

## **Transcript /** Where Teal Meets Requisite Organization with Bruce Peters

**Melody King:** 0:01

Everything rises and falls on leadership. The ability to lead well is fueled by living your cause and purpose. This podcast will equip you with the tools to do just that Live and lead with cause and purpose. And now author of the book the Anatomy of Leadership and our host, Chris Comeaux.

**Chris Comeaux:** 0:23

Hello and welcome to the Anatomy of Leadership. I'm excited Today's guest is a good longtime friend, Bruce Peters. Bruce is actually the founder and guide of Beyond Teal LLC. Welcome, Bruce, good to have you.

**Bruce Peters:** 0:36

It's good to be here, as always, and I really enjoy your podcasts, Chris. I don't watch all of them, but I've watched many of them.

**Chris Comeaux:** 0:44

No, absolutely, and I appreciate your feedback and, as many of our listeners, I talk frequently about Dr Lee Thayer because he was an amazing mentor in my life. That's actually how you and I got to know each other was through Lee, and I feel, in some respects, those who knew Lee always knew that he would challenge them, challenge them to think about stuff, and I feel like, in some respects, you have filled that role in my life in a good way. You asked me questions or challenging questions after a podcast and I just really do appreciate that, and that spirit asked you to provide your bio and you refused. What's up with that?

**Bruce Peters:** 1:19

Yeah, Chris, I mean you asked the question and I thought to myself you know, it's interesting at this stage of my life, rarely, when I'm asked for people who might want to engage my services, I no longer provide a bio or a CV, because usually what happens is when people get to me, they've been referred by word of mouth or they were referred by somebody personally, and in the early days when that would happen, I'd have to be careful not to sell myself out of an opportunity, and so I've gotten away from providing bios or providing CVs or even responding to RFPs, and it seems like the more I do that, the more work comes my way, and so it's kind of counter, it's counterintuitive, you know. But and I thought, well, I would love to have that conversation with Lee, because, as you

know, Lee held all kinds of academic degrees and rarely would bring it up with somebody else, for very rarely at all.

**Chris Comeaux:** 2:28

I think I found out a degree he had towards the very end.

**Bruce Peters:** 2:30

I'm like I didn't know you had that, yeah and um, where in the world that you and I play in, people are running around. If you look at the vitae at the bottom of their email messages, it's like 17 pages long and some all kinds of titles and all sorts of things. So, anyway, but what? I was looking for the reason I sent that out to you. The first question you asked me about was my own superpower.

**Chris Comeaux:** 2:53

Yeah, we had an interesting discussion the first time, and so, yeah, what do you want to say about that?

**Bruce Peters:** 2:58

Well then, that took me. Your whole question took me to that part of the conversation. And then I recall a conversation you and I had about Lee Thayer. Lee Thayer once said most people misinterpret the reason for their success and their failure. And if that's true of other people, well why isn't it true about Bruce or Chris? And so, it caused me to say well wait, actually it's more important what other people think my superpower is than what it is, and the chances are very good I'm wrong about mine. So, the question I had for you you've asked that question of a whole bunch of people and then you asked the second question is why is it hard for people to do it? And I was wondering you've been on the show for a long time, but how are people responding to that? Why are they already responding? Why it's difficult to say that about themselves?

**Chris Comeaux:** 3:52

Yeah, that's a good question, Bruce. Well, first off, I do prep them because I think it is such a difficult question. Where I originally got it from is I coached my kid's soccer team and I grew up in Louisiana and the only sport was football pretty much, so I had to coach a sport I'd never actually played and a friend of mine actually told me he said yeah, exactly, I was actually pretty good because of probably exactly the reason.

**Chris Comeaux:** 4:19

But I would ask the kids their superpower and it was amazing how aware they were at such a young age before the world beat them up and they lost touch with that. And so, I think, as adults I think that's kind of the reality is that the folks that have truly gained that

self-awareness, that know this is part of my purpose and part of my unique offering to the world. And then when you do get to that place where you understand it at a deep level, there's almost a humility that comes with it. So, it's almost it's like a very fragile thing that you want to put out to the world, and I think that's why it's a tough question for people to answer. And what I love about most of our guests I feel like they will say it in such a way that they all realize they're a work in progress, and that gives me great hope for themselves and also for me.

**Bruce Peters:** 5:08

Yeah, you just. You just mentioned something that I had not thought about in a while, although I actually teach it. The last story I tell in my FLP program is my golf story. It was a reasonably good golfer, but I was kind of frustrated I wasn't getting any better. So late in life I decided to go take a lesson the first lesson that I took, and I won't bore you with the whole story, although the story is quite a good one, mostly over a beverage late in the day. So, the very first lesson I go, and I'm going to take a series of four lessons every two weeks and I'm going to get better at golf.

**Bruce Peters:** 5:43

This summer my wife bought me a subscription and the pro happened to be a mastered golf teacher in Rochester by the name of Craig Harmon. Craig's brother was Tiger Woods' coach, oh wow. And the family, the brothers, were all head pros at championship-level courses. Their father was Bobby Jones' coach at Wingfoot, and so wow, um. So, I go to craig carmen. I don't talk all the scratch golfers I know. I go to craig carmen. Craig carmen gives me you can't give me hands me a club. I hope there's some golfers that are out actually listening to this. He hands me a driver and he says hit it, go ahead and hit it. Nice, hit a few. He says great, try it again. Great, try it again. So, I try a. He comes over, takes the club out of my hands and he says have you ever seen John Daly swing? Do you know anything about golf at all? A little bit so. Do you know John Daly? Who? John Daly?

**Chris Comeaux:** 6:35

is oh, yeah, who John Daly is,

**Bruce Peters:** 6:40

He has the most unorthodox swing that any golfer's ever had, ever. And uh, and I said yeah, and I want. I'm looking at him kind of strange like why, why are you asking? That question wasn't a question I was expecting world-class the pro and um. And he said he says can you swing like John Daly? And I said sure and um, so I, he put the pin in the ground, and I take the wing and I take this big whack and I literally hit my rear end with the head of the club on the way by, spring it all the way through and I almost missed the ball completely. It trickled off to the left. He says great, try it again. He puts another. One

goes this way, one goes that way, one goes straight up, one goes into the ground. But I do this for about 20 minutes. He keeps doing. He just he just says great Bruce, try it again. Great, Bruce, try it again. And pretty soon I'm hitting the driver 20 to 30 yards longer than I've ever hit in my life and I'm hitting them all straight and I'm swinging like John Daly.

**Bruce Peters:** 7:37

Now he comes over and Chris, I'm a coach, right, and so I think I'm a smart guy about this stuff. He comes over and he takes the club out of my hands, right. And so, I think I'm a smart guy about this stuff. He comes over and he takes the club out of my hands, and he says, Bruce, what did you just learn from that? I had no idea what I just learned from that. And he says he said, Bruce, there's a lot of ways to hit the ball long and straight. Golf is not a game of perfect. And then he told me to go try it. You know, do it then. So, I took a whole series of lessons and I'm going to tell you the whole story of the lesson. But what he was teaching me in that first lesson was what you just mentioned, which is, as a kid he was allowing me to be a kid again. How do kids play golf? That's cool. They just grip it and rip it. So, he didn't know what my potential was, and he sure as heck knew I didn't know what my potential was, and he sure as heck knew I didn't know what my potential was. That's so cool, wow.

**Bruce Peters:** 8:31

So, the work that you and I do in our own way is very often about that. It's helping people uncover and discover that version of them and then where do you build on it and how do you build on it and how do you build on it, and so in my case I learned an awful lot about this and kind of the rearview mirror it's a little bit like purpose. If you were asking me what my superpower is, my superpower for me was my compass was always good for Bruce and his choices. That's pretty good. I always knew, if I stayed true to that internal compass to go left or right or up or down, and there were lots of times in life you get into those situations when I stayed true to that compass, and I could always know it was always there. Then for me that was the superpower, and then the superpower is how to pass that along to others yeah, it's like the super of the superpower yeah, I mean, that's what keeps you going.

**Bruce Peters:** 9:35

You know, in a sense, that's what keeps me going, so um, so anyway so that's the I love that. The rest of the rest of is also wonderful. I think it's wonderful, but I won't bore you with all that it actually sounds like a good adult coverage conversation, I can tell you the conclusion that Saturday morning after the last lesson I shot 69, tied the course record on the front at our championship course shot 31 and I've never touched a golf club since.

**Chris Comeaux:** 10:04

I love that all right. Yeah, this is going to be interesting segue. So, you were being a really good agitator question asker to me. We had Tom Foster in our podcast twice. Love the work that Tom is doing related to requisite organization and you just started kind of asking me some really good questions about like. So maybe the first question should be to you, Bruce, is you're familiar with Tom's work and Elliott Jaques' work? Has it influenced your work over the years? Have you pulled that into your work?

**Bruce Peters:** 10:42

I use it almost everywhere and everything that I do, but not quite the way that Tom does it, because I came to Tom's work later, later, and so and I thank you for the question, because some of this history I'd actually forgotten, I you know, it just kind of goes away into the memory bank somewhere. So, I had a my business, I had 150 employees and in 1997, 1998, and I took a class up in Toronto, Canada, on requisite I don't even remember who the people were I went looking for my notes and that sort of thing I was introduced to it by a former client of mine. Was the father of somebody who was later in my CEO group and the father was an expert and sold consulting services in Toyota Engineering and his son became an advocate of that and the father's name was Fred Flynn. The uh, younger fellow was Craig Flynn. I don't you probably run into Craig in lay's world in the last. That last event we did that I did down at, uh, North Carolina. Craig was actually there. Oh, yes, actually, yeah, now I do remember that little sad story. He's had some health issues, but Craig introduced me to the program. I went up to Toronto and I took the class. Now I took the class because I was looking for, I had a lot of conflict going on in my organization.

**Bruce Peters:** 12:15

I had lawyers and we were designing a totally paperless process mortgage closing system in the 90s. If you called into my office in 1998, 1999, your file popped up on the screen. Everything that was happening on your file was there instantly. Everything was transparent, the systems were all there and available for that in that day and age. But nobody had really put it together the way we put it together. So, they talked about it, they called it unified messaging or that sort of thing in those days. So, but I had conflict in my organization. I didn't know what the hell to do with the conflict. And so Craig says this program will help you deep root deal with the conflict. So, I'm ready for any kind of panacea. I go five days in Toronto and that's where I first got introduced to to ideas and to Strata and to the whole thing. I learned it slightly differently than I'm hearing Tom, and you come back and talk about it today. They were very much more rigid about it in my day. As far as they were concerned, nobody was a six or a seven.

**Chris Comeaux:** 13:20

Well, yeah, and it's. I mean, it's very rare because you were working at usually like some type of government or international level.

**Bruce Peters:** 13:27

I didn't even talk about six and sevens. Colin Powell was a seven or an eight and he was the only one in the universe and that was that they also were very rigid about people not getting out of level. Ones were level ones their whole life and they were not able to mature. So, you may have gotten more mature, so they were very rigid about that. However, what I recognized and what was my problem was I had lawyers who were technically competent, running departments or areas of my business, who were levels two or three in terms of how they looked at work, and I was hiring all these bright young people that were fours and fives working for them because of their technical expertise, and now I was in danger of losing all this talent, all this talent that I brought in. And we're all there because of the neat things we were doing. They're all going to run out the door because they're reporting to somebody that's above them.

**Chris Comeaux:** 14:28

So, what did you do with that?

**Bruce Peters:** 14:29

Well, what I did with that, and I couldn't do it right away, but I took that information. I said it was like a blinding splash of the obvious to me, like, of course, that's exactly what's going on. And I got the chance to talk to the instructors and some other people that were using it in the companies. And I came back to Rochester, and I realized I didn't want to lose the technical competency of the lawyers, but I didn't want to lose the other people. So, what did I do? I had long conversations with the lawyers about their job, what they enjoyed, how they'd enjoy it, how they looked about work I'm armed with all these questions from the program, and I basically let them keep their title and let them keep their salary and I moved them into an independent contributor role.

**Bruce Peters:** 15:11

Wow, I couldn't do them both at the same time because it was very costly to do that. So, I did. I made a plan for myself. I did one in six months and then, once that one worked, I figured out what's the easiest one to work and then I'll do the next one. So six, eight months later I did the other one- and two-year period of time. Now, all of a sudden it flourished and two years later, I sold my title company to a management buyout team, which is all these young people who had come in and were working for this lawyer, that they were all going to leave. I had a secretary who ended up being the president of that title company after I left, after I sold it.

**Chris Comeaux:** 15:48

Did you just use titles for? So, the titles were more for outside consumption than inside.

**Bruce Peters:** 15:55

Yes.

**Chris Comeaux:** 15:56

Okay.

**Bruce Peters:** 15:57

Yeah, but I didn't use the. I mean I didn't talk about requisite anywhere, I just talked. I used it very pragmatically. I did not systemically change much of anything, except I moved those two people out of the way.

**Chris Comeaux:** 16:12

You recomposed your organization. I moved them out of the way. You recomposed your organization. I moved them out of the way.

**Chris Comeaux:** 16:16

Yeah, which is now. You know, my book about the enemy of leadership is, like you know, really just like a table of contents. But that whole chapter of composing the organization intuitively, I know I was going maybe two inches deep, and that there's this other body of wisdom and I feel like it's exactly kind of what we're poking on, which maybe this is a good segue, Bruce. So, you were one of the first to introduce me to the concept of a teal organization. Can you just talk about that a little bit? Of course, where I want us to go is then bring these two concepts together.

**Bruce Peters:** 16:44

So, the second part of me being reintroduced to Requisite was when I decided to leave Vistage. I went around. There were a couple people on the channel I had not heard speak. One of them was Jerry Harvey, and Jerry Harvey taught requisite organization at GW and Elliott Jaques was an academic fellow staff member with Harvey at the time and so I went into, I lined up with the tech chairs who I knew most of them and I went, and I saw Jerry Harvey speak five or six times. About the fourth time I went to see him speak.

**Bruce Peters:** 17:24

We go out into the parking lot after the presentation. He looks at me and he says don't, I know you from somewhere in his West Texas draw. And I said Well, this is the fourth time I've heard your presentation. And he said why would you want to hear that? And you know. So, we got into a conversation. I had a four-hour conversation with Jerry Harvey in

a parking lot in Potomac, Maryland or somewhere, so we got into the very tail end of the conversation. Jerry says to me Bruce, he says this is a wonderful conversation. Um, Jerry says to me Bruce, he says this is a wonderful conversation, but I gotta leave us. And he says I'm gonna go meet Elliot. I said, are Elliott Jaques? Because he talked about Elliott in his presentation? And he said yeah. He says, do you want to join us? Well, I can't yeah, I can't.

**Bruce Peters:** 18:07

Yeah, but I couldn't do it because of other commitments. But he says well, if you can't join us tonight, why don't you come to Elliott's retirement party over in Baltimore tomorrow night? So I ended up at Elliott Jaques's retirement party in freaking Baltimore, Maryland. I mean he was in a wheelchair at that time and so I got to meet Elliott Jaques in person. We didn't talk requisite, there was much more drinking than conversation going how old was he then, Bruce?

**Chris Comeaux:** 18:32

I'm curious.

**Bruce Peters:** 18:33

I don't know the answer to that. He was okay, he was, um, he was old, for I would say old for his age, I mean it wasn't, I mean he was at his age, but he had had some health issues, so that was ultimately the thing. Uh, so that caused that, caused me to be interested in it. And then I had multi conversations with Jerry about Jerry's thoughts about requisite and he has a wonderful chapter, and chapter in one of his books which I sent you a piece of caused me to go back and revisit it.

**Bruce Peters:** 19:04

So then when I got, when I be, during the time that I was a tech chair, I had known about Tom and Tom's work, but I really had not used him. So, after I left Vistage, I brought Tom in to do some work with a client of mine in Rochester. So, we brought him in, and we made him a speaker for a whole bunch of people. Well, it turns out, the founder and CEO of that particular company fell in love with Requisite. But this guy, rather than hire Tom, what this guy did is he dove in for three weeks into the Requisite books and he developed three teaching modules of his own and he taught it back into his company.

**Chris Comeaux:** 19:46

Wow, that's a great way to own it.

**Bruce Peters:** 19:47



Yes, now what he did was he took what I did and just went deeper with it. As you were discussing, I stayed here at the superficial level. I solved my problem, I was gone right in his case. He went in and talked about now I had been really good at getting them to have role descriptions and all the stuff you and I have talked about with Lee's work, but the ability to take the roles and to get requisite to the roles and he literally did that with his team and never talked about strata. All he did was talk about the role.

**Chris Comeaux:** 20:24

And did he talk about levels of the organization?

**Bruce Peters:** 20:26

No, okay, he just got people in the room. What's your role? What's the role before you? What's the role above you? What's the role before you? What's the role above you? What's the role? This way they got it. They created role descriptions, and they built that into a role description accountability process, and they never talked about Strata.

**Chris Comeaux:** 20:42

Did he have to recompose the organization in the midst of doing?

**Bruce Peters:** 20:45

that in some places, but not instantly.

**Chris Comeaux:** 20:50

Okay, so he more established the principles, the lexicon, the language.

**Bruce Peters:** 20:55

What it basically did is exactly what you're saying. They got common language; they got a real clear example of what the current state is. So, he's not coming in and saying what it should be. He's coming in and saying what is it? What are the existing roles that are being played? So, they got all that on the table and then he would take the descriptions from strata, from Lily's book, the descriptions of the behaviors, and put the descriptions to the role and the person, match them up so he would back into it was this?

**Chris Comeaux:** 21:33

What kind of company was this first manufacturing the? Optic comes out company, the optics company that I worked with for 25 years here so just for our listeners, that would be a highly specialized manufacturing company, almost like a job shop prototype optics and what your inquiry.

**Bruce Peters:** 21:50

And listening to you and Tom, I went back, and it happens to be Mike. I went back and called Mike, and I said Mike, go back and tell me a little bit more about what you did back in those days and why I resonated with you and what you did. And to this day he's now retired from the company and moved on from the company. I did a little video call with him and almost wanted you to be there. What he did is he had the three modules he still had from the company. I did a little video call with him and almost wanted you to be there. What he did is he had the three modules, he still had the three modules, and he said, Bruce, it was the most important thing I ever did in my organization.

**Chris Comeaux:** 22:23

Wow, maybe you need to pass me his contact information. Maybe you need a podcast with him. Yeah, yeah.

**Bruce Peters:** 22:29

So, anyway, I wanted to include that part of the story.

**Chris Comeaux:** 22:34

So, let's take it to the teal now.

**Bruce Peters:** 22:35

The second biggest thing that Mike said to me, that, Bruce, you ever did for us, was I introduced them to Frederick Leloup. So, Frederick Leloup is the author of a book called Reinventing Organizations, and Reinventing Organizations is about 15 to 20 companies that are operating at a very high purpose-driven level and self-led and self-managed fundamentally. And the TEAL concept comes in the field of psychology, matching up adult levels of development and behavior and development with child behavior and development. And they realized there were somewhere around six levels in adults, the same way there were in kids.

**Bruce Peters:** 23:27

So, you don't talk to a two-year-old the way you do a four-year-old, the way you do to a 13-year-old. If you can't talk to a 13-year-old the way you do a four-year-old, you do what you do to an eight. You know 13-year-old if you can't talk to a 13-year-old. So, um, those, those stages were all color-coded and so the higher levels were teal, it was level five, and turquoise was level six, and so lulu took that color coding, and he labeled these organizations that he was talking about, high purpose driven organizations, as teal level organizations. So, he coined that phrase over and brought it over on the business side of things. Now, uh, I met lulu, and I learned this from lee. When I read the book, it was really, I was kind of eye-opening for me and I could see.

**Chris Comeaux:** 24:11

I could see Lee and Requisite in Teal yeah, let's not go there yet, right, but that is where, ultimately, I want to play.

**Bruce Peters:** 24:20

So, as you and I both learned from Lee. I read the book and I went and found Freddy Belue and I got him on the phone. And I get him on the phone and he I said I read your book and I actually want to change the name of my organization to Beyond Teal and I don't want to violate any IP or anything like that. And he said and he's got the most refreshing thing I've ever heard from a business person. He said, Bruce, do whatever you want. I'm more interested in creating a movement than I am in having economic success for me personally. And so, I changed the name. And it turns out I said you, he. I said where are you? Now? He was happened to be in Belgium at the time and, uh, do you get to the states? He says I just came back to the states, are back from the states. I said are you coming back? And he said yes, he says I'm gonna. I said where are you gonna be? He says Ithaca. Now you know where Ithaca is in relationship to me. And I said you're gonna be Cornell.

**Bruce Peters:** 25:14

No, he and his family and his young children at that time were going to move to an eco-village outside of Ithaca, and so this is a very humble guy who made a lot of money on the book. The first printing they did in Japan. On the book. They sold 30,000 copies in one day Wow. The first printing they did in Japan on the book. They sold 30,000 copies in one day.

**Bruce Peters:** 25:36

And outside of the US he's like the wunderkind. He and his wife can't go to a restaurant in Paris and not have people. He's like Michael Jordan in Europe Wow and hardly known. He keeps a very low profile here in the States and he's still down in Ithaca. The last I heard in that conversation he says to me he says you know my best friend's from Rochester. And it turns out his best friends were a little town outside of Rochester called Brockport. So I contacted his friends so I would drive down once a month and have dinner with Frederick and we brought him into Optimax. And so, he came into Optimax and he married. What Rick? What Mike and Rick were doing in their company in Optimax with the teal concepts and the piece that we? I didn't talk about when I learned at Requisite initially.

**Bruce Peters:** 26:27

For me the big focus in that original class in Toronto was Navy SEALs programs and the work at the war college, because Jax taught there for almost 30 years and Jax would take teams of 14 people, and they would win the war games against the 140 people all the

time. And the reason were they were three levels lieutenants, sergeants and privates, and just three levels. Now the work that you were just you and tom have been describing about is that's above. That might be being done by generals and other people. So, the so what hill we're going to climb may be determined by somebody else, but the how to climb the hill was three levels and if you think about it, they all knew the mission.

**Bruce Peters:** 27:25

That's the hill. They all knew each other's capabilities in these small teams. Bruce is good at this, he's not good at that. Everybody knows. So, the munitions expert everybody knows who's the best munitions expert, but on the team there's always somebody who can back up the munition's expert. So, they know the mission, but there's always a way. So, if everybody gets killed except the last person, he still knows. That person still knows how to fulfill the mission.

**Dragonfly Health Ad:** 27:53

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**Chris Comeaux:** 28:36

So just let me try to interject a couple of things, Bruce, and you clean it up if I get it wrong. So, if we think about so, I think some people hear the word Teal, just you know, because we live in drive-by soundbites blah, blah, blah. Oh, that's a leaderless organization.

**Bruce Peters:** 28:50

It's just kind of loosey-goosey; it's actually the highest level of accountability you could possibly imagine. So it's not that there is no hierarchy in a teal organization, it's just maybe there's optimal minimum number of levels of hierarchy, would you say that differently, but mostly those are in place to inform communication and how do we design the work and that sort of thing as opposed to a power hierarchy, which is where Tom and I got into this, why he he's a little better at clarifying what he means by that.

**Chris Comeaux:** 29:23

Yes he is actually. Yeah, and, and we know hierarchy is not very yeah, not very PC

**Bruce Peters:** 29:24

uses the word bureaucracy, which everybody gets very jerky jerky about in this day and age, but he had a very specific meaning for that. I think that's the other thing that Mike reminded me before I started rediving into this myself. So, however, the thing about Teal is there, like all work, it's the thing love about Elliot's work is you get crystal clear about the what by when and then you design the competencies and the work and the roles around the deliverable. The what by when and that's why Navy Seals teams are so functionally, so great is because everybody's real clear about what by when and they're clear about the roles. They're clear about the mission. They're clear you know what I mean, and they know each other's competency. They know that they can trust each other. I mean they do a whole bunch of things at that level.

**Chris Comeaux:** 30:23

Yeah, that's pretty profound, Knowing the what by when, and then that the players on the team are super competent.

**Bruce Peters:** 30:30

That've the systems the training they don't have non-virtuosos on the team. Yeah, why do people?

**Chris Comeaux:** 30:37

Want to be on those teams because they're playing with virtuosos so you, if you, this is where it's difficult to go into an organization and do organizational change if, if it ain't that, yes, um, there's, there's not the basic building blocks in place, then to go there right from the yes, yes and and one of my superpowers, maybe an alternate power is I love to go.

**Bruce Peters:** 31:04

I don't like to do anything until I understand what's going on in the ground. And so when I do teal and this is makes me very different and there's teal consultants all over the country when I do teal and this makes me very different and there's teal consultants all over the country, when I do teal and when I'm operating at my best, I believe that that kind of high level is always happening in every organization in some way. Describe what you mean that high level, that high performance? Virtuosity is happening somewhere. Oh, gotcha.

**Chris Comeaux:** 31:34

So you're doing your gimbal walk, you're going to where the action is and you're all cause you're, so I'm going to kind of here's what I'm commenting on, you correct?

**Chris Comeaux:** 31:41

me. You are like this high-level CSI leadership guru, so you can see things that are there. You and I might be sitting in the same space watching the same thing, but because of this well of wisdom and tools, you might be seeing symptoms of a lack of communication or even a lack of the organization being requisitely structured, just by watching where the action is. Would you say that differently?

**Bruce Peters:** 32:04

But I don't do it to uncover that. My intent is to uncover where is virtuosity happening now?

**Chris Comeaux:** 32:13

Because? Why would you want to do that? Because I want to get more of that.

**Bruce Peters:** 32:16

And how do you get more of that? I begin to ask them.

**Chris Comeaux:** 32:19

It starts with them and because that replicates quicker than bad stuff.

**Bruce Peters:** 32:26

Yeah, yeah, well, it's the only way, because if you do it from this way the top down so so the question becomes what's in the way of of you exercising virtuosity? What resources do you need? What you know if you go into deep into Lee's work. Lee's work talks about that capacitation and competency and all that, and so very often we're having these conversations about the what by, when and how you get from here and the design of the work, without including the people who best know what the design of the work is.

**Chris Comeaux:** 33:01

This just popped into my mind because I love I met, was it? What was the gentleman I met on the airplane that worked for OptiMax?

**Bruce Peters:** 33:08

Oh, he's their HR person.

**Chris Comeaux:** 33:10

Yeah, yeah, like we started, like you know, Bruce Peters, it was just so wild. But thinking about OptiMax and just the highly specialization of their work, I think there's a corollary to healthcare. Because that high specialization, what do you do when that competency and knowledge doesn't exist in the organization? How do you go get it and bring it back? It always does so. Say more about that it always does.

**Bruce Peters:** 33:38

I mean, you know, I mean, that's why I mean, it sounds like like is the answer like learning mode then, because there's so much in the learning. Yeah no, what I do is you find you could go. You could go into any organization. Who's the best performer here? Everybody knows who the best performer is but.

**Chris Comeaux:** 33:55

But what if, when that best performer doesn't have the knowledge for some new mountain peak they want to climb, how do you bring that in? What?

**Bruce Peters:** 34:02

Do you need to learn? I mean you, yeah, I mean it starts with them. In other words, what you're doing is giving them tools in their toolkit to do. My thing is you're putting agency at that level and the better you can, and there are some people who take our agency over their own choices and decisions, whether you and I tell them to or not, there are some people who will do a good job despite their leadership do you define agency similar to like learning mode?

**Bruce Peters:** 34:30

well, I think responsibility. To me it's responsibility for their, for their choices, okay, and um, there are people who are leaving the nursing profession today, like in droves. Yep, why do you think that is well, in my mind it's easy. They can't be the nurse kind of nurse they want to be. It's because they realize that they don't be the kind of nurse they want to be. It's because they realize that they're not making choices in congruence with their ethics and their integrity, and they don't want to be in that spot anymore. And the industry calls it moral injury. I think that's bullshit. To me it's they're being forced to make choices because of the pressure they feel. And so, if you say it's moral injury, moral injury is happening to them.

**Chris Comeaux:** 35:19

Can you contrast that, Bruce? What's the name of the organization that's Teal in healthcare, that you're pretty fond of?

**Bruce Peters:** 35:25

Beardsorg in England. So, what I'm doing is getting people to read. So, I had this conversation. I mean, I sound like a therapist sometimes. I had a conversation in this organization the other day and tell me everything's wrong. I'm down at the line level Tell me everything that's wrong here. They look at me like you're an outside consultant, you want to know what's wrong here. I said yeah, and sometimes they'll answer, sometimes they won't, but ultimately, I can get to the point where they start telling me what else is wrong, what else is wrong, what else is wrong, what else is wrong, what else is wrong, what else? I'll make this list. When we get that list done, we'll never talk about this stuff again. If you come up with something new, I'm happy to listen to it.

**Bruce Peters:** 36:05

When I get to the end of the list, I ask the question what can you do that you're not doing now? And some of them get deer in the headlights Look some of them. But ultimately, they'll answer the question. I said go do it. Will you go do it? Will you commit to go do that? Yeah, okay'm reluctantly, some thankfully. Um, that's what I mean. What happens at that level, at the level that the actual work and the value of the work is being created. You're moving them from a scarcity mentality into an abundance mentality, but you're getting them to understand that they actually have responsibility for the choices that they make.

**Chris Comeaux:** 36:46

That's good.

**Bruce Peters:** 36:48

No matter how many bad things are happening here today, don't let anybody take away your power to make the choices that you can make.

**Chris Comeaux:** 36:56

Take it finally into the intersection of requisite organization Teal, and then what Dr Lee Thayer would teach the intersection of requisite organization, Teal, and then what Dr Lee Thayer would teach.

**Bruce Peters:** 37:13

Well, I think the requisite gives me the language to understand the roles at the level and the what by when. So, I'm using that requisite language to understand their role and where are they in the organization and where are they? And where are they in the organization and where are they when I talk to them, almost invariably, Chris, I find I know you know that there's a process that you can identify somebody's stratum and most of



the time you can generally come up with an idea. So, I'm talking with somebody, so I get an idea. There's stratum.

**Bruce Peters:** 37:44

Now you got a lot of people doing level one work that have level three, four, five, you know possibilities, um, organizations. Almost in a traditional hierarchical organization those people are not going to get recognized unless there's a boss who's actually got a line of sight or somebody who puts them under their wing and goes with them. But that's more anecdotal than part of the system. So one of the things I love about requisite once you identify that, then you can begin to assign work, and you know what I mean. You can get very strategic about where and how you grow, and they will want to take it on.

**Bruce Peters:** 38:25

And then what happens, Chris, is the genie gets out of the bottle. So, they. They now feel better about the work that they're doing, and then the next level of people see them in a different way than they see them before. And so, what I'm doing is, I mean, we create these read delete programs in the organization. I will. I refuse to lead a read a read delete programs, but one company I work with has nine read delete programs. They got the union in there, they got everybody in there, they got uh, finance working with. Now, all of a sudden, people are seeing each other in totally different ways and totally different things. And now you've created a whole learning, a true learning community.

**Chris Comeaux:** 39:10

Something occurs to me, and I should have gone back and asked Tom this, but the first time Tom came is when I was at Four Seasons. He started his presentation with Azusa's work, the life cycles and basically, it's startup. 75% of startups fail and I'm I've lived this being part of Teleios because once you understand the levels of work and a startup like I was doing level one work as the CEO of the organization, I still have to jump down sometimes and do level one work. I have to resist the temptation of dropping down to level one when it's not the role I need to be playing at that moment. But here's my point. It occurs to me what Tom teaches in Requisite and what you teach at Teal. The intersection of those two things is so critical for a startup to be successful, because in that startup phase it's almost like you have to ask at this moment, what level of work am I needing to perform based upon what needs to occur? Does that resonate or would you push back?

**Bruce Peters:** 40:11

Yeah, I think it's absolutely true and if you remember back, one of the reasons I mentioned the stages model the stages, developmental stages is all based on your perspective of the world. Your perspective when you're a level one adult is you're just out

of college or you're a senior teenager or whatever. Your world perspective is so different than my perspective at this stage of my life. So, there's a lot of parallels here between stages and requisite and um, and where you, where you are, and we didn't get into it. But if I mean, you really made me think about this a lot, about my own journey and what I realized my superpower changed at each level over time hmm, and so, unpacked, it, changed then what way?

**Bruce Peters:** 41:03

Well, when I was working on the ketchup line at the canning plant in Swedesboro, New Jersey. I was the best line man line person that they had ever seen in their lives because I figured out, I mean you were limited and what you could do, but I was never going to be down, I was going to have to get as many bottles as I could. I figured out how to be the top. You know all that. So, I was designed. It was level one work in most organizations but I made it as high level one work as I possibly could.

**Chris Comeaux:** 41:36

That's one of the things, maybe a way to restate what you just said. It was actually in a Vrista presentation. You probably know the guy because this is the day, I can't remember it, but it's the vision of the eagle. When the eagle flies, they see the horizon, but they also look down for their food at the same time. I use that continually as an analogy, that looking at the horizon infinity times, looking down infinity times, infinity is infinity at any moment. There's an infinite number of new visions, new programs, et cetera, but there's also an infinite number of improvements in what actually needs to occur now. So, every level, even at level one, there's infinity times infinity. So, you may have said you know what I want to make the rest of my life here on the ketchup line, and I may reinvent what the ketchup line looks like the thought never entered my mind.

**Bruce Peters:** 42:20

I was just going to do it the best way I could do it. Whoever did this, I was going to do it better, but I was hardwired that way at each level. When I was a young lawyer, I was going to build more hours than anybody else. You know what I mean. There's a hardwiring in all of that. The watch by when was different. The watch by when was different. So in my case, um, the other thing that go back to the superpower thing, the one of the reasons why I think I can be successful, and the way I described to you what is that? Because I've been along all those paths, I can stand in other people's shoes. I can't be in their shoes, but I can have empathy for where they are in their stage of the journey.

**Chris Comeaux:** 43:13

And do you think that, like thinking about the? Because we're having an interesting debate within TCN about how to apply the levels of work to TCN, because we're kind of a

unique organization, like I may be playing level one work in TCN that feels like level three or four work to the organization we're working with, like think, as a consultant, and so, rick, that feels similar to what you just said, like you may be sitting there in that person's shoes empathetically and so you're getting on the same level one as far as the work that they're doing, but you're drawing upon superpowers that are more level four?

**Bruce Peters:** 43:48

But I have to, but in in relationship with them. I have to meet them where they are.

**Chris Comeaux:** 43:55

And it's interesting though I'm just you're recalling, making me recall when Tom presented he would talk about you know, level five leaders using this like, very like futuristic language and the level one person is like I don't know what the hell they're talking about, and Lee would always talk about. The thing about Patton that was so amazing is Patton could speak directly to where the foot soldier would matter to them. And you, you, you challenged me. I actually still have a little sticky on a weekly basis I look at and you challenge me very similarly about. You know, when I speak in my vision language, how does that really resonate with what's most important to the people who are doing the work? Can you remember exactly how you put it, because I'm paraphrasing it? You had a very succinct way of saying it.

**Bruce Peters:** 44:39

I'm not sure what question you're thinking about, but I'll tell you the one that came in my own mind. I'm not sure what question you're thinking about, but I'll tell you the one that came in my own mind the people who are working in your organization with the families. In my mind, that's not level one work.

**Sona Benefits Ad:** 44:51

Good employers know that health benefits can make or break your business. But while employers are looking out for their employees' best interest, who is looking out for theirs? Sona Benefits is an independent pharmacy benefit manager who partners with employers to optimize their pharmacy benefits while supporting their business goals. By offering no spread pricing, contract, guaranteed rebates and the SonaMax program, clients are regularly able to save 20% to 35% off their total drug spend. The result Pharmacy benefits that improve employees' well-being and employers' bottom line.

**Bruce Peters:** 45:32

The person who's sitting with a family where a principal is in a hospice. To me that's not level one work. I think it's three, four or five.

**Chris Comeaux:** 45:46

It's interesting We've had a kind of similar but not framing it that way. So, the way the organization is structured, that is the level one work, that's the production line. But what I feel like you're poking on is the superpowers or just competency it takes to do that well is much more systemic.

**Bruce Peters:** 46:02

This is not. This is not checked by the numbers. In fact, the danger of it being a checklist kind of a level one activity is it's not filling the needs of the people you're trying to fill the needs for.

**Chris Comeaux:** 46:16

So, and then good. So maybe this is just all getting lost in the lexicon, but when you brought in the Navy SEALs analogy like a foot soldier versus a Navy SEAL there's a very different level of competency between those two. Probably a hospice worker is more akin to a Navy SEAL in terms of skill level. So, are you and I getting lost? Like I think if Tom was with us, he'd still say no, that is the level one. It's just the level one. Of this type of organization, the competencies required are much more robust. Or is that incorrect based upon how you learned?

**Bruce Peters:** 46:49

I don't. Honestly, I don't know the answer to that and that's the reason I raised the question, and I raised it because of the Jerry Harvey conversation with Jax about associations are different than a bureaucracy. I do not know the answer, but it raised that question in my own mind and that's why I wanted to revisit my own background and own experience. My experience of doing requisite is I mean, you've taken a much deeper dive. My client, Mike, took a much deeper dive than I did. I mean I was interested in it, and I like the application of it, but I use it in a very limited way. I just have this sense that that work at that level is not level one work the way I learned level one work, yeah, and I think that's the key thing.

**Chris Comeaux:** 47:39

But take it to what you do know. Look at OptiMax. If I'm working on the line at OptiMax compared to working at the line at the ketchup factory, my guess is the competency level of those two employees is different, is that not true?

**Bruce Peters:** 47:53

It's most in some cases, and so they have. I just had a meeting yesterday with a, with a small group, that are in a line. So, they're doing flat glass, big optics, flat glass, and there are people in that group, and I've talked to 10 or 12 people in one team. There are people

in that team who can't get beyond the lens that's right in front of them. There are other people on the team doing the same work. Basically, who understands what happens before it gets into the team?

**Bruce Peters:** 48:30

and they understand what happens after it gets into the team.

**Chris Comeaux:** 48:34

But doesn't it come down to this, bruce? Is what's the role? What's the role that's needed? Correct and how you design the role and what's the accountability? What's the authority? I love what you said the what by when. Correct and how you design the role. And what's the accountability? What's the authority? I love what you said the what by when. Correct the competencies.

**Bruce Peters:** 48:46

Correct. Now, what they don't do there is that team ends up being more organized like a Navy SEALs team than it would be another team, because they have people there who are that kind of, they're threes, threes. You know I'm doing one work, but how they organize the team, and the group ends up being a mini version of a requisite organization I don't know if you have you done a deep dive on the hill.

**Chris Comeaux:** 49:17

Is it all? Is it berksarg or herkzorg? Beard beard sorg yeah, berk sorg is with the b? B. So if you've done a deep dive on them, because that's kind of a correlator to hospice and palliative care, what does it look like amongst their clinical teams?

**Bruce Peters:** 49:32

I have not, I have not you and your work and there's it's always struck me about your work is um quality of the person doing that care and how much they care about being with a family in that environment and doing the work, but doing the work in such a way as it maximizes things relationships and things in the family.

**Chris Comeaux:** 50:05

Well, you just made me. I just had a huge aha. You know, the patients in hospice and palliative care are generally have a prognosis of six months or less, which is kind of interesting because then that gets to more of like level two. But so, a great hospice person will meet that patient and family where they are and will walk alongside them in that journey. They will bring skills and tools clinical, you know, pain, symptom management but that ability to meet and walk alongside them and help them discover what's most important to them and then coordinating amongst other team members to deliver that,

that's like an AV seal, I mean, that's like super-duper power. Let me give you an aspirin and give you a shot.

**Bruce Peters:** 50:46

It's not level one work the way I learned level one work in Toronto.

**Chris Comeaux:** 50:52

But I think, in terms of what Tom teaches, though I think he would come in and say you're defining level one work as almost like a very non-complex task level thing. Like you know, I love my father-in-law. He's amazing. He was in basically a machine repair shop of a manufacturing line his whole life and so while there's probably certain levels of complexity, it's not quite as complex as what we're dealing with within hospice. So maybe the more efficacious way is level one does not connote how much competency and complexity, it's just very specific to that organization. Because when you start looking at level two and level three, you know it's about systems and processes and then integrating those systems and processes. You're thinking at a human level but in, yes, that does exist at the level one. So I don't know if you'd push back on that.

**Bruce Peters:** 51:44

I did. I, as I said, I just you know the fact that we were going to meet and, and that it caused me to go look at this and I I would have a tendency to believe that that's not level one work under any circumstance that I could define.

**Chris Comeaux:** 52:06

Maybe we'll go back to the source of Tom and kind of see what he says.

**Bruce Peters:** 52:09

I just said I knew you and I were going to be talking about it because, for all the reasons you just mentioned, it's, it's connection, it's a, it's a bunch of things, the worldview and how they connect and the way they're doing. They're like the CEO of that family's life during that.

**Chris Comeaux:** 52:29

Well, you just gave me a cool idea, actually, which you know. We do this in our org chart at Teleios. I'm at the bottom of the org chart and our admin team hates me for it, like they have to do it in a software, and it has to flip it upside down.

**Bruce Peters:** 52:43

And so, and I'm not doing it, for, like cliché, you may not ever publish this- no, but to your point.

**Chris Comeaux:** 52:48

What if you actually took the levels of work and just flip the actual pyramid, because the most important people are the people at the level one, and that, to me, is probably more tool-based thinking, right, or beyond tool-based thinking? You're also making me recall we had a meeting, Lee, and we had like our own kind of CEO group that Lee would facilitate. And he came in on a Monday and he was just, he was almost giddy, and he had seen a college football game that weekend with the Johnsonville Sausage Company and there was the marketing commercial. There was a staff level people sitting at the table going well, now they want us to come up with a commercial and Lee was like they're finally getting it.

**Chris Comeaux:** 53:26

It really was kind of flipped upside down. The people that were doing the actual work were having to come up with the marketing message.

**Bruce Peters:** 53:32

Yes, and I think, even if I'm wrong, it's a better way to look at your work.

**Chris Comeaux:** 53:41

Well, that's what's kind of occurring to me. It's just like you had brought us into a fascinating conversation. I can't remember the name of the organization, but what they talked about was think of where the work needs to occur is these circles, and you bring people into the circles. Yeah, and what I remember, the first thing I remember thinking of was then I want a team of Navy Seals, highly ambidextrous, highly trained and competent, and, theoretically, if you did that, ideally you wouldn't need any structure.

**Bruce Peters:** 54:08

It's just the CEO and just all these certain bear stories got 30 people and 20,000 employees but if you agreed and so that's you get optimal.

**Chris Comeaux:** 54:17

But there is still people that have level three and four responsibility it's like which is there?

**Bruce Peters:** 54:22

are people have that, but they're not in the performance.

**Chris Comeaux:** 54:26

What they're doing is they're dropping in and they're helping like hey, our systems no longer working anymore. Can you help us change the system, Update the system? These systems aren't talking and working with each other. It could be a process system, could be a technology system, et cetera.

**Bruce Peters:** 54:41

Yeah, and they're directional. I mean we're going north or we're going west, or we're going south, or we're going to take this mountain, uh, because you do not get that from the organizational structure of requisite somebody's making a decision about. We're going west, um, and I think the navy seals team, uh, Birdsorg does it takes it a step further, although I think navy seals do this, um, their role of the corporate headquarters and the people above their role description is to make sure that the circles have competency to perform their roles. That's interesting, right, and so it's not. It's not to do. You's not to make it hierarchical in any way, shape or form, right, but are they free to make the decisions? And you've got some circles splitting their money equally and you've got other circles who are very different about it. But what they're not flexible on is the quality and the service of the work that we're doing. Well, Bruce, we probably could go on hours why and the service of the work that we're doing.

**Chris Comeaux:** 55:44

Well, well, Bruce, I can't. We probably could go on hours. Once you land the plane, what final thoughts?

**Bruce Peters:** 55:51

you think would be a good way to tie all this together. Oh God, I think I think you're really onto something, but I, I, really, I appreciate the opportunity to come in and kind of watch from the outside, because you're wrestling with what hundreds of organizations are wrestling with in the current environment and the current uncertainty is everywhere in our society, yeah, for whatever reason. And so, one of the things I love about requisite and this goes back to Jerry Harvey Jerry Harvey viewed it as being a cure for anaclitic depression. Say it one more time A cure for Anaclitic depression. What's anaclitic, Anaclitic depression? Sorry, what does that mean? Anaclitic depression is depression that's caused by separation.

**Chris Comeaux:** 56:43

Oh wow, and might be misdiagnosed as a lack of cause and purpose.

**Bruce Peters:** 56:47

correct could be a whole bunch of things. But if you, if you go back and restudy, jerry, the whole idea of his work was the maximize manage meaning and maximize connection.



And so, which goes back to Wilford Beyond, but he would say, like in the concentration camps in World War II with Frankl Well, but in the concentration camps people would die and when people died they crawl up in little balls and most of them died from pneumonia or not from any particular physical ailment they could not put on them. They died of loneliness essentially, and because they were disconnected from their society, their families, their friends. They're just gonna. Everything was important in their world.

**Bruce Peters:** 57:39

All of that is a cause of anaclitic depression. Way back in the old days, when kids were in the orphanages and they didn't get held at birth and all that sort of thing, people who got through that had anaclitic depression their whole life. They couldn't get married, couldn't make relationships, couldn't make friends and that sort of thing. The thing that you're seeing in our society today is a mass of anaclitic depression. We do not know how to be in relationship and connected to each other, and so one of the things that requisite does is allows a formula in the business world. It creates a formula for how you create some structure that's not chaos and reduces uncertainty about what we're going to do and how we're going to work and play together that's incredible.

**Chris Comeaux:** 58:26

You know, Bruce, I was in a meeting the other day. Do you know? There's a minister of loneliness now in England?

**Bruce Peters:** 58:29

yes, yeah, yeah, very much. So, you know what the biggest program is? They have no, what is it? Woodworking shops for men. They have 400 of them. Oh my gosh, and what we? What they learned? They learned is men get together around the thing and then they become friends. Women get together as friends and then they decide what we're going to go do together and so, um, so the big initial thing that created this in England was the woodworking shops. So, so that's so cool, yeah, and so there's. I mean, there's like 400 of them now they got a little woodworking association. Every little town has its own woodworking association. So, um, anyway, that's a long, there's a very long-winded conversation, but I hope this is helpful to you.

**Bruce Peters:** 59:10

It's very it is very you force me to think, rethink and read some things for my end of things too. So yeah.

**Chris Comeaux:** 59:18

So, what I think of? Well, um, what I'd love to do is actually bring you and tom together. We've been having tom mentor a team of ours, because I want to say this out loud on the

air you look at a lot of organizations today, especially in health care, that have become over bloated bureaucracies. They're not requisitely structured, and then the work. You end up with nurses that are very disengaged from their work, but a lot of other things. This has happened in the health, healthcare, the hospital systems and I am concerned in the hospice and public care field that, as you start to see a lot of mergers and acquisitions, we're doomed for exactly the same thing, and that's why I'm so passionate about what you and I are talking about, because I think this is part of the antidote to make sure what I think is the most brilliantly model ever designed of health care thrives into the future.

**Bruce Peters:** 1:00:06

Yeah, exactly, and the thing that I worry about, and you see this all the time, like when people say you're working in a teal space and I had to be careful about that, and is that people say, oh, that's flat management, so people get it into buckets or categories. What I love about Requisite is it has buckets or categories, but the buckets or categories are designing around the work. Yeah, I agree.

**Bruce Peters:** 1:00:35

And I think the big thing I would worry about if I worked for you, I'd worry about does the accountant of Chris come in and look at this stuff? Because it's very attractive to people who think like accountants.

**Chris Comeaux:** 1:00:53

Right. Then it comes down to how you design the role, which is kind of interesting. You would take it into that realm.

**Bruce Peters:** 1:01:02

So, it's the standing in the shoes of the people that are doing the work Right. Some way, somehow make sure that they're involved in whatever it is you design. Thank you, wow.

**Chris Comeaux:** 1:01:13

Well said, Bruce. That's a great way to land the plane. Appreciate you. You're a treasure, and so to our listeners, thank you for listening. At the end of each episode, we always want to share a quote and a visual. Possibly might Thank you for listening. Book on Amazon Anatomy of Leadership. Tell your friends, family, coworkers, pass this podcast, subscribe, hit the subscribe button, pay it forward to them. It's easy to rail against the world and be frustrated by things. Let's be the change we wish to see in the world. So thanks for listening to Anatomy of Leadership and here's our Brain Bookmark to close today's show.

**Brain Bookmark / Jeff Haffner:** 1:01:57

"Every one of us has a different narrative. We must be tending the garden on an individual level by Bruce Peters. Thank you.