

Alison Whitmire: Welcome everybody. I'm Alison Whitmire with Learning in Action, and I'm so happy to be here with you today. Happy holidays. Our podinar today is Conscious Leadership for Coaching: Aligning your thinking, caring, and doing for meaningful results. And I'm super happy to have my guest today, Eric Kaufmann.

Alison Whitmire: Hi, Eric.

Eric Kaufmann: Hey.

Alison Whitmire: I'm going to give Eric a proper introduction in just a moment.

Alison Whitmire: So our intentions for the podinar today is to talk about what is conscious leadership, why is the world hungry for it, what are some examples of conscious leadership, what does it look like in action, and how is it embody. And then how do we coach someone to be a more conscious leader.

Alison Whitmire: So just want to do a quick introduction of my team. On board today is Kris Harty. Hi, Kris.

Kris Harty: Hey, Alison. Hi everyone.

Alison Whitmire: Kris is going to be moderating and curating your comments. She's going to be watching the chat box. Can I get a theme for everything that you've got to say, and making sure we're responsive, interactive with you today.

Alison Whitmire: And the Corrie is going to be in the background. Hey, Corrie.

Corrie Weikle: Hey, guys.

Alison Whitmire: And to the extent you have any questions or comments about maybe we have technology issues or questions about coaching or anything at all, Corrie will be responding to you. So thank you, Kris. Thank you, Corrie. Appreciate it. Kris, we'll be seeing you in a bit.

Alison Whitmire: So you might be asking yourself what the heck is a podinar. We made it up. It's a cross between a podcast and a webinar. We hope it's the best of both. It's interview style like a podcast with the interactivity of a webinar. And we do want it to be interactive. So we hope you'll chat with us and ask us questions, and we'll talk to you about exactly how to do that in just a moment.

Alison Whitmire: But first, why do we do these podinars? We genuinely, truly want to facilitate and accelerate transformational change in the world, and we want to do that by introducing you to thought leaders who are doing just that and what their unique special sauce is, what their perspective is, how they do what they do, and hopefully to inspire you and to inform you to do more of what you're already doing so well, and to help you thrive in your chosen professional. That's what this is about, that's what we're about at Learning in Action.

Alison Whitmire: So how do we engage today? We'd love to hear your chat. So the way you do that, if you want everyone to know what you're talking about, and we hope you do, you'll want to change the setting to be all panelists and attendees. You'll just click that there, and then when you chat, you can chat about anything. We'd love feedback. We want to riff off what you're saying. Then you can just put that in the chat box. If you put it to all attendees, everyone will see it. If it's just a panelists only, Eric and I and Kris will see it.

Alison Whitmire: If you've got a question, we'd love for you to put it in the Q&A box. That helps it clarify it from being out of the chat box, but we're going to be monitoring both. If you've got a specific question for Eric and I, you can put it in the Q&A box. And we'll be doing a poll as well. Polls are super easy to participate in. You just select the answer that best fits you and then click the submit button.

Alison Whitmire: So with that, without further ado, I'm very excited to introduce my friend Eric. Eric and I met at a Institute of Coaching Conference a couple of conferences ago, and I haven't told you this, Eric, but I was just really taken by just how ... I just felt your heart. It sounds kind of corny when you say it. But like I just felt like an enorm-, like who you were. I felt a courageousness and a compassion. I just thought I need an excuse to stay in contact with this guy. And so I made these up.

Alison Whitmire: So for a more formal introduction of Eric. Eric is an executive coach. He's an author. he's a keynote speaker. 19 years ago, Eric quit his corporate gig to form an executive development consultancy. He describes his work as an unrelenting commitment to results in an unyielding regard for the human spirit. Eric's the author of the book Four Virtues of a Leader. He's a fellow thought leader for the Institute of Coaching at Harvard. He's a former business chair and TEDx speaker.

Alison Whitmire: So welcome, Eric. Thank you so much for joining us today.

Eric Kaufmann: Thank you, Alison. I'm honored. I'm excited. I'm really grateful to have a base to talk about this conscious leadership construct and practice and yeah. Thank you.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah. Yeah. Glad you're here. So we got more sign ups for this podinar faster than any other we've done, and we've done quite a few. I'm curious what's your sense of what it is about this idea. People don't even know what it is. I had never heard of it before you, but what do you think is the sense of like what we think conscious leadership might be that attracts people?

Eric Kaufmann: So if we look at the arc of history, human beings have always been shaped by the cultural and sort of social and environmental conditions that we have been in, right? So if we have the hunter/gatherers, the leadership was done in a particular way. It was very distributed. Men and women had equal roles because everybody had to be all hands on deck to survive as hunter/gatherer, right? Then we went into sort of farming and it changed the niche of society, it changed the nature of leadership. And then we went farming became city states

that gave rise to mass production. Then we started having armies and military. Of course, at some point religion comes in there. So we're shaped by our ... As much as we're shaping society and culture. Culture and society and environment shapes us as humans.

Eric Kaufmann: We are at a time in history that is another inflection point, right? There's something different that's been happening, and it's been happening since before World War II with the globalization of markets and economies, the rise of the business class, not just on airplanes but I mean sort of the whole idea of commerce and business, global trade, multinational corporations. We've had a concomitant sort of decline of the power of religion and a flattening of the sort of authority of government. So what we've had over the years is government is reducing, not reducing but we've sort of we have suspicion around government, right? We have some sort of antagonistic push and pull with government. Religion has lost it's shining sort of moral star, and business has risen to be the facto, the shapers of society.

Eric Kaufmann: Business and business leaders, commerce, commercial has become the shapers of society. So now we have situation where business leaders are unprepared and often unaware of the role that they're playing as shapers of societies. Not just leaders of business but leaders of humanity. And so if we don't have government and we don't have religion and we have business, then, oh my god, how is business going to take care of me? Where it wasn't inherently invented as a profit driven motive to make the most for the owners and not necessarily to care for society.

Eric Kaufmann: So conscious leadership is not so much a desire as a failed sense. We need our leaders to step up, step into, tune into, and really embrace the inevitable role that they didn't sign up for, and so that is what I believe ... And I'll give you a real quick example. So we have the terrible speed of shootings in the United States. After the high school in Florida, I'm blanking on a name. I'm sorry.

Alison Whitmire: Sandy Hook. No, no. That's up north.

Eric Kaufmann: My deepest apologies. I can't recall the name.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah. Sorry. Someone will chat it to us.

Eric Kaufmann: After the shooting, there was this grief outcry about the power of the NRA and this kind of defacto notion that guns are birthright and there's been sort of let's review our relationship with violent weapons. And the government didn't do anything about it and the religions didn't do anything about it. You know who did something about it? Delta Airlines, Walmart, Dicks Sporting Goods. Those are examples. I'm not saying those are like shining examples of conscious leadership. But it's a shining example of the transfer of moral authority into the hands of business leaders and conscious leadership. An effect is how can we do what I described in my work, right? Is an unrelenting commitment to results,

kick butt, get shit done, be successful with an unyielding regard for the human spirit. It's not an either/or proposition. It's a both/and, but the both/and is not something we practice. So now it's requisite.

Alison Whitmire: So appreciate that context and it feels so ... I feel really empowered by what you just said. So I've coached CEOs for a long, long time, for 15 years. Small and medium sized businesses. And I haven't put my work in that context, and I feel so much more ... I don't know. Maybe emboldened to coach my clients maybe differently. So I really appreciate that.

Alison Whitmire: So when you think of consciousness, in the context of conscious leadership, how do you define that?

Eric Kaufmann: Are you asking what is conscious leadership or more specifically what is consciousness?

Alison Whitmire: No, so conscious has so many different meanings.

Eric Kaufmann: Yeah.

Alison Whitmire: So when you think of the word conscious, what does that mean?

Eric Kaufmann: I'm going to go coaching, a coaching mind trick, and sort of respond with a question.

Alison Whitmire: Okay. I'm game.

Eric Kaufmann: My daughter, by the way, has flat out forbade be from doing that anymore. Last time I had a conversation, she's now 18 so this was a couple years ago. She said, "Look, I have a question for you, and I just want you to give me an answer."

Alison Whitmire: Just tell me, dad.

Eric Kaufmann: And I said, "Why would you want me to do that?" She goes, "Oh my god. You can't even ..."

Alison Whitmire: Oh my god.

Eric Kaufmann: It's more rhetorical. I was thinking about it and I was thinking I mentioned to you before. But I was thinking about why do you put so much effort into this podinar, and for those folks who are on the podinar that don't have the background experience. I was saying I have such great respect for the way you're doing it. There was a trial run. There was a whole host of emails. You were doing the research. You got four people on it, right? Not just me and you, but you got people who are taking care of different things. And so there's preparation and then there's attention and then there's people. I think part of the reason you do that, I didn't ask you, but I'm sort of imagining, is because you

want to prevent mishaps, right? What you want is you want to it to go real smoothly so you can provide value to folks. You want to create an environment where you and I can really be attentive and focused and therefore bring the best of ourselves forward so that people can gain the most from the exchange. You want to minimize the unexpected, the disruptive inevitability of things that will happen. Is that sort of ...

Alison Whitmire: Yes, that's very fair.

Eric Kaufmann: And so you do this in order to be able to do a few things, pay deep attention, provide value and service, and to the degree that you can deal with uncertainty, right? Or prepare for the uncertainty. And I think that is one of the things that's so important to me about this whole notion of conscious leadership. Life is fraught with uncertainty. That is not like a philosophical statement. That is a fact, right?

Eric Kaufmann: Life is fraught with uncertainty. In fact, we have a joke, and we say, what do we say? The only certain things in life are death and taxes, right? And so okay, I'm not here to talk about death, about taxes, but I am going to die. My wife is going to die. My children are going to die. Everybody who I love is going to die. We're all going to die, and I don't know when but I know for certain it will happen. And actually it hurts my heart to say that out loud. It pains me to admit that, and you spend a lifetime essentially wanting to avoid, deny, and reflect that reality. And I'm not saying this as some kind of a depressive, existential hopeless statement. I'm saying this because facing our mortality, the fact that we're going to die, facing ... And with that, the uncertainty of life is really a significant part of what it means to awaken to being conscious, right? And to awaken to being a leader.

Eric Kaufmann: By the way, leadership is fraught with uncertainty. In fact, the more senior you are in the organization, the more intimate you are with the fact of uncertainty.

Alison Whitmire: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Eric Kaufmann: So I think that what I'd like to say here is my life is a dress rehearsal. There ain't no second chance. We don't get a, what is it called? A do over button. I don't get to do it again. This is our one chance to do the best that we have and to be the best we can be and to provide the most that we can, and I mention this as an invitation to myself and as an invitation to everyone else to seriously commit to this reality. And so as part of the leadership role, it's about producing amazing results and having a great life and doing all things that are a privilege and a value and a gift and a joy. But it also is an invitation as ...

Eric Kaufmann: So here I am as to what is a conscious leader, right? Embracing the inevitability of uncertainty and facing the undeniable element of death. What does it mean to move from being self-centered to being life-centered? And I think that's where the conscious leadership becomes like the really interesting game, right? It's not like either/or. It's in the language of spiral dynamics. It's transcendent

and include. Right? How do I include the self-centering impulse, which is impossible for me to erase and transcend that into a life-centered way of being, and I think conscious leadership at its very sort of heart is engaging in a life-centered perspective.

Eric Kaufmann: So serving not only the mission and the board and the values of the stakeholders but serving life as part of our journey of leadership.

Alison Whitmire: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative). I feel that. So tell us what is conscious leadership?

Eric Kaufmann: I think about it in the simplest terms as I think about leadership as organizing and influencing people to achieve meaningful results. That's my sort of shortest definition, most succinct definition of what leadership is. Organizing and influencing people to achieve meaningful results.

Eric Kaufmann: Conscious leadership then is organizing and influencing people to achieve meaningful results while respecting that this is the only life we have. And so therefore engaging with curiosity and with compassion and boldness. So it's organizing and influencing people to achieve meaningful results, and in doing so with curiosity, compassion, and boldness.

Alison Whitmire: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative). So say more ... By the way, there's a great article that Eric has done on this, and, in fact, Kris, if you have a chance to put that in the chat box for people to link to would be awesome.

Eric Kaufmann: give you a link to it after the conversation.

Alison Whitmire: Yes, okay. You're right. Don't do that. We will send you a link to it in the follow up. Thanks, that's much better. Where you talk about what conscious leadership is, and you talk about this idea of a triune intelligence and three pillars of consciousness. Will you speak to that?

Eric Kaufmann: Sure. Yeah. So traditions, sometimes we call them wisdom traditions, right? Across the globe and across time have long identified that there are sort of three pillars to much of our life. I mean, in Hebrewic, Judaic tradition, it's Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, right? In Christian tradition, you've got the father, the son, the holy spirit. In Hindu have Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma. The Tao has Zen, Ching, and Shan. The zen tradition, there are sort of mindfulness practices, kindness practices and hara practices, right? There are three traditions of practice.

Eric Kaufmann: I think this triune of intelligence now in modern medicine, there's actually some very, very clear and compelling remarkable evidence of actually three centers of intelligence. If we say intelligence, it's because we have neuro pathways that you communicate, store information, memory and make decisions. If that's an intelligence, there is the head brain, the pallet brain with 100 billion cells or a

trillion. I forget the number. Lots of cells. Sometimes they're more fired up than others. There's are actual cells, brain cells in the heart, and there are neuro cells in the gut. As a matter of fact, we have as many neuro cells in the gut, almost as many neuro cells as a cat has in its brain. That's a lot. So when we talk about a gut sense or a heart felt or a head that's ... Those are sort of three centers of intelligence, and the pillars ...

Eric Kaufmann: As I've looked at all these traditions across time and throughout the different places and have studied them both sort of in an academic way but also in an experiential way. I've practiced with them. I've seen this kind of triune element that I've come to call wisdom, love, and courage. And I think that the practice of awakening and attuning and aligning these elements of wisdom, love and courage is the process of sort of raising consciousness and in particular, as we bring wisdom, love and courage into our leadership, now we have a way to practice conscious leadership. It's not one or the other.

Eric Kaufmann: I'm sort of at the dangers of the beginning of an early soap box here. What we have really lauded and have prioritized is our wisdom, right head tradition, the intellect, the analysis, the capacity for perspective and vision and planning and problem solving. I think our traditions, particularly in a progressive movement, and even in religious traditions, awakening the heart and being compassionate is coming to being. We haven't actually learned how to bring online the full sense of being rotated into a courage aspect, the sort of third element as in informing and connecting element of all three. And so I find that a lot of us are not aligned. So we can't bring the full presence into our work.

Alison Whitmire: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative). So Tommy Glover asked a question in advance about how you balance those three intelligences, and how you know if you're ... I'm adding this part. Like how do you know if you're strong in one and weaker in others?

Eric Kaufmann: So I think the notion is balance is it's a little limiting. And I'll say what I mean by limiting. So if I think of balance as like the balance of nature, for example. Right? So there's a notion of balance of nature like the ecosystem is somehow self correcting and that if ... Jesus. If too many deer appear in this ecosystem, which is one shift of the balance, then there will be a corrective balance by way of more wolves showing up to eat the deer. Right? Now the reality is that science has debunked that. There is no actual balance because balance insinuates either an equilibrium or a homeostasis. Right? Neither of those are actual sustainable states in nature or in humans. There's no sustainable equilibrium, no sustainable homeostasis. It's movement around and about. So what we really have is chaos sort of playing out in this chaos theory is far more modern than balance of nature kind of theory, right?

Eric Kaufmann: So the reason I bring it up is if in fact that's what Tommy meant by balance, and I don't have the good fortune of actually with her to ask the question more deeply. I think it's a her. If it's a him, I'm sorry.

Eric Kaufmann: What we're looking for really is not equilibrium but rather alignment and range, right? So I want to be able to awaken these three elements, right? My wisdom, my love, and my courage. And then dynamically either productively or reactively remain in contact. This is what I mean by life standard, right? Part of what life standard means is that I have a deep capacity to listen into what is happening within me, around me, and beyond me. Right? And so if I'm in a team situation and I find that we are lingering too long on a decision because it's uncomfortable and awkward, that's when I say, "Okay. Let me bring more courage online right now and press forward toward discomfort," right? I've used my wisdom to do the analyze, I used my heart to make sure we're connected, and really now it's not a matter of balance. It's a matter of priority. Now courage, boldness, a little ferocity has to come online to move into what it needs to move into.

Eric Kaufmann: Or I can be in a situation where I'm approaching somebody and I'm feeling really intense and they're driving and they're feeling really good about what they're doing. But I have this sense that they haven't thought it all the way through, right? So I'm going to say, "Okay. Let's downshift the courage element and kind of up shift the ... Okay, what do we need to do to think this through as wisely as we can from as many perspectives as we can?" So I hope I'm answering the question.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah. I mean, what I took from it, let me know if ...

Eric Kaufmann: It's not an even scale as much as it's a dynamic flow, and part of what I think what conscious is is being aware of what does life want of me right now. How can I be in flow and lock into the energy that is required of me to fulfill the Gestalt experience that's happening within and around me.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah. Yeah. What comes up for me is a friend of mine Jen Rybeck said it at a meeting we had at the of the IOC round table here locally in D.C. when we were talking about questions we ask ourselves. And one of the questions she asked herself is like what is the situation calling for me now. Like what is this situation asking for from me. And that's what I hear is this asking for me, courage, is this asking ... Your head, is it asking for something else. So yeah.

Alison Whitmire: So I got one more question, then we're going to go to Kris to hear questions and what the audience is chatting about. So Dude Rosenberg asks a question around what's the ... How is conscious leadership different, what's the value add? How is it different than servant leadership or adaptive leadership or all these other forms of leadership you hear about?

Eric Kaufmann: So I would ... Let me think about this. Ask me again. Sorry. So how is it different than those other ones. Is that what you're asking?



Alison Whitmire: Yeah. How is conscious leadership unique from what we hear about whether it's servant leadership or situation leadership or adaptive leadership? Like what's unique about it?

Eric Kaufmann: What comes up for me, Alison, is that I'm kind of inclined to reframe it from what's the value added. So how's it different or how's it additive? I'm really focused on how is it additive. How does it add to these other pieces whether servant leadership or situation leadership, and I think that there are ... How can it help evolve and add more context, nuance, and receptiveness to the familiar leadership model. Because it's not against or denying those other models, right? It's additive. There are ... Let me see how I can make sense of that.

Eric Kaufmann: So there are a few levels of relation that we operate in, right? And I'll say them. There's intrapersonal that's a relationship within myself with myself. There's interpersonal, right? The relationship that you and I, either individually, or you and I collectively. I'm relating to you personal and community. And there's this transpersonal relationship, right? The relationship that I have with that which is beyond the individual or the collective. So intrapersonal, interpersonal, transpersonal.

Eric Kaufmann: Something like emotional intelligence or situational leadership or emotional intelligence, for example, begins with intrapersonal, right? Self-awareness, self-encouragement, and then goes to interpersonal, right? What's happening with them and how do I just serve whoever they are, their developmental. I think that in particular, as I mentioned already, what conscious leadership adds is that transpersonal. And it's transcend and include. It's not against or without but it's transcend and include. So it includes the intrapersonal. Part of being conscious and being self-aware of your emotional intelligence is I think some of your bread and butter. It's hugely important.

Eric Kaufmann: Some consciousness is aware of others and relating with others, and part of consciousness is aware of life or what is the situation called. And I think where we falter is when we think that it begins and ends when a skin suit or a meat suit that we're wearing as an individual entity. And where we thrive is when we recognize a fundamental interconnectedness of all things in the universe, including all people. And when we can bring that interconnectedness on top of the actual interpersonal and the internal, we now have some really good foundation of some type of leadership opportunities, right?

Eric Kaufmann: And it's moving from a self center, even interpersonal. It's how do I relate to you, what do you like, how do you view me. How much of our time is spent in sort of perception management, right? How much of our time is spent and what do they think about me. How does it feel, and did I come off mad. Am I going to have another opportunity to get them to like me. It's so self centered, right? That doesn't go away, but there's another dimension we can add. What does life want? Right? What is it that I need to bring up to the team now that's not comfortable to me but will serve because that's what team energy, that's what

the team pulse requires. So that's when I think it's additive and enhancing rather than sort of unique or different. It's more. It's bigger.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah. I appreciate that. I hear it.

Alison Whitmire: Okay. Let's go to Kris. Kris, what are people chatting about? What kind of questions do they have?

Kris Harty: Yeah. We have one clarifying question, and we have three really short observations. So the clarifying question, we're looking for the third word, Eric, you had used. You had used curiosity, boldness, and something else as a component when you were talking a bit more about conscious leadership itself.

Eric Kaufmann: Curiosity.

Alison Whitmire: Compassion.

Eric Kaufmann: Compassion.

Kris Harty: Great. Thank you. Thank you for that. So much great information coming at us pretty quickly. So appreciate that.

Kris Harty: Three other quick comments. Alison Carol says Brittany Brown focuses a lot on courage and leadership. And [inaudible 00:30:21] had a comment about leaders are responsible for their world and conscious leaders are responsible for the impact they create. Both intentional and unintentional results are an extension of the impact.

Eric Kaufmann: Thank you.

Kris Harty: Yeah. And one more really great observation. Heather Lehman says balance is a verb. It's constant action. Not a steady state to achieve.

Eric Kaufmann: Yeah. I love that.

Alison Whitmire: I like that. I like that.

Eric Kaufmann: Without the advantage of that beautiful brief description. But yes, balance is a dynamic state. We think of balance as like the scales are somehow balanced. Where, in fact, it's really this dynamic process.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah. Yeah. I love that. So I'm loving how you're describing conscious leadership, this idea of interpersonal, intrapersonal, transpersonal, this idea of leaders, us asking for what's needed. So that sounds awesome. So what gets in the way? Why don't we all do this?

Eric Kaufmann: I can talk about there's several things that get in the way, right? One of the obvious things that get in the way is just the human condition. The human condition. I write in my book about fear as a basic mood of the ego. The ego in effect is this construct where I hold and we hold as the fixed finite self, right? So my ego ... Ego's Latin for the word I'm. So I am my values and assumptions and beliefs. I take that to be me. And it gets in the way because that has a sense of limited capacity and therefore I can talk about the inevitability of death. We just don't want to deal with the expansiveness of the uncertainty of it. We just want to be safe and secure in our state of self, right? So that's one.

Eric Kaufmann: Another thing that gets in the way is cultural constructs and cultural behavior, right? My kids ... Because my daughter turned 16, my younger daughter turned 16 on Saturday ...

Alison Whitmire: Aw. Nice.

Eric Kaufmann: Next month. So we'll call them 18 and 16. I've been real present with them going the school system. And we are educating little children to wonderful things like self reliance and intellect and problem solving, but we're also educating them to break away from their sense of connectiveness and compassion and sort of interdependence and really be more individuals. So the grades I get are my reflection, right? And the relationship with my teacher is my reflection, and whether or not I'm going to be graduate at the end of high school because I got a 4.0 is my work. So it's being my mind. I am reinforcing constantly this separating individual. And I think that it takes time and practice to rise above that, right? To transcend and include. Yes, I'm the individual and more.

Eric Kaufmann: There's a couple other things about ... You want me to throw in some other sort of gets in the way?

Alison Whitmire: Yeah, yeah. I'd love to.

Eric Kaufmann: One it isn't working or already on the path. When I started getting into the belief that I'm already conscious, I'm screwed.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah, right? I hate that conversation with a client on Monday. Oh goodness. Oh, that's a good one.

Eric Kaufmann: Yeah. As soon as we start convincing ourselves how conscious we are, we sort of lost the thread, lost a trail.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah, yeah. My client was yelling at me about how healthy is. I'm like, "Well, the fact that you're trying to convince me and that you're angry about it kind of flies in the face at that, you think?"

Eric Kaufmann: I think the sort of antidote for that would be just to be really humble, right? To be very much a sort of always in a student mindset, a beginner mind. Right? The other thing that gets in the way is some of these ... There's social efforts like, what's the expression here? I think it's a New Zealand or Australian called a tall poppy syndrome. You ever heard that?

Alison Whitmire: I don't know that. No.

Eric Kaufmann: It's either New Zealand or Australian. I apologize for whichever country I'm not attributing appropriately. But the tall poppy syndrome is this idea that if your a poppy in a field and stick out, they'll cut you down so you can fit in with all the other poppies.

Alison Whitmire: Right. Right.

Eric Kaufmann: Right? And so I think that there's this powerful work for us to participate and conform and be part of. I think part of our consciousness requires us is a smidge of rebellion. Right? I truly believe that rebellion is a seed of enlightenment, and I'm not talking about rebellion as a force of just screw you. I'm going to tear everything down and destroy it. I mean rebellion as this internal inclination to push against the assumptions of what's true and real. And I think that to the degree that we're willing to push against those ... The sort of inherently obviously fabrics of narrative that we grew up in. If we don't push against them, we're only demand a level of consciousness that we are brought into and born into and raised in. So I think there's an inherent drive towards conformity.

Eric Kaufmann: Again, if I go back to the school system, my girls have done fantastically academically but their struggles have primarily been social, as most children are, and most of the social struggles are about conformity and fitting in. And I think that part of what consciousness requires of us is to break beyond and be nonconformists. And so I think the folks who are willing to take some risk and rebel are going to inherently see more and know more than what was available to them before. I'll just quote Einstein who said that a problem cannot be solved with the same level of consciousness that created it. Right? We've got to pop a side from or away from the familiar.

Eric Kaufmann: I'll give you one more just because you asked. I mean I have several, right? But one is corollary to that, right? What can really get in the way from the leadership perspective is trying to make people happy. And we have made a ... Not me personally but there's a profitable industry around the science of happiness, and we have somehow bought into what I believe is a fallacious notion that we deserve to happy and that happiness can be acquired given the right circumstances. And so ...

Alison Whitmire: Happiness should be the goal.

Eric Kaufmann: Yeah, we deserve it. It's the goal. That's the ultimate achievement of the human life is happiness. And I've really encouraged people to review that and look at that differently. I think it's a bullshit commercial effort, and I think that what it paves the way for is a remarkable amount of money to be made by people who are profiting happiness. I'm not saying life should be sad. That's not what I'm saying. But I'm saying happiness comes and goes. It's like tooth pain, just like hunger.

Eric Kaufmann: Who is considered the wisest man in the western tradition? Biblically speaking, who was the wisest man in the Bible?

Alison Whitmire: I don't know.

Eric Kaufmann: In the Bible, Solomon.

Alison Whitmire: Okay. Yeah. Okay. I was going to say Moses.

Eric Kaufmann: No, Moses.

Alison Whitmire: Not so much.

Eric Kaufmann: No, Solomon, right?

Alison Whitmire: Yeah.

Eric Kaufmann: Solomon is considered the wisest man in history. The story goes he had a ring and inscribed on the inside of his ring was a statement that says, "This too shall pass." So the wisest man in biblical time had a simple formula that says, "This too shall pass," which means even happiness passes, so does sadness, so does loneliness, so does ecstasy, everything passes. And I think that if we're trying to make people happy, we're creating this artificial construct of really hedonistic exchange.

Alison Whitmire: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Eric Kaufmann: And if we can settle in as leaders to help people really be present, be mindful, learn to live in and reside in reality as it is, now we're moving beyond happiness to contentment. Contentment's available. But contentment doesn't always feel good. It just means that I accept what is.

Alison Whitmire: Accept what is. Mm-hmm (affirmative). I love that definition of contentment. I think some of the people I work with, when we talk about contentment, they, interestingly, resist that notion, that contentment could be a desired state because they see it as not striving, giving in. They equate content with complacent.

Eric Kaufmann: Yes. I hear that a lot. Content with complacency or resignation, right? I mean, it's one of the sort of ways that we've butchered it is what it is. Profound deep, Buddhist teaching of embracing reality as it is. Yatha-bhuta. Buddha would say yatha-bhuta. Reality as it is. And now we go, "Screw it. It is what it is. I can't do anything about it." That's not at all the same thing. Certainly contentment is not resignation or complacency. Contentment is being able to find deep joy in the present moment regardless of what it is, right? So can I be content when I'm fighting with my wife?

Alison Whitmire: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Eric Kaufmann: That's really hard.

Alison Whitmire: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Eric Kaufmann: We'll be married 20 years in March. Last week we had a pretty robust disagreement. I was very diligently trying to find my contentment in that disagreement.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah. How'd that go?

Eric Kaufmann: What I came to is that I was able to be in disagreement with her with all the energy that happens in the bonding, right? And if I stayed away from making bigger stories around it and going to the future and the past, and therefore making expressions about who I am and who I'm not, who she is and who she's not. Just stayed in the energy of that frustration and anger and disconnect, it's not inherently bad but it is unpleasant.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah.

Eric Kaufmann: So it also allows me to stay present with her in the experience and with myself in the experience, and therefore more through it a lot faster.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah. Right. There's less resistance to what is.

Eric Kaufmann: Yeah.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah.

Eric Kaufmann: Yeah.

Alison Whitmire: So what are some examples? We've talked a little bit about the theory of conscious leadership, some of the attributes of conscious leadership, and conscious leadership itself and what gets in the way. What is conscious leadership look like when its embodied by a leader?

Eric Kaufmann: It can look different ways depending on different leaders, for sure, in different situations. Let me give you an example. Matt, CEO of a very successful company, found a business. He's parents started. He's been running it for 20-some years now. So he's shaped this company and grew it. One of the practices they have is that they were giving sort of loans for employees, small loans. I think it was 0% interest. But it waws like financial aid as it were for employees, especially because the manufacturing side of the business, employees ... It was really helpful to them to have a safe and caring source for ...

Alison Whitmire: Yeah. Because some maybe don't pay their loans anyway with people who aren't safe. So they made something that might have already been taking place safe. Yeah. Their conscious in itself.

Eric Kaufmann: It's very cool and part of the way they set it up is the person taking a loan would have to go through and sort of write a narrative of what the money's going to be used for, and then they have to also come with a bit of a financial plan on how they're going to pay it back. So there's an indication of a component. And there was a woman ... I remember particularly there was a woman that ... One of the employees who had asked for a loan, mom was sick. She's one of five siblings. She couldn't quite get to the family. When she gave all the paperwork, Matt turned her down. And she was kind of blown away. I asked him, "So why'd you turn her down? She may need the money." Essentially he took time to go and engage with this woman in the manufacturing capacity. He recognized a couple things. One, she was under educated. Two, she was under utilized, and three, she had skills, actual skills that were not being leveraged to make her more successful in her own way.

Eric Kaufmann: So rather than giving her the loan, he sent her up for some training, some education, some coaching. He helped her get in touch with what it is she was actually trying to accomplish with the money, which was she wanted to send money because she didn't want to actually go there physically and deal with her mother. And so he really helped her.

Eric Kaufmann: So here's Matt using his wisdom, saying, "I see something here." So wisdom to me is going below the surface and beyond the obvious. I'm seeing something here that is under utilized. Let me help you see it the way I see it. He cared. He was real compassionate. And as his compassion said, "I'm not just going to let you do it because it's under utilizing you," and he took action, which seemed courageous, right? No, I'm not going to give it to you even though it seems like you're the obvious candidate. And then he engaged with her and helped her earn the money in a more sustainable way. So that's conscious leadership. That's putting yourself on the line. He's listening. He's attending. He's using his wisdom. He's using his love and he's using his courage.

Eric Kaufmann: I can think of Kelly is a Vice President of a large company. Conscious leadership for her is very intentional, very deliberately slowing down. She's a super high energy, wildly intelligent woman who's successful in every way. But she gets

really focused on slowing down so that she can bring her whole self to a human being in front of her and really engage with them and see not only what they say they want but what emerges as a real need as she slows down long enough to bring her full self into the situation.

Alison Whitmire: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Eric Kaufmann: So she's one of those leaders that through her department have come so many people have been promoted. It's one of these great examples of a leader leading, right? Somebody who not only does great work on their own but in their presence, other people unfold and shine. And she does specifically, she listens very intensely. She cares deeply, and she's willing to go directly towards what other people run away from. She's courageous in that way. And people flourish around her. They absolutely explode into their full potential. They move on to other places, and by the way, she has a giant network of fans and allies who would do anything for you. So if you ask what is the value of conscious leadership, it's not only that you get more done, but you get more people to get more done.

Alison Whitmire: Mm-hmm (affirmative). You know what I'm appreciating about your description, I've always thought of the workplace as this ideal form shaping ground by which we kind of learn to kind of rub off the rough edges of ourselves, like these stones that are kind of roll over each other when we can live and be together in honest feedback, that we can kind of like grow into a fuller, more relative expression of ourselves. For me, what you're adding on top of that is this idea that the leader has the opportunity, maybe the responsibility to hold the space for their people to grow into a fullness of themselves. And that the workplace can be a place of becoming and belonging where we find this place of whole expression and connectedness.

Eric Kaufmann: The Gallup Poll. You kind of made me think about that where they ask about ... One of the questions is do I have friends who work as an opportunity to grow at work. And what they've identified over the years as the premier, the number one predictor of engagement in the workplace is a positive relationship with their supervisor, which is their boss. And I think that we know that when my boss is someone with whom I don't have a good relationship, it's not only the quality of my work that suffers, it's my experience in life that really is effected by it because we are relational creatures.

Eric Kaufmann: I don't think leaders have like a spiritual responsibility to make people better. I think that's sort of like trying to make people happy. But I love the way you describe it. I think part of what we can do as a coach is and thought leaders is can bring into the work is holding a space in which this is possible. And I think that capacity to be conscious is to be aware, right? There's a wisdom and a curiosity and awareness. There's a care and compassion and love, and then there's a boldness and a philosophy and an action orientation, and when we can bring all those into dynamic flow of one another, we do create an environment



where other people do that as well. Right? So rather than me have to do something for them, if I create a space where wisdom, love, and courage are the guiding principles, well then that awakens and emboldens that in others as well.

Eric Kaufmann: So you don't have to coach them to be better. I can watch you and by inspiration, become more courageous, right? Or settle in to a more of a heart-based care, love way of being.

Alison Whitmire: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative). Perfect. We're going to launch a poll, and we want to hear from everyone here about to find out where you feel you are on your conscious leadership journey personally. So we'll get a sense for where people feel like they are. Feel free to give questions and go from there.

Alison Whitmire: So, Eric, how did you personally come to conscious leadership?

Eric Kaufmann: Let's see. Can I close this poll on my screen? Ah, there you are. You don't know what I've got on my screen. I came to it by way of a combination of two paths. A college, work, corporate path and a spiritual practice path. And the two were sort of parallel for a while, then united, then crossed over, then united again. So I came to the United States as an international student. I came here to go to college. My first year in college was a remarkable education experience that had no grades. So they kicked me out of college. I learned a lot about mushrooms and acid, remarkable partying capacity of Southern California.

Eric Kaufmann: Apparently the university and their old school way wanted me to have grades. And after a year of doing that, they kicked me out. So I was 19 years old and I realized, "Oh my god. My life is derailed. I am kicked out of college. I'm living 10,000 miles away from my family. I really screwed up. What's wrong with me?" And the diagnosis I came up with was that my mind was out of control. And so I figured, "Okay. So how does one get their mind out of control?" Which wasn't obvious to me and to shorten the story, I got into meditation practice. So I was 19 years old, I started mediating with the community, with a teacher. I got super, super involved. I moved into a residential community, a meditation community. Graduated from college ...

Eric Kaufmann: Got back into college, graduated college, went to work with 3M in sales and went to work in coining and marketing. And at some point I realized that my life now ... So now 10-12 years had gone by and I was fast in corporate, and I had been now practicing these mediation and spiritual traditions for a long time. And I wanted to ... I was 31 years old and said I need to make a choice. Was it going to be ... it was intense, right? Do I throw myself over to the spiritual practice or do I go into the corporate? And I decided I was going to go wholeheartedly into the spiritual side. So I quit my job and I basically went out into the mountains and built a cabin and lived in the woods for a while to deepen my spiritual practice. It was an isolated cabin in New Mexico.

Eric Kaufmann: And I had this completely unexpected revelation when I was up in the mountains that my life would be richer and fuller and my learning would be more complete with wife, children, and service to community. I was like, "Oh, shit. I should've known that a long time ago." It would have been really great information.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah, before I built this dang cabin in the outback.

Eric Kaufmann: That's devastating. It had a 500 gallon a cast bank for my water, and an accomplishing toilet for my bathroom. Just saying, I was off the grid and I was ready to be off the grid for a while. This deep insight came up saying get back in the grid, buddy. And so I was very inspired of how do I do both, how can I engage deeply with people in the world of production and results and challenge and relationship and continue to lead in this deeper aspiration towards unfolding the fullness of what it means to be a human being, which is the same as a spiritual being. So that's been 19 years, almost 20 years in the making of doing that. And that's why I describe my work as an unrelenting commitment to results with an unyielding regard for the human spirit. I am simply not been willing to give up on either.

Alison Whitmire: I love that.

Eric Kaufmann: You can do amazing things, and at the same time, we can continue to unpack the fullness of who we are as humans, whatever that means. I don't have a ... It doesn't have to be Buddhism, it doesn't have to be Jewish, but there is a human quality that transcends the grid of production, right? And includes you.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah. Yeah. So I'm going to share the results of our survey. So it looks like that 36% I'm applying key principles and practices to my purpose. 27% mentor others in their purpose path, emerging. I'm connecting deeper with myself. So it gives you a bit of sense of where we are in this.

Eric Kaufmann: Yeah. So I'm enjoying the folks who are applying body and mentoring, right? There's people who are very on it. Makes me feel very delighted to be in this company.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah. Me too. So we'll go to the chat box in just a moment. And first, so of all the things you've done to enhance your consciousness, what would you say that's had the greatest impact on developing your consciousness?

Eric Kaufmann: Oh, this reminds me of the brief conversation we had on the phone before the air. Of all the things that I've done, what's had the greatest impact? Grinding.

Alison Whitmire: Grinding?

Eric Kaufmann: Grinding just day in, day out, discipline application of basic principles and practices. I think that there are peak experiences and there are ordinary

experiences, and we can grow tremendously without having any good experience, and we can have remarkable peak experiences without growing tremendously. So I think that what has had the most impact is the day in, day out devotional practice. By devotion, I don't literally mean a god. But by devotion I mean I heard this definition of devotion not that long ago. It really turned me on. Commitment is something that we do because we choose to do it at a conscious level, right? I'm committed. Devotion is something that we cannot not do. Right? I cannot not do it.

Eric Kaufmann: And so what's had the biggest impact on me is when somebody asked me the other day, "Why do you meditate?" I just described, I've been practicing meditation for this will be 32 years. So it's a long time. So why do I meditate? Because I'm a meditator. Period. Is it because I'm getting this thing or that thing or this thing. I've had this thing or that thing. And at the end of the day, it's because the continuous practice whether it's yoga or meditation or it's deep listening, if it's really compassionate, engaging with your friends and loved ones and coworkers, if it's a practice of a practice of gratitude, if it's a practice of ... whether it's physical, emotional or spiritual, this notion of continuous practice, discipline grind, day in and day out, un-sexy, unexciting, often boring, consistently challenging is what's having the greatest impact.

Eric Kaufmann: And I think that that kind of persistent disciplined action builds neurophysiological channels and pathways that can actually contain building wisdom. And I think without that constant grinding, disciplined approach, what happens is we can have an ecstatic or dramatic or peak experience, and it happens but it has no where to settle into our physiology. It has no where to settle into our psychology. And so it eventually vanishes and becomes a memory. Oh, that one time in Boulder when we did that one thing, it was amazing. But has it shifted you as a human being?

Eric Kaufmann: Daniel Goleman's new book, I love the title, The Altered Traits of Consciousness because he says it's not enough to have altered states of consciousness. It's altered traits of consciousness. How are you as a conscious being being transformed, and I think that the wonderful peak experiences of delightful, delicious, I love them, but the most impactful thing I've done is the same boring old thing over and over and over. For me it's meditation, it's yoga. There's ways that I'm engaging with my kids, with my wife, with my coworkers. The way I breath. I mean, these are the disciplines of practice.

Alison Whitmire: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Eric Kaufmann: I would share with you, I have this deep concern, genuinely deep concern that we are transposing and we are replacing discipline with ecstasy, right? If we can just have an extended experience that I've arrived, bullshit. You've arrived for a minute or a day or a week and then it fades. What doesn't fade is the shift that happens with repetition.

Alison Whitmire: That feels so right to me. I'm not sure I've heard it say it quite the way you did. So I've only been meditating for the last couple of years. So I don't have that experience that you have, and I've exercised yearly every day for 35 years. That's my version of that. And I get what you're saying now. And so maybe it gives me a way to frame because I can't not exercise. That's kind of where I am in my life. It's something I can't not do. And so that, for me, as kind of still even a couple years in, a novice meditator. That gives me hope that I can get there. So thank you.

Alison Whitmire: So let's go to Kris and hear what's in the chat. Any questions we have?

Kris Harty: We have had so much great conversation and comments in the chat. It's quite interesting and wonderful discussion. We have two questions that I'd like to throw to you two. Each one has about five sentences to it, just so you're aware. But I want to throw these out to you so you have a feel for what's going on and what people are wondering about.

Kris Harty: Heather Lehman has said, "It was so hard to answer the poll." She says, "I could check them all. In some sense, I'm measuring others. In other sense, I still have things to uncover that I'm not even aware of yet. I think it's an unfolding of different pieces at different point in time. Life." And she asks, "How do you do both? Both the spiritual and the corporate?" So from Heather about the poll.

Kris Harty: And then we also have a really great comment, question from Tim Brody. He says, "Hm. The discussion around courage is rubbing me in a challenging way. Aristotle says courage is the golden mean between foolhardy and cowardice. Over access of the fear command system leads to cowardice. Under use leads to foolhardy. There are elements of neuro pathways. Can courage actually be groomed or is it a blind spot?"

Alison Whitmire: Okay. So hang on, Kris. Let's answer that one and then we'll go back because I lost the other question. So will you answer Tim's question, Eric, or do you want ...

Eric Kaufmann: The question is can courage be cultivated or can be groomed or is it the blind spot?

Kris Harty: Yeah, exactly.

Eric Kaufmann: Okay. I'm not clear about the blind spot, but I am clear of the courage can be cultivated and groomed. 100% yes, in my opinion. And courage begets courage. Just like generosity begets generosity and just like listening begets listening. And I think that the courage that ... My definition of courage, and I write about this in my book, and I write about some pieces, I described courage very distinctly as walking toward what you'd rather runaway from. Right? And that can be physical, but more often it's emotional, mental, and relational.

Eric Kaufmann: So I think that there is three ways ... I talk about sort of the three parts practice of courage that cultivates courage, right? I talk about it as feel, face, and embrace. What I mean by that is that the beginning of the cultivation of courage is to feel. So fear, anxiety is a physical manifestation, right? Palpitating heart or fast beating heart, sweaty palms, stiffness of neck and throat, pressure in your chest, butterflies in the stomach. Butterflies are so cute and fluffy. I never felt it that way. But there's a physiology. So to me the first act of courage is not to do something but to hold still for a second and feel it. Feel it completely because it's kind of like admitting the inevitability of death. Feeling into the experience of the fear is already and act of courage.

Alison Whitmire: So true.

Eric Kaufmann: And what it is about fear that is so adversive is the physiology of it as well as the actual manifest relational experience. So what I am rejecting, what I am getting away from, what I am not acting courageously is I don't want to feel the fear. I don't want to feel the sensation in my palm and stiffness in my throat. And so pausing for a moment to just breath, don't dwell and ruin a weekend of it. But take three breathes, right? And just basically three breathes. Just really monitor it. By the way, that is an act of mindful practice. That is a mindful practice in itself. Feel.

Eric Kaufmann: The second part of the cultivation of courage is face it. It's not doing anything yet. First, I'm really getting present in my experience, and second I'm going to face it. When I face it, I'm turning towards that which I am running away from, right? I haven't walked towards it but I'm turning towards it. So what is it. To face it is to call it my its true name. Rejection. Humiliation, failure, loss. Whatever that name is of that fear, right? But I get to face it because I've stood long enough to feel it. If I feel it, I enter into a relationship. When I face it, I enter into recognition, and now the third part is in place. How do I move towards it, right? Embrace it. And I don't have any conversation on eliminating the fear or being fearless. What a wild concept, fearless. I don't know what that means. But embracing means I can move towards it 10%.

Eric Kaufmann: And if you think about it, every one of these stages that I've already practiced courage because feeling is an act of courage, facing is an act of courage, and embracing is an act of courage. And all three together allow me to stay dynamic in relationship with the experience rather than running away, hiding, or avoiding. It's cultivating. The more you do it, the easier it is to do it, and the more obvious it gets. What it is that is causing you fear and how I can be more skillful with it.

Eric Kaufmann: I'm not talking about jumping off of cliffs or running with bulls in Pamplona. That is nothing to do with what I'm talking about. I'm talking about why didn't you say that thing at the meeting. I'm talking about if you're a coach and in your gut you suddenly have this dropping sensation because your client something that threatened you, but you need to come back to give this client some

valuable reflections so they can see that they've done it with you and they do it with their employees and that's why they don't really speak up at the meeting.

Eric Kaufmann: So where is the courage to rise up and serve the life center, move out of the self-centered, "Oh shit, they just criticized me as a coach. What?" Yes. Feel into that. "Oh shit. They just criticized me as a coach." Feel the sensation. Let it for a moment claim what it is. I'm afraid of rejection, and then how do you softly, gently 10% movement into that direction. Don't miss half your client.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah.

Eric Kaufmann: Capitulate to that story. So feel, face, and embrace is what I have practiced and teach and work with on a regularly basis. I continue to cultivate. I shouldn't use the world cultivate. What was the word you used? Grow courage. Yeah.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I find that if I can courage up with my clients and do something I never done before like try something new, like I don't even know if it's going to work. I do this crazy ... I saw it done once and I did this chair exercise with my clients from the other coaching where they're in a chair and they bring two other chairs, and one's their future and one's their past.

Eric Kaufmann: Yeah.

Alison Whitmire: You know that one? You like that one? You talk to the chairs, and I'm like, "I have no idea what I'm doing but I feel like ..." I felt so like ... I find that when I can like stipple and be awkward and in my way courageous as a coach, my client then bring that part of themselves to our work too.

Eric Kaufmann: And it's important for me to make sure that in this conversation courage is not a stand along function. Courage is with love and courage is with wisdom. I think courage without love is often just destruction, and courage without wisdom is foolhardy. And so the visual for me is sort of courage is in the heart, it's the gut, it's the rooted energy. And love is in the heart and the chest. Wisdom is more in the head. So for me the idea is that courage comes up from the root and out through the thumps, right? So that I have this discussion, right? I'm not really interested in coming from the heart as a human being. I'm interested in coming through the heart as a human being. And through the heart I want to feel both my wisdom and my courage, right?

Eric Kaufmann: I want the rooted energy that connects me to the ground and allows me to be bold and strong and steady, and I want the expansive energy of the crowd that allows me to be creative and optional and multifaceted. And I want both of those to flow through this connected, caring space. And so, to me, courage on its own is a missed opportunity just like love on its own is a missed opportunity and wisdom on its own is a missed opportunity. So as we talk about can we cultivate courage, yes. And bring the courage up through the heart, not as an attempt to destroy but as an energy that allows me to bring more to the person.

Alison Whitmire: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative). So Donna Singer asked the question about what is the relationship that we coaches need to have with our coachees to coach them into conscious leadership?

Eric Kaufmann: What is the relationship that we need to have with our coachees? Well, I think the relationship ... I think right when people hire me to be their coach, they want me essentially to help them accelerate their ability to lead, right? I was just talking with a CEO that hired me. It was Wednesday. We were on the phone and we were sort of finalizing we were going to do this together. And I said to them quite sincerely, I said, "Ryan, you are one spirited, smart son of a gun, and you are very capable and very driven. My job at some level is just to cut years off of your developmental curve." That's really the exchange that we can do, right? Is to get clear and to get more honest and to get more effective. But essentially I think part of our role as coaches is to ... At least for the people who are in the population I work with. They're going to get their anyway. These are smart, competent driven folks.

Eric Kaufmann: What I can help with is the acceleration component, let's get there faster. And so there's so many directions we can move in. There's so many things that depends on the person, the situation, the need. So I think at some level I just want my clients to be more skilled, more competent. I want them to be more loving. I want them to be wiser, and I want them to be bolder. Not bolder so that they can be brash. But bolder so that they can not be stuck behind their fear. And the relationship with the coach I think is coach is instrument. Coach is instrument, right? I'm an instrument in this exchange. I'm not some kind of a blank mirror. The idea that I show up with some kind of perfect mirror for them to look into and see themselves is there's

Eric Kaufmann: What can I do as a coach? I can practice my ass off to be present in my wisdom, to really cultivate my heart so I can understand what it's like to have a big vision and big compassion that holds a lot of space for beautiful people of all different kinds, and I can practice being driven to the ground and bold in my movement. If I can do that as a coach, inevitably it is leaking into my coaching.

Alison Whitmire: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Eric Kaufmann: That's what we can do for our clients. We can practice. We can beat that. And then we can even teach them elements of it. But I think that if we don't practice and if we don't live into the capacity of being conscious leaders, conscious beings in our own way, there's a very different transmission that happens in the form of just words.

Alison Whitmire: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Eric Kaufmann: Certainly everyone can get my book and other books as well. There's lots of wonderful writing about it. I think what coaching does that writing can't is create a field of experience that is collective and collaborative.

Alison Whitmire: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Eric Kaufmann: So what can we do as coaches? Wholeness as an intention, practice with intention, teach it to other people, and just do what we do as coaches, right? We set a plan, we help them navigate through it, we measure different elements of it, and add this dimension.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah. Yeah. You know it's coming up for me. I'm reminded of a conversation I had this week with a client who I just did 360 feedback on. And his team is not ... Almost close to mutinous. And he has such a different alternative image of himself that's really very different.

Eric Kaufmann: Yeah.

Alison Whitmire: Really one of the hardest conversations I've had with a client, and what I felt helped me is when we just developed a deep, deep, deep relationship of acceptance where yeah. I think I'm able to be as direct with him as I am because of how deeply accepting I am of who he is. So I was just thinking about that in response to Donna's question around kind of what the relationship, how the relationship we have with our coachees impacts their development.

Eric Kaufmann: And I'm going to phrase this in my own model, Alison. Essentially you have a lot of part online, right? There's love. When you say deep respect and acceptance and connection, how's that distinguishable from love, right? Love is wanting to do well for others. Love is accepting others. Love is valuing the intrinsic of others, right? So you have this love connection, this love presence, and through that love you can bring the boldness of action, right? You can have this difficult conversation where you're pressing your meaning in and really challenging him on his view of the world because you're coming through the heart.

Alison Whitmire: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Eric Kaufmann: And you're doing it in a way that is using data and analysis and there's a logical way and a bold way that you brought the two together coming through the part, and there is a, I'm sure, quite an impact on him.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah.

Eric Kaufmann: Quite an impact on him.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, we met ... This may not be very professional. But I started the conversation by saying, by tearing up and telling him it gave me no pleasure to hurt him. And by him seeing that, it just changed the entire quality of the conversation.

Eric Kaufmann: And what a beautiful, again, sort of example of the question that was asked about what can we do as coaches, right? You showed up as vulnerable. I had a



mentor of mine years ago who said that if you want someone to talk about their brother, talk about your brother.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah, right? Right.

Eric Kaufmann: If you show up in a vulnerable place, clearly residing in your love and yet taking your courage to step forward, then it creates a dynamic that invites a mirror.

Alison Whitmire: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative). So here's the money question that I imagine people have been wanting to ask is how do we coach someone to be a more conscious leader, and not ... What I'm curious about is how much of that ... Of course a portion of that is who and how we show up, but what I'm curious about is how if there's any of it that's kind of directed or prescriptive. Do you talk with your clients about meditation or is just how you do what you do? So if you would share like when you want to help your clients embody conscious leadership, what are you doing as a coach?

Eric Kaufmann: So there's a few things. The article that I shared with you, you can share, is a brief form center. And I've got more work around that. But I describe it as sort of my blueprint to conscious leadership, and I'm going to describe this as wisdom, love, and courage. So what I do with my clients is I do share with them a model and we do talk through it, and then we talk about well ... and often it doesn't take much for a client to say, "Yeah, yeah. I'm totally tuned in here, but I'm totally not here. I've got a little bit of this and not a lot of that."

Eric Kaufmann: So the framework allows for a conversation to already unfold and then we can find some focus. So for example, cultivating wisdom, and I have ... I think it's the article I keep bringing up sort of the subcategories. For example, in wisdom one of the things we cultivate and we work on is mindfulness is one, perspective, so having multiple perspectives is one, and humor is one. So there's like three distinct pieces within wisdom that I find from a leadership perspective really makes a difference to cultivate or activate that wisdom.

Eric Kaufmann: But, for example, from on the call now, I described wisdom as going below the surface and beyond the obvious. Right? So that's my ... It's not an existential definition. It's a very sort of blue collar definition, right? It's going below the surface and beyond the obvious. And so okay, what does that mean? I can coach a leader to really awaken their slumbering curiosity, right? What happens often is that we get into a place of certainty, and now when I'm certain, I don't have to bring my wisdom. I just bring my habit. Habit of thought. But wisdom is going beyond the surface and beyond the obvious. What else? What is here? So we can actually practice awakening curiosity, reawake all, right? Appreciation of things that are remarkable and not understandable. So much of our effort is to make cognitively locked in and linear.

Eric Kaufmann: So that's one way that I help people cultivate that is let's get curious together, and this is how you can be curious, these are the kind of questions you ask. Oh,

by the way, as coaches we are trained out the wazoo to be curious. So each of us as a coach already has the capacity to teach that to a leader because most ... I don't know if I want to say most. In my experience, the majority of folks who have gotten to a senior role have forgotten to ask questions and have gotten really comfortable with giving a lot of insight, advice, and suggestions. So that's one layer of wisdom as an example.

Eric Kaufmann: With love, one of the things that I work with my clients on an ongoing basis, and, again, I describe love as wanting to do well for others. Well, how do you know what's well for others if you don't know the other? So one of the simple practices for cultivating love is like Kelly does so beautifully, slow down long enough to understand what their interests and passions are, what their fears and dreams are. And so you combine a little bit of curiosity with this kind of pause and let me understand you, let me feel you, let me get to know you, and in that, now I can do well for you. Right? Because if I don't know who you are, how can I help do what's well for you, which is my projection. So part of the love element is listening and taking the person in and really suspending my preset notions of who they are.

Eric Kaufmann: And courage, by way of example, again, it's walking towards something you'd rather run away from. I teach all my clients to feel, face, and embrace piece. I already described it. I'm not going to rant here. But each and every one of them we get into is feel, face, and embrace. Everybody's triggered by fear all day long. It's just me, you, all of us as the human experience. So when they learn that they can feel it, face it, and embrace it, they are immediately able to be more courageous. And there's lots of examples, but those are three really concrete by looking at you as a coach. Switch on that curiosity, help them become better listeners, not for the purpose of closing the deal, but for the purpose of being loving and doing well and help them step into cultivating their courage.

Alison Whitmire: Mm-hmm (affirmative). So it sounds like early on in your relationship with them, you kind of share with them your model. And maybe there's a bit of education around these three components and what practicing each component can look like. It sounds like your coaching does a little bit of a self diagnostic of where they're strong and where they can develop more. And then it sounds like then you that begins to create a kind of a scope of where it begins to kind of share where you're going to focus with them. And then how much of your work is just they come to a session and what do you want to work on today, and you work with them through the lenses of wisdom, love, and courage; or is there something more that you're giving them like giving them many assignments to do? I'm just curious.

Eric Kaufmann: Yeah. So the coaching for me is not curriculum driven, right? It's life driven. So what are they going through. I'm not showing up with a curriculum. I think that's more of a training. So it is a lens, like you describe it. So I had a conversation with Chris yesterday and the conversation was we're moving into new offices. He's the co-founder of the business. Should he get ... The CEO is going to get an

office. Should he get an office too? Great question. What does that mean politically? What is the optics of it? What is the meaning from a power dynamic, etc., etc.

Eric Kaufmann: So the question really became that question of love and courage, right? What is the expression of love and what is the courageous actions to take to take on more of a mantle of responsibility. So the office thing is a situation, but we looked at it as in why are you conflicted about it. Do you see conflict? The conflict came down to sort of connection, relationship and power and authority, which are quite frequent in most of my coaching conversations. Right? And so it's not like we said, "We're going to address this." But rather there's a framework and it looked like love and courage were the two elements that we needed to sort of shine a light on in the context of what was going on. So it's always context driven.

Eric Kaufmann: And then, yes, the activity, the homework, the field work, not homework but field work is to practice this and practice that. Go deeper into the activity that you are doing as a leader. Right? So not necessarily as a student of [inaudible 01:23:01], but as a leader at work.

Alison Whitmire: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative). That's super helpful. Okay. Well, let's go to Kris, and hear what is percolating in the chat box. Any questions we have as we kind of begin to wrap up and come to a close.

Kris Harty: Yeah. We had most of our comments earlier in our session. So not a lot of new ones. But we've had a lot of thank yous just for the insights that you're offering. I would echo that absolutely.

Alison Whitmire: That's great. Thank you, Kris.

Eric Kaufmann: It's a wind down energy about it.

Alison Whitmire: Yeah. Yeah. So just to wrap up, if you've loved what you've heard today like I have, you can stay connected with Eric. You see here his email, his website, or you can find his book. Eric, is there anything you want to say about anything else you ... How people can get ahold of you or why they might want to?

Eric Kaufmann: There are a couple of workshops coming up this year that I'm going to go really deep into this work, but there are sort of invitation or a bit of a filtering process. If somebody wants to go way deeper into this work, I would love to chat. It's not sort of an open enrollment, everyone can show up. There's opportunities for going into a deep embodied experience of how to activate this. I'd love folks to read my book, The Four Virtues of Leaders is a deep dive into conscious leadership. And we have a coming in the first quarter of next year will be some online programs that will take a deeper as well. So if people want to jump on the ... What's that? The mailing list, the distribution list, that's how I keep folks apprised of new things coming up.

Eric Kaufmann: So this is a practice book. This is not just a one off. I would love if anybodies turned on and they want to stay in on the journey together and they want to work together to serve the failed sense of what the world is asking for, which is conscious leadership, I would love to be partners and allies on the journey and be in touch.

Alison Whitmire: Nice. Nice. Great. So here's all of Eric's contact information. If you're curious about what we do here at Learning in Action, what we do is we work with coaches and people in the leadership and personal development space in the field of relational and emotional intelligence. And you can find our all the information about our trainings, all of our ... at the link that's in the chat box. If you want to stay connected with me, you can do that. Here's all my contact information. And we'll be setting this up along with ... We will follow up with you and send you a recording of this. We'll send you information about what was mentioned, the articles that Eric talked about. We'll be sending that to you along with the recording, and information on our trainings as well.

Alison Whitmire: And our next podinar is January, Dr. David Drake. So pumped. So next podinar is on coaching, and David's going to join us on January 25th. And we're going to a one hour format. So I'm super excited, and we're going to do a coaching demo. David doesn't know this yet. I should talk to him about. But I think we're going to do a coaching demo, and I'm really excited about that. I think that will be fun.

Alison Whitmire: So is that it? I think that's it. So in the meantime, thank you so much. Thank you, Eric.

Eric Kaufmann: Thank you.

Alison Whitmire: I so appreciate you. Thank you, Kris. Thank you, Corrie. Thank you everybody. Have a great holiday. Blessings on all of us and see you in the new year. Bye now.