

Episode 297: Generate Buy-in and Change People's Minds with Michael McQueen

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Mamie Kanfer Stewart 00:00

Getting others to embrace our ideas isn't always so straightforward. The conventional strategies to build buy in Sway perspectives and shape the course of work lost their effectiveness. And while you might think of persuasion and influence as an art, today, you're going to explore the science behind changing minds to help you move work forward, a warm welcome to Jenna G, Robert D, and Raj K to the modern manager community. Today's guest is Michael McQueen. Michael is a multi award winning speaker, change strategist and best selling author of 10 books with clients including Google, Toyota, and MasterCard, he has helped some of the world's most successful brands navigate uncertainty, and stay one step ahead of change. Michael and I talk about how to change people's minds. We get into why it's harder to influence people now than ever before, ways to prime people to hear your ideas, tips for getting buy in from even the most stubborn colleagues, and so much more. Plus in the extended interview available to members of podcast, but Michael shares how we can keep people open to hearing ideas without triggering their defense mechanism, as well as one easy technique for helping people see things differently. Now, here's the conversation.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 01:11

Are you a manager, boss, or team leader who aspires to level up and unleash your team's full potential? You're listening to The Modern Manager podcast, and I'm your host, Mamie Kanfer Stewart. Each week, I explore effective strategies and provide actionable insights that supercharge your management abilities, optimize team performance, and foster a healthy workplace culture. Become a rockstar manager and help your team thrive at themodernmanager.com/more.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 01:36

Thank you so much for joining me today, Michael. I'm so excited to talk with you about why of your stubborn and how to influence people and how to get unstuck in our ideas. I was reading your book, and I just felt like this applies to all aspects of my life from my kids, she might partner to the political sphere and volunteer work I do to my office life. I mean, really, we are constantly trying to influence people and having people influence us. And sometimes, you know, we don't

always react the way that we know we should. So I'm just really excited to unpack all this with you.

Michael McQueen 02:13

Thanks so much. Great to get to spend some time.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 02:15

So why don't you start by laying out some of the reasons why it is so hard to influence people. I mean, I think we all experience and it's hard to get people on board with your ideas if you're trying to sell something to a boss or a colleague. And it's hard when you kind of unpack why it's so hard for us. And then we'll get to what we can do differently to to move the needle.

Michael McQueen 02:37

When the headline figure and this is probably the surprise to many people is just how much of our time in all those spheres of life, you've just mentioned that we spend trying to influence or persuade or shape the decisions and the thinking of other people. So it's 40% of our time is spent doing this in any given day. So 40 percents a lot of time. The tricky thing is, and this was from a study done at Cornell University a little while ago, they actually found that we are only successful in changing other people's minds, three to 5% of the times that we set out to do it like so we're just not very good at this. And there is a sense in which this has no, it's never been easy to try and persuade someone. And there's lots of reasons for that. But it feels like it's increasingly difficult now, and there are lots of reasons for that, like why, why do we seem so much more stubborn? Now part of it is just that we are utterly overwhelmed with information and ideas and things that we are expected to make up our minds about. I mean, there are things that we are aware of what's happening in the world and in culture that we're just you didn't know, 1520 years ago, you just had your little pocket of the world that you are focused on. And so you could read about things that related to your world. Now we've got to know about everything in the world, not just our world. And so there's that sense that obstinance is related to overwhelm when you're exposed to so much information. And the expectation is you've got to take all this stuff that you're exposed to and quickly decide and make up your mind about things form opinions, and you've got to have an opinion, you know, like, are you for this or against so you left the right you Progressive Conservative and all these hot button social issues, especially but you can't just say like, I don't know, I've never really thought about it, that's not accepted. And that's not okay anymore. You've got to pick a side. And so there's this sense of being overwhelmed. That means that like, we can't think about that much stuff. Our brains aren't designed to do that. So we tend to defer to things like tribal instincts. What are other people like me think about ideas like this? I can't think about everything. So I'm just gonna defer to is this

person from my tribe or not? Is this something that we agree with? Or we don't agree with? So we sort of defer to the herd, but also we tend to then defer to these gut instincts? Does it feel right or not, as opposed to have actually stopped and thought about this and considered it really and so the challenge is, when you're trying to persuade someone, they've had to make up their mind about all these sorts of things. And you've got to then unpick, or navigate this whole mess of things that shape the way we think the perceptions that we form.

Michael McQueen 04:51

And I think that the challenge for most of us is that there's two different parts of our brain and I really sort of go deep into this in the book looking at the different parts of our brain that when we talk about it made up my mind what what part of your brain was involved, because different parts of our brain are actually involved in what most of us realize. And the part of our brain that's typically most associated with stubbornness is the part of our brain that loves to feel right. It also loves to feel safe. And so when you're trying to persuade someone or get through to them, those are some of the hurdles you've got to overcome. And so a lot of the book is focused on how to speak to that part of our mind, not the logical, the rational, the linear, but that that instinctive, emotion driven, gut driven part of our mind, because that's where stubbornness tends to reside.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 05:33

I feel like with when it comes to the workplace, right? Like, we are so overwhelmed with all the projects and the work and the things that we have to do that when new ideas come up, or people are trying to get us on board with their product, it's very easy, I can see how you're just like, I don't have time for this, I'm gonna do that to my kid, like, I don't have time for this conversation. Like, I get that you want to get this thing on time. I'm trying to think about it with you. Right, and that holding on to where we're at, and what we have to do, and all those other things just doesn't leave us space, for engaging with with those ideas. And to be thoughtful about them. This like two mindedness piece also, I think, really, really resonates. Because so often, we know the facts, we like, understand the logic, and yet, our behavior doesn't follow. We do something else, because the other thing feels better to us. Right? They talked about it with smoking, right? Like, smokers know, it's bad for them, but they still do it. And they have some way of making sense in their brain that these two things can coexist. And it's not, I don't understand it. But like you can, you can explain that because you understand that.

Michael McQueen 06:43

Of course, I think what's interesting is we've got this assumption about how people think that that sort of dates back about 400 years, so the person who's probably most responsible for the

way most of us approach persuasion and why we're so bad at doing it is a guy named Francis Bacon. So Francis Bacon was probably one of the world's most important thinkers in the early 1600s. And he was the father of the Enlightenment period, he was actually the guy who coined the phrase, knowledge is power. That was him who came up with that as a concept. So I mean, if you're gonna come up with a quote in your life, that's a pretty good one to say that was mine. Right? So that was, that's got Francis Bacon. But his his big idea was that humans are fundamentally rational and reasonable. And so if you want to change someone's mind, or educate them, or shift their view, then you've got to expose them to enough information and solid evidence to the point where they start, they see the light, they see reason and change their thinking. And so the assumption and this shape the next three or 400 years of academia, education, public policy, communications, certainly the way businesses tend to communicate with each other. And even scientific method was deeply influenced by this assumption. The idea being if someone doesn't see reason, though, the problem is there's it's an information gap, a knowledge gap, then So you've just got to help them understand, you got to give them more information and more data, just pile it on. And that'd be nice if it were the case. But we've actually discovered in the last few decades, that's not the case. In fact, the opposite is true. And the more information you give to someone who's got a very fixed or rigid idea about something, particularly if that idea is connected to their identity, who they are, who they see themselves as, rather than open up, their minds will shut down, they'll dig their heels in even more, and the Genesis moment for this book really are traced back to speaking to a manager at a conference two years ago, in fact, probably late 2015, this conversation happened. So I was speaking at a conference and Industry Association conference all about disruption and the future. And like, that's, this is book number 10. For me, so I've been in the last four or five books of all focused on AI, robotics, demographic change that where's the word heading over the next few years. And so I was speaking at this conference about those themes. And so at the end of the, my session, during the lunch break, there's this woman who came up and you could just see everything about who was exasperated, she was just I heard she was the picture of exasperation, I remember speaking with her at the back of this ballroom at the Hilton hotel here in Sydney. And she said, You know, I get it, I can see what you're saying, I can see what's coming for our industry, just how much things are about to change. And if we don't change in my organization, just that I reckon we've got five or maybe six years before we are out of business. But she said, My biggest challenge is how do I get my leaders on board? I can see they just can't, and they won't see it. And so I said, What have you tried, you know, in terms of trying to persuade or influence them, and she'd done all the things that all the books tell you to do, and yet they hadn't worked. And so that that was essentially the Genesis moment of this book is to try and figure out what actually does work because she'd done all the things that Francis Bacon in the last three or 400 years of philosophy and educational ideology, what they've told us to do, give evidence, give logic, give a pie chart, give the data make your case in a compelling, rational way. And then it didn't have the opposite effect. And so I see this daily when you're trying to influence down or influence up particularly for managers that skill of trying to get through to people who are very stuck and stubborn in their thinking. It is a massive issue.

Yeah. And I feel like in addition to the knowledge piece, it's crazy to me like giving people more information actually has the opposite effect. We're not gonna spend time going to that, because it's just it's mind boggling and people want to know more about they should read your book. But I feel like the other piece of advice that's been more common recently is like, tell stories pull their emotional strings. And your research shows that like that also doesn't really work. Can you share more on that.

Michael McQueen 10:25

It can work but not always. So there's a real trick, there's an art to using narrative in a way that really gets through to people. So, narrative can work using stories, particularly for your own stories can work, because what they do is they unlock a thing called ethos. So Aristotle, two and a half, 1000 years ago talked about influence as being one of three things. So there's logos, pathos, and ethos. So logos is about often appealing to those rational faculties, for instance, Pathos is just appealing to emotion. And so you often see, the advertising industry is great at doing that, sadly, our politicians are also good at that. But they appeal to only a narrow range of emotions. They appeal to emotions like disgust, and anger and fear, emotions that have a narrowing effect. So they make you get out and vote because I'm afraid of the other side, or I'm angry at the center I'll have discussed in fact, you see that right now, typically, it's not left versus right, progressive versus conservative, it's good versus evil. And political leaders play on that they stoke some of the emotions associated with that, which makes us very tribal and not think very clearly, which is really tricky. But the third element is ethos. So ethos is argument by character, by being trustworthy. And this is where stories can be really effective. If you tell a story that is true, authentic, vulnerable, what it actually does neurochemically in the other person is it unlocks those, those signals of trust that you're trustworthy. And so what's happening actually, from a physiology perspective, is a thing called oxytocin is released. And even if you've never heard that term before, like everyone knows what oxytocin feels like, oxytocin is that feeling like you know, you speaking with someone, and you walk away, you're like, I just feel like I really clicked with that person I really gelled with them. That's because deep down those oxytocin released, unconsciously, you got a signal that this is a person you can trust and connect with. And interestingly, you have that conversation with someone else. And they might say all the same things and you walk away like it didn't feel like I clicked with them. It's because something wasn't in that conversation. That meant you got those unconscious trust signals, the oxytocin wasn't released. So telling stories can be great, because if they're vulnerable and honest, and there's a pile of research over the last few decades that looks at this, when people tell honest and vulnerable and even self deprecating stories, that's a trigger for oxytocin, it signals that you are trustworthy and honest and reliable. And so if the stories paint you in a light that is fallible, like that, you've stuffed some things up from time to time, and you also have doubts, and you're not 100% sure about this, and you're just just a normal person like them. It's amazing how those sorts of stories can be really effective at paving the way for influence. And when it comes to telling other people's stories and trying to appeal to empathy. And empathy is, of course, a very powerful persuasive tool. Some of the research that interesting on that front is that you've got to keep the scope very narrow in the story that you tell.

So if you're telling a story about like they've said this in, in charity, fundraising, there's been a lot of great research about this. And charity fundraising, if you're trying to get people to raise money for an impoverished community, for instance, do not tell the story about the community, or even a tribe or a group within that community, tell one person's story and only one and enrich detail. And Chris Graves, who has headed up behavioural insights at Ogilvy for years, puts it this way, he said, human empathy doesn't scale well. And so we react emotionally to one story to a very narrow scope at the moment, it's a big story like emotionally we just can't engage with it becomes too big a deal. And so I think it was Mother Teresa, who said, if I look at the mat, if I look at the mess, I wouldn't ever act, it's overwhelming. If I look at the one, that's what I'm spurred to action. And I think that's the case for all of us who want to appeal to emotions and empathy. Tell one story teller it vividly and if it's your own, be honest and vulnerable.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 14:03

Pulling those, you know, back to the workplace, I can see how, as a manager, if you're going to try to influence a policy in your organization, right telling the impact it has on you, or telling about one specific person on your team, rather than this is going to, you know, totally not work for all these reasons, like but making it really specific, like, oh, I can see how this would be problematic for me on my team, because blah, blah, blah, and she has this situation like that, making it personal in that way. I can see how that can be incredibly powerful. I wonder what are some of the other tips and tricks you have for for persuading in the workplace?

Michael McQueen 14:42

Well, I think one of the first things for managers especially when you're trying to encourage people to change is to look at what are the handbrake on people, neurologically the things that mentally stop them from being willing to change the keep them mind stuck? And so I mean, we've heard for years and I've written about this in books, and I've said it from stage for years that, you know, humans are fundamentally afraid of change. And we say that so often we just assume it's true. The interesting thing is we've discovered in the last few years, that's not actually the case, humans are not afraid of change, what we're afraid of is loss. And so the moment change is associated with something we have to lose. That's when we dig our heels in. So as a manager or a leader, rather than trying to upsell the benefits of change less than the loss, how do you address or at least even acknowledge the losses that might be perceived from the people you're trying to persuade or communicate about the change and the three big losses we've got to be super careful about because these are the losses that tend to make people most shut down and rigid, a loss of certainty, a loss of power, and the loss of dignity. If the idea or the proposal or the suggestion that you're putting forward means there's even a perception that someone might lose one of those three things, that's when they dig their heels. And that's when the fear really kicks off. It's the fear of loss. And so sometimes it's as simple as showing how what you're suggesting as a change is not something that's a break from the past. But an

extension on the past things that you know, you're already doing this, or something very similar to this, you know how to do this because of x, y, and Zed. This is just about tweaking the way we apply that and just giving people that sense of this is a continuation, this is certainty, or you know, showing how they're not going to lose dignity in the sense that they're not going to be embarrassed if they don't know how to do this. And part of that is by you being upfront and showing that it's okay to sometimes not know how to do things because people will so often if there's not psychological safety, and they feel they could be laughed at or excluded, that's when they will step back. And they'll resist change at all costs are trying to make sure that people feel safe to change. And this is one of the challenges we often find is that for managers and leaders, if we're not careful, we give people no other place to stand, but not to say in order to change their mind, after we acknowledge they were an idiot in the past. And of course, if someone has to acknowledge that they were wrong in the past, in order to embrace something new, then their egos will resist that at all costs. And so one of the dynamics to be super aware of is the thing I refer to as psychological sunk cost. And most of us know about economics sunk cost, this idea of, you'll stick with a decision or a course of action that you know, isn't going to work out well. But there's been a better option come along, but you'll stick with the original one, because you've spent so much time and so much money already, you will see it through to the bitter end. And we let our past decisions rob us of our future benefit. Now the same thing happens psychologically, and as managers and leaders, we've got to be super aware of this, when it comes to your certain ways of operating and thinking mindset. So you've got people on your team, or perhaps people you know, that you're trying to influence up, who have got a degree of psychological sunk cost, they've got a way of operating that they've spent so much energy, so much their time invested in this way of doing things. And their ego might even be wrapped up in it their reputation, because they've been advocates of this certain way of doing things, you come along with what is objectively a better offer a better a better way, a better way to do things. It'll be faster, it'll be cheaper, cheaper, they will benefit from the change. But psychological sunk cost means that if there's the fear that by losing dignity, or power or the rest of it, that essentially there's something that will, they will lose in the process of change, they will stick with the original plan, the original way of doing things, because they've spent so much time energy reputation in it, even if deep down, they know that what you're suggesting is a better way. And so it's trying to figure out how do you allow people to change in a way that preserves their dignity and agency? How do you make him feel like they're not going to be embarrassed, but also that they're, they're in control of the change, ideally, make him feel like it was their idea. And that's always going to be a much safer option.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 18:33

I'm wondering if you have any stories of people kind of using some of these techniques and helping people feel that sense of agency and lack of certainty, being able to save their dignity and those moments, many stories from your work that you could share.

Michael McQueen 18:46

One from a few weeks ago, say I was speaking with a client and she tried some of the things we've been talking about from a workshop I'd run a few weeks earlier. And so one of the things that the research shows us about how to preserve dignity and create that sense of trust. And this is such a simple thing. Such a simple thing is if you want to do that don't sit opposite someone at a table, go for a walk. The reason being when you go for a walk side by side with someone, your cadence will eventually match there as you start to get in step you physically get in sync with that person. And a lot of that research about oxytocin over the years has showed that if you can match someone, physically oxytocin is released. So it's not just about telling stories that are vulnerable and self deprecating, physically matching them really helps. That's tricky, because sometimes you hear that advice that we should therefore match the body language, if they cross their legs, you cross your legs, and if they scratch their you scratch your ear, which always just feels very contrived and awkward to me. So but the guy has done most of the research around this stuff. A guy named Paul Zak, who's a doctor Professor based at Claremont University, and I was chatting with him recently he had said that one of the best things you can do to release oxytocin is go for a walk because of that matching vibe. And so I'll share with this client who, who is going to have an The next day a very difficult conversation with someone she knew was going to be resistant, and stubborn. And so she just said, rather than sitting opposite the table that had a few meetings already that had gone nowhere, they got out of the office, they just went for a quick walk together. And she said, the difference was extraordinary, because this person was so much more open, there's something about being in motion moving, that was helpful rather than sitting stationary, but also being side by side and matching that pace credited. Essentially, if you look at the research and mind mirror connection between those two individuals, and this other person was far more open to having an honest conversation. I mean, that didn't instantly change their mind. But there was a bond that was formed, that meant the trust, that foundation of trust meant that communication could be free flowing. And that's typically where influence and persuasion happens.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 20:43

That's like such a simple little thing that we can all all do right away, we can just invite someone to go for a walk on our team, instead of having to sit across them on a table on and instantly create a less defensive position. Are there other things that we can do to prime people for being more open or, or somehow kind of avoid triggering some of those instant defense mechanisms that flare up? And that that kind of the reaction of just like shutting down and not even being able to hear ideas?

Michael McQueen 21:18

Yeah, for sure. So I think one of the really good tools is also a tool assisted principle for life. And that is get really good at listening. I see so often, when managers and leaders go into conversations, particularly with people on their teams, with a really clear idea of what they're going to say. And if they say this, I'll say that and we've got all of our, all of our tactics worked out. And my encouragement is often have you actually taken the time to stop and really listen, like actually listen to where that person is coming from. And because the bottom line is people are listened to are more likely to listen. And if you go in with a posture of humility and openness, I want to understand your position, your position and genuinely understand, not just listen so that I can reply, but listen to fully engage the difference that can make in terms of defensiveness, if people feel seen and heard, it's amazing how they'll be far more open from that point onwards. And I remember reading some stuff from Oscar Trimboli, who has done some great research around deep listening. And it was such a simple thing. But I'd never thought of it before he said, Never overlooked the fact that the word lists the words listen and silent, are made up of the same letters and like, they are two, I've never even considered that. And yet there's something profoundly true in that do we? Do we give silence and space for people to to be heard, and also to hear themselves? Sometimes the most persuasive thing that any of us can do is speak out loud what we're thinking and then suddenly go, gosh, I can't believe I didn't even know I thought that that's actually that doesn't make much sense. And in that moment, you can't sort of jump in. It's like, Okay, gotcha. All right. Now, I'm going to show you why that's really crazy. Like, let people speak their own ideas out, expand on them. Interestingly, just asking questions that draws people out like I can, it's interesting. How would that look practically? I'm just curious if we just played that out? What would that look like if we put that across every department or you start to get people to expand their ideas, and it's amazing how the logic that underpins their assumption starts to crumble really fast. But if you give people space to speak out, and to speak out their ideas and extend on them, it's amazing how those logical fallacies start to emerge. And those are the moments where you can sort of get gets interesting. I can see where you might, where that might work in one area. But it may not work in others. I can you see that as well, like just asking the question starts to create a much more constructive conversation than going head to head arguing over what why your ways better than their way your perspective is better than their perspective. Because, again, for all of us, and this is a fundamental truth, whatever we think is right, we think is absolutely irrefutably true, you know, the human, the human brain wants to feel right. And in fact, feeling right feels good. And so the moment there's a sense that you're pushing back on what someone else thinks is right, and the truth is everything that we think makes sense to us, otherwise, we wouldn't think it. And so just saying that that's dumb, or how could you possibly think that? All it does is create a conflict at that point? So I think listening is such a simple but effective and important way of approaching any high stakes conversation.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 24:06

Yes, I Well, first, I have to give a shout out to Oscar Trimboli, who was on my podcast years ago. So everyone listening should scroll back in the feed and find it or check the show notes for it. And secondly, this idea of like, we can talk ourselves out of an idea better than someone else

can talk us out of it is really fascinating. And it's making me think of times where I've started something, and my colleagues can attest to this where I start saying, This is what I think and this is, and then I get to where we're gonna actually I don't think that scratch because because it's true, right? We are very good at identifying the our own places where our logic isn't sound, but as soon as somebody else starts questioning us, it's like, oh, no, I need to like prove that I'm right. And I think in the book, you talk about going into conversations, not with the mindset of trying to win, but from that mindset of just Try of trying to learn art. Can you say a little bit more about that before we have to wrap up?

Michael McQueen 25:05

Honestly, this is a stuff that personally, I've learned the hard way over the years because I grew up in a family of five boys where, and my parents were both scientific in their background. And so five boys, two scientists, parents, like it was every mealtime was a debate, and it was trying to one up the other person and win the argument. And so that was sort of my fat, our founding or foundational experience growing up, which made for really robust conversations, but also sometimes sets up a dynamic that we see play out in so many spheres of life that is just not effective, this idea of seeing arguments as a battle or a war where the goal is to take ground at any cost to dominate the other party to tear down their arguments and leave them with no option but to raise the white flag of surrender. And the problem with that, and I remember coming across this and some great work from Andy Stanley, who's a leadership expert base, they're in the States, and he said, in any relationship, when one party wins, the relationship always loses. And so you know, you may have won that argument. But if you've if you've infringed on their dignity, if you made them feel like a fool, or you broken the bonds of trust, then have you really won. I think that's a really important thing for any of us. And so the methodology or the idea, the metaphor, I should say, that I use in the book to discuss constructive arguments is seen as a dance rather than a battle and how to dance is work, you get in sync with the other person you get in step with them, you give and you take, I mean, winning a battle is all about taking ground at all costs, you never want to lose ground. With dances, you take a step back at time, you allow the other person to lead just for a moment, then you get into a grid. And that's where something beautiful is created. Good arguments, good debates are a little bit like that. And sadly, we've seen over the last few centuries, debate become a very toxic, zero sum game, I'm gonna beat you at all costs approach. And all we've got to do is look around and see how toxic that has become and what it's bought out of human nature, the polarization, the tribalism, the fact that we're less able to come to the middle and talk and learn in the way that we're used to. And so I think the proofs in the pudding, that sort of approach, while it might get votes, for instance, it doesn't create a harmonious society. And if you're a manager or leader, there's not going to create a great vibe in your culture internally within a team either.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 27:14

Yeah, I can see. So clearly how that is important, especially if you are having to collaborate with peers across departments, right. And of course, you have the things that are most important to you. And they're going to have things most important to them, and you come into a meeting and you're like, we got to battle this out that that would be harmful to the relationships that you have with those colleagues you have to collaborate with, and probably not make you look so good in front of your boss, if you're, you know, dominating in that way. And I think the big idea or the metaphor of a dance raise, like we're partners in this right in the workplace, we're all partners, whether it's your team members, or your boss or colleagues, other departments, they are not our enemy. And we don't we're not trying to persuade them or convince them of things. Because we are right and they are wrong. And we have to fix this. It's we're partners, we're trying to get to the best solution and the best outcome for everyone involved and for the business as a whole. So I love that metaphor. Quickly, before we wrap up. I'm wondering if you can share one more tip for like persuading the person on your team who just is like, they just don't, they're just not buying and maybe it's a new strategy that's being rolled out. Maybe it's some other kind of change. And you just you're trying to get them to buy into this because they're going to have to be part of it, whether they want to or not. Any any thoughts on trying to move those people who are just super stuck?

Michael McQueen 28:35

Yeah, I think one of the best tools that I've come across in the in the clinical world, this is a tool called motivational interviewing. So easing to specific questions, because questions are really powerful. I remember reading recently, this notion that smart people give good answers, wise people ask good questions. And so as a manager or a leader, how do you get better at asking? Just really good questions. And so this is a question asked, asking methodology that, if you look from a clinical perspective has been tracked for about three or four decades, it is the most statistically reliable way to change someone's beliefs about themselves. And also their behavior. Particularly, they've done a lot of research around drug abuse, alcohol abuse, and how effective this is in those environments. And so the two questions at the core of this this approach? First one is a set from one to 10, how likely or willing would you be to and then fill in the blanks, you ask someone literally give a score out of 10? How willing are open that are to an idea or project and initiative that you want to suggest for them to consider. And if you're dealing with someone who's stubborn, typically, they'll give you a low number, they'll give you a three or a four. And then the second question, this is where the magic happens. You get Okay, cool. You know, whatever the number is, that's cool. I'm just curious. Second question, how can we didn't give a lower number just then. And what that does is it instantly reframes the issue because now it's not about all the reasons they don't want to do what you're suggesting, and all the arguments against it. Now it's looking at the maybe the small part of them it might only be a very small part of medicine. He thinks there is merit, there's value in what you're suggesting. And that's what you're starting with. And the conversation can go from there. And so that simple approach, I mean, you've got to do this in a way that doesn't feel too technique. Like if, you know, how many conversations do we have where it's not awkward, okay, so tell me a scale of one to 10, you know, hey, we got to make this conversational. But the principles behind this is you got to get

people to a point where they can acknowledge that it's even just a part of them. Even if it's only a small part of the things, what you're suggesting is a good idea. Start there, rather than focusing on all the reasons they don't like your suggestion, or would be resistant to the change you're proposing. Start with where they might find this battle of value and benefit and build from that point.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 30:38

Oh, my gosh, that is like 100% opposite of what I've done my entire life. Right, where I go, like, Okay, what what is wrong with this idea? Tell me all the reasons. So I can tell you why you're wrong. Yeah, starting there. Like, why is this idea not terrible, right? What what is there a value here is a completely different starting point. And I can see how that would just totally shift the direction of the conversation from the very start. So

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 31:02

Before we officially wrap up here, can you tell us about a great manager that you worked for, and what made this person such a fabulous boss?

Michael McQueen 31:10

Actually, I can. And the reason I can and this is only front of mine, because on Saturday, we had a reunion with a group of people I worked with 20 years ago, I haven't seen a them for probably 18 or 19 of those years. But this was my very first job when I moved to Sydney, from regional Australia. So like pivotal time, they were like family, for me, when I first got new no one, it was my first full time job, post university or college. And so we had this reunion and sitting around the table, what I noticed is that there was such a sense of community, even 18 to 20 years on since we'd seen each other and the manager who had met who headed up that team at the time, I said, You know what, this is real credit to you. This doesn't happen by accident that 20 years on, people want to get back together again, and have the manager of that team in the room at the table. And so what he had done was create, through often shared experiences, we did a lot of travel together as a, as a software marketing teams, we had to do rollout. So we'd go on the road, and he would go to great lengths to make experiences that that bonded us as a team was a lot of fun celebrating of milestones, there are only very simple things, but it created that sense of family that, you know, the proof was in the pudding again. And 20 years later, there was that sense of everyone wanted to be back together again, I think that was such a good example. Even just from the weekend just gone, of seeing what happens when a good manager creates that sense of team, and belonging are those social bonds that are a really meaningful.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 32:29

Wow, sounds like so much fun. And what a fun reunion to have. Yeah, it was great. And where can people learn more about you tell us about your book and where people can find it all that jazz.

Michael McQueen 32:38

The website for the book. So [Mindstuck](#) is the name of the book, and it's on all the websites and in all stores. But probably the best place to go would be [MichaelMcQueen.net](#). And so MichaelMcQueen.net, you'll find resources, blog posts, details about the book. Social media wise, I'm on all the platforms, even TikTok, I have a Gen Z who's like encouraging me to get on to TikTok so I'm doing that. But um, the main one for me is LinkedIn. So if you look for me on [LinkedIn](#), that typically is where I'm sharing content video pieces daily, so that'd be probably the best way to connect.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 33:12

Fabulous. Well, thank you again, Michael's so, so fun to learn from you. And I definitely have things that I'm going to do differently going forward now.

Michael McQueen 33:20

Lovely, thank you. It's been great to chat.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 33:21

Michael is providing members of Podcast Plus access to an exclusive mini masterclass. In this video series, Michael shares practical insights from mastering the art of changing stubborn nines. The series includes five videos with titles such as what we got wrong about being right. And it takes two questions to change your mind. And in the extended interview, Michael shares how we can keep people open to hearing ideas without triggering their defense mechanisms, as well as one easy technique for helping people see things differently. To get this guest bonus, the extended interview, episode guide, and much more become a member of Podcast Plus at [themodernmanager.com/more](#). All the links are in the show notes and they can be delivered to your inbox when you subscribe to my newsletter. Find that at [themodernmanager.com](#) Thanks again for listening. Until next time.

