

Episode 307: How to Make the Transition Into a Manager Role with Eric Girard

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Mamie Kanfer Stewart 00:00

Going from being an individual contributor to a manager can be a daunting transition. And even if you've been a manager for years, it's not always easy to know if you have truly embraced that manager mindset. And that's why I spoke with today's guest who specializes in just that. Today's guest is Eric Girard. Eric is CEO of Girard training solutions and author of Lead Like a Pro, The Essential Guide for New Managers. He has over 30 years of experience helping improve the performance of managers and employees. He specializes in the development of new managers focusing on their successful transition into their new role, and on the team management skills that they need to be successful. Eric and I talk about the key skills and mindset shifts that new and not so new managers need to be successful in building strong, thriving teams. Plus in the extended interview available to members of podcast plus, Eric shares a new way to use a SWOT analysis to help yourself and your team become even better. Now, here's the conversation.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 01:00

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 01:23

Thank you so much for joining me today, Eric, super psyched to have you I just finished reading your book. And like there's just so much that new managers need help with. And I'm glad that I found a kindred spirit. And you are someone who is trying to help new managers be successful in this role that so many of them get thrown into without expectations of like an app the support and without the training that they really need to thrive. So thanks for coming.

Eric Girard 01:52

Oh, I am thrilled to be here. Thank you.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 01:53

So why don't we start with? What do you see as some of that biggest challenges that new managers face? So when they're first promoted? Or are they you know, get a new job and managers in their title? What are some of the first challenges that they run into, in this new kind of role?

Eric Girard 02:13

In my experience, what I see happening a lot is a new manager will, will get promoted. So for example, I was promoted over my team, I worked with a team of three, and then I was promoted over them, or folks come in, and it's like, hey, congratulations, now you're a manager. And in my case, and what I see happening in other people's cases is they don't make that psychological transition, that transformation from I was an individual contributor paid to perform tasks to, I am now a manager responsible for getting results through people. And a lot of folks want to kind of fall back to what they were good at. Right? So you know, I was a great program manager. So I kept falling back into a program manager role, and ignored my team, to my detriment and to theirs. That's probably number one is folks are like, well, listen, I was a great financial analyst, or I was a great engineer. That's what got me promoted. It's my double down on that. And that causes real problems with the team.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 03:11

Oh, my gosh, I feel like that's not just for new managers, like the problem that so many managers continue to face in an ongoing way, when there's so much safety that comes from doing the thing that you know, you're good at. And now you're not supposed to do that thing. But it's really hard. It's really hard not to.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 03:31

I'm wondering, specifically related to this kind of like mindset shift, what's getting in the way of kind of entering and saying, Okay, now I have to be responsible for these people? Or is there something that you can pinpoint? Or, or just unpack that's like, are we not? I don't know, like, why aren't we just like jumping into the new manager roles and be like, great, I have a team now like, this is wonderful. I have all these people who will do all the work for me.

Eric Girard 03:58

Well, what I see happening a lot is folks will say, look, it's I can do it faster, and I can do it better if I just do it myself. And so there's a fantastic article by the Harvard Business Review called Who's Got the Monkey? And it was published in 1974, I believe, and then republished in the 90s. So it's got real staying power. And in it, the authors say, you know, imagine that, that your team, your direct reports are walking around, and they've got a squawking monkey sitting on their shoulder. And it needs to be fed and taken care of, and all the things that you have to do with a living creature, and they don't want it anymore. So they walk up to you and they say, Hey, I've got this problem. Will you help me with it, and then they hand the monkey to you. By the end of the day, your team is able to go home scot free, no worries, because, you know, they handed off all their tasks to you, and you're laden down with 20 screeching monkeys. So my mantra for that is accept no monkeys don't. Don't take other people's problems. Just because you are an expert in financial analysis, or whatever it is, doesn't mean that you need to be the dispenser of all wisdom regarding that. Learning how to be a good coach and learning how to ask questions to get people thinking on their own, is hugely important for new managers and experienced managers alike. Say, you know, well, what would you do if I wasn't here? Chances are when you when you throw the ball back in their court like that, not to mix metaphors. But you know, when you when you hand the monkey back and say, What would you do? If I wasn't here? Chances are, your team member knows what to do, where they have a decent idea, and you can work off of that, rather than just letting them hand you the monkey in there. Now they're completely rid of it. You know what I'm saying?

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 05:48

Yeah, oh, my gosh, what a fabulous metaphor. And it really reinforces that, right? Just because we have expertise, and we may even enjoy doing that work. And as you said, feel like we can do it faster. And we can just jump right in and solve a problem and put out the fire, that we have these team members who are handing us their problems. And we might be inclined to accept them because we can so managers are supposed to do and what you're saying is like, no, that's not your job, your job is not to fix their problems, to jump in and save the day and to get your hands into the work and take it over. But your job is to coach them so that they can get the job done. I that's like, so helpful.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 06:28

Okay, so what do we do then to help coach because that's not a skill that most of us have had practice doing or have training in? So what does it really mean to coach someone to be able to navigate their own challenges?

Eric Girard 06:41

For coaching, I love the GROW Model. So GROW is a really common acronym. It stands for goals, reality options, and way forward, or what will you do? And so this can be used in a couple of different directions. So let's say you, as my employee come to me and say, Hey, I've got this problem, I can't figure out this this data, what should I do about it? Then I can start saying, hey, let's let's talk about it. So you want to talk about this data that you're having trouble with? How are things right now? So what's what's the reality of the situation? What have you already tried? What options you know, have you tried or what could you do? And then after you have that discussion, you realize, oh, wait, we need to go back and revise the goal. So you can go backwards, the GROW Model is not linear, but you eventually get through goals, reality options, and way forward. And the way forward is the action plan for the employee to go get the thing done. So I would use the GROW Model first. Secondly, I would ask the good journalistic questions that we grew up with in school, who, what, when, where, why, how. So just asking lots of really good open ended questions. And then lastly, I would encourage every budding coach, or even experienced coach to read Michael Bungay Stanier, his book, The Coaching Habit, fantastic book, he comes up with seven questions that can be used in any order to move a coaching conversation along so that you don't wind up walking around with 20 monkeys on your back.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 08:07

I love that. And I want to give an extra support for that book. It's fabulous, fabulous insights in there. And very practical. Okay, so we are shifting from don't take anybody monkeys don't take their monkeys, let them hold their own monkeys coach them. Definitely no monkey handle it, except no monkey. That's like the number one thing take that away everyone who's listening, except no monkeys.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 08:31

Okay, so we're coaching people through challenges, what are what's another one of the skill sets that we win or mindset shifts that we need to take on to really live well in this new role called manager.

Eric Girard 08:46

Another thing I talk about in my book is how important delegation is. And it goes hand in hand with what we just talked about. So not only are we not accepting any monkey's, we're not

accepting any new tasks. But we're also thinking thoughtfully about who can I delegate to, and it may not be the person who has the most expertise, it may be the person who needs to develop in this area. Or it might be the person who I can trust to make good decisions, who might have almost zero expertise, but will make good decisions. So you can develop your team by delegating. And you can do yourself a huge favor and actually go home at five or knock off at five, by delegating off things that you like. And there's real grieving that comes with this as well. Because for example, when I started your our training solutions, I was going to be a solopreneur. I was going to do all the things I was going to design, develop deliver the programs, I was going to create the custom slide decks, I was going to do the facilitation, I would do the business development and the sales and all the things right. And one of the things I really enjoyed was playing with my website, and I love tinkering with that thing, but it got too much. And I started making mistakes and kind of messing it up. And so the first thing I did was hire an old friend of mine who I worked with 15 years ago, and asked her if she would be my webmaster. And not only did she knock it out of the park as a webmaster, but she also has a significant background in graphic design and instructional design. So she's been getting more and more work, which is good for her pocketbook. And it's also good for my sanity. So you can develop people, you know, Delegate small and then grow over time as people earn your trust and show you what they can do. And your life gets better. So that's the next thing, I would really focus on his delegation.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 10:33

Oh, my gosh, delegation, it's so tricky. And I actually had a very similar experience with my own journey as a solo entrepreneur, wanting to do everything because I liked it all. And I thought I could do it all and then realizing that I couldn't do it all. And that sometimes the things that we like doing are not necessarily the best use of our time. And that when you delegate, right, you free up your time to do the things that are unique for you. And you let somebody else do something that maybe you couldn't do it better. But they can also do it perfectly fine. And that's actually okay. As a hard, that was a hard lesson for me to learn.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 11:10

And I feel like with delegation, right there, it's scary. You just talked about the trust piece of it, can you say a little more about how managers can, especially if you're new into a team, and so you don't have long standing relationships, you don't know what your team members skill sets are, to kind of build that trust so that you can delegate and not micromanage and not worry and not jumping all the time. And really, truly like delegate effectively.

Eric Girard 11:36

The trick to building trust is to build relationship in my point of view. So if you want to trust somebody, you need to get to know them. So there's knowing and liking people, so that you then eventually trust them. And so I love Patrick Lencioni, his book, The Five Dysfunctions of a Team I use, I use that as a source in my book, and really spending some time thinking about how can I get to know these people on beyond just a surface level beyond just the name rank, serial number kind of level? So asking, you know, really deep questions around, who are these people, and where are they from, and what matters to them, and what's important to them, digging deep into their background, you know, so learning more about where they came from, and how they grew up in their field, you can do that individually, you can do that in a group setting, you can do fun things that that are kind of low stakes, like bowling is a great equalizer, because you know, there might be one person who actually knows how to bowl, the rest of the team is there just for laughs. So if you go to a decent bowling alley that's got like food and other distractions and things like that, you can quote, bowl, but really, you're there to hang out and get to know each other a little bit. And so there's food and there's drinks and people are talking, that's a great way to break down barriers. So so little, little things like that, that don't cost a lot that are complicated, can go a long way. And then finding ways to recognize people as well. So early, early in the career early in your career, as a manager, find ways to catch people doing something, right, and call that out and do something and it doesn't have to cost a lot of money. You know, it could be just a handwritten thank you note or a \$10 Starbucks gift card, it doesn't have to be that big of a deal.

Eric Girard 13:18

So for example, let me tell you a story about how one of my managers started off with a really small, inexpensive thing to recognize us. And it turned into something bigger than he had had really ever imagined. Do want to hear the story. So absolutely. In 2000, I'm gonna say 2003. Jeff took over our team. Our team had been beaten up pretty badly by the previous manager. And so he was working really hard to kind of rebuild our sense of worth and self esteem. And one day he walks into our weekly meeting, we had a weekly staff meeting he walks in, is carrying this little stuffed gorilla. There's this little black stuffed gorilla. And we're like, Jeff, what's with the gorilla? He says, Everybody I'd like to meet Stanley. Stanley is going to be our Totem. And we will compete for Stanley. So every week, I will check my email and see who of your internal customers because we're all an internal training team who of your internal customers was surprised or delighted or thrilled with something you did? And if I hear about it, then I will award Stanley to you for the week and you can show off Stanley and it's kind of like a big deal to us. We know that if you got Stanley did something good. And it'll just be something we pass around to kind of keep keep that sense of esprit de corps kind of going in our team. So I said okay, fine. I'm gonna get Stanley as much as I can. So I really worked hard to delight my customers. I had Stanley a lot and he would sit on my bookshelf and greet people that came into my office and you know get having Stanley was not guaranteed like he wasn't paying Astra round in a circle like you had to earn Stanley, so we were all like working really hard to delight our customers to earn Stanley. So fast forward a little bit. I've had Stanley a few times my team members have had Stanley a few times. And I was diagnosed with metastatic testicular cancer, and it almost

killed me. So I'm in Stanford and Stanford Medical Center in Stanford, California. I'm in a in a hospital room. Jeff comes in. He's holding Stanley, he says the team and I talked and we want you to have Stanley permanently. So in my drug addled state, I'm hooked up with all kinds of meds, all I could do is kind of land back on the politico, Stanley, and then I fall back asleep. But when I woke up, Stanley was in the room. So Stanley stuck with me for years, and I took them to different jobs, and he always had a pride of place, I'm gonna put them away. Fast forward again, I get married, and I have twins. And when they hit about three, I brought Stanley out. And I told the story of Stanley and how important he was. And the girls just glommed on to Stanley, and they made them close, you know, and they, they played with them all the time. And so they played with him for years, and we still haven't he's put away in our storage area, and we'll pull them out when it's time for them to hand them off to their kids. So go all the way back to the beginning, Jeff probably spent \$15 on this stupid stuff, gorilla, right. And now think about all the law, the lives that Stanley has touched. And you know how much he meant. So if you can go and come up with a tradition or something that costs very little or no money, that means something genuine to your people, then that's a great way to build trust, it's a great way to build respect and esprit de corps, and get your team performing really quickly.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 16:47

I love Stanley, I love the idea of Stanley. And it is it feels like it hits on so many of the pieces that teams need, right? Like there's the element of appreciation, right recognition for someone who has delivered, you know, kind of not necessarily hugely above and beyond, but really like done what you all are aiming to do. And that's awesome. And then there's this element of cultural building, right? Like Stanley don't mean something unique to your team that is really special and gives you something to bond over, which is to that trust piece and the relationships piece, which is so beautiful. I love that. Mike, how do we do a virtual Stanley way that we can co live with?

Eric Girard 17:30

Yeah, there's absolutely got to be.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 17:33

There must be, there must be.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 17:35

I want to shift a little bit because you talked about are we mostly what we've been talking about so far is really like as an individual. And I know in your book, you talk about the stages of team formation. And I feel like that, in my experience is like another area where managers get really stuck because they're not only responsible now for their own work, the one on ones they have directly, right the relationship they have with each individual and trying to really support and optimize that individual, but also now this group, that they have the advantage of multiple people who have their own relationships and their own interactions. And can you talk a little bit about the approach for it kind of managing the group of people that managers are now responsible for too?

Eric Girard 18:22

Oh, yeah, yeah. I would love to. Bruce Tuckman in the 50s. I think it was 1956 wrote an article where he laid out what we now know as the Tuckman Model of Team Development. And for my book actually dove into the archives and found the original articles. So this thing, you know, is imagined a scholarly article written in the 50s. It's pretty interesting reading. But he talks about four stages. And when I'm done saying them, you'll already understand the model. So a team goes through four typical stages, forming, storming, norming, performing. And then in the 70s, he came up with a fifth stage called the journey, but I stick with just the core four. So you already understand what this model means, right? So you got a team that's coming together, they're excited, they're ready to go, but they don't know what they don't know they're forming. Then the personalities start to clash people's personalities and workstyle preferences. And this is the way we need to do it. Now. This is the way we need to do it. And maybe I don't like you so much. There storming. A manager's job is to manage through storming to let the team know, hey, this is all this is going to happen. You can share this with your team. This is going to happen when we get to storming. It's okay. We're just not going to park there, we're gonna keep moving, then the team starts to start to crawl out of that trough and starts to perform a little bit better. They start to get along a little bit better. Now. They're norming. And then when they're hitting on all cylinders, everything is humming along. The team is performing. And the good news is the team is rocking it by this point. It may take a little while to get there but they finally do just just start to knock it out of the park, that's the good news.

Eric Girard 20:02

The bad news is the teams that are performing often get poached. So that's just something to watch out for as a manager, it's like, how do you keep your high performers? Well, there's two schools of thought. The first is some managers will want to keep their high performers on their team and not let them leave. Great managers will groom their high performers to go off and do new things, start new teams, go do new stuff. And then you just you continue the cycle of building these high performers, letting them go through the four stages. So that's just a high level overview. Do you want to go deeper in any of those are what we're trying to do?

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 20:35

Yeah, I would actually love if you have any practical tips or tricks for kind of how to spot we kind of talked a little bit about how to spot what stage you're in. Especially, I mean, my experience has been like, it's not so linear, right? And so like, you can kind of be going into different stages at different moments, because things change in the environment, things change on your team, right? So it kind of how do you spot what stage you're in? And then what are some of the tips and tricks for navigating through that stage so that you don't get stuck in storming forever? And you can really get from norming into high performing and not kind of get lost in the norming processes.

Eric Girard 21:12

You Yeah, so with forming, we're looking at two things, we're looking at competence and commitment teams, a team's level of competence, how well they can do the thing, do the task, and commitment, how committed each person is to actually getting it done. So informing your spotter team, it's informing where they're all pretty excited. So their commitment to the team is usually pretty high. But they don't know what they don't know. So their competence is fairly low. But they're like, Okay, new team, new opportunity, let's get it done. So typically they're come, their commitment is fairly high. Then we get into storming, we're building competence. So that's actually coming up, because we're starting to understand what the work is and how we need to get it done. So the team is fairly competent at this point. But their commitment is down to the lowest point, because they're aggravated, they're irritated. So that's what I would be looking for is what's the sentiment of the team. Then as we go into norming, both competence and commitment are coming up. They're not at their highest points, but they're definitely coming up. Commitment, especially is on the upswing. And so this is where the team is starting to gel a little bit. Okay, they're not, they're not doing as well as you would like yet. But they're certainly a lot better than they were two weeks ago, when they were storming. And then finally performing boom, both both items are high, high, high competence, high commitment. So those are just some snipe, some snapshots you can be looking for. And then ways to manage, especially managing through storming is to let people know, first off what to expect. So explain the model to them, I would encourage you to share the whole model with them and say, Okay, this is this is what we can expect to have happen. And letting people vent letting people talk privately, I think is useful. Just you know, I'm really frustrated and really aggravated, but x, you know, let people vent, and that's okay. And then also let them know, like, Okay, so let's use our coaching skills. And let's ask questions. What can you do about that? Because I'm not taking that monkey from you. But what can you do about it in order to move on to the next thing? How can you help solve the problem? How can you be part of the solution? It's okay, that you feel this way. And I'm gonna let you be this way for a little while. But you need to come up with a solution and an answer to it.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 21:36

I love that. I love that. Like that. Once again, it's like, don't take the monkey, and coach people through it. Just the recurring thing of as a manager, there's me lots of monkeys coming your way, and you just don't want to let them get transferred.

Eric Girard 23:49

If I'm, if I'm overdoing it on the monkeys in the coaching, let me know.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 23:52

No, no, I love it. And I think these are the kinds of things that like the visual model of the monkey plus, of course, Stanley, right, like, show appreciation, make sure that you're you're giving praise, right, like we have our two monkeys, we have the monkeys that we need to give the gorillas we need to give and the monkeys that we need to not take. So I think it's a fabulous mental image that we're you're creating for us right here with this storming norming. Right, we were just kind of saying that, like, at least my experience, again, has been that it's so iterative, because you have a new team member come in and you were high performing. And now you're kind of like, we got to figure out what's going on with this person, right? Or you have a person leave, or something changes out in the context of the business and now your goals have been shifted. And so you got to do some different things and you thought you were doing and it can kind of throw people off. And I feel like that gets into the responsibility around managing change that you also talked about in your book. So could you maybe tell us a little bit about kind of what what is our role and how do we help our teams through some of those disruptive moments and really support the change that's happening?

Eric Girard 25:00

And I would absolutely say that change is really important to be good at as a manager. And it's something that you want to master quickly the ability to spot where you're at personally in the change curve and where your team is. So I talked about two different models in in my classes, and you get to pick your favorites. So I'm going to explain both of them. And you pick the one you like, the bridge has changed model is simpler. And it's as simple as saying, okay, there is an ending, so something is ending. And people tend to resist endings, they don't like letting go of the unknown, they don't like letting go of the known. So imagine a trapeze, and they're hanging on and everything is fine. And then they come into the neutral zone, and they let go that trapeze and they're flying toward the next one, but they can't see the next one yet. And so that neutral

zone is a very uncomfortable spot to be. And this is where people tend to freak out a little bit, it's like, you know, that the known is gone. And the the next thing isn't here yet. And I don't like this. So that tends to get very, very wonky for people. And then Beginnings is where we can see when things are starting to get complete, the changes started starting to become complete, we start to feel better about how things are going, we start to get into new routines, new rhythms. And so the old the old stuff is past, the past is complete. And now we are on to moving forward in this new paradigm that we're in. So the bridge has changed model is endings neutral zone and beginnings. Then we've got the Kubler Ross change curve, which is based on Elisabeth Kubler Ross, his work on grief, and death and dying. But I use a much greatly simplified version of that, where we have denial resistance, exploration and commitment. And again, just like with the previous model that I mentioned, because I said this four things, now you have an idea of how the model works. So we've got people denying that the change is going to affect them denying that it's going to work resistance, because humans resist change. We were wired for consistency, and humans often don't like change. exploration was like, well, maybe I could try they dip their toe in the pool of this new thing that's coming. And then finally commitment where they're like, Okay, I'm bought in. And just like with the Tuchman model, I would say share this model with your team, explain it, say this is this is going to happen, and it's okay. And you're allowed to vent, you're allowed to be upset for a little bit, just don't park there. So that's another recurring theme for you know, you're allowed to get irritated at this change that's coming along. Let's just go into a quiet room by ourselves. And you can talk it through. And then we'll, I'll ask you some questions to see how we can move you along. So if you had to pick one of those two models, which one would you prefer?

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 27:55

I love them both. I don't know why, why do I need to pick? Can I use them?

Eric Girard 27:59

You know, it's actually I'm kind of doing a little market testing here right now. Because as it turns out, in some of my classes, folks are like, I'm overwhelmed. There's too many models, like I use a lot of models. And so one of the easiest places to trim is to trim back one of the to change models. But if you think they're both good, I'll leave them anybody asked, I'll say, okay, mainly said that they're both good.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 28:22

I like them both for different reasons, right? I think the emotional experience of grief and up through to commitment and resistance to commitment is super helpful as a manager to think about the emotional experience that someone is going through, that can be completely

irrational, right? Like the change could be a really good change. And still, most people are going to go through some variation of that change curve. And you need to be empathetic towards that you need to be receptive of that. And you can't expect people, especially if you, as a manager have been brought into a process earlier, and you kind of have Ted time to get to a place where you feel good about the change, to now expect that your colleagues immediately are going to jump to that same point that you are without having the time to process it. So I feel like that's such an important mental model or framework. And then the the bridge model, I think is also really important and that we are having to let go, right? Any change can even good changes, you have to let go of what was the past, right? This is a departure from that shoreline. And we're when you're on the bridge, right? You're in a place that is unknown and uncomfortable. You're not yet where you're gonna be. And you're also not yet on the solid ground from where you are. And that that is its own journey that people have to traverse. And I think that acknowledging that that experience of the kind of messy middle phase is also really important as a manager. And then you know, once you get to the other shore line right now, things can get sold down as you're discovering and that's its own thing. So, I like them for different reasons, because they they give managers different kinds of they have ways of thinking about what it is that their team members are experiencing and what it is that they need to do to help support their teams.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 30:05

So all right, all that being said, we have to wrap up. Can you please tell us about a great manager that you work for? And what made this person such a fabulous boss?

Eric Girard 30:15

Yeah. So I've already mentioned Jeff. But before Jeff was Brent, Brent was my first remote manager ever. And he was my first ever manager in Silicon Valley in 1999. And he lived about three hours away from headquarters where I was working, so he worked in an office south of me, and would come up every week or two to check in, and all of that he did a couple of things that were pretty good. I mean, the first is he on boarded me in person. So he made sure that he was in the office showing me around and introducing me to people and getting me oriented. So that was in person. And then during the week, in between visits, he was on the phone with me several times a day. So this is before slack and all of that, but he would just pick up the phone and call me Hey, how's it going? How you doing? Not to look over my shoulder not to micromanage but genuinely like, I'm just curious, how are you doing? Because I sat right outside the door of his boss. So he wanted to make sure she wasn't running roughshod over me. But it was just it was a great way to build relationship because we would chat 510 minutes, how's it going, how's things what's going on? And it was really, it worked really well to build relationships so that then when he would come up to visit, we could chitchat for a couple of minutes and then just sit down and go to work and work on whatever project. We're, we're we were working on that week. So that was, that was a great thing that he did. But here's

something that made him stand out. In 2001, my mom was diagnosed with metastatic lung cancer, so a little cancer in my family. So my mom had lung cancer. And of course, I needed to be with her at the hospital. So Brent's, like, okay, sure, go to the hospital. So I would go to the hospital, but then I would come back to work. And then Brent would shoo me away, like stuff that go go be with your mom. And then I would come back, you know, like I just I was in deep, deep denial, and I just kept coming back to work thinking that that would help somehow. So he sat me down and said, Look, you need to be with your mother, you need to be with your family, go be with them. We got work, we got you don't worry about it. They have your laptop at home, we got you. Okay, so I went back to the hospital. And I stayed there. And my sister and I were the only ones in the room when she finally passed. And that was a huge blow. It was very, very difficult, very emotional. And Brent caught wind of that. And he says, Okay, you do what you need to do, don't worry about work, we got it. Then he sends out an email to the entire team, which was very, fairly large, since I've been an email to the whole team and says, Hey, Eric, George mother just passed, let's please lean in, and help out to pick up his tasks so that he doesn't have to worry about it. And I'd really appreciate it if you'd say a little prayer for him. So he didn't do a lot. He didn't say a lot, you know, mainly it was shooing me away. And then a quick five minute conversation to keep me at the hospital. And then a quick three line email. But that meant so so much to me that years later, like that was in 1999. And it's 2024. And Brent still very important to me. So those are the kinds of things that that great managers do is they fly air cover for their team. They show genuine care and empathy. And they do everything they can to help you manage life so that you can when you come back to work, you're ready to go. So I just, I think the world of bread, and I hope that everybody experiences manager like him at one point in your career. Amen.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 33:43

That sounds good. Sounds amazing. Yeah. And where can people learn more about you and get a copy of your book?

Eric Girard 33:51

Yeah. So you can find me on LinkedIn. I'm [Eric P. Girard](#) on LinkedIn. My website is girardtrainingsolutions.com. And my book [Lead Like a Pro. The Essential Guide for New Managers](#) is on Amazon.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 34:04

Amazing. Thank you so much, Eric. So fun to talk with you today. And just thanks for being here.

Eric Girard 34:10

Absolutely. Thank you for having me.

Mamie Kanfer Stewart 34:12

Eric is giving away four signed copies of his book [Lead Like a Pro](#). This book is your roadmap to becoming a successful manager people will want to work for members of Podcast Plus can enter the drawing by June 5. Plus, members get the extended interview where Eric shares a new way to use a SWOT analysis to help yourself and your team become even better. To get this guest bonus and many more, become a member 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. You can also subscribe to my channel on YouTube, [The Modern Manager](#), where you can listen and watch every interview. Thanks again for listening. Until next time.