peter is this worst leader that I'm describing.

If you were to meet this person. One of the nicest people you would ever meet very, very pleasant person, not combative, very get along. You [00:14:00] would not meet this person and be put off by this person. Very, very nice.

Peter Anderton: But one of the, you know, one of the scariest things to watch out for this dangerous thing is a manager and be aware of the manager who is focused on themselves.

Always, because when we flip into the other column and we talk about the best one you ever worked for where, you know, he's, he's taking fire from above. All he's concerned about is you being able to do good work. And then when he gets this once in a lifetime opportunity that he'd be an idiot to refuse.

He's concerned about how are the team going to cope and how will they be and how do they feel about him moving on and then losing that air cover. Where is the focus of his attention? Is he on himself or is it on the team? So, it's, you know, what we find is, you know, and going back to your earlier question about what are the factors here, the common denominator that separates the worst people we've ever worked for and the best we've ever worked for is rule number one.

You know, the worst, it doesn't matter how long [00:15:00] we make that list, we just pick two or three things. We could keep going, oh, they didn't listen, they micromanaged, okay, they took all the credit. All of that stuff, you know, the typical list we could write. Yeah, it's all about themselves. And then we write the list on the right on the right-hand side for the best managers ever.

We build on the stuff we've talked about here. Are they empowered? They allowed you to make mistakes, but of course made you learn from those mistakes. The list goes on and on. They had time for you even when they were under pressure because their focus is on you. They get rule number one. But it is interesting, your question is really interesting because it's not enough to know rule number one and it's quite interesting.

I speak at a lot of conferences, and I realize over the years I've always, I've almost made a commercial mistake here because people think that's it, two rules, that's all I need to know. Job done. It's one thing simplifying it, but what I, what I realized over the years is that there's three stages to these rules. [00:16:00]

First of all, you need to know rule number one of leadership, but then I would articulate, you need to get it. I mean, like get what that means in practice. And then of course you need to apply it. And there is a stage, there is a process you go through. It's not enough being able to quote rule number one.

You have to go through that process. And, and going back to one of your earlier questions about my origin story, I would love to sit here as a leadership guru who's done amazing things and has all of the answers. Most of my lessons from leadership have been about getting it monumentally wrong. You know, I've learned more from my mistakes and my failures than I ever have from my successes.

I pretty much learned everything I needed to know about leadership from a biscuit in the UK referred to as chocolate Hob Knobs. I'm not sure what it would be in the U. S. So, it's like an oat biscuit with a chocolate layer on the top. So, I'm sure there's an equivalent somewhere in the States. And I was a young hotshot.

I was brought [00:17:00] into this factory as somebody who'd really changed the way things were done. They had high hopes for me. The pressure was there. And originally, I worked on like a savory cheese snack line and we did great stuff there with a product called Mini Cheddars. And then they decided to move me onto the problem child of the entire factory, which was the chocolate obnob line.

It was a highly automated line. So, I went from a team of like 60 people down to a team of eight. And I was young enough and arrogant enough to think that the fact that the two managers before me had left with nervous breakdowns. Would not be a problem. I would be fine. I could solve this It would not be an issue at all and the whole experience nearly broke me I I'm a very upbeat positive person most of the time anyway And yet there I was Just staring into the abyss, wondering how I got to this point, because I was working, I was working incredibly long hours.

I was solving everything. [00:18:00] I mean, I was doing good work, but everywhere there was an issue, I was there trying to fix it. And I had fantastic ideas. I had fantastic solutions, wonderful work, but somehow managed to completely miss the fact that I actually had a team of people that I was there to be working with.

Cause at that time I thought it was all about me. It was all about my effort. It was all about my blood, my sweat, my tears. It was about my solutions. And in honesty, it was about my ego because all the pressure was on. Look, this guy's going to show us how it's done. And there I am. My worst ever shift saw 10 tons of biscuits on the floor.

That's a lot of biscuit. Okay? And in the food industry, you're only as good as your last shift. So that was that was not a good shift. And we had, we just had problems everywhere. And I'd love to say I learned my lesson at the time. It's only looking back on how monumentally wrong I was, that I've reflected [00:19:00] on it.

I don't even if you've ever found the same thing, wouldn't it be great to learn the lesson there and then, but sometimes I found the lessons for me have come back like 2, 3, 4, 5 years later, the pennies dropped, and I thought, you idiot. You've got a team of people there and the essence of rule number one that's so key from a leadership perspective is that if you really and this is the second stage when you get rule number one so you can't just know it when you get rule number one when I work with my clients there's one statement I try to get tattooed on the inside of their eyelids.

Metaphorically speaking, which is it's not your job to deliver the result. It's your job to deliver the team who deliver the result. And until you make that mindset shift, nothing's moving further forward. You've got to recognize there's a shift because do you know what? We've all been there in a time of crisis.

Well, we need to get down in there in the trenches with the team. We need to roll up our sleeves and get [00:20:00] stuck in. And any leader needs to be able to do that. That's an important part of leadership. However, too often, and this comes back to being nice again versus being kind. We think we're helping the team out because we're constantly down there in the trenches, fixing problems here, solving things there.

And yet in reality, while we're busy working away side by side, we're failing the team terribly because nobody's working out how to get out of the trenches. Nobody's working out how to get out of the mess. That we're actually in. Everybody's just trying to deal with the waves of biscuits that are coming towards us from the oven.

Because of course you can't stop the oven, or all the biscuits get burnt inside. There's this wave of stuff coming towards you whether you're ready to take it or not.

Tim Spiker: What, what clicks somebody from just knowing something to getting it?

Peter Anderton: So, when I work with leaders the program I run called original leadership and the premise of this is can we just stop saying, Oh, it's a

[00:21:00] new world. we need a new kind of leadership. And let's please recognize that leadership has been around for a very long time. What we need to do is get the basics right. And my argument is let's go right back to the core. Let's go back to the origin of leadership and understand how it all fits together. But in that program, I typically work with around 10 different leaders from different businesses.

So, I can, I can, I can run it as an in house program. But my favorite version is when we're bringing a range of different leaders together from a whole range of different businesses. And the way we work is that whilst there are things that I want to cover and there's materials, of course, that I've created. We spend Two days and then there's a one day follow up about, you know, several weeks further down the line.

It's very discussion based, so we are forming this together. It's not me sitting there at the front of the room lecturing them and telling them [00:22:00] what they need to know and how they need to do better. It's not, it's not a remedial session for broken leaders where I sit there and wag the finger at them It's a masterclass where we're co creating What it is, the shift that we need to make. And what I find that's really powerful here is because they're involved in the process, they're not being lectured here, they've got some real skin in the game of what we create as part of this process, that's when the mindset starts to shift. Because otherwise we're into just the telling people, we're not forming it.

So, I have to draw it from them. I can't, I can't just tell them the two rules and then the work is done. I have to draw it from them. As part of that process, whether we're working together as a group, or whether I'm working with them on a one to one basis, for them to really get it. It's not enough just to spell it out.

So, it comes through from the discussion, it comes through from the questions that we're asking, it comes through from getting them to [00:23:00] reflect on themselves, and getting them to open up properly. So that we get into a stage where we're willing to be vulnerable with each other, willing to get it wrong, willing to understand where we've made mistakes over the years and learn from those. And I think when you get into that state of mind, you're ready to get it.

Tim Spiker: So, you're talking about engaging people in their own learning and obviously a quick phrase like it's not about us as leaders, true as it may be. Easy to nod along and still not quite really understand until we kind of sit knee to knee and unpack that, look at our own careers, look at the lives of other people that we've been close to and say, oh, yeah, let me let me talk about the worst and best leader that I've ever worked for.

Let me see, oh, yeah, that that phrase accounts for so much of the difference between those two. Now I get it, you know, as we as you go deeper into the dialogue.

Peter Anderton: Well, and of course, the problem is as well. We're all very good at judging everybody else's [00:24:00] behaviors and yet all we focus on is our intent, isn't it?

So, when we get it wrong, when we, I didn't mean it like that. That's not what I intended. My wife will tell you I do this all the time, so I'm not immune to it. But for everybody else, we judge their actions. But when it comes to ourselves, we judge our motives. And therefore, we excuse ourselves from poor leadership behavior when we should be holding ourselves accountable.

Leadership, it's not a hat you put on when you come into work, it's about who you are, it's, you know, it's a mindset, and unless you think that way, I, there's too many people out there, and they're trying to, they're trying to gather the next tool or technique, or there's a search for the silver bullet, you know, that, oh, this is going to solve all my leadership problems, and people will magically do whatever I need them to do and everything will be great.

And I'll walk down the street and the birds will fly out of the air and land on my shoulders and it'll just be fab. Okay. And it's just nonsense. [00:25:00] It's complete nonsense. There is no waiting for, I need to hear something new. And, and, and I get frustrated sometimes when it comes to leaders. They want to learn the new thing because they want to know something new and they're not applying what they already know. And it's not changed them. And what we've got to recognize in leadership is that we have to change if anything else is going to change.

Tim Spiker: Yeah, you're just saying all the things that are going through my head. Our team will tell you if there's three words that I hate more together in life, you'd have a hard time finding. And that is tips, tricks and techniques. And the funny thing is, I'm not actually, I hate them, but I don't hate them in the hands of a well developed Who. I actually rather like them in the hands of a well-developed Who. But usually, people want to skip right past becoming a well-developed person and just apply these techniques and think that that's going to work, and of course, as you said, that doesn't work.[00:26:00]

Peter Anderton: Well, I tell you, the analogy I often give is If you think about your phone, so you've got apps on your phone and you've got the operating system. And all these tools and techniques, they're just apps. And I don't know

if your phone's anything like mine. I've downloaded that many apps that I've used like once.

Tim Spiker: Yes. Yes. Guilty.

Peter Anderton: And then I've got the ones on the homepage that I use a lot. So, I can collect as many apps as I want. But I might never use them. So then most of those are pointless. There are ones that I use regularly, and they can be really useful for me. However, if the operating system on my phone isn't working, then the apps are irrelevant.

And what we're talking about here with leadership is you've got to get the operating system right. You've got to get the mindset right. Then, as you said, tips, tricks and techniques in the hands of somebody who's got the right mindset. They're a great thing, but when you think that they're the substitute for the mindset, then it's just a waste of time. You're just rearranging the deck chairs in the Titanic. [00:27:00]

Tim Spiker: There you go. There you go. Well, should we, should we talk about rule number two? Because rule, you know, by definition, and when you, when somebody says rule number one, we should all expect that there's going to be at least one more rule. So, should we, should we get to rule number two and unpack that one a little bit?

Peter Anderton: So, yeah, absolutely. In fact, we came quite close to it just a moment ago, actually, when we talked about recognizing that we are the ones who need to change. You can't wait for somebody else to change. Nelson Mandela put it beautifully. He said, I could not change others until I changed myself. So, we're recognizing that leadership is about who you are.

There is a way of being and when you are the right way, shall we say, that others will respond to that. So, what rule number two says is that, you know, whilst rule number one says it's not about you, it's not about your way of doing things, it's not about your solutions, it's not about your ego. Oh, and good news, by the way, from rule number one is you don't need to have all of the answers either.

It takes [00:28:00] a lot of pressure off us, you know. We're not just, we're not just challenging the leaders here. We're releasing them. That they can genuinely say, I don't, I don't know. It's okay to not have all of the answers. So, but anyway, but that's, that's by the by. But whilst rule number one says all of those things, rule number two says, if you want your team to be different, and of

course, there's too many leaders out there that look at their team and they're disappointed that they're not quite where they want them to be.

And then going back to the, you know, the, the poor manager that you talked about earlier, they probably spent a lot of time talking to other people about the fact their team are not where they want them to be, but never actually tackle the issue properly with their team. And it would be great, wouldn't it?

If people come with some sort of magic button that we could press to make them become the best version of themselves or whatever it needs to be. But it doesn't exist. It's again, we're back into silver bullet category here. But what we have to realize as leaders is that the only way we can change somebody [00:29:00] else's behavior is change the way we behave towards them.

If we want to get a different response from them, if we want to get a different team, then, then we need to look in the mirror and ask ourselves, what do I need to be doing differently? What do I need to stop doing? What should I be changing about what I'm doing? Or what am I not doing that I really need to be doing that will make this team become what it needs to be? So, so whilst rule number one says it's not about you, rule number two says, well, rather like Gandhi said, be the change that you want to see in the world, rule number two says it's only about you. You make the changes in yourself, and others respond accordingly.

And real leadership isn't waiting for everybody else to get their act together. Real leadership is cleaning up your own act and recognizing who you need to be in order to create the team that you want. I passionately believe that every leader in time Gets the team they deserve.

Tim Spiker: [00:30:00] Hold on everybody. Just pause right there. I give you about 15. I would, I want to do like 15 seconds of silence to think about what Peter just said, because it's so true. You know there's a, there's a guy here in the States named Andy Stanley, who will talk about systems in this way. And I think it applies to leadership as well to like my leadership is perfectly designed to produce the results that I'm currently getting.

Talk to us a little bit about, as you transition from rule one, that it's not about you to rule two, it's only about you. How do you help leaders embrace those simultaneously? They are different ideas and yet they are obviously sound almost antithetical. Do people ever have trouble after agreeing with rule one, rule one, getting to rule two?

Peter Anderton: I get quite hot under the collar when somebody misquotes rule number two, I'll tell you why. Some people will quote rule number two as it's, it's only about, sorry, it's all about you. Now, it's all about you is the [00:31:00] opposite of rule number one. So that would be confusing. That's down to the you know, that's the teenager who is the center of the known universe.

Okay. It's all about me. Okay. The world exists to satisfy my needs. And of course the true, the true mark of adulthood. Is when you get to the point that you suddenly realize that actually the universe is bigger than you and you're not the center of it. You know, when that, when that transition takes place.

So, people will get hung up when they think of rule number two as it's all about you. But the whole point of rule number two is it's saying, you know, it's very much stop waiting for everybody else to change. That's your job. You need to be the one who changes in order to create a difference. You know, we could, we could, there's so many things we could say.

Oh, this relationship would be great if the other person would get their act together. You know, this team would be great if that person wasn't doing XYZ or whatever it is. We've got to look in the mirror and own it. What I would say is in terms of the transition, so first of all, they need to understand the [00:32:00] nuance there, that it is a very different phrase and it's not a contradiction.

But you do, I do get that response sometimes. Most people will, will get it and they can see what's going on there. But I think one of the things we need to think about from a rule number two perspective is that it starts with rule number one. So, rule number one is the foundation. Rule number one is when, when you're in that scenario where everything depends on you, and things only work when you're there, and you're doing your email on your own holiday, you're, you're worried about taking annual leave because you don't know what you're going to come back to, all of that stuff you've tripped over rule number one.

And I think there is a degree of liberation that comes with rule number one, particularly when we say, you know, you don't need to be one with all of the answers. Then the next question is, so what am I going to do about this? How am I going to make a shift? How am I going to stop telling my team and fixing all of the problems?

And how am I going to start drawing it from them so that I'm not just creating a result here, I'm creating the team who deliver the result. And that's [00:33:00]

built on the essence of rule number one. Rule number one is it's not your job to deliver the result. It's your job to deliver the team who deliver the results.

And then when it comes to rule number two, then how am I going to behave to create that shift? And what we tend to find here is for most leaders, some leaders have had all sorts of development and opportunities and experiences to really learn and grow as leaders. Most of us have been making it up as we've gone along.

And we've got a lot wrong over the years. And what I would say is I think in the States, when you're a child and you learn to ride a bike, you call them trainer wheels, we call them stabilizers.

Tim Spiker: Yeah, training wheels. You got it. Training wheels. Yeah

Peter Anderton:. So, we call them stabilizers. And, and of course, as a kid, you know, you can, you can do great things with stabilizers, but you're not, you're not quite as agile.

You can't turn corners quite as well. You can't go as fast. And what we find from a leadership perspective, I would say the overwhelming majority of leaders out there, there are some notable exceptions to this, which is great. They [00:34:00] do exist. But most leaders out there are still leading with their metaphorical leadership stabilizers, you know, whether it's a case of, oh, I'm surrounding myself with people who are like me, or I don't like to accept challenge from my team or you know, whatever it is, they're all stabilizers.

They're all different versions. And, you know, I'm avoiding tough conversations. All of these are stabilizers. They're all training wheels. And at some point we need to recognize the training wheels that we are riding with as a leader and that the only person that can take them off is us. Because if we're going to become the best that we can be, yhey need to go. It's a little bit like you you know You could you could run with crutches kind of but you're never going to do a four minute mile with crutches You know, you're never going to be brilliant.

You might be okay and this is the point we're looking at from leadership that we need to be prepared to step into that zone where we let go of our training wheels [00:35:00] and start making changes ourselves. And sometimes that's going backwards. Because the whole point of the training wheels is they make us feel secure, we feel confident when they're in place.

So, we can find ourselves getting into quite a vulnerable place. Where we don't know quite how it's going to work out. We know that we're working on things that perhaps everybody else thought we'd nailed a long time ago, but our stabilizers are, our training wheels were in place. We were micromanaging. We weren't listening.

All of these are the things that we picked up and the critical thing for rule number two is to identify what those stabilizers are, those training wheels are, and they're different for each of us. And challenge ourselves to make that shift. And the best way to do that is to be really open with the team.

And when I've worked with people, I encourage them rather than the whole, oh, look, you know, he or she's been on a course, wonder what they're going to be like now. I encourage him to go back to the team and say, it's true. I've been on a course and here's what I want to do differently and hold my feet to the [00:36:00] fire.

Yeah. Let me know if I'm doing this or I'm not. So, this doesn't just become another flavor of the month and get lost in the deministrative past. So, accountability is a really key part of that.

Tim Spiker: Yeah. As we, as we head towards wrapping up here, talk to us a little bit about some of the change that you have seen with your clients when, when leaders have been willing to not just know, but get and apply both rule one and rule two over time, what has emerged? What has changed? What has been different when they've walked through this process with you to take these training wheels or stabilizers off?

Peter Anderton: I'll give you two examples. So, one's an organizational one. I ran a program with one particular MD and one of the things that came out, I remember the sales director at the time just came back to me saying, so hang on a minute, Peter, let me get this straight.

What [00:37:00] you're saying is we need to stop solving everybody's problems for them. And I'm like, yeah, that would be a great place to start. So, one of the things they did is stop stepping in and fixing everything and solving everything. And they had, they had some huge problems with customer service. So, their on time delivery was like 65%.

And by taking this shift as a leadership team, they weren't going to keep diving in and trying to fix everything. They were actually going to focus on developing the team and helping the team fix the problems. You know, their on time

delivery in one area went from 65 percent to 95 percent when this happened in less than two months.

Whoa. There was another example where another department where they had 350 overdue orders, you know, and there was significant money. This had a big impact financially on the business. And again, within a similar time period that had dropped from 350 to 150. Now it's still too many. It's still not acceptable, [00:38:00] but it, you know, it's moving in the right direction.

And that's a subtle shift in. Let's just stop solving everybody's problems for them. So that would be an example that perhaps stands out to me. But one of my favorite ones is a personal example where there's one particular individual working with his team and I would describe him, I describe him as cursed because he was literally brilliant to everything.

He was one of those people who's super talented, very intelligent and everything that every member of his team was doing, he could do better. And I don't mean that from an ego perspective. He wasn't like that at all. He really could. And what happened is that two things were happening. His team were almost like they're almost like a group of suppliers, if you like.

He was tasking them what he wanted them to deliver, and then they would then deliver it. Then he would task them with something else, and they would then deliver it. And he started to realize that he was dramatically underutilizing what was available there. And he created [00:39:00] a shift. And part of this sometimes, of course, is the dilemma you've got there, the curse is when you do a better job, your input makes it better.

And he had to accept not as good. But what's really interesting now is one of his team members now has absolutely become, she's become a real lieutenant for him. She's really starting to pick up some slack. She's taking on activities that he would be running with because he stepped back and let her run with it.

And do it in her own way. And again, he's had some tough conversations with her along the way. Yeah. There's been a lovely balance of challenge and support that's gone through, but she's responded really well to that and is giving him the support that he needs. That's allowing him then to turn attention to other members of the team and give them the opportunity to do the work in their way rather than doing it his way. He's got tons more mental capacity and space to go on and think about other things and frankly do what he was meant to be doing in the first place when in reality he spent a lot of time just doing [00:40:00] everybody else's job.

And, this is what we see a lot of this in leadership, that people, they're almost frightened of being a leader. They think, I must be doing this technical job, this task, this thing. And what we have to recognize is there's a tipping point in any leader's career, where their ability to get results from other people becomes infinitely more important than their ability to deliver results themselves.

And only when you move through that tipping point, do you really become a leader. And I guess that's the essence of rule number two. Does that make sense?

Tim Spiker: Absolutely. Absolutely. It does. And I had an opportunity to work with a four-star general here in the U. S. one point number of years ago. And it was really interesting when you talk about this curse of being so talented and so capable.

And there was an assessment that was used with this general. And we used to look at these assessments and if somebody had just tons of talent, you know, these bar [00:41:00] graphs would go from left to right. And we, it was a, it was a black and white paper at the time. And we used to talk about, there's a lot of black on the page.

And that wasn't you that usually posed a challenge because it meant this was an extraordinarily talented individual who just as in your story could oftentimes in fact, actually do things better than everybody else, not from an ego standpoint, but from a reality standpoint, and it was really interesting that this high level, four-star general had almost no black on the page. And it was so interesting to talk to them because he knew that there wasn't a lot of black on the page. He already knew that about himself. We had our specific assessment, but in general, he knew it and it became a blessing to him because he actually had an easier time letting go of things. He had an easier time handing off responsibility to others because he wasn't living in the space where he thought, if I would do this, I would do it better. Obviously would also came along with that was, it was a good deal of humility.

Peter Anderton: [00:42:00] It's music to my ears because one of the things we need to get is that it's not our job to be the superhero, to sort of come in with pants on the outside and rescue the situation.

Our job is creating superheroes. So, I love the fact that the example you quote there, he doesn't feel threatened by it. He doesn't worry about the fact that there's people around him that are far more talented than he is. He's relishing in

it. He's loving it. And the question is, how do you then build a team around you where that talent doesn't get in the way?

Tim Spiker: So, as we begin to wrap up today's episode with Peter, I want to point you to a resource. Peter has recently developed a free three-minute self-assessment, and it lives at the inspirometer.com. If you're wondering, how do you spell inspirometer? How do you spell the inspirometer? Well, don't worry about that, the link will be in the show notes, but I encourage you to go check it out, spend three minutes and let the work that Peter does help you. So, check out the inspirometer.com [00:43:00] as we think about the conversation with Peter. There are so many things that I could emphasize, but I've got two in particular picked out.

And the first one we spent a little time on at the very beginning, and that is this idea. Peter drew a distinction between kind and nice. And I love that he did because in doing that, he really emphasized rule number one. Which is, you know, it's not about us as leaders. It's not about you as the leader, it's about others. And there's a difference between being kind and being nice. The kind person actually cares enough to deliver the difficult conversation to somebody. Now you do it with tact. You do it with compassion. You do it with care, but you still do it. And there are many, many leaders who are focused on being nice rather than being kind. And that makes them worse leaders. This idea of being nice means essentially, I never end up in a conflict. I don't have difficult conversations. I just go along to get along. And [00:44:00] there's never been a great leader in the history of planet earth that lived by that go along to get along. Never has there been a great leader who lived by that.

So, I really encourage us all to not be nice leaders. Don't be nice, be kind, because if we're kind, then we will be delivering the difficult messages that need to be delivered. And we will be delivering them in a way in which they can be heard. So that's the first point. The second point I want to emphasize, as we're wrapping up, is this idea of the responsibility of the leader, this idea that we have probably accidentally lean into, which is the leaders got to deliver the results.

And as Peter is pointing out, that's not really the case. The reality is, is that we are responsible for helping the team deliver the results. And what happens to our mentality? What happens to our psyche when we start thinking about preparing the team to get it done rather than ourselves? [00:45:00] It really shifts us into a position where we are leading rather than doing, leading rather than getting sucked into the details.

And so, what happens when we lead with this, I've got to help the team get this done mentality is that we not only solve the immediate problems, but over time we significantly increase the capacity of the organization. Because now the team is able to do more and they're able to do it over and over and over again.

And so, that leads me to the question I want to leave you with today. And it begins with a quote from Peter. Here is the quote, and it's about you as a leader. It's not your job to deliver the result. It's your job to deliver the team that delivers the result. And the question is this, is that your mentality as a leader?

This is Tim Spiker reminding you to be worth following [00:46:00] 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.