

-- Speaker 0 00:04 Make it right. The manufacturing podcast. How much time

Speaker 1 00:10 do you spend every week thinking about work? If you lead a team or even if you don't, in all likelihood, it's far more than the standard 40 hours and if these hours are mostly filled with anxiety, frustration, doubt, or boredom, then you probably aren't doing your team yourself or your health any favors. My guest on today's shows says work satisfaction doesn't come from having a specific title. It comes from spending time doing the types of things that excites you and give you energy. Imagine the possibilities if everyone in your business was firing on all cylinders doing what they love to do. That sounds great and we've heard it before, but how do you get there this week on make it right? My guest is Cal Meisner. He's been helping leaders create committed, passionate teams and it starts with a committed and passionate leader. Kelsey, the author of the freedom framework, the business owner's guide to earning more and working less, and he joins me today from I believe Vancouver. Hi Cal.

Speaker 2 01:14 Hi Janet. How are you today?

Speaker 1 01:16 I'm really good. Thank you so much for, for taking the time to chat with me. I know you've had a really interesting personal voyage of discovery that led to the writing of your book and actually reinventing your career role as what is now called a people and culture consultant. So I'm really interested to hear how you actually got there. So tell us the story.

Speaker 2 01:38 Sure. I'll tell you the story and thank you so much for having me. I'm really excited to be here today. I'm going to try and keep it short and sweet, but I'm going to go way back in time. So back when I was actually just getting out of high school, I hung out with a group of 12 gentlemen and we were very close and we're still close to this day. I'm very blessed to have them, which is great. But what I found is most of them knew exactly what they wanted to do with their careers and with their lives. And I was one of those people that I had no idea. So, for example, one of my friends wanted to be a chef, so he went to chef school and opened a restaurant and had a long successful career. And, and like I mentioned, most of these gentlemen knew what they wanted to do, but I had no idea.

Speaker 2 02:22 So what do you do when you don't have a clue? You just start doing a number of different things. And I did everything from work in the Canadian Arctic islands, cleaning up rig sites to moving mobile homes to, I won't go into all the details, but again, I was really just searching for, I saw people that were really excited about their careers and what they were doing and I just wanted to be one of those people. So I continued on my journey of trying different things and, and you know, you hear this saying about tapping into your passion and following your purpose and, and I'm a big fan of those concepts by the way, but I had no how to do that. So, so, but there was two things I did know. One is, and I think this is pretty similar for most young people starting out, cause I wanted to make decent money, right?

Speaker 2 03:08 Because we all need to pay the bills. And two, I knew that I'd like to travel. So what I did is I actually got into the telecommunications industry. I'd saw a good friend of mine worked in that industry, made very good money and he was traveling a lot. So I thought, Hey, I can do that. So I got into the telecom industry and excuse me, I had very, uh, many very technical roles, uh, when I started out and then leadership roles and senior leadership roles, but they were always around technology and operations. And what I learned tonight, I guess, Janet, I'm a slow learner. It took me, it took me a long time to figure this out. But what I realized, I wasn't that passionate about the technology and operations. What I was passionate about was helping other people ensure they had worked, they were excited about and career opportunities they look forward to and we're learning and growing.

Speaker 2 04:01 So I literally, after 15 years of working in that industry and focused, like I said, on very technical roles, I called up the gentleman that I was working for at the time, and excuse me, and he's a good friend of mine, so this helped. But I said, Dave, you know all that technical stuff. I don't want to do that anymore. And he said, uh, okay cow, what is --

-- it that you want to do now? And I said, I want to support your team, but from a people and culture point of view, and I didn't even really know what that meant. You know, the term now I think is ubiquitous, ubiquitous across many industries and replacing the, the term human resources. But at the time I didn't, that wasn't what I had in mind. Again, what I had in mind is I knew that I loved supporting other people and their growth and that's what got me excited.

Speaker 2 04:48 So I created a role for myself in the company that I was working for at the time. There's 43,000 people in this company and I called myself the people and culture champion and my job was to support Dave's team of 700 people across Canada. And really my job description was to make it a cool place to work. And I'll talk about more about how we did that in a moment. But what was very exciting for me is I was able to completely realign the work that I did and focus on the things that excited me and got help with the things that I wasn't quite as excited about. And so, you know, talking about my own story and being able to transform my work and my relationship to my work and really marry the things that I was passionate about personally with my career was just, it was transformational for me.

Speaker 2 05:38 It was for the first time in many, many years, I felt like an idea. I certainly didn't have all the answers, but I felt like, you know what? This is a step in the right direction. This is feeling better. This is, I feel like I'm on the right path. And so because that felt so good for me. I thought, I wonder if I can help facilitate this for other people. And so I was supporting Dave's team of 700 people like I mentioned across the country and I still had a small team of 14 people that were reporting directly to me and I started to have different conversations with them. So my standard, we, you know, we always had one on one conversations and as a good leader I felt that you should do that. But really the topic of our conversations in the past had been around key performance indicators and performance metrics.

Speaker 2 06:27 And, and don't get me wrong, those things of course are still important. But I saw also started to ask questions like, you know, really simple questions. I think a lot of us, and like I mentioned when I was young, I certainly fell into this category is starting out being motivated by money. So, and a lot of people I believe feel they need to stay in a certain career or certain job because of the money. So I started asking questions to the folks that I supported. Like, so if you won the lottery tomorrow, for example, and money was no longer a concern, how would you like to spend your time? And what I found is by having those kinds of conversations and really getting to, you know, what motivates people on a much more deeper level, I was able to help facilitate this idea of aligning their passions with their profession as well. And so, you know, to, to your point, and thank you again for the, for the lovely intro, but that is what I've dedicated my life to doing. I really feel like we have an epidemic of people doing work that they weren't meant to do. And I envision a world where we all get to do the work that we're excited about. And I think the world would just be a much happier place because of that.

Speaker 1 07:39 Well, and I think it does. Yeah. It takes all kinds in the world, doesn't it? Right. So surely there is somebody out there who will do the thing that you don't want to do. And if you're in a big corporation like you where you can find that people in house, that person in house because gosh, you've got that many people to pull from. Right?

Speaker 2 07:57 Absolutely. And, and can I tell you a quick story? Yeah,

Speaker 1 08:00 yeah.

Speaker 2 08:02 This was one of my many career stops in that environment, but I was working for a lady at the time and we were having some challenges with, with some of our wholesale providers. So I was part of the group that in the telecom industry, many carriers like they share facilities and, and you have these different agreements. So the lady I was working for at the time, we were having some service challenges with one of the other providers and she, and what I've now come to learn is that, to your point, Janet, I think we all have a theme where we have, there's the things that we love to do and enjoy spending our time --

-- on certain things. And there's other things that we really don't. And at that time, this particular individual needed to go meet with these executives from this other company and talk about our service levels.

Speaker 2 08:50 And she was a very data-driven person, very analytical, but did not like conflict and did not really like to, you know, sit in front of customers. And that the irony at the time, I was actually doing data analysis, which I think I'm pretty good at, but I really dislike it. And so, but, but my passion or my theme and having done some real deep investigation on this, I know for me it's around networking and relationships. So if I'm building relationships, meeting with other people, I'm thrilled. So in this particular case I asked her, I said, I could see she was losing sleep. She, she wasn't eating, she was so distraught about having to go to this meeting. And so I asked her, I said, would you like me to go to that meeting on your behalf? And I could just see the weight of the world fall off her shoulders.

Speaker 2 09:41 Right? She just like side. And she's like, okay, how would you do, would you do that? And I said, I would love to do that under one condition. And she said anything, you name it, because again, she's just very relieved to, to not have to take this, this meeting and, and, and address this conflict. And so I said, the one condition is I need someone to help me with data and analytics. And she's like, yes, done. Consider it done. So, so there's an example, Janet, of how I've got to do something that I was comfortable with and look forward to and I got help with the things I wasn't quite as excited about. And you're right, it's a win win, right? We all have the things that we're good at, our strengths and especially I think from a team perspective, if you can get everyone working in their zone of genius and it complements the team, I think that's the real secret sauce to building a great culture or work environment.

Speaker 1 10:35 <inaudible> this is a real uphill battle, isn't it Cal? Because let's be honest, and you said it right at the start, sometimes we don't know what we want to do when we get started, but we know we want to make decent money and we want some security and whatnot. And, okay, I'll, I'll look at that job because I'm pretty good at doing that and I can do that, but I don't really like doing it, but I can do it and it's going to pay me well. And all of a sudden, you know, 10 years down the road you've been toiling away for 10 years doing something you never liked doing and you're collecting a paycheck and you're getting it done and people are respecting you at work, but you're not the person you're supposed to be. So <inaudible> just explain or give me a picture of a person who is totally like not an aligned person and how this issue is reflected in a business culture.

Speaker 2 11:26 Sure. Well, I mean, I think misalignment is so prevalent in the workplace, but also in every area of our societies. So by that I mean, I'll give you an example. Like maybe it's the relationship there that you're in that isn't the right one for you. Maybe you're living in a place that doesn't serve you as well as it could. And, and you're right for a variety of reasons. Often it's money driven or family reasons or you know, we stay in these situations that don't serve us as well as they could. And, and I'll just throw in what I mean by alignment because, and I apologize in advance because I'm probably going to set a record for the amount of times I say that word, but yeah, unzipped in a word that I'm, I'm a little bit obsessed with these days. But when I talk about alignment, what I mean in general terms is doing more of the things that serve you or that you enjoy and less of the things that don't.

Speaker 2 12:20 It's, that's simple. And then when it comes to work as a leader, am I doing work that excites me and am I getting help with the stuff that doesn't excite me quite as bit, quite as much. Sorry. And then thirdly, when you look at your employees or team members or whatever term you use for the people that you support as a leader, are they in the right roles doing work that they're excited about? Okay. So that's what I mean in terms of alignment. Now, like I mentioned, this can impact every area of your life, but it's very prevalent I think in the workplace and like you said at the outset, when we spend at least two thirds of our waking h --

-- ours as adults in the workplace, the cost of doing work that is not suited to you or that you don't enjoy is immense, right?

Speaker 2 13:07 It didn't come. You can impact every area of your life. You think about it, if you go to work and you, you have a day or a job that you're really just not that excited about, how do you come home? How do you show up when you get home to your family, to your children, to your friends, right? It can impact every area of your life and that's why I'm so passionate about helping people with this idea of alignment. And again, I am mostly targeted at alignment in the work that we do. But again, I feel if people are aligned with the work they do, every area of their, of their life will benefit. But what you're right, it is a bit of a struggle because I think, I think one of the reasons it's a struggle, and I know I certainly did not have this, I did not have anybody that when I was trying to figure out out of high school, they're doing all these odd jobs.

Speaker 2 13:57 I didn't have anyone that said to me cowboy, like, what do you really want to do? What's in your heart? What are you passionate about? And, and I certainly at that time didn't believe that there was a way to marry the things that I was passionate about personally to my work. Yeah. Could you even have identified them at that age? Likely not. Nope. Yeah. That's the hard part, right? Yeah. It's the hard part for many. You know, I also learned over the years of, you know, I now have 25 plus years of experience leading people. And what I learned is trying to be a very supportive leader. And I think naturally a people person, I would say to people, what do you want to do next with your career and how can I help you get there? And what I found is 90% of the time people couldn't answer that question and I don't.

Speaker 2 14:51 It was because they were apathetic. I think they just genuinely didn't know or hadn't taken the time or haven't given themselves the space to to ask that of themselves. Right. To your earlier point, when you get into a job, you get a paycheck, you get caught in what I call the golden handcuffs. So now maybe you have a mortgage payment and a car payment. And the idea of changing at that point for many people is, is just too uncomfortable to even consider. And this is why I, you know, a lot of the work that I do, I focus on leaders because I feel as a leader we are obligated to help people ensure they have work. They're excited about them. Right. And there's obvious business benefits to that for sure. But again, just from a human to human perspective, I feel it's an obligation that we have as leaders.

Speaker 1 15:41 So as, as a leader, if you are trying to find this alignment and you, you don't believe you have it. One of the methods that you mentioned in your book, and you've already mentioned it in this conversation, is finding your theme, that thing that really lights you up. So how do you discover that if you don't know what it is already and then how do you help your team members do the same? So there is that trickle down and everybody starts to get that alignment.

Speaker 2 16:09 Yeah, it's a great question. And fortunately if you know where to look and you're aware of this concept of alignment, there are actually several tools out there. So we've created our own tools. So certainly, you know, I'd be happy to provide the listeners with access to those, but there's many ways to do it. And there's things like disc, you may have heard of that. There's things like strength finders, there's a number of different ways to give you insights into the types of things that you enjoy. And so, but you're right up often, like, like we talked about, people don't know what that is. And so getting some help and going through these tools I think is very, been a beneficial for us as leaders. And then to your other point, to be able to facilitate that for the people that work for us, I think is amazing.

Speaker 2 16:56 And uh, you know, I'll, I'll tell you another quick story. I, so when I embarked upon this journey to really transform it, align the work for myself, I started having these deeper conversations like I mentioned. And, but at that time it was still a fairly new concept to me and I wasn't aware of now what I believe again, that we all have a theme or a way of being that we enjoy or the types of things that we like to enjoy. And so what I'm having these convers --

-- ations with my team and at the time there's a gentleman that was working for me, his name was Michael, and I'm in Vancouver, Canada, Michael's in Calgary, Canada. And he calls me out of the blue and Cicala I think I need to leave the company. And I was like, Michael, what are you talking about? And this, of course, I had just created this new role for myself.

Speaker 2 17:49 And so I needed more help than ever before. And I was really dreading the thought of leaving Michael because like I mentioned, or losing Michael rather cause he was, he's like my right hand man. But again, I hadn't identified what the theme was for Michael. So at that time I said, okay Michael, what if, what if you don't need to leave the company? What if you don't need a new job? What if we just get you doing work that you're more excited about any <inaudible> I trust you. So I will have the conversation, but I can't imagine what that looks like right into your previous point. Many of us just have no insight even into what that is that we're passionate about and certainly no thinking of how we could marry that to the work that we do. So what I did know about Michael, Michael is a very creative guy and his theme, and I now know this more deeply than I than I ever did, is his theme is around creativity.

Speaker 2 18:50 So Michael's a photographer, but not only does he like taking photos, he likes to take Photoshop and, and, and create them and transforming into these unique works of art. And at the time I had Michael doing the scheduling of data migrations, probably the least creative function in our company, or perhaps even on the planet, be in hindsight how misaligned it was for him. But again, I didn't know that at the time. So, so he said, okay, cow, I trust you. I'll have the conversation. But I can't imagine he just couldn't see it from, from where he was sitting. And what I wanted to do, excuse me, as the people and culture champion, I wanted to sub celebrate our successes as a team, but I didn't want to do it in the standard like stuffy corporate talking head fashion. I wanted something that was cool and impactful, any motive. And, and so I shared this idea with Michael and Michael said, cow, I think I've got an idea. Just leave it with me. So two weeks later, Michael sends me the draft. I'm seeing that in air quotes to what we called our midyear video. Uh, clicked on this link and I literally started crying. Wow.

Speaker 2 20:13 Sorry. Just thinking about it. This video was unbelievable and he, he had captured exactly what I had hoped in that he captured the successes of our team, but in this really cool human fashion. And for example, one of our managers at the time had just had baby twin girls. And so we had a picture of Sean with his two daughters and we also, at the time we had some flooding in Southern Alberta and a number of our team members were out helping customers and, and helping get people to higher. And so he'd captured some of those highlights and he captured a number of our business accomplishments, but again, the real human element to our team. And so I was just blown away. And again, I'm in Vancouver, Michael's in Calgary. I phoned Michael and I remember this conversation to this day. He answered the phone and I said, Michael, are you freaking kidding me?

Speaker 2 21:08 And he's like, why? What, what did they, did I do something wrong? And I said, no, Michael, like, this is so incredible. It's amazing. It's nothing wrong. It's unbelievable. But this is an example I think of when you can unlock someone's potential, right? When you can unlock the things that they're really passionate about and marry that to your needs as a team or as a business. This is where you see these extraordinary results. So literally, you know, you fast forward 18 months later and Michael's now doing this creative work and supporting me on the people and culture front and, and he's literally pinging me like midnight Saturday night and it's like, Oh, I found this great program. What do you see? This is what I'm going to be able to do. And I'm like, yes, yes. Can we talk about this on Monday morning please? Cause it's Saturday night at midnight, right?

Speaker 2 21:56 That's the point. Michael is living and working within his theme. He's getting to do the things that excite him. You know, when you, you, you hear so much talk about work life balance, it's not quite as necessary when you're doing work that you lo --

-- ve. Now maybe, maybe Michael's case was extreme and he was a little imbalanced in the other direction. But again, I think that's the point, right? He was just, not only did he, here's a guy that went from wanting to leave our company to literally like just being a rock star in, in every sense of the term and delivered some extraordinary results for our, for our team. So, you know, I think in terms of building a culture and a workplace environment, that is the key, right? Getting people doing work that they're excited about them.

Speaker 1 22:43 So with, with Michael, did you find someone else to do all his data stuff? Somebody else that was super passionate about that and wasn't doing it, but then when you said, can you take over what Michael's doing so he can do this? They went, yes. Did you find that? Yeah. Okay. So go ahead.

Speaker 2 23:02 Sorry. I'm just going to say too, to your point, I think is we found a successor for Michael, but even when I was looking for that successor, I was doing it through a very different lens. Right? It's not just who can I find that can fill those shoes. It's like who's to be so passionate and excited about data migrations that they're going to knock it out of the park just like Michael did on the creative stuff and I was able to find someone and it was actually a promotion for them and it was a move into, into a role that they were truly excited about. So, so it's a win win for everyone if you can do that right.

Speaker 1 23:36 That's Kel Meisner. He's chief happiness officer at high performance culture and his advice and insights are taken from his journey alignment for himself and his team members. Cal is also the author of the freedom framework, the business owner's guide to earning more and working less and Cal has kindly agreed to give away a copy of his book on the show. So please send me an email@makeitrightpodcastatgmail.com and the first listener who gets in touch will receive a copy and Cal will join me again next week. That's our show this week. Please check out our Twitter and LinkedIn feeds that are on our podcast page at <inaudible> dot com and subscribe and share this podcast with your friends and colleagues through iTunes, Google play, Stitcher, Spotify, and YouTube. The makeup right podcast is brought to you by Kevin Snoop, leadership advisor and author of the bestselling book, make it right, five steps to align your manufacturing business from the front line to the bottom line. I'm Jed at Eastman. Thanks very much for listening to the make it right podcast. We'll see you next week.

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