

## Transcript: Unlocking Leadership Potential: Through Self-Awareness with Coach Sherry Winn | Part Two

**Jeff Haffner:** 0:00

Welcome to TCNtalks and Anatomy of Leadership. We continue the conversation in part two of Unlocking Leadership Potential Through Self-Awareness with Coach Sherry Winn. And now, here's Chris Comeaux.

**Chris Comeaux:** 0:18

So here's a good segue question. Once a leader recognizes that they're making excuses, which that in itself is progress, what's the first practical step they should take to break that pattern and then move forward towards higher productivity, higher accomplishment, higher success?

**Coach Sherry Winn:** 0:36

I love it that you're just throwing me all the fluffy questions today. Thank you, Chris. Thank you so much. No, I think that it comes out to that awareness, that mindfulness. And I think the only way to get mindfulness is I don't know if there's another way. I think the best way is through meditation. Because if you ever sit down to meditate and you're like, okay, I'm going to focus on breathing, it's like in, you know, oh, I feel the breath going in, I feel the breath going out, I feel the breath going in. Oh, I've got 15 things to do today. Oh, oh, oh yeah, breathing. And so what meditation does for you, in my opinion, is it helps you understand how often you go off track. And it also helps you understand that you have the power to bring yourself back. So you have to have the mindfulness first to know that it's an excuse that you're doing. You have to be aware of that. And then the second awareness you have to have about excuses is, is that going to give me the result I want? So in the moment is if you're aware that it's an excuse, and then you say to yourself, is it gonna give me the result that I want? And if the answer is no, then you want to change your mindset. It's just, I mean, but you you have to have that. So many people don't have the mindfulness. And I and I'm still learning, Chris, I'm still learning how much I don't know that I think. Like it's crazy. It's like, what? I've been thinking this. So I just I just came to the realization the other day, this, and this is insane, but that I feel guilty eating food. Right? So my mom is all about, you're gonna be fat, you wanna be fat. I mean, it was like all this like plant these seeds. And so I've been, you know, for years, I've been constantly not knowing, but adding up in my head, how much did I eat today? Did I eat that? Oh my gosh, I shouldn't eat this. This is bad food to eat. Oh, I felt guilty eating this. Well, how in the world can you ever have a good relationship with food in your body if you're feeling guilty? And I didn't even realize how much guilt I was bringing into it. And so, and I I

practice mindfulness, I practice self-awareness. So imagine a person who's just learning. They need to learn first to be mindful and to catch that, to catch that story before it sinks into you, because you have 17 seconds, this is what neural neuroscience says, you have about 17 seconds before that that thought starts getting attached into your neural networks and it becomes deeper and more connected and becomes more like it becomes so deep it becomes a belief because a belief is just a thought you keep thinking, right? So in that in that moment, if you could just say, if I use this excuse, am I gonna get what I want? No. Well, then I don't want to use it. Let me find another direction to go. Let me find something else to do. And it's again, you have to, you have to start recognizing all the thoughts that you have, which are tons, we have lots of these thoughts.

**Chris Comeaux:** 3:15

Yeah.

**Coach Sherry Winn:** 3:16

And and how many of those thoughts are not taking you the direction that you want to go?

**Chris Comeaux:** 3:20

That is so good. I actually, that was a I I'm an a voracious reader. And now don't say that braggingly, it's an actual passion and a love of mine. I have a team member, she goes, you know, when you talk about talk about all the books you're reading, it sounds like you're bragging. I'm like, you love beekeeping. That to me is like, that's my love. So anyway, I read this great book and it was all about the mental, about the thought process and all the thinking. And it was based upon the scripture about the the battlefield of the mind. And the guy in this book actually used this beautiful metaphor about the situation room, which I don't know if you know much about the situation room in the White House, so it goes back to some interesting history, I think, during JFK. But they don't, you don't have all the listening and technology now. It's just kind of like it's a very safe room, basically. And he's using the metaphor is what are you going to let into that room as a metaphor? And it's just made me so aware. And I, just like you, just this morning in my quiet time, there's a thought pattern that I did not realize was driving a script in me. And just being, I'm like, that's been there a long time. And there's a lot of habits that come out of that, and going back to the root and headwaters of that, you know, I'm just in the beginning of this one that I just found, but I could now go back to the rearview mirror of my life and go, oh, oh, that was a product of that. That was a product of that. That was not good. I don't want to repeat that. So I love that you said that.

**Coach Sherry Winn:** 4:43

Yeah, it's it's a it's a process, and I think that when people start the process, the the thing that I want people to understand is in this process, you have to give yourself praise. Because the first thing that we do, or the first thing that I did is judgment. And judgment's not gonna move you the direction you want to go. It's gonna keep you stuck and it's gonna keep you going the opposite direction. So so it's really about being curious, being understanding, being for you know, instant instantaneous forgiveness. And so this goes back, we're gonna circle back to love, right? So if you can in the moment give yourself that forgiveness, that love, look, you're gonna you're gonna get to where you want to go faster. But if you need to spend uh an hour beating yourself up, you just lost an hour of moving to where you want to go, or a day or two days, or some people or years people in this place.

**Chris Comeaux:** 5:35

Well, in another place in your book, you frame accountability not as punishment, which I think a lot of leaders stray away from it, maybe it's some of their own scripts and what they saw as maybe accountability in their life. And so you frame it not as punishment, but as something much more empowering. How can leaders practice accountability in a way that builds trust rather than fear?

**Coach Sherry Winn:** 5:58

Right. So, first of all, they got to get set in their mind this is not punishment. Because uh, you know, think about this. We have to understand that people, our nature is to find the easy way out. That's our nature. I mean, you know, if you have two roads and one is gonna be level and it's gonna get you where you want to go and it's gonna get you there faster, or you have this huge mountain that you have to go over that's gonna take five more hours, which way are you gonna go? Easy way. Like duh. Well, so people are going to look for the easy way out. But if you know that you're gonna be held accountable, if you know that somebody's at the other end going, uh, you were supposed to go over the mountain and you took this road, well, you're gonna go over the mountain. So we have to show them that we care deeply about them by holding them accountable so they're gonna reach their goals, they're gonna get to where they want to go, and they're gonna be happy about, you know, what they just received, which is uh, you know, worthiness, uh, uh value, validation, whatever it is. So it's not being mean. It's just helping people get what they really want, but they're not certain that this is the way they need to go to get there. You're showing them how much you care about them. It's like a parent. I mean, if you're a good parent, you hold your children accountable. You're not gonna let your child get away with, you know, throwing a timber tantrum in the middle of a store. You may not punish them there, but you're gonna have a great conversation with them when you get home, or you might be able to have a conversation in the store depending on how good you are. You know, um, I know a parent's good when they're raising their kids and they do

this one, two, and the kid's like, better. Like in that, you know, that because you know there's a there's a there's the accountability, and the and the child knows accountability is coming. And so they're they're gonna do the right thing. And so we're just helping people evolve to the best version of themselves. This is not about us being mean. This is what this is what you do when you truly care about somebody deeply, is you want to hold them accountable so they get to their goals.

**Chris Comeaux:** 7:52

That is so well said. Um, and you actually didn't remind me of this because I wrote about this in my book. Like I got through my end of my book, and I'm like realizing I'm so passionate about trying to become a better version of myself, not realizing for other people, like maybe they don't see that yet. So here's my question You emphasize creating a shared, compelling vision. What does a winning vision look like in a mission-driven field, especially like hospice and powder care? And my point is like, you know, I realized I went through my book, and so what I did at the end of the book, I was walking through Lowe's with my wife, and we were planting blueberry bushes. And it jumped out at me that you know, the the tag on the bush wasn't this beautiful picture of people digging it, having to cultivate, having, you know, all the hard work. They were giving you the beautiful picture of the fruit on the bush at the end. And I'm like, that's what I was missing, was giving them a compelling vision of what it looks like to be a better version of yourself. So is that what you're after with this concept of a winning vision?

**Coach Sherry Winn:** 8:53

Yeah, I think that it has to be something that people can feel. So it has to, you have to change a vision into something that people tangibly can feel. They can touch it, they can feel it, they can see it, they can smell it. It's gotta be that kind of vision. And I'll tell you, Tommy, this this guy named Jason G, he was a men's basketball coach when I was a women's coach at the University of Charleston. And I watched him really paint the vision in such a way that his guys believed in it. So they start their season every year, and his guys would be in the gym going, conference champs, do push ups, conference, champs, conference, screaming it, push-ups, conference, champs, conference, champs. I'm like, dude, Jason, conference doesn't start until December. Today is August. He's like, Vision starts today. And then I'd see him talk to his guys like every single day. Guys, when we win the conference, like you start, or he'd go, John, John, John, John, let me talk to you, John. Come here, John. John, I want to tell you about, you know, you're gonna be the guy that's gonna grab that rebound that we need that's gonna stop the other team so that we win that, that, that championship game. You're gonna be the guy who does that. I mean, he just painted it so vividly all the time. You know, when he had his calendar, his calendar was up like game versus so-and-so, his win versus so-and-so. I mean, he spoke with conviction. He talked about it, he painted the picture for guys. I mean, I was just like, I

wasn't on the team, and I'm like, I want to be on your team. Let me put be put me on your team. So the vision was like that. And I think that when we go into corporations, we've got to do the same thing. We've got to, we've got to create the picture and not just create it, but we've got to keep talking about it, exploring it, telling people about it, how, what their part is in it, so that people really feel it, you know, in their soul, that it's they're so connected to it. And we don't do that often enough. We put this big, like, this is our vision, you know, boom, and then we're done. And we expect everybody to believe in it. Well, you got to make it something that really they feel and connect with.

**Chris Comeaux:** 10:47

Yeah, it's so good. Um, you said also in your book that people don't buy into what we do, they buy into who we are. So, how does a leader cultivate authenticity that inspires that type of belief, that type of trust? And that maybe type of knowing, maybe is a better word.

**Coach Sherry Winn:** 11:05

Well, you know, we're energetic human beings, right, Chris? We're we're we're energy at our base. So if you break us all down, they know this now. When you get to the atom, they break the atom down. Energy, whoop, whoop. So you have to be that energy. I mean, your words, if your words don't match your energy, everybody knows it. Everybody, you know, you've probably walked in a room at some point in your life. You walk in the room, two people have been fighting, they're not fighting anymore, but you walk in, you're like, oh, I'm not going in that room. Not no. Well, whether we know it or not, we're emitting that energy all the time. So if your energy is that energy that comes from all of the personal development, that self-awareness that you've done, and you really get to the energy and understanding what with the love we talked about earlier, right? If you get to that energy, people feel it. And so if your words don't match your energy, they're like, something's not worth it. They might not be able to name it, but they understand it's not matching up. It's not matching up. And so when you when you enter something, you enter from that position of all that personal development, all the self-awareness that you've done, and you're entering it in that way. And then whatever you say matches who you are. So people who are listening to us today, right, Chris, they they know that what you say is you. They know that what I say is me because they can feel the energy of that. And so people try to fake it, but you can't fake authenticity. It's got to be the essence of who you are.

**Chris Comeaux:** 12:34

That's my mentor, Dr. Thayer, would basically say exactly what you just said that leadership really comes down to it's the essence of who you are. It's it's a reflection. So his his uh kind of magnum opus book was leadership dot dot thinking, being, doing, as we

think, so we are, as we are, so we do. And and that's actually a great framing. It's it's like a brain tattoo. So if I'm worried about, well, I don't have that thing down yet. Well, how does my thinking affect my being, which is then driving my doing? And we're all some level of work in progress. There's no level of perfection this side of uh this part of the journey that we're on. Um I see you shake shaking your head quite a bit. Anything you want to add to that?

**Coach Sherry Winn:** 13:18

Well, I just think about, you know, one of my one of my big, big, big teaching points is quit taking it personal, right? I mean, you want to go through life understanding that what somebody else says to you is because of who they are. It's not who you are, it's who they are. And I live that probably 90, I want to say 94.5% of the time. And then somebody will say something, I just go ballistic. I'm like, even when I'm doing it, I'm like, what is going on here? Because that's not me. That's not who I am. And so even when we practice this and we live it, there are still moments when our imperfection is gonna show through because we're humans. And then the cool thing about that is that the moment is that you get to give yourself peace. That's the moment you get to practice the very things that you're saying are so essential. So you know, I'm always reminded of those moments when I lose it, and I it's not often, but I do. I mean, it's less often than it used to be, right? But then I'm like, okay, how fast can I get myself back right? How fast can I recover and step back into the essence of who I really want to be? Because that's what it gives us that opportunity to do. Um but we are, we're we're human beings, and the human experience is is filled with mistakes and uh imperfections and just you know, human stuff that we do that we're like, uh, I wish I would have said that, wish I would have done that. But that's our lessons. That's how that's what we need to grow and to be and and to evolve into this person, this leader that can really lead at a different level that people feel and they so want to connect with. I think that in it, if we were perfect, you know, Chris, if you were perfect, if I were perfect, we would be so much on a pedestal that nobody would think they could get there. What good are we then?

**Chris Comeaux:** 15:04

Right. And and that's there's no reality there for anybody. But you you know, a quote that's just been such a kind of guiding light for me this year. I think it's a Eugene Peterson quote that, of course, it's from a Christian perspective, but it's it's about not perfectionist, basically saying going in the same direction for a longer period of time. In other words, I'm gonna screw up, I'm gonna make mistakes, I am a work in progress, but can I look through the rearview mirror and the trajectory is more often than not in a better direction than we're up in? That's my interpretation of that quote. And that's been because I've always been bad most of my life, giving myself grace. I'm like, I'll be the hardest coach on myself. I mean, and it has driven me to great success and heights, but it's also probably

not been so healthy in other aspects. So there's a there's a more graceful way to do that, which is I feel like what you're poking on. If if I even read you right, you probably were a little bit more of a hard ass coach in the earlier part of your career, maybe in the latter. Is that is that true?

**Coach Sherry Winn:** 16:03

Yes. Oh, yes. Absolutely. I mean, the evolution was uh it was uh really huge. And so, and it's probably the reason people say, why don't you get out of coaching? But, you know, life transforms you. I mean, the events in your life transform you, and the events in my life transform me. What I really wanted to do after a while was like, look, look, I'm I'm getting these 12 to 15 young women, and next year a lot of them are the same, and nothing wrong with that. I really wanted to have the opportunity to grow them as individuals. But what I started learning was I really wanted to share this with a lot more people. I mean, I had messages that were gonna help more leaders and more people, and um and I had and I was different. I mean, winning wasn't the end-all be-all that it was early. It became, I really want to see this young lady evolve. I want to see who she becomes, I want to, I want to help her get through this thing. Well, you know, if you're a coach, winning's gotta be everything to you. I mean, literally, you gotta be like, ah, and I just lost some of that because competition wasn't as important.

**Chris Comeaux:** 17:08

Wow, that's so cool. Well, you've coached elite athletes and now high-impact executives. What could maybe hospice empowered care leaders learn from Olympic athletes, other athletes you've coached about thriving under pressure? Because there is an immense amount of pressure in this work that we're doing. And again, it's gonna get more, it's not gonna get less, unfortunately.

**Coach Sherry Winn:** 17:28

Well, I think the same thing that I've taught for a long time is that pressure is something you put on yourself. So, how do you want to change that? And what view do you want to make pressure? How do you want to view it differently? And, you know, you see people now say pressure's the privilege. Well, you know, that's one of those things that people do to switch that out, you know, to switch that concept into a happier place, into a more uh revealing place for yourself. So when I think of pressure, it's like, well, if I put it on myself, what can I do to take it off of myself? What does that look like? What does that feel like? And do I want to feel that way versus the stress that I'm adding? Because we know what stress does, right? We know that if you go to the doctor and they're gonna say, huh, you need to get less stress in your, you know, you got this, but if you just reduce your stress, you'd be fine and like that, you know? And you're like, okay, great, I'm gonna get rid of my job, my family, my, you know, like but since we can't do that, we need to be able to do



the other, which is the way we view stress. So, in what ways do you want to change your view of stress? In what ways do you want to view it in such a way that you feel better about it instead of worse about it? And again, it goes back to the mindset because whatever you tell yourself, oh, this I feel a lot of pressure, so much pressure here, it's it's godly, it just has me drained. Okay, well, that becomes your truth. Or you can say pressure is a privilege, I'm so lucky that I get to do what I do. I'm really helping people in such a way that that I get to see some incredible miracles daily or weekly. I'm so lucky to be in this, in this business. I'm so lucky to be in a space where I see these people and the love they have for other people in their life, or or the way they rewrite their lives, or the or the forgiveness they ask for, or whatever they do. Like you get to reframe that however you want to. And then if you take the pressure off, it doesn't feel the same.

**Chris Comeaux:** 19:16

That is so good. Last year on my whiteboard in my office, I feel like listening to you, I need to go put it back on top. I had get to versus got to. Am I uh I gotta go do that, or I get to go do that. And just that reframing, and I had a big bold letters. I think after this podcast, I'm going to put it back on my whiteboard. So, Cherry, so as we kind of land the plane here, if you gave one piece of advice to hospice and powered care leaders just trying to find their voice, strengthen their leadership presence, what would it be?

**Coach Sherry Winn:** 19:46

Well, I think you go back to why are you in this business? What what was it you came to do? What was your passion about getting into it? Who are you serving? How does that serving fulfill you? Like, how do you connect to that in such a way that you go, oh my gosh, like what I do is very purposeful and dive into the purpose of it, feel it, and remind yourself that you make a difference. I mean, this is what I'm doing really makes a difference because we're all going to go that same path. Nobody gets to go a different direction. We're all going the same way. And um I I think the more you connect to your purpose and the more you connect to your passion, the easier it is for you to do whatever is in front of you.

**Chris Comeaux:** 20:26

That's so good, Sherry. You're I'm kind of wishing, like, damn, I wish you were my coach. Um, any any final thoughts? Because you're obviously a kick-ass coach. So any final thoughts?

**Coach Sherry Winn:** 20:35

Uh, I think it goes back to what I said earlier is you don't get what you want, you get who you are. To get what you want, you must change who you are. And so people will say, but you know, this is my personality. I'm like, well, I changed mine. Like you can change yours.



Like this is this is you're not, you don't you don't come with this finite ability to become somebody. It's infinite. But we create all those barriers and all those obstacles. So who do you want to become? And then if that's who you want to become, start learning, start growing. Hire a coach, hire a mentor, read some books. Like you said, you read books all the time. So, so do something about it, evolve, make an evolution. Um, I'm always growing and learning new things. And um, I don't get it perfect. I know I'll never get it perfect, but here's what I think. I'm joyful about it. I'm joyful about the lessons I've learned. I'm joyful about the the places I've I've come to in this world. And and I and I really want other people to understand that joy and that love that you can have for being on this earth at this time with the situations that you have.

**Chris Comeaux:** 21:37

That is so good. Well, Sherry, thank you. Thank you for the work that you're doing. Keep it up. And I I'm now I know Coach Sherry and our listeners do as well. So, try listeners, end of each episode, we always share a quote, a visual. The idea is to create a brain bookmark, a thought powder about what we've been discussing over this podcast series. And so we wanted to further your learning and your growth, and thereby it sticks. We're going for like a brain test. Too. Make sure you subscribe to Anatomy of Leadership. We're going to put links to Sherry's books. We'll always put a link to my book, The Anatomy of Leadership, as well. It's easy to rail against the world. Let's be the change that we wish to see in the world. So thanks for listening to The Anatomy of Leadership. And here's our brain bookmark to close today's show.

**Jeff Haffner:** 22:17

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