

E41 - Rooted & Unwavering - Hylke Faber and Jim Lang

Diana Belluomini 00:00

Welcome to rooted and unwavering, a podcast and radio show which features leaders from all walks of life in conversations about courageous connectedness. How do we stay connected to our best selves, especially when we are challenged, what becomes possible when we truly stay committed to our own and others greatness also when we don't feel it. Join host hylke fauver transformational coach, facilitator and award winning author of taming your crocodiles and his guests as they explore leadership greatness in today's episode of rooted and unwavering.

Hylke Faber 00:42

Well, welcome to rooted and unwavering where we help leaders connect more deeply to their innate potential. I'm your host. Hylka Faber, this is episode 41 and I'm here today with Jim Lang, CEO of eversana, and also a former colleague, Jim. How are you today?

Jim Lang 01:00

I am spectacular hylke, and honored to be here.

Hylke Faber 01:03

Oh my goodness, I'm so happy you're here. I have been thinking about this conversation all week long, and it's like a closing the circle, as we talked about just before this call started, from the past of working together to sitting here now, probably about 25 years later, which is extraordinary. Never thought that would happen, because that kind of time seems incredible. So before I introduce Jim Lang properly, because there's so much I want to say about him, I want to say a little bit about this podcast, rooted and unwavering, as we do every time. This is episode 41 so in the last 40 episodes, we've been talking about, how do you connect more deeply to what's most important to you, and if you're anything like me, what I've noticed in the years working with myself and with others, that inside of us can be quite a confusing landscape, with all kinds of things pulling us in different directions, and Not always the directions that later on we say, Yes, that's the one. It can be a little foggy inside sometimes. So how do we find our way to what we really want to be? Do we really want to be? And to me, that is a very gigantic human endeavor to find that way. And we can find that way also by by listening to each others and listening to each other's stories. That I find very helpful, just spending some time with each other and saying, Aha, yeah, that person like, I remember breakfast at Tiffany, I want to know. I want to have what she's having. And that that kind of situation, maybe not always with the same context, but that is the that, that's the idea. So we're going to talk today with with Jim Lang, and listen from him. He is. He's the CEO currently of of ever sauna. And eversana is dedicated to accelerating the industry shift to patient centered, value based care, creating a healthier world for all of us. And who doesn't want that?



Jim is not a newbie. He is 30 years into this of senior leadership experience, leading and advising and funding mission driven health companies. He served previously as CEO for several large organizations, and also spent two decades almost building a premier strategy consulting firm that I had the privilege to be part of. He's been named many different things. He's been named in pharma. Voice, 100 in both 2020 and 2021 and was a word of Pharma. Voice, red jacket in 2022 he holds an MBA from Dartmouth University, and is an executive advisor with Water Street healthcare partners. And besides all these things, when I think about Jim Lange, the imprint that he's made on me is that there is a way to be in dignity and self respect and respect for each others, also when there are difficult decisions to be made, and that sort of grounded positivity that has a deep respect for ourselves and each other and for what we're doing and using both the heart and the intellect very strongly, is what I think of when I think of Jim, and I'm looking forward to learning more from you today. Jim, so, yeah. So Jim, first question.

Jim Lang 04:29

Overly kind there. Hylka, thank you.

Hylke Faber 04:31

Oh, well, I'll take that accusation. That's a great so let's start with the with this question, which is, Jim, tell us about what you have learned in your life. It's been going on for a while your life. So tell us what, what have you learned in your life and leadership, about connectedness?

Jim Lang 04:53

Yeah, it's, it's a great question. Hylka, I mean, you mentioned that we. Were in our early lives together as partners in a in a consulting organization. And, you know, we were privileged to be part of a group of folks at that time who may not have used the word connectedness, but you know, thought of their business with great purpose and thought, you know, use language in ways that you would say, Yeah, that's the spirit of connectedness, right? We talked about the house we wanted to live in. Was the principle of the the culture of the firm. We were all about culture and values. And in fact, I think we all acknowledged we were running the business with values as the key steward for the business, as opposed to other dimensions of of business growth like strategy or ops excellence or something else and and, you know, I never thought at that time I was young, right? We were, we were in our early 20s, uh, mid 20s, and I never thought about it explicitly, but I really resonated and said, you know, this, this is, this is the way it should be. I mean, people should be inspired when they come to their work, right and and unfortunately, we got the opposite lesson at that time by working with a lot of fortune, 500 clients, going into those environments and recognizing there's a lot of uninspired people here, you know, who are showing up for paycheck and not having much fun. And it didn't really click as like a gestalt moment to me, but it did come to me at that time to say, you know, there's got to be a better way to build and lead organizations to build this connectedness where people come to work and say, Hey, I'm part of something special. I'm excited to be in the presence of my colleagues doesn't mean we don't have tough things to work on, but it should be inspirational, and it in it, and it can be fun when it's inspirational. So I sort of would say now, looking back over now a little bit over 30 years of career, you know, I've kind of dedicated my life to doing that, even though I didn't really start out that way, or think



that that was part of my mission, and it's been very much part of the companies I've been part of since, and it's exceedingly a part of the company ever sauna that I founded and and, you know, and growing currently,

Hylke Faber 07:39

I love that You said we didn't know it explicitly, and yet we were doing it. So maybe tell us a little bit about the gym before he joined this consulting company that we're both part of, and tell us a little bit about how you connected to what was most important to you, and maybe also times you got distracted. Because my sense is, you don't just join a firm because, well, it's just there. There's something that drew you to it. There was something in you that drew you to that. So what was, was that

Jim Lang 08:13

that's a that's a good question. Let me, I'll do my best to answer that. You know, I was like, you hylka, we've all been blessed with, you know, some good roles at the DNA lottery, and I had supported family members as well in early days, and, you know, worked hard in college and business school to have an opportunity like the firm we went to, SDG at the time. I've never thought of it this way, but maybe, maybe this will shed insight onto the question. I went to business school very early on, right out of undergrad, which is unusual, but I really wanted to broaden my thinking and have that opportunity as quickly as possible, and was really candidly inspired when I went to business school classes and saw people who were very different from me and the perspectives they could bring on problems I'd gone engineering before. It's a very narrow field. It's important field, but it's very narrow field. So I only, I only went for very few jobs when I left business school. One was sort of continue a technical track, and it was actually to go go to Microsoft was my other big choice. I don't know if I ever shared that story with you, but I was actually at that time Melinda French, Bill's current fight was the head of HR there. Sorry, she interviewed me as part of that. And then I had the opportunity to go to SDG, which I chose. But you could really feel in a place that you know, in meeting with the folks who were at the company that you and I went to, I went there a little before you did that. They, they woke up every day, happy, right? They woke up with purpose. They woke up inspired by each other and the kind of innovations they were bringing to the market. It was a very innovation oriented strategy consulting firm bringing methods and approaches for people to improve their business success, and that just wasn't present in Microsoft. It was a business, right? And it's been a great business, and it's created awesome impact on society. And actually, I have personally, deep respect for Bill Gates, but it was a different environment, and that's really what led me there. After having dinner with the partners and the young staff at STG, I could see myself in that kind of

Hylke Faber 10:44

an environment. So I hear that what you resonated with was that there was this sense of purpose, not just a business in its basic form, but actually a purpose that inspired people to be happy, to like it. I remember this little phrase that somebody tried to teach me, which I only understood much later, which is, have fun. I was like, why do you why? Like, I wasn't that that that open yet when I think, when I was like, have fun, like, have fun, I can see that in your story, in your story, so Jim, what do you do, or what



have you been doing in these years to keep that alive? Because that's, you know, there's so many side ways you could go that are not about purpose, that are not about values, that are not about creating a fulfilling, meaningful life for yourself and the people that you lead. So what have you been doing to keep that alive? Well,

Jim Lang 11:50

you know, and and building purpose driven organizations and highly connected organizations, maybe we'll come to this later in the podcast, I think has some consequences that are sometimes difficult to deal with. But let's talk first about all the all the positive sides, and what I've done to sort of keep that going. First of all, I believe, as it is a true win, win, win. Mean, I actually now that I've been in and then, you know, I'd argue, help create and build very purpose built, very connected organizations. The performance that those organizations achieve has been better than than organizations that don't have those characteristics. I really, truly believe that, and the joy that employees have in those environments is, you know, off the charts compared to environments that you don't create that. So I do believe it is a, it is a, you know, kind of a universal win. It's not easy. It takes a ton of work to do it. And it can't be just, you know, value statements on the, if you will, the corporate wall as you walk into the to the to the lobby. You have to find ways to bring it alive for people. And we could talk about those ways, as you'd like, but it, it, you know, if I summarize it, it isn't easy, but it's possible. Yes, it takes work, and the work never ends, I guess. Yes, the short story, so

Hylke Faber 13:38

it isn't easy, it's possible on the work never ends. I like that seems like the three noble truths of creating a purpose based organization that sounds very powerful. What I am curious about is no in the midst of all this building of organizations, there's Jim. And so how does Jim work with Jim? To activate his purpose, to stay purposeful, to stay in this, this energy that you bring, because it must come from somewhere. And for some of us, it's not automatic. Maybe it is for you and at this, and I entirely accept it if it's an automatic view. For some of us, it's not automatic. So, so tell me, tell us about your own journey, of like, even maybe how you got to this, maybe from your early life, how you discovered that this is part of what you are, and how you keep nourishing that.

Jim Lang 14:35

Yeah, well, I had great mentors when I was younger, and always thought about, I always took the perspective. There's always something to learn from someone, right? So, you know, how can you deeply listen to what they do, or learning from hylke, because he loves meditation and how that brings in life value and so on. But early, early along. You know, I did study in. Lot of different kind of leadership philosophies from different people and and really became comfortable with the idea that, you know, I can choose almost all my reactions to everything, like I can just disconnect stimulus to reaction. And that's been a very big gift to me, because it allows me to remain kind of when I need to very even keel with respect to situations. Allows me to choose happiness every morning that I get out. It's also, you know, and you and I were very much part of some of these teachings earlier, when we had worked with Stephen Covey and his organizations. It's also allowed me to separate the concepts of, you know, I



have to be connected in multiple roles, right? It's, I know, here we're talking a little bit more my business roles, but, you know, there's the, you know, what's the? What am I doing with respect to the relationship I have with my wife, with my kids, with my church, with my community, you know, and making sure that, you know, I'm, you know, very pragmatically, manage my calendar, to attend to activities within all those roles, right? And have goal set for all those roles. So that's that's important. I've also learned to just stop, and this is really hard when you're type A kinds of executives, you know, I don't, don't tell my board, I don't work weekends, I don't work late into the night. I just like, if you do all of that, what happens is, you you're going to cost the connectedness in those other roles in favor of the connectedness in a business role. And it can be enticing if you're good at building highly connected organizations, because they're actually very fun to be heavily involved with. But you also have to recognize you have other places to connect to yourself, making sure you're taking care of your health and wellness, your your your family and so on.

Hylke Faber 17:01

I hear you having most like purpose buckets, like purpose roles like this is all different parts of how I steward intentionally, this this energy, and I'm also resonating very deeply with this awareness of the gift of between stimulus and response lies the freedom to choose. So I have this moment of choice all the time, and that is one of the things that really struck me. I remember some meetings at SDG where we're talking about pretty hard issues, and I could feel myself who I didn't master that yet at all, getting upset or dramatic or whatever, in myself, and I just watched you being like as you're saying, even keeled. And back then, I thought, well, some people are like that, and I'm not like that. And what I've learned since then, and what I learned from this conversation, and that there's a deep choice fullness that is underlying that, and you bring that into every area of your life. So thank you for that. Tell me more about how do you work with yourself when the stimulus is really challenging, either from the outside or from the inside. And both the outside of the inside, of course, are connected. How do you how do you do that?

Jim Lang 18:28

Yeah, well, first of all, you imply really important notion. I mean, it's, it's a, it's a muscle building exercise over the years, right? I mean, it is, it is, it's, you know, I'm not a fan of yoga, but it's so it's like mastering some sort of skill like that, because we as humans have a, you know, an inference engine that automatically creates a narrative off of every stimulus. And that narrative is the auto create narrative is shaped by one's biases and and, you know, and that that's what needs to you're in the meeting, someone says something in this, you know, the hair stand up on the back of your neck, or you get heated all of a sudden, or those sorts of things. It really requires practice to just sort of take a deep breath, step back, count to three, whatever mnemonic technique you want to use, and then come back into the conversation. I've gotten good enough at it that, you know, I can usually handle it in the moment, but there's still times where it's so difficult that I lose it. Hopefully, that's rare. But there's sometimes it's so difficult where I just say, You know what? I have to step away from this. I can't think objectively about it, you know, let's reschedule and talk about it later this afternoon, or something of that particular order. But you ought to, you ought to practice it, and you can practice. Practice it in very easy



ways. Just go out driving and have somebody cut you off and take a deep breath and either stop yourself from having such a negative attitude towards that, or create a counter narrative that would give you comfort, right? You know, create the counter narrative. Oh, they must be rushing to the hospital to meet a friend or or something that would give you comfort that their rationale wasn't just to be, you know, an aggressive driver taking advantage of you and so on, because it's it's almost the all these small things that wind ourselves up all the time, but if you can get command over can make a real difference. And it was a little bit different than the core idea of connectedness, but it's, it's, it's one that's allowed me to put the effort into connectedness, because now I have all kinds of bandwidth that's not taken up from these kinds of distractions.

Hylke Faber 20:52

I see it very much integral to connectedness, because that way you stay connected to it actually who you actually want to be, not the reactivity that's based upon maybe some not so pleasant inference, stories from the past that make your hairs rise on your back for the only reason is your past. You know, as you said, this person cutting you off in traffic is probably not doing because they have a gripe against you. It's probably something going on with them that we have no clue about send no control over, right? And no thank you for and no control over. So let's talk about that for a second. How do you work then, with building highly values based organizations, realizing that our control over others is very limited, like so how do you how do you do this? How do you do the work with people? Yeah,

Jim Lang 21:47

so maybe parse that in kind of the strategic staging part of setting up a connected, values based organization. And then there's also, like, the tactical, ongoing reinforcement of it. And then, if you want, we can talk about, you know, managing people within the context of that as well, and some of the really challenging things you need to do in managing people. Like, I say, it's not, it's not a complete, this is not completely free gift, right? So in in setting the stage, you know, and some of this is going to seem, you know, obvious, and so I'm sorry if it does, I mean you really have to draw the path of clarifying the company's mission and vision and getting people to participate in those words and really come create things that people will believe the narrative. A lot of things get people get create, you know, they write it out, and nobody believes the narrative. So we actually, when we created ever sauna, after our first few companies came together, got the top 75 together, we did two days of workshops. We really clarified those mission and vision words so that people were quite happy. This is the easy part, by the way, and everybody does this part. Never does what I'm about to go on to, but you know, you got to get this. And you do because you need, you do need touchstones, and then you need touchstones of values. We use the language cultural beliefs. Because I think when people use the word value, they they tilt a little bit towards kind of what I would call values that should just exist everywhere in society, like we value in integrity and honesty and transparency, and it's like, well, those are redundant. Like, if those don't exist in society, you know, they should be in our company. So we use cultural beliefs. So some of them are related to our business and helping life science companies innovate products. So, you know, one of our one of our cultural beliefs is patient mindedness. Another one is client delight, because we are a B to B service company. Another one of them is winning together, because I was bringing together people of



all kinds of different expertise, and really wanted them to bring that expertise together and so on. We We ended up having about eight cultural beliefs that we created and worded together the mission and vision words are pretty have been pretty everlasting since the start. We've morphed a bit. The cultural beliefs, added one, subtracted one during the five years we've had the company. But now, now comes the hard part, which is making them come to lie, come alive in your organization. And I should have said, you know, the reason we needed these cultural beliefs, and I've been very explicit with people, is not to erase the cultures of the companies we had acquired, and particularly the natural differences those companies have if they're located in, you know, Milan, Italy, versus. Pune, India, right? There's very unique things there, or Georgia, right? Or San Diego. There's very unique things that they may have come from, but a touchstone that everybody could touch to and in so now, pragmatically, what? What do we do? Lots of different tools or exercise. Probably the one I exercise personally is in my town halls every two weeks with the company. These are just short, 15 minute town halls, much like this on a screen. We always have a cultural belief story so, and it can come from anywhere in our organization. So, and usually it's two or three, and we feature the person who nominated the cultural belief, and then we feature the story itself and the people being in it. And you know, these may be things like in our distribution business, a hospital called and had a stock out on a transplant product that they needed was a Sunday. The shifts were done at those businesses, but employees went in, got the product, took it, shipped it out, so it got to the hospital for the transplant. And we have all those kinds of stories, but we do. We do it all the time. The culture belief stories are all the time. We also have some mechanisms on our intranet where people can just, you know, give a cultural Kudo award, if you will, to the business. So that's the, that's the broadcast side of things, which is, which is important. And I think people would argue it shows up, right? In a fabulous culture, it shows up that, you know, we have been a great place to work since we started the business, which is a surrogate for employee engagement, as you know, but it's also changed our philosophy on how we how we manage people as well, which we could turn to if you want. But there's a lot of those kind of reinforcing tactics, but a lot of it is just, if the CEO doesn't talk about mission, vision, value all the time, and then talk about people when they show up, yeah, living that connectedness through our values, nobody will believe it exists right in the company. So it's really important to lead from the top on this. Yes,

Hylke Faber 27:23

yes, yes. I'm very struck by the strategy, the strategic like rigor that you bring to this. So I love the steps and the staging and intellectual rigor that you bring to it. That's very clear to me, and I love the that you're talking about, how it starts with creating those touchstones, mission, vision, values, and that's the easy part, and then the broadcasting and the sharing of the stories may be a little bit more challenging. I also want to dive in with you into so what do you do when you notice that things are going completely are a little off the rails. Now, when you have maybe performance, and we had this conversation with SDG, I think often, like, what happens when you have a high performer and a low values, or, you know, person that doesn't live the culture. What do you do with that and and how do you work that through in the culture? So maybe we're going to take an hour and about a minute and a half before we go into the break, but maybe you can talk a little bit about, how do you approach that. First of



all, start with with Jim. What? What does Jim do when he notices he went a little, or maybe a lot of the rails. What do you

Jim Lang 28:41

do? Yeah, I apologize because you, you, you, you know, I've literally, you know, told my team, you know, I just, I didn't react appropriately in that situation. I said things that weren't what I want to be known for. And hopefully it doesn't happen too often, but if it does happen again, you got to walk the talk, right? I mean, if you're trying to build a connected authentic culture, a connected company who uses values as way to drive that connectedness, if you somehow don't fully demonstrate those, you got to be authentic and and I think that surprises people when that happens, but it's the only way to deal with it. Yeah, yeah.

Hylke Faber 29:30

I really hear what what you're saying, and I am, I'm struck by how unconscious, skilled you are in this, because you say, like, just like getting a bag of groceries. Oh, and then I apologize. I don't see many executives, especially not in a public setting, and especially not in our culture. Apologize. So after the break which we're going to take in a moment, I'm going to ask you more about I want to explore more with you about. Uh, how do you do that? And how do you help others do that? You've been talking with Jim Lang, CEO of eversana, deeply values, guided or cultural beliefs, guided leader and human being and a delight to be around. See you after the break. We're at Wilton and wavering.

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You are listening to rooted and unwavering presented by growth Leaders Network, the leadership team and culture development company. If you would like to learn more about working on connectedness for yourself, your team or organization, please contact growth leaders network on LinkedIn, and now back to the show.

Hylke Faber 30:47

So we're listening to rooting and wavering. That's what you're listening to. And during the break, what came for me was I have these mental posters in my office, and my office is always with me, whether I'm on a plane or somewhere else, and I have these images of people that are on the poster. And so I just had a poster in my mind that says, between stimulus and response lies the freedom to choose. And then a picture of Jim Lang. And it was, it is just something when these concepts that we all learn are actually lived by an other and you see them, that's how they gain credibility. I think it's also connected to your saying about broadcasting, how the culture actually works, so people understand this is not just words. So tell us more about a little bit more about your own journey, about how you make an apology, or how do you make an amend? How do you grow through these maybe challenging moments, and how do you help others do the same? Yeah,

Jim Lang 31:48



I mean, it's better for worse, better or worse, it becomes very natural to me to just sort of like I screwed up, right? I didn't say it. I'm sorry. I've never been one of these high ego guys that can't do that, maybe that's a gift I was given from my mom and dad. I taught me humility first amongst everything. Because, you know, you know, we've all been blessed differently, with different, you know, histories and capabilities. I do work it with others a lot, though, because when something happens between team member A and team member B, and it may not be the right setting for me to intervene publicly, although I often do much more public coaching than people tend to do, but let's say I have to intervene. I'll talk to that executive afterwards, and I will really say, what happened? What happened? What do you think you should do? And if you know, sometimes they're just scared to sort of be authentic and apologize and recognize there was some weakness in their part, but it's part of being part of our team, like they go, I, you know, and oftentimes I can remind them, you know, you'll be surprised at how much the counterparty will probably appreciate this. And you know, so I lost times. I forced that to happen when I see an opportunity to do so, because it's if you have a break, you know, a lot of connectedness as an executive. Besides some of the things we've talked about is if you see a breakdown in a relationship between team members because of whatever competitiveness or something one done that felt, felt that they were disrespected, or whatever, or there's a disagreement over a business choice, and they can't just sort of agree to disagree and move on. It is really your job to do the work to repair that, because left unrepaired, those things faster and all of a sudden, connectedness goes out the window. Right? So, you know, I don't know if being a CEO in a connected company is more like being a therapist than it is being, you know, business strategist. I never think about it that way, like, but good at strategy, good at therapy. But I think this is a lot of that there. And I, I did want to you started to mention it before the break. This two by two concept is really, really important to me. If you wouldn't mind, I'll talk about it a little bit. So I introduced this, you know, it's been part of others thinking before. I'm not taking credit for creating it, but it's certainly part of me. And when we started the company, I introduced this and all of our executives and leaders sort of use this language all the time now, and they like it because it's freeing, and I'll share it with you all. And that is like you can think of any human being in your company at any moment in time on a two by two grid, and that is, what's their performance in their role relative to expectation, and how well aligned are they to your culture or your values? That kind of thing. And of course, you want high, high with everybody and companies you know, seek that. And you the low, low people are pretty easy to deal with. And then the people who may not be performing optimally in their role, but are high cultural fits, you know, those are the folks you're trying to coach, or maybe find a different role, and maybe, ultimately, there isn't a role for them in the company because of, you know, competency in the field, in opportunities you have for that role, but, but that's okay, but your your goal is to try to move them to high, high from from where they are. But the single most traveling quadrant is the people who have high performance in their role and are really not good cultural fits. And most companies tolerate those people for long periods of time. And if they do, they will never have connectedness. I mean, guarantee you, because with that kind of thing, existing trust, openness, you know, an ability to to be authentic, goes away, and so you just have to take management action on those people. And I use the term liberally. I talk we're going to generously sever those people, but we have no, no tolerance for that. In the organization, we've taken action. And it was interesting, one of the beer companies we acquired, when I went through this framework with them, and earlier on, shortly



after the acquisition, they mean, you mean, I don't have to deal with jerks anymore, you know, that was their tagline, right? And I go, Yeah, and, and I'll use analogs like this as well. Hylka, I go, and I've said this in big public settings, in the companies, if your phone rings, or maybe a better, more modern analog would be if somebody shows up on your calendar and ask, is asking for a meeting, and you're not looking forward to it, there's something wrong, right? I mean it, you know? I mean, obviously this means that maybe tension filled because you deal with an issue, but if it's like, if you just, if you're, if you're dreading in part of some activity with another one of your colleagues, then something's wrong. And I tell people, you know, deal with it with your HR person, or call me up, and I'll adjudicate. Now, by the way, maybe the problem with the receiver on that, not, not necessarily the sender on that, but but the reality is, you have to, you have to, you have to take action in that way if you want a culture that's fluid and fun and and high trust, because a lot of this is all about trust in the end, or certainly that's a key part of this. You have to deal with that quadrant, and we've been very good at dealing with that quadrant.

Hylke Faber 37:55

I love the explicitness about what you're talking like. Are you looking forward to this meeting, or look for looking forward to this meeting with this person that will tell you whether there's work to do. And I also hear you say, the work may not always be coaching the other person that you have a problem with, it may also be with yourself. So it's a two way street. It's a two way street. So having said that, since you mentioned the word jerks, so what, how do you coach, give feedback, or and, or manage out like, what is a person that is? Is? Is this in that quadrant? Because sometimes people are in that very problematic quadrant of not in values and high performance for a while because they don't know better. What you do? Yeah,

Jim Lang 38:51

I mean, we do. We do a lot of training on, you know, how to give candy, caring feedback, how to deal with difficult conversations. You know, this different jargon, you know, around you know, similar kinds of things. But we, we do really teach our leaders and managers that this is, this is part of their job, because if it, if a person, what, for whatever reason, hangs out for that period, a long time, long run, there's a two order effect in the second order is much bigger effect than the first order. The first order is, of course, somebody better who is a better fit for that role, could be in that role, delivering value for the client and their colleagues and and making a bigger difference faster for the you know, because we see ourselves on like a screaming race to fix a very broken industry right now, and in the end, healthy patients as the result. So there's no time like there's a real sense of urgency with that. The second order effect, though, of course, is the mere tolerance of this. Because these aren't easy kind of. Conversations to have, right at an individual level, right? The mere tolerance of this is going to make others less inclined to move rapidly on this. One of the things I've done to more to make this fabric work, of course, we do. We do, like 360 feedback four times a year. So there's a lot of regular kinds of feedback that happen. We we take feedback from our customers into an individual's performance as well that that matters, and then we do treat people really well when they leave like really, really well. Now I have the liberty to do that, building this business from scratch with some great private equity



sponsors. I know that's harder sometimes to shift midstream, but when people know that we're not going to mistreat these people like it's just, you know, I think it makes it a little easier for for people to do the right thing for the company in the long run,

Hylke Faber 40:54

such a powerful question to be in, like, how do you work with people that are not living the values. And I'm struck by something you said very quickly early, which was, oh, I guess I have low ego and I have a lot of humility that I learned earlier on. And so a question that I I sit with, and often don't know yet in the moment how to work with in the best possible way, is like when I work with somebody personally, right? And there's a sense like, er, how much of that is me doing my personal work, letting go of my judgments of this person, which often clears up a lot of things. And when do I know it's time for some different decisions, like we're not working together anymore, which I've also done right and in coaching people, I noticed that there's this interesting parrot or integration between doing the work on ourselves, so we're not the aggressive driver, cutting people off and having judgments and putting everybody in that quadrant. Because it's interesting. When you ask people to draw the quadrant that you just talked about, some people have a lot of people that quadrant, yeah. And then you may ask, Oh, why? Why is that right?

Jim Lang 42:19

Yeah.

Hylke Faber 42:22

So how do you yourself, like starting with yourself? How do you work that? Because one of the things I admire about you, Jim is your firmness. So how do you have that firmness, grounded in that humility? How do you do it? Well,

Jim Lang 42:38

you're asking you, what is a really? I think, you know, fascinating question, and I'll give you some tactics on how I deal with it. But, but I think it is, it is, I don't know how to answer it really, because if I paraphrase what you said, hylka, you know, when I'm judging another, how do I remove, remove all my biases from that judgment, right? Knowing that, you know, one has a ton of filters, right? And in fact, you know, I work really hard with my team to, you know, you know, embrace the differences between people. And it's, it's somewhat easy when people look very differently, like, you know, the folks who work in our Asian organizations versus our African organizations, versus South America and so on. But the reality is, there is as much difference from people just based upon, you know, personality and preferences and what they want, and, and, and how do you have people have the EQ to know that that's not creating the blinding judgment that they're having meaning it's about them, because they're not neutral, right? They're not very neutral at all in their perspective. So I, I'd argue it's really hard to answer that question, you know, because, you know, de filtering yourself, de biasing yourself, being really open to people of all different characteristics, it's, it's, it's worthy of pursuit, but it's really hard to get there. And I didn't even know if it's measurable, frankly, right, in some sense of the word. But one of



the small tactics I use in all those situations is is the i i blame everything on myself, and then I blame it all on the others, like I take the extreme position. Let's say there's a disagreement with two individuals about something, and it's making me think, is this individual going to work? You know, since that sort of thing, but I'm not thinking about whether they're going to work out or not. I'm just facing, you know, this disagreement about something or some issue happen, and I do this with my two directs that might be having an argument with each other. You know, take the extremes. Let's say. It was all about me or us. Let's say it was all about you or them. Same thing is true with a disagreement with a client as well. Like let's let's act as if it's all our fault. Let's act as if it's all their fault. Usually, that opens people up to think differently about the situation when they have to blame themselves for it, because then they start getting comfortable. Well, yeah, I guess I'm biased that way, and I didn't really maybe realize how much that is impacting my thinking, because I just don't like the direct style of that person. I'm not that kind of way, and they're very confrontational, but that's just their style, right? So that's a tactic that I take on when you can solve that for me. Hylke, I'm having you come in and teach all 7000 of my employees how to do that. I don't know how to do that. Well,

Hylke Faber 45:50

we call this the step that. The way you're talking about it, Jim, is is we call this the 1% principle, right, which is basically saying, even if 99% is not fair, whatever, what is your 1%

Jim Lang 46:08

what is your 1%

Hylke Faber 46:09

so it's not, it's not the blame. It's no blame. It's taking responsibility to curiosity, ownership, yeah, it's ownership, which still doesn't mean that I'm going to now we're going to continue working with each with each other. That's still there's a possibility for a different outcome, but at least there is a a deeper value at play, which is, we really value growing, right? And I actually not what not to sell you this project for 7000 people, which would be, would be, would be to say, well, how, how can I make sure if, if a, if a person is truly committed to growth of themselves, then nobody will stay in that fourth quadrant, because You will have to face your own demons, your own crocodiles, your own stuff, and move out. It's the people that, at some point say, No, I'm, I'm pulling up the gate like I'm, I'm not willing to look that's, that's where you get stuck in that quadrant is from my from my experience. So it's teaching people that willingness to just to be humble, which for from like an that's my second poster for Jim on my wall, which is humility. You know, that's, it's one of the things that I think makes it so easy for you to apologize anyway. So now that we've talked about that, Jim, you are. You've been in this, in business for 30 odd years. You've done amazing things. And what is your aspiration for the next decade or so, as you think about being truly connected to what's most important to

Jim Lang 48:02

you? Yeah, it's, it's a, it's a wonderful question. The I mean, I'm, I'm very blessed doing what I'm doing right now with this current business, and not to get into talking in detail about the business, but I do



hope when you know, and I'll retire from it and go on the board at some point in a few more years, you know, I hope that it will get seen as a business that really did make a difference in the healthcare industry. It's focused on life sciences, you know, bringing the right medicines to people, getting them faster, less expensively, getting it around the world more quickly, things I know we've talked about in the past. Hylke, I think I, I want to leave that legacy there. I can say, hey, you know, I built a business that made a difference out there. And then, you know, and then I'd love to be involved with companies in, you know, whether in boards or other kinds of things, to sort of give back the gift of just it is possible to build companies that are joys to be part of. Like, like, you know, I don't know if we talked about this earlier, but like, there shouldn't be means and end separation, right? They can be congruently awesome, right? I mean, you don't. A lot of people sort of put up with the means are going to do this, and it's going to be terrible. I got a mean all this stuff, because I got to work, and they got to make some income to have their lives and those kinds of things. And it, I just don't believe that. I think that's just because that's easy to run your organizations that way. And I'd love to find ways to to pivot more organizations to that philosophy. I mean life's short. I mean very, very short, right? And why shouldn't it be, you know, joyous all the time.

Hylke Faber 49:56

Organizations that are joy to to be part of. Of I'm thinking about what you said earlier, like, is this person, somebody I'm looking forward to spending time with, same with work? Is this workplace something that I'm looking forward to being at and to being at to create that joy? So what does Jim do when he feels sad or angry, what do you do?

Jim Lang 50:26

Well, my wife would say, I usually make myself gin martini, but which is true, I usually do something where it connects me with my kids. They bring me lots of joys, or my pets or some exercise. There's no real, no real magic to that. I love I love being outdoors. I love boating. So I think everybody needs to find, you know, certain places that they can go and feel safe and disconnect. You know, for some people that may be meditations, for some people that may be exercised, for some people that maybe walks in nature, but certain of those are parts for me,

Hylke Faber 51:07

beautiful, beautiful. What would you say to somebody who is just not feeling it today for whatever reason like they might feel, they may feel not the joy, they're frustrated. They're in the middle of it. They're feeling like, Yeah, especially with with regards to culture, like the culture that I'm in at the moment, or and specifically, you know, the situation, the colleagues, the workload, whatever it might be, I'm just not having it today. It's just, it's just really hard, it's frustrating. What would you say to them? Yeah,

Jim Lang 51:44

that's a the thing I use the most in that situation is comparator analogs. So, you know, and you have to be careful, because some people hate these but, you know, but it's like, the reality is, like, even in your



worst day, in a job here in wherever you know, Florida, you know, is, is not the day that people in Southeast Asia are having right now or not the day that people are having in Ukraine right now or not the day people are having in the Middle East. You know, there's you know, and I've done that candidly with my own board sometimes, to remind them to have some perspective on life and the blessings that we have. So I do that a lot with people saying, Hey, you have some perspective. I know this is a really tough day. Look, we could be in this situation right now. Some people don't like that because they're like, don't, don't trivialize the situation that I'm in. So then I might turn into the well, let's talk about it and why, and see if I can give them some reflection on it. So not, not always easy. You, you said something in this hylke, I just want to double down on five minutes ago. If we could solve the problem of people's the 1% the biases not getting in the way, we wouldn't have to do a lot of these other tactics like that. That's the core, right? Because people, people almost always amplify differences into negatives rather than amplify them into positives. And of course, we're all different. And if we could sort, if we could sort people having those overreactions, a lot of these other things would go away because people would hope, you know, would approach others with a, you know, a belief that trust is already there and candor is there, and integrity is there. But when those differences show up, we somehow reinterpret them as a values choice, yes,

Hylke Faber 53:40

yes, yes, yes. I'm taking so much from speaking with you today, almost at the end of our conversation, one of the things that strikes me about what you bring to this gym is that there's a sense of joy and calmness that you bring so not getting enmeshed in any stuff while still being compassionate and being available but not getting enmeshed. I think it's a very high skill and something that many of us get to work very hard at to live that So closing thoughts, ginger, what would you like to say, by way of closing our conversation today,

Jim Lang 54:24

really just that this work is worth it, right? I mean, it is so much of a joy when I see people writing online around their growth at the companies that I've been part of. This one in particular called ever sauna, their pride when they were hired here, their pride when they, you know, they've been promoted. And, you know, to be direct, and it's not just lip service, meaning it does bring business results. We started as a company with 30 million of revenue in 2017 and we're billionaire revenue in 7000 people now. So, and I do think this has been essential to our success, a massive accelerator to our success, and a massive differentiation in attracting top talent relative to competitors. So there really is a business rationale to do it, but the fact is, it's just so much more fun than anything else.

Hylke Faber 55:29

I'm reminded of what you said, Jim about life is short and so therefore not why? Why not make it something that we truly enjoy? And since work is so big of a part of it, and it's such a beautiful invitation to practice joy. Why? Why not make it so? And that requires work at what you're saying, and you said in the beginning of our podcast, it's worth it. It's not easy, and it's possible, you know? And and that that's that resonates with me, and the more I think people are seeing people that are doing it, and not



just in one part, but in many parts of life, and then also see the integration with not just being in the high values low performance quadrant, it is actually being able to be in the high values high performance Quadra that then starts to feed each each other, really strikes me. And the other thing that really struck me from our conversation today this deeply simply, simple but really profound idea of the choosing, the choicefulness and that groundedness that helps us to make the truly tough choices. Also like is this, am I looking forward to this conversation? If not, what's there for me to look at? What's the conversation I need to have? Because that is not okay, and that not not looking forward is not free. So yeah, again, thank you. Enough, Jim, it's been a true joy to speak with you today.

Jim Lang 57:06

That's been an honor to be with you. Hylka, yeah, it's

Hylke Faber 57:09

really quite, quite beautiful. I can't wait to see what you will be up to and what a persona will be up to, and to read about how you will continue your your growth, grounded in what's truly important, the difference you want to make with patients and the values. It's quite something to watch. So thank you for the example you set in the world. Jim, so yeah, thank you, sir. Great. So you've been watching to listening to root and unwavering, maybe watching it as well. This time, we had a conversation with Jim Lang, who's the current CEO of eversana and builds truly values our cultural beliefs, driven organizations. It's possible, it's not easy, and it's worth it, as he has been explaining to us, next time, we'll be here with another wonderfully values driven leader from an entirely different walk of life. Her name is Mary Jo West, and she was one of the first anchor women for CBS News in Arizona, and also person that made Emmy award winning documentaries, including Mother Teresa. So we learn lots of things from lots of different people. If you're interested in this podcast, you can always subscribe to us on Spotify and Apple and other places, or you watch us on LinkedIn and YouTube, and whatever you do from this conversation today, maybe think a little bit about what's a a conversation that I'm not looking forward to, and therefore, what are different choices that I have, that I could make that will bring me and maybe the other person a little bit more joy. Thank you for listening. You've been listening to Ruth and unwavering, where we help connect leaders more deeply to their innate potential. I'm your host, hylka Faber, and see you next time.

Diana Belluomini 59:14

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