Corey Andrew Powell:

Hey, everyone. Corey Andrew here, host of the Motivational Mondays podcast. And as we wrap up 2024, we're celebrating an incredible year of inspiring conversations and transformative insights. This special year in episode highlights five remarkable guests who graced the podcast with their wisdom and unique perspectives. Janice Robinson, Sandy Colhoun, Nacone Martin, Willie Pietersen, and Siobhan McHale. Each of these individuals shared invaluable lessons on creativity, resilience, leadership, and personal growth, leaving listeners with practical takeaways to fuel their journeys into the new year. Janice Robinson is a renowned vocalist and songwriter, best known as the Voice behind the iconic 1990s Dance Anthem "Dreamer" by Living Joy. In this dynamic episode of Motivational Mondays, recorded live at the 2024 Leadership Summit, Robinson discussed the power of resilience in pursuing creative passions and how staying true to oneself is vital for success. Her key takeaway was her encouragement to embrace personal authenticity, perseverance, and even when things get tough, face those challenges.

Janice Robinson:

I am so honored. I think I just had a moment. You know, my dream, my very original dream was always to inspire others, and I really feel like this moment, this Motivational Monday was something I have been waiting all my life to do. So I feel a little like, wow, I'm here. Oh, my, I'm having another dream moment come true. So thank you. And I hope my words, and I hope my wisdom lives on in everyone tuning in.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Hmm. Oh my gosh. Well, I, I'm, don't get me up here crying now on Motivational Mondays <laugh>, but that's wonderful. We're so happy to be a part of your journey and to give you yet another, uh, feather in your cap because you've done so much so. But to share a bit about how you got your, your start in the music industry and what initially inspired your songwriting and performing, can you give us a little bit of that background?

Janice Robinson:

I think what inspired my songwriting was a broken heart.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Hmm.

Janice Robinson:

You know, a crush, somebody I liked. And the beginning of those, uh, teenage years, you know, when you start liking someone, um, and they don't like you back <laugh> and you don't know how to tell someone you like them, you know, that like 15 awkward, it just started in my awkward teen years, and I would hear these songs written by Diane Warren and Siedah Garrett when I was a teenager, and I wanted to express myself. So it really started with like, the confusing feelings of 14, 15-year-old girl who looks at somebody and go, Ooh, I like, I like them <laugh>. And I wanted to figure out how to express my feelings. So it really started with that, that time of my life.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Hmm. It's interesting you bring that up because we talk a lot in the leadership space about the importance of journaling.

Janice Robinson:

Yes.

Corey Andrew Powell:

And it's very similar in a way because it was just the idea of expression. You had to get it out, and it came out in words on paper. And that's such a, a therapeutic thing that more people I think would benefit from, wouldn't you think?

Janice Robinson:

Absolutely. I think love is the gift we've all have been given. We all get to experience, but it's the, it's the most mysterious emotion because oftentimes we feel something, but we don't know how to express what we feel.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Mm.

Janice Robinson:

So writing became a way for me to express what was going on inside. I couldn't say it, I couldn't say it to a person, but I could pour my heart out in a lyric. And then I found myself writing my truth, and, and that when I, when people heard what I wrote, they, they felt a connection and I went, Ooh, I'm onto something. So it was really that journey of, you know, going away to college, being just in the piano room at a Delphi University where I would probably play the same four chords for hours and write a million songs to those four chords, <laugh>.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Right, right. Yeah. Well, people don't realize that chord, people don't realize that very, that's pretty much how all songs are written. There's only like, yeah. The Beatles four chords really, and four chords.

Janice Robinson:

Yeah. Life is about four chords and all your emotions, you know?

Corey Andrew Powell:

Wow. And even that's a metaphor, because I had Stephen Graham on the show years ago, a couple years ago, and I got to interview him, which was fascinating because he said something that's really, really relevant to what you just said. Now, in pop music, the biggest hits are made from four chords, and people can go and research what that means if they don't get the music lingo. But he had a, a similar thing, which is we all have the same 24 hours a day.

Janice Robinson:

Yes.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Right. It's what you do with those 24 hours that will make a difference in the life that you, uh, can carve out for yourself. So I love that you had those four cards and, uh, four chords that you had that same philosophy. And from those four chords came one of the greatest dance crossover songs in history called Dreamer. And if you guys, uh, you don't think you know it, but when you hear, you'll be like, oh, that's okay. So I want you guys, if you don't know, check it out. Go Google it, whatever. And you'll go, oh my gosh, that's her. So <laugh>, you'll be, uh, you all know the song. So it's an incredible song with an incredible legacy that has been relevant for now going on 30 years and brought you back into the spotlight after a long hiatus. So what do you think about that song resonates with so many people across generationally?

Janice Robinson:

Well, first of all, I think the first three words that you hear are love, life, and laughter.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Mm. Yes.

Janice Robinson:

And I think that sets the tone when people hear it along with the music. It's, I'm, I'm simply saying, love life and laughter is all I believe.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Mm-hmm <affirmative>.

Janice Robinson:

And I think what also, I said, my savior is pure, my savior, my soul, my savior, my why. Your savior is whatever you believe now, whatever you believe in a higher calling, a higher power, but your savior is kind of like your soul. And, and I was saying, you know, my savior is pure now because I've gone through so many things where I felt broken, but I'm still able to feel love in its truest form. And so that's what I was saying in that, in that verse. I never learned how, you know, we, we, we learned how to love when we are loved. Love is not taught. It's an expression, it's a feeling that just, it, it appears.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Mm-hmm.

Janice Robinson:

Through kindness, through, uh, our everyday people around us. When someone says hello to us, that's an action of love. Love is an action. And so it's not something that you wake up knowing, oh, I love you. It's something you feel.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Sandy Colhoun is the seventh president of the National Outdoor Leadership School. We had an informative discussion about his passion for developing leaders through immersive outdoor experiences that challenge people to step beyond their comfort zones and unlock their full potential, whether in remote back country settings or through courses near their home. Participants hone their skills, resilience, and build the confidence to lead in all walks of their life.

Sandy Colhoun:

We tend to like, uh, think of NOLS as a place like we are a school at the heart of what we are. We are a school, and we want to train people to gain comfort so that they can travel through those environments. But, you know, along the way, as you learn leadership skills and wilderness skills, all of that has direct application to the rest of your life.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Hmm.

New Speaker:

And you're, as we get into the conversation today, you're gonna hear how, you know, when we work with astronauts from nasa or executives from business, uh, from different companies, or we take college students out, like all, everything we do at NOLS has such an incredible application to what happens in your daily life. How you can be a leader in every community that you work in, and how you can apply those skills of being in challenging circumstances and learning you can do it, and then applying it in your daily life.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Right. Right. And so in that same, I guess in that same idea, if you can share with us some of the, the key experiences Right. And lessons gained, um, during your time as president of NOLS. Like anything that really stands out.

Sandy Colhoun:

Wow. There's a, well, you know. Yeah, sure. Well, you know, I, like I said, I was drawn to, you know, uh, adventure early on in my life. And, uh, you know, I went through a series of experiences that I found myself in, and I created these opportunities. So, like, for example, after college, I wound up, uh, working in Alaska in a cannery, and I was like drawn to this, like, I'm gonna live in a remote place. And, and, and that kind of like reliance on myself continued to build throughout my, what I became sort of my, uh, my career developing. So I went from Alaska. I actually wound up going from there to teach English in Japan for two years.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Hmm.

Sandy Colhoun:

And there was a sense of independence and being in a remote culture, not speaking, that language was there for two years. And then that all led to, uh, almost a year of traveling and mountaineering and biking all across Asia, which it, this is pre-internet, pre email.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Right, right.

Sandy Colhoun:

Just gone, gone and, you know, wound up, uh, cycling actually across the Himalayas from the capital of Tibet, Lhasa, to Katmandu, uh, which which is about a 21 day journey.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Hmm.

Sandy Colhoun:

Um, on our bicycles, which it's a kind of a, that was a story under itself, <laugh>. So all of these experiences of like going out and exploring the world, one fed into the next one, fed into the next. So I wound up, and Corey, if I'm getting off track, just say the word. But I wound up paring all of that into this experience as a, uh, as a journalist.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Hmm.

Sandy Colhoun:

And I thought at that point in my life, that I wanted to be a photographer for National Geographic and write stories, and that was gonna be my thing. Uh, and all of that led me to a job working in Antarctica, where I was the editor of the Antarctic Sun, which is a glorified newsletter, but it's an incredible publication that, uh, writes about science and life in Antarctica, in support of the United States Antarctic Program.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Mm.

Sandy Colhoun:

So each of these experiences pushing further, further, further away, <laugh> going to the end of the earth, literally to kind of discover what it was that my metal, what I was made of, and each step of the way took me ever closer to, uh, what it was that I wanted to be as a human being.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Mm.

Sandy Colhoun:

And, uh, the journalism world, I followed for a long way after Antarctic, I wound up working at the Christian Science Monitor, a wonderful newspaper based out of Boston, um, where I did a bunch of general reporting for that newspaper. Uh, but ultimately I wound up transferring all of that. So those skill sets into higher ed, uh, where I worked at Colby College in Waterville, Maine for, for a number of years.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Wow.

Sandy Colhoun:

And I'm tell all, all this is this pathway that led me to NOLS and, uh, the opportunity to lead this incredible organization. And I think that it's the combination of all of those experiences that have allow, are allowing me to be successful as a leader of NOLS right now.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Wow. Sandy, you know, you were not kidding when you said to me before we started that you saw these parallels between us, you and I. Um,

Sandy Colhoun:

Yes. I could tell when you talked to me about your story, <laugh>, I was like, okay, this guy has done some amazingly interesting things. And you mentioned you went to Europe. I don't know where that was in your journey, but

Corey Andrew Powell:

Well, yeah. First time, um, France, uh, 1999, which was a very, so that's pre nine 11 for America. Right. So I, the, the first time in Europe ever, um, went to France, you know, landed Charles Degal. And I see that it's just normal every day for military people to be walking around with machine guns, which was startling to me. But Europe had been dealing with terrorism for years, so it was normal part of their culture at that point. I was just mortified. I mean, they were just, you know, army guys and machine guns everywhere, which was just normal. But, so, and then I realized how that became normal for America just in a couple years later, that we'd see that same thing.

Sandy Colhoun:

Mm-hmm <affirmative>.

Corey Andrew Powell:

But it's so it's interesting to have transitioned in my travels to seeing the world shift globally seeing America shift. And I wouldn't have seen that and had that reference if it had not been for at some point wanting to see beyond America's borders and understanding.

Sandy Colhoun:

mm-hmm <affirmative>.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Other people are living. But I have to say, why I started really smiling was because my first attempt at going to college at 23 was to be a photojournalist

Sandy Colhoun:

<laugh>. No way.

Corey Andrew Powell:

And I, yeah. And I, and I had an assignment once to, um, to photograph DC during, um, uh, I think July 4th or something, some, or, or maybe no Veteran's Day.

Sandy Colhoun:

Hmm.

Corey Andrew Powell:

And it felt intrusive to shove my, you know, try to take photos of veterans with their legs and arms gone. And I said, oh my gosh, I can't, I, I can't do this. This is not me. I don't wanna be intrusive that way to people who are feeling something. So I, I shifted gears. So anyway, um, this interview is about you, not me, but I just had to share that.

Sandy Colhoun:

But I wanna just say I, but I, I, what I really resonate with that is, is, you know, it, what you did and what we have done both is to be curious about what's beyond the borders of what your, your, your, your, your, your small community may be.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Yes.

Sandy Colhoun:

And by the way, I'm a big believer in community. Wendell Berry is one of my favorite philosopher writers, you know, and he believes all, all things happen in small communities. But until you get outside your community and you, you explore a larger world, you don't have a lot of context about what it was like where you came from.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Mm-hmm <affirmative>.

Sandy Colhoun:

So in order to, the, the Journey away and back is the one that allows you to have perspective.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Nacone Martin is a fitness enthusiast, professional bodybuilder, and advocate for personal empowerment and her appearance on Motivational Mondays. She inspired listeners by sharing her journey of overcoming adversity and severe bullying in her youth. Today she thrives creating new personal opportunities through determination, physical and emotional wellness, and positively envisioning the life she wants

Nacone Martin:
I, I went into the gym and that was it. I never, never turned back that that was it. You know, a lot of camaraderie in there, like that became my family. Oh my God. I got the belief of self, um, those men and women in there. Oh. They just really uplifted me. And then of course, the transformation of my body starting, started to happen. I'm like, oh, I'm getting a little muscular.

Corey Andrew Powell:
Yeah.

Nacone Martin:
Or changing some things, you know? Um, and then that gave me the courage to really be outside.

Corey Andrew Powell:
Mm-Hmm. .

Nacone Martin:
Like, and I started delving into, uh, modeling and getting involved with like, vocal productions. And I did that for years. And then through the networking even, um, you know, you have helped me and, you know, my path.

Corey Andrew Powell:
Mm-Hmm. .

Nacone Martin:
Um, and then through the networking and the connections, I was able to get an agent. And, you know, it's, my story is crazy because I didn't obtain agency representation until I was 39. Right,

Corey Andrew Powell:
Right.

Nacone Martin:
And people, you remember, and people were telling me that I was crazy. I was being referred to by friends and family as an old model, you know what I mean? , or

Corey Andrew Powell:
Again, People,

Nacone Martin:
if I said, you know, I've, I've been in music videos with, uh, you know, Jay-Z Rihanna, you know, those people. And then I found out, like my family members would be like, she's how old? And she's doing music videos, like.

Corey Andrew Powell:
Mm-Hmm. .

Nacone Martin:
really, you know what I mean?

Corey Andrew Powell:
Ridiculous.

Nacone Martin:
But then now I'm on TV performing mill, or they see me in Power and it's like, oh my God, that's my cousin. That's, you know what I mean? So I'm just like, um,

Corey Andrew Powell:
Listen, I know I told you.

Nacone Martin:
I know, you know,

Corey Andrew Powell:
I told you I was watching, I am an ID channel fanatic. I love the ID channel. And I was watching forensic files one night, . And I was like, and they cut to like a woman, uh, scientist doing the mitochondrial DNA test in the laboratory. She put her hair behind her cheek. My, and I said, oh my gosh, , that's like, no, that's Nacone in there. And I was like, wow. And I just saw you doing your thing on like the ID channel. I'm like, wow. That's like, like my home girl, like grew up in the same neighborhood and she's doing her thing and did not let other people hold her back. I mean, I was really just.

Nacone Martin:
finally .

Corey Andrew Powell:
Yeah. Finally. It was so impressive. Yeah.

Nacone Martin:
Took me a while. Took me a while, you know?

Corey Andrew Powell:
Mm-Hmm. .

Nacone Martin:
But even at the age of 39, getting agency representation, I just remember having that meeting and that agent and, you know, I still have it today.

Corey Andrew Powell:
Mm-Hmm. .

Nacone Martin:
And he telling me like, welcome to the family and me walking outside that door and collapsing on the floor in the hallway and sobbing. You know what I mean?

Corey Andrew Powell:
Right.

Nacone Martin:
Feel emotional because

Corey Andrew Powell:
Yes. 'cause you felt validated Right.

Nacone Martin:
My head, you know what I mean?

Corey Andrew Powell:
Mm-Hmm.

Nacone Martin:
My mother telling me, you're never gonna be. My friend's laughing at me behind my back and I'm like, oh my God, I am a signed now and working like for real.

Corey Andrew Powell:
Mm-Hmm.

Nacone Martin:
Commercial model. How many people do you know, they say, oh, I'm a model.

Corey Andrew Powell:
Right.

Nacone Martin:
And like, you know me, I'm like, you ain't really a model unless you got representation.

Corey Andrew Powell:
Right. You know what I mean? And you're working, and especially now because everybody's a model on Instagram,

Nacone Martin:
IG model. Right, exactly.

Corey Andrew Powell:
That's not the same

Nacone Martin:
Thing. Right. But, you know, in that moment I was like, no, I am a bonafide commercial model.

Corey Andrew Powell:
Mm-Hmm. .

Nacone Martin:
So yeah, that was a really great moment.

Corey Andrew Powell:
Yes, yes. And, uh, and with the fitness evolution for you just to go into that, to that place, when I saw the transformation of your body, it was from you posting a lot of the transformation series of photos on your Facebook. And I was like, okay. I mean, you went from being shapely to like, wow, okay, she's a, that's, you know, she's really looking great. Then it was like, yo, she is like not playing right now with that gym. Like she is really about to like, she is ripped to shred. And I was so shocked. And then I think when we interviewed you, when I interviewed you for the core issues podcast years ago, the first time you were just weeks away from doing your first fitness competition. And I think we did an interview for, uh, Figures magazine, shout out to to Dion.

Nacone Martin:
Yes. No.

Corey Andrew Powell:
Yes. Yeah. Yeah. So, um, so you really took it seriously and you were doing your fir and you, uh, now you didn't, I think you, you did get a medal, your first one, right? Your first competition

Nacone Martin:
Got a medal at every competition baby.

Corey Andrew Powell:
Okay. I stand corrected . I mean, you literally, yeah. When I saw you on stage with the medals, I mean, and these are really serious competitions. Like these are like the pro, I mean like the elevations to like the pro.

Nacone Martin:
Yes.

Corey Andrew Powell:
Competitions. Right

Nacone Martin:
Exactly that. Yeah. So that's the next goal. So you start in regional and then you have to place in regional. And then once you place in regional, you can go onto the national stage. And the national stage is where you compete to get your pro card. And a pro card is because a lot of people are like, what's a pro card? So a pro card is basically just a validation that's saying that you are a professional bodybuilder. And my federation is the IFBB.

Corey Andrew Powell:
Yes.

Nacone Martin:
So we, we a top dog, um, you know, they're the most prestigious, um, you know, federation as far as bodybuilding. So it is very, very hard. Very, very hard to turn pro. But I'm proud to say that I, um, competed for my pro card, you know, last season. And I came in second place twice. I was like one point away from getting my pro card. Oh. So I'm about to do it again. So hopefully, you know, God will show me some favor and this will be my season, but I'm working hard, you know, 'cause I start competing in June.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Willie Pietersen is a former CEO turned Columbia Business School professor. He's an expert on leadership and strategic thinking. His poignant conversation focused on the importance of inclusion and adaptive leadership in today's rapidly changing world, A standout moment was Pietersen's reflections on growing up in the oppressive segregated apartheid system of South Africa, and how it personally inspired him to make a change in the world.

Willie Pietersen:

Now, the way we evolve our thinking, and we've gotta be willing, of course, to accept and consider alternative ideas. Now, as a five or 6-year-old, you know, we are not equipped to do that. We want safety in our surroundings, and we're told this is the way the world works, and we follow those precepts and principles without really questioning them.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Mm-hmm <affirmative>.

Willie Pietersen:

So my learning had a number of growth stages that are very specific. The first is going to my local, uh, university in South Africa where I studied law. Now for the first time, I was in contact with conflicting ideas, people who are challenging the status quo and saying, there's something wrong with this. And I would say, well, what's wrong with it? Everybody's been given a separate but equal opportunity.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Hmm.

Willie Pietersen:

And then they said, let's see how that's working in practice, because that's a slogan. How is it working in practice? What is fair about what's happening now? Is everybody being given an equal opportunity at the end of the day to participate in the development of this wonderful country that's been bequeathed to us? Yes or no? Citing evidence to going to and fro began that way. To question my own underlying assumptions of what's true. You know, I'm a great follower philosophy, like, you know, I, we seek wisdom. When wisdom is the answer to three questions is the first question is, you know, what's, what's true and what's not true? The second question, the second question is amongst all the things that are true, uh, what's important, um, amongst all of those things and what less important. And the third thing is how will we act? How will we act on the beliefs that we develop that way? So it's philosophy and action. Now that began, uh, a, a set of questioning. Then I was lucky enough to win a Rhodes Scholarship to go to Oxford in England. I'd never been outside my home country. It's at the southern tip of Africa, a remote place. And the whole wide world was there. And I'd not discovered it and was intrigued by it. And now I was really introduced to a kaleidoscope Again, I used the word kaleidoscope of ideas from people from many, many different countries who were looking from the outside in at what was happening in South Africa. Some of them very well informed in invited me to do this leap in my own understanding, was the ability to look at something from the outside in and truly understand it that way. You know, what they say is the last thing a fish notices is the water that it's swimming in. Now you have to get outside of your environment. And mentally even, you know, my, that was physically, I got outside of it, involved in a lot of debates with people from many countries and had a, a shift that was somewhat profound in my thinking, realizing that what was happening was wrong, unjust, and cruel. And, and knew in my bones that something needed to happen to change it, otherwise there was gonna be the prospect of a violent revolution.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Mm. Yeah.

Willie Pietersen:

So that was a, you know, an epiphany.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Mm-hmm <affirmative>.

Willie Pietersen:

And a realization that, you know, the beliefs that I'd started with had evolved to an understanding based on this kind of more objective way of evaluating things and opening my mind more deliberately. You know, there was discomfort. There always is. When, when the anchor is pulled up from what your original beliefs were, it's a very uncomfortable situation.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Mm-hmm <affirmative>.

Willie Pietersen:

But that's how real learning happens. You know, Margaret Wheatley likes to say that, um, you cannot change a living thing from the outside. You can only disturb it so that it changes itself. And these were the disturbances that allowed me to change myself in terms of the way I thought. And Mandela had the same experience. I went back and practiced law and, um, in Cape Town in South Africa, uh, that's what I'd been trained to do. And, um, there was a, um, a process to classify people according to their race, because there was complete separation was called apartheid. That's the pronunciation of it. Apartheid the word hate of course. Sounds like you know what it is.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Mm-hmm.

Willie Pietersen:

Apartness is what it means in Afrikaans. And, uh, when there was ambiguity, you, you were not allowed to go to the same school. You were not allowed to live in the same area. You were not allowed to marry people of a different race. You were not allowed to have sexual relationships with people of a different race, believe it or not. And there was this board called the Race Classification Board, um, that heard cases of ambiguity. And people would show up, you know, with their representative lawyer, whatever it is, and examined like laboratory specimens, put a pencil through their hair to see its kinkiness, look at the color of their skin, something close. And, um, I happen to represent a number of clients whose lives have been torn apart. Um, kids in the same family, you two belong in that white school, you two seem to have a colored kind of element. And you go to the other school and then looking at the parents and say, your marriage is illegal because you're from different races. You've gotta separate, you can't live, you can't cohabit. I mean, I, it's hard to, this is fascinating. Something like this, you say, can that really be true? Well, it was. So I represented these, uh, people and what I saw brought home something to me. Now I'd been at Oxford, I'd changed my view. But, you know, we generalize, we talk about being unfair to people of color. Well, you know, it's not people, it's individuals. And now, for the first time I saw the crushing effect this had on individual human beings. So getting away from group think and thinking about, you know, the people involved, that was to me, horrifying.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Siobhan McHale is an author and organizational culture expert known for her work in transforming workplace dynamics. In her insightful conversation about her new book, the Hive Mind at Work, McHale shared how much leaders can learn from the behaviors of bees in a hive. Her examples are how to drive cultural change, foster innovation, inspire group intelligence, and higher team member engagement.

Siobhan McHale:

You can use these techniques in, in any change, in any industry. The the key thing is that you begin to rewire your brain for groups, not just for individuals, and not just for the technical changes that you face. You, you, you know, often when I speak with leaders, they, um, they've been taught to think in terms of their functional expertise. So an engineer can design a bridge over a wide river. Uh, a marketing executive can create a, a plan for a product rollout. A finance manager can create a budget for a department, but ask these people to design an intervention to bring about change in a group. And, uh, they really draw blank faces often because we haven't been taught how to intervene in those complex human ecosystems in order to bring about change. And, uh, one of the first places you start is understanding the patterns. So in the a NZ example, what was the big pattern running the organization? It was the order taker pattern where one part was giving the orders to another. We had to see that pattern and reframe the roles in order to bring about change, putting in more systems, more training. All of those usual interventions were restructuring. They were not working.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Mm. When it comes to reframing those roles, then, would you say that is one of the main difficulties or pitfalls that you have experienced when it comes to workplaces trying to bring about change? Or, or are there any others that you think are also problematic that you have helped people work through?

Siobhan McHale:

Oh, very. Every change is different. So you must see the reality of what is going on in that particular ecosystem. For example, another, I give lots of examples in the book, but another example that I gave was at an infrastructure company where they were facing complaints, increased complaints from clients. And when I spoke to the newly appointed GM, she was quite frustrated and she wanted to, uh, she said, I think we need new equipment because, you know, it's an old fleet or equipment's out of date, and clients aren't very happy about that. And I said, well, before we spend millions of dollars on a new fleet, let me take a look at what's going on. Uh, so I went to some sites and on one of the sites, I, I talked to the project manager who was falling behind in terms of the laying of cables in, uh, one district. And, um, customer was very, uh, frustrated by that. But he was digging his way through hard quartz rock in an old goldfields region in, in Victoria, in Australia. And he said, well, the rock is harder and we need jumbo drills to get through this rock. And I said, but did you not know that in this region there was this hard quartz rock? And he said, yeah, we, we, we did know, but we just didn't factor it in. So now we're waiting for this, these jumbo drills to come. So this was an example of what I call the reactive pattern where nobody was really planning ahead. Then they were sending in the firefighters to compensate for that lack of planning and dig, dig faster. And the whole organization, it wasn't just happening on that project, it was happening on multiple projects where you had these heroes flying in to save the day or to compensate for lack of planning.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Mm.

Siobhan McHale:

So that reactive pattern where you had a lack of planning, you had compensators, and then you had the people on site being the rescued ones, they needed rescuing that pattern was running the whole organization. So we had to see that pattern, the reactive pattern, and start to intervene to, um, rewire that pattern in the organization before change would happen.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Hmm. That reminds me of a very common expression here in the US where we're always, um, when someone comes to us in a panic because they didn't plan ahead, and the expression is a lack of planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on mine. However, if you're in a charge of a business, it does become your problem <laugh> and you have to try to fix it. And that sounds expensive, what you just mentioned too, like

Siobhan McHale:

Yeah, well, you know, the, the automatic response of the general manager was, let's buy new fleet. We need new trucks, we need new Utes, we need new equipment. But that was a technical solution to an adaptive problem. Actually, the solution was that she needed to reframe the role of her project managers to the prepared ones, the planned ones. What she did in order to help that situation was she started to put in a review team that would review every proposal and make sure that they were looking out for risks. Like, is there hard courts rock in that region that might slow us down? We might need jumbo drills in order to get through it. So this intervention of a review team really looking out for and managing for risk, uh, started to help the organization to rewire and, uh, not sending in the firefighters afterwards to compensate for the lack of planning.

Corey Andrew Powell:

And that's a wrap for our 2024 season of Motivational Mondays. What an incredible journey. It's been filled with powerful stories, inspiring guests and thought provoking conversations that reminded us all to dream big and take action. Now. We couldn't have done it without you, our amazing listeners and watchers. So thank you all for tuning in each week. Thanks for your comments, your shares, your likes, your overall support. You are the heart of this community, and we are so grateful to have you with us now. Stay tuned in 2025 for more exciting guests, fresh, new insights and more empowering moments. So be sure to subscribe and we'll see you next year. Thank you for listening to Motivational Mondays, presented by the National Society of Leadership and Success, and available wherever you listen to your favorite podcast. I'm Corey Andrew Powell, and I'll see you again here next week.