

Healthy Building and Workplace Wellness with Jeff Hochberg Transcript

00:02

Introduction

Welcome to Green Building Matters, the original and most popular podcast focused on the green building movement. Your host is Charlie Cichetti, one of the most credentialed experts in the green building industry and one of the few to be honored as a LEED fellow. Each week, Charlie welcomes a green building professional from around the globe to share their war stories, career advice, and unique insight into how sustainability is shaping the built environment. So settle in, grab a fresh cup of coffee, and get ready to find out why. Green Building matters.

00:33

Charlie

Hey, everybody, welcome to the next episode of the Green Building Matters podcast. Once a week, I get an interview with a Green Building and sometimes wellness real estate professional. That's what I've got today. And I've got Jeff Hochber here. He's in the Tampa Bay area, down in Florida, but he's got a storied career here with all kinds of amazing companies of all sizes, even some very large corporations. He's got a lot of experience around, well, around healthy buildings, healthcare. Can't wait to unpack his career story. Jeff, how are you doing today?

01:06

Jeff

Doing great, Charlie.

01:07

Charlie

Good to see you. I love our growing relationship here over the last several months, and I'm excited to have you on the podcast. What I like to do is

start with that kind of origin story. Jeff, where did you grow up and end up going to college?

01:22

Jeff

I grew up, Charlie, in the Chicago area suburb of Chicago out southwest, and went off to college. My undergraduate was down at Rice University down in Houston, Texas. My initial degree, my undergraduate degree was physical education. But along the way there met two folks at professors that are considered kind of mentors to me, Dale Spence and Jimmy Dish. Doctor Spence was into exercise physiology, which I was not familiar with, but was pretty excited about. Doctor Dish was kinesiology, the study of human movement. And that was back before the day of we do all the types of sensory movement testing, anatomical testing on athletes today to really help them fine tune their craft. This was a little bit before that, but the beginning of it so got my degree there.

02:19

Jeff

They both encouraged me to go on to graduate school, which I did at the University of Arizona in the human performance lab, and got my masters in exercise physiology. So kind of came out of that degree and chose the path to go into community based wellness, hospital based wellness, physical therapy, cardiac rehab, kind of that trilogy of services that oftentimes were combined. And that's where I got my start for my career back in Fort Worth, Texas, St. Joseph's Hospital, which is no longer there but was a. Was a great little place to start a career.

02:56

Charlie

Oh, man, I love that. Obviously, like you said, the tide of Texas and rice, and as I understand it, you even went back and got a master's there and just kept kind of building on that physiology and just kind of getting into this

wellness world. So tell us a little more about early in that journey as we might not have had programs like well yet. How are those conversations going? I mean, were you working with companies, individuals, real estate, or. Not quite yet. How did you kind of get pointed towards maybe even wellness real estate eventually?

03:28

Jeff

Sure. That took a long time. Back in the time when I was coming out of graduate school, literally, there were seven corporations in the US that had wellness programs, actual wellness facilities. Most of them had those facilities because the CEO or CFO had a heart attack or had some medical situation, and they understood the risk of losing those people and what it not only meant to the longevity of the company, but the cost in trying to replace folks like that. So they put together little fitness centers right there at the corporate locations, and companies like Kimberly Clark and Southwestern bank and PepsiCo had those. But it wasn't mainstream by any means, as we know, corporate or employer based wellness today. Back then, Charlie, the science we had was the Framingham study. Framingham, Massachusetts, outside of Boston, had been tracking individuals for years, some 27,000 individuals, and tracking things like cholesterol and blood glucose and some of the more basic laboratory tests and tracking their health. What was the likelihood that they were going to develop heart disease down the road? So that was a science we had. We believed in it. We rolled up our sleeves and went out to tell our story. My focus was in the corporate world. I started out in hospitals, but focused on those hospital settings. How did we reach employers in our community and try to really preach the importance of taking care of their people, providing programs and support screenings for those folks so that they could better care for themselves. And so that was really the beginning of my approach to wellness well being. And really, that's kind of the direction my career went. I was in hospitals in Fort Worth and western Kentucky, down here in Florida, in St. Petersburg, Florida. And then I kind of felt like the decisions

and the money was coming from the health plan. So I kind of zigged my career and connected with Blue Cross Florida and got a role with them, helping to provide Blue Cross, providing wellness programming and screening and preventive care for their membership. So kind of went that way for a while, worked in the managed care and consulting around managed care industry, and tried to push it from that direction. Ultimately ended up within the corporate setting. Quest diagnostics. Everybody's familiar with Quest and thousands of small quest laboratory testing sites that are around our communities. But Quest had a little tiny division really focused on corporate wellness.

06:24

Jeff

And we called ourselves Little Q. And in our little queue division, went out to Fortune 100, Fortune 500 companies, and we sold them on the importance of doing, providing lab screenings for their workforce. And then my role is to go in afterward and kind of from the corporate perspective, look at the aggregate and say, what are the health trends in your organization? Where are there some challenges? Where have you got some things going really well? Where are some subsets of your workforce that you need to address benefits differently because cultural issues or regional issues are just truck drivers versus call center employees versus folks who worked in an office. So that was really kind of the trajectory of my career with a few fits and stops in between along the way. And that's what brought me eventually to, well, building sustainability, green building, well, building. So that's kind of the path that I took. A little bit different than many in the design industry and the green building industry kind of came at it from a long trip. A different direction.

07:40

Charlie

I love that because even in my career I really was doing one building at a time. But you gotta zoom out. You gotta think of the organizations. Even

while there's some mandates, say, for green buildings and certain countries and states and cities, it's also just the corporate sustainability mandates. But over here, corporate wellness mandates. It sounds like you were early in that when there were just seven or nine companies that really had that kind of program. I love this. It's giving everybody a peek into your foundation, and I can just hear the passion and the work you do. So I love to ask about mentors. Sometimes. Jeff, a mentor, is someone we have access to. Sometimes it's someone we look up to, but we really don't know. Are there some mentors that maybe helped you along the way, open some doors?

08:28

Jeff

Yeah, both of those professors that I mentioned earlier really were a great help to me. Even after I had left rice and gone on, I stayed in touch with them and really helped me kind of be aware of some areas career wise that were young, were kind of in the works, but maybe weren't there yet to help me kind of get that direction. There was another professor not at the school that I attended. Robert Patton, doctor Patton from North Texas State University in Denton, Texas, who really helped me a lot in my career, understand business, the business aspect. We came out of college like a lot of college students do, with the ideal, right. Wellness was the right thing to do. Companies should do it because it's the right thing to do.

09:17

Jeff

But we didn't get a lot of them, here's why it makes good business to do wellness. We didn't learn that in our classes. So at least back then. So that was a weakness on my part. It wasn't something I understood well. It was, come on, we believe in this. Let's go do it. But doctor Patton really helped me from a business perspective. He and my first boss in Fort Worth, Doctor Guyon, were both really great in helping me take that passion, as you described, and say, okay, but you've got to put good business sense behind

it. You have to put a value proposition behind this. That's what speaks to companies. Nobody disagrees that wellness is a good thing, but somebody's got to make a decision to spend some money on it. And so they were really, I think, very prominent in my development as a professional over the years.

10:16

Charlie

Love that man. Well, you're still in this wellness movement. We're going to talk about the present day in a minute, but one more look back on the highlight reel. What really stands out? What are some things you're really proud of so far and this journey work wise? Hey, you can sprinkle in some personal stuff. What's on the highlight reel, Jeff?

10:35

Jeff

Sure. Well I mentioned the zigs and zags as I was kind of explaining my career path. There was one piece I didn't talk about that I always think is probably some of the most valuable work, the most meaningful work that I did, and that was here in the Tampa Bay community. I had been invited from my corporate job to sit on a board of an organization called the Tampa Bay Alliance Small healthcare, not for profit in Tampa Bay. That pretty much had the mission to improve healthcare in Tampa Bay, which is kind of a big approach. And were small. We were funded a little bit here and there by pharmaceutical companies on some projects and this and that. But we really didn't have a direction and were running out of money.

11:22

Jeff

And on the board, they took me aside and said, hey, take six months and figure out whether or not we really have a reason to exist in this community, whether this community really needs another healthcare, not for profit. And if it does, what should we be doing? That was an exciting project, a

meaningful project, as it turns out. Not knowing where to start with that, I actually sat down with the existing board members, one to one, and just interviewed, what do we need? What does the Tampa Bay region need? And, Charlie, it was interesting because there was one common link between all of them. I mean, they all had lots of ideas, but there was one common link, and that was finding some way to provide better access to health care for the population of Tampa Bay that works, but is not insured, the working uninsured. Let's see if that's really a problem. It turns out we were able to determine there were about 400,000 working uninsured folks in the Tampa Bay region. That seemed like a meaningful number. We understood what that meant to the strain on our emergency rooms, because that's where those folks would seek all types of care, usually not preventive care, usually not care at the start of an illness, but only when it got bad enough because they weren't insured. So having come from the hospital sector, I was a little bit familiar with how that worked.

12:50

Jeff

So we did kind of a national search, and this was back before the days of the Internet being as robust as it is today. So talking to people, we found two communities, Austin, Texas, and Portland, Oregon, who had really put together fabulous programs for their uninsured, but working population. We modeled after them. And they kind of told us that there were three things that we had to do if we were going to address it. One was to increase awareness of the problem. Corporate leaders needed to know, governmental leaders needed to know, political leaders needed to know that this was a problem, or there was no way we're going to pull them together and make it work. We were able to engage with the Robert Wood Johnson foundation, who had a project, they still have it called cover the uninsured Week, which is a week of media coverage and programs and awareness that they fund into communities, to pull together activities at community health centers and to create awareness. We were able to get funding from them and to start that process. And that was the conduit to

bring political leaders, governmental leaders, hospital system leaders, all together at a table and say, this is a problem, and here's some of some models of success. We were able to do that and became one of the designated locations for cover of the uninsured week Robert Wood Johnson. We were able to grab the sit down, the largest hospital system in the area, and listen to them as they explained how many people came to their emergency rooms who didn't have insurance and that's considered charity care. They have to provide the care, but these folks don't have a way to pay, and that's a burden on the community because we pay for that care ultimately. So we worked with them to design a screening system that they could deploy in their emergency rooms that with twelve questions they could identify a number of financial assistance programs like state Medicaid, but others too, that these folks were qualified for. But for some reason or combination of reasons, they weren't enrolled in. And so instantly they had coverage for their healthcare. And then the third part of that was to connect them to the community health centers.

15:13

Jeff

I don't know if you know, Charlie, but federally qualified health centers, FQHCs, they're in many communities all over rural and urban areas across the country, FQHCs get reimbursed at a much higher rate for the same care that an emergency room gets if they provide the care. Those are the rules behind Medicare and Medicaid. We were able to connect people to coverage, connect them to a primary care doctor at a federally qualified health center, community care in our community, which got them care before they needed an emergency room. And were able to bring funding into the community to provide that care. That was really an exciting project. We took those lessons and we made that all work. We put those pieces together. And so it was if I look back on, yes, they've been successes and things I'm proud of at all the different stops I've made, but maybe the most meaningful, maybe the most rewarding would have been that work there with Tampa Bay lines.

16:20

Charlie

Thank you for walking us through all that. Those are some amazing accomplishments. So let's get closer to kind of present day talk a little bit about some of the amazing credentials you have. I know we're looking to do some more work together on the WELL education lab. Let's get to that. But just kind of tell us what's going on with you. I know you've done some amazing work with the International Wealth Building Institute. You've got some other opportunities coming up. So, hey, what have you been doing recently? What's, what's going on in your world?

16:48

Jeff

As you know, like you say, we've been talking about working on a few things like that, but I've really been focusing my work right now in two areas. One is preparing the next generation, that next generation coming out of our colleges and our universities to understand what the importance of, well, building of healthy indoor space means, and that's design students, sustainability students, construction management students, public health students, cross the gamut. Right. Architecture students. I feel like Charlie, and we've had this conversation, a movement, the well movement. We call well, the well movement. A movement is only a movement once it transcends generations. If it starts and it ends in one generation, it is a trend. It was maybe something that was exciting. Some might call it a fading. But a movement has longevity. A movement can sustain itself. And so I feel like we have an obligation in the industry right now to be reaching down to the next level of professionals coming up in all of the various professional areas that touch on buildings and infrastructure and green buildings and community building and urban planning and design, all of those industries together and public health and really doing a good job to teach what well is about, why it's important. Why are investors really focusing on buildings that are certified? Why, what is ESG? What are all of

those things? So that they understand how it integrates to the specialty that they're going into architecture, design, sustainability, and the like. So that's something I've been working on, is looking at how do we build that up?

18:39

Jeff

How do we take the knowledge that we have and folks that are in the industry have and make sure we're handing it down, make sure we're giving back, make sure that we're paying it forward or whatever cliché you want to use so that the next generation comes through and the next. And every year there's more students coming out of schools going into these fields. How do we make that an integral part of their education? So that when they get into their jobs, they can see how it applies, and it becomes kind of almost a defaultly built in. So that's one piece that I'm really focused on. And then the second piece, obviously, my background coming from the health side, population health. One of the reasons I was really jazzed about, well, when I came across it was that it was based on research. It was based on all of the research that indicates the various systems in our body. And think back to exercise physiology. How does exercise and stress affect the systems of the body? How do all the systems of the body, how are they impacted by how we buildings, indoor spaces? That's what well was built on. That research is what gave it the foundation to go forth. And so I'm focused on not losing that. As we look at ESG and we look at investments and we look at all the reasons why we might certify a building. Let's not forget that we're in this to improve the health of the people inside the building. And are we measuring that? Are we tracking that? It's important.

20:20

Jeff

Equally as important as do WELL certified spaces bring higher rent premiums for real estate developers. Does productivity increase for organizations employees? Yes, those, and those things are being

measured, and that's a part of the puzzle. But I'm eager to make sure that we're looking at medical spend and health spend and whether or not we're truly having that impact on those health factors that WELL was designed.

20:48

Charlie

You can go to a lot of different places. And so I want to ask two follow ups. One, we'll get to education, but just, okay, we had a pandemic program, great programs like well already came out before a pandemic hits. My phone was ringing. Jeff. Charlie, how do I make this a healthy building? How do I do the air quality testing? Well, health safety rating. The seal. I mean, so many good things came out. I might argue, though, we kind of went to a default. How do you get all buildings a little healthier, a lot of cleaning, a lot of air quality, a lot of filters, and that's good. But how do we get back to what I call proactive wellness, real estate in a building? I know we've got to remind some clients there's a lot of other opportunities. You can get the full package certification. But, but if you were talking to someone now, the pandemic, thankfully, is hopefully in the rear view quite a bit. You know, where do you pick back up that conversation? So it's not just, oh, I do cleaning, I do filtration, I'm a healthy building. How do you get back to, but here's what you really here's what's possible. So any suggestions pro, tips on how to have those conversations?

21:53

Jeff

A lot of this is starting where the client, if it's a client, starting where the client's at. Wealth can be overwhelming. If you were to sit down with a prospective client or business owner or property manager, and you said, here's wealth, it can be very overwhelming, all the different things. But I feel like right now the workforce itself is defining for business owners, for employers what the expectations are. The pandemic was awful and tragic for a lot of reasons, but as you mentioned, there were opportunities that came out of it and the growth of, WELL, the health safety rating, all of that.

And I also think that being at home, this remote workforce that we have, has taught us a lot about quality of life. It's taught us a lot about being able to focus on your mental health. It's taught us a lot about whether or not a two hour commute back and forth from work is a valid expenditure of my day and my time and my energy. It's taught us a lot about the old paradigm of work, and I think it's created a new paradigm of what a workplace is supposed to be. And I think the coming generations who came through college, who started out in this remote world, came through the pandemic years, see the workplace as a totally different thing than maybe many of us saw it beforehand. That's a really good place to start. Every workforce is different. Every company is different. What that company does to stay in business and make profit and all of that, they're all different.

23:44

Jeff

And so the characteristics of that business lend themselves towards different needs, different workforces, in some cases, subsets of workforces in the same company that are very different. I think the first place is you listen and you kind of try to understand a day in the life of the average member of the workforce, what makes this a better place to come to? What makes this a place that improves my health, whether it's mental health, whether it's physical health, whether it's air quality, whether it's the lighting above me, that's the fluorescence, whatever those things are, whether we've got a walking path outside. I think the first step is you listen, and this can because well is not fully certified. It's not, you don't be fully certified anymore. There are ratings. There's WeLL at scale that allows you kind of as an organization to pick and choose where you go. I think there's lots of options out there now for organizations that would be.

24:46

Charlie

Good listener and plenty of options. And it's part of your job. My job is to stay out front. Hey, we have options, I think these days more than ever.

Green buildings, healthy buildings. It's not just here's the ultimate prize or nothing. It's here's the four steps to get the healthiest building you can. Let's start at step one. But don't forget, you can move on to step two when you graduate there. Let's lay out the whole plan, not just all in or bust. I'm seeing that more and more. Let's talk about credentials and education. You have a lot of letters after your name, Jeff. I love that. WELL AP, LEED, grant, associate, active score, AP fit, will ambassador and others. What have credentials meant to you in your career? WELL, certainly even going back before that, the masters, I think back in the 1980s when I was coming through that really did help me get into the healthcare setting that allowed me to take my degree into more of a healthcare clinical setting, which is kind of. I still see myself as a clinician of sorts. The well AP was really my gateway into well. And when I first came across WELL Charlie, I was on my way to attend the national Wellness conference. This was like 2016. I was mainstream wellness. That was what my career was. And looking at the agenda before the conference, I saw this topic to be presented called the well building standard, and it caught my eye. Never heard of it before. I wanted to see it, read about it. And Doctor Whitney Gray was presenting.

26:24

Jeff

I took a shot and sent her an email and said, hey, I'd love to learn more about this. Would you have some time to talk with me after your session? And she was so gracious enough to do that. We had a nice chat and talked all about, well. And I said to her, how do I get into this? And she said, there's one way. You got to get your lap. You want to be in this industry. So that was the kick in the back that I needed. And so that credential is really what opened up my career to switch over from more mainstream, population based health, employer based wellness into well building. And that credential was everything to me, to be able to do that. Subsequently, I was able to get on the well faculty and teach this and present this. So it's really been, it really was the launching pad for me. And then the LEED credential, the active score, the Fitwell in the role of a consultant, as you

talk about sitting there with a customer and then saying how do we get started? What do we do? WELL isn't the only answer. LEED is the answer. Active score is the answer. Fit well is an. There are a number of answers depending on what the organization is seeking to do. And so I picked those up so that I could be more well grounded in any conversations with prospective clients.

27:49

Charlie

Thank you for walking us through that. Let's talk briefly about the well education lab, and then we're going to talk about the future. So you, me, dean at our education company GBS, we've been brainstorming and meeting with colleagues at IWBI that there's this amazing program that's not just how do you pass OLAP, which is a tough test. Go get it, everybody. We've got some great flashcards and practice tests for you@gbs.com. But how do you become that practitioner? How do you really go do this work? So could you speak a little bit about what you love about the well education lab, how it's part of, I think you rolled out University of Florida, where we may go with it, and then we'll move on to what's in the future.

28:29

Jeff

So because I was on the well faculty and I participated on the movement advisory with well, there are ten concepts, of course, air, water, sound, light, et cetera. Movement is one of them. And I served on the advisory panel that really drives some of the feature development and requirements around that concept. The University of Florida, in concert with the International WELL Building Institute, was running what they called a well learning lab practicum class. And in that class, the students, which came from multiple disciplines, sustainability, design, public health, et cetera, the students learned about each of the ten concepts in well, there was a building designated on campus as their project building, and the students were broken up into teams with each concept, and they had to go into that

building. And specific to each concept, identify areas where the building already met requirements for WELL in that concept and where the building didn't, and write a proposal to the university administration as to how that building could become well certified. What would they need to do? What would the costs be? How would you do it? I was able to sit in on the movement concept lecture part and guest lecture there and engage with the students and the specific project building. In that class, they did ultimately, the students did ultimately make a proposal to the university administration on how to do that. The students then, because they had just learned about each of those concepts and gone through the whole business practice application of WELL, then they had the opportunity to sit for the WELL AP exam, which would be a great LEED in great training for them. I feel like that program, I thought looking in from the outside, that was an amazing program and an amazing opportunity for students to get hands-on with an actual building, not just a theoretical one, and look at and assess a building, write a business proposal, do all the things that we have to do. I believe that class should be offered. We should find a way to all of them.

30:55

Charlie

We are going to work on that together. So everybody stay tuned. We're going to put some links in the podcast show notes. So Jeff will exchange some links. Everybody can be reading up. And we're talking about if anybody wants to be a part of this, if you want to help we're on a mission here to get this out. All right, let's talk about the future. I love asking a green building and a healthy building professional like you just, let's talk about the future. What are you kind of excited about what's coming at us down the road?

31:20

Jeff

From a WELL perspective we've reached a point where the workforce is

determining, defining, describing what a healthy work atmosphere is. And yes, that includes indoor air quality and clean water and all the things that are features within these certifications. I believe there's more there. There's more there as to how people engage at work, how building design and flow helps them feel productive, helps them feel connected. I think so much of what we see in the WELL certification features, we're humanizing by listening to our workforces and hearing how it works. How does that apply to them? We're going to see continued growth as we continue to reimagine what the office, what the workplace is. Hybrid, remote.

32:23

Jeff

All of these things, I think, are still to be defined from a green building perspective. I think climate related resilience in buildings, infrastructure. I live down here in Florida, and although some years we're lucky not to get hit with hurricanes, we're always under the threat of that. And resiliency around how buildings are built, how infrastructure around buildings are designed, how communities are designed, especially the coastal communities. I think that's going to drive a lot of work in the green building area. And then there's that, gosh, that ESG. How do we invest where investors are looking to put their money, that's a piece that right now is, I think, subjected to political wins a little bit, maybe more in this country than maybe elsewhere in the world. But I think these are all factors in play. I see tremendous growth in all of these areas. They all integrate, they all interact. And I think those are some of the key drivers that are going to take this wherever it is. And of course, then we've got to be teaching it. We've got to make sure that the next wave of the workforce that comes into the workforce understands this from a young age.

33:42

Charlie

You definitely are pointed in the right direction there. Everyone is listening. I concur. I agree you got a good read for it, Jeff. Let's shift. Let's talk about

you a little bit. I love to ask some kind of rapid fire questions. What would you say is your specialty or gift?

33:58

Jeff

I think to say anything I've got, as especially your gift, is probably a stretch, Charlie. But I would say that something I think that I excel at is being able to see a problem or to hear about a problem and really kind of literally go to 30,000ft and figure out all of the pieces and parts that might be contributing to that. See it as a big picture. See how one step early in a process impacts a step, multiple steps down the process, and to work on those collectively, I think. So problem solving, being able to see the entire problem as opposed to pieces and parts and try to fit some and silos is something that I think just kind of comes naturally to me understanding in a team of people, I think I do a good job identifying skills and personalities and traits to understand who's best suited to do what. How do we pull a team together and make sure that all of the tasks fall in the hands of the right person on the team so that we can maximize a really great outcome. Some of those kinds of things I think I do well at. I don't know if I'd call it a gift to anybody.

35:13

Charlie

It is. It's a humbling question I like to throw out to my podcast guests. But, man, you're doing amazing work and you're humble about it. So how about habits, routines, rituals, anything in your day to day, week to week that kind of keeps you on point, you know?

35:26

Jeff

And I'm not great at this, but one thing that I try to do is to declutter. And at the end of the day, whether that's tasks that were on my to-do list or my calendar that I didn't get done with, then I need to carry them over tomorrow. Or whether it's a piece of paper on the desk, but cleaning

everything up so that when I walk in the next day, my mind is decluttered, my desk is decluttered, and the calendar is organized. Starting off my day decluttered, it clutters up pretty quickly in most cases, but. But starting out with a clean slate and then there are some other little things that I think I do. I take an opportunity to look out this window here that's off my right shoulder. I've got. I'm lucky enough to be able to have three bird feeders out there. I've got nature right outside the window, constantly getting a chance to get up away from my desk, make sure the feeders are full, see who's eating today as the migratory patterns come through, I get to kind of see that building in some kind of mini breaks during the day, or I take my eyes off screen for 2 seconds, I can still be thinking about work, but I'm looking at something else. Those are things that have helped me. I don't know that there's anything ground shattering there.

36:45

Charlie

Many of us, I would even argue, work from home. I work from home a lot. As you know, we purchase screens and Zoom calls and teams. Man, you've got to get out, connect with nature. That's both green buildings and healthy buildings. I love that tip there. Let's talk about a bucket list. Jeff, you and I have been hanging out over the last year, and I want you to know Darlie's a big fan of a bucket list. Is there any adventure travel? You want to write a book? What are a couple things on the bucket list?

37:14

Jeff

I would like to get to see the northern lights. Love to do that. From the Nordic countries. They get over there and really go up and really experience that. Full pictures on the Internet don't do it for me, so I want to do that. Years ago, I had opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument, and I didn't do them. I just focused on other things. And over the years, I've thought I want to be able to play a musical instrument before I'm done. I don't know if that's the piano or if that's a guitar or what that is, but it won't

be anything like a trombone or a tube, I can tell you that. But I would like to do that. So that's kind of on my list out there.

37:57

Charlie

I love that. The northern lights are on my bucket list, too, man. How about we're on a podcast, but I'd love to ask, is there a book you'd recommend? It doesn't have to be about buildings. Just might make a nice gift. Is there a book you'd recommend or a podcast, documentary? What's a pro tip?

38:14

Jeff

A book I've been reading lately isn't really about green building or any of that. It's called the mind keeps the score, and it's really written by psychiatrists that have been trying to understand how to deal with trauma, how to help people with trauma. And what's interesting to me about the book is, obviously, a number of case studies in there with military veterans, PTSD, childhood traumas, abuse situations, all kinds of traumas. And what's interesting to me is that this group, this author who wrote this really looks at it from the physiology of how the brain works. The various connections, the various sectors of neurons in our brain that in a normal non traumatic situation, all work together, trigger on, trigger off. The fight or flight mechanism triggers up for a second. But once the fear is over, the moment it comes down, how all of those systems work differently once you've been subjected to trauma, whatever that trauma is to you, and if the brain shuts some of these pathways off, closes some of them off, that reduces and changes how hormones are produced in the brain. That impacts things like moods and depression and all kinds of things. And the book really gets into how to work with folks to try to basically get those sectors of the brain working again, and not just through medications, not just through drugs, but some of the other therapies, the newer therapies that are out there, especially some of them that are being used on military veterans and PTSD. It's fabulous research. Fabulous. Fascinating as to

how the mindset of what mental illness, the stigma of mental illness is now changing, and they're working to change it to be, it's physiological, we can get those parts of the brain working again. The brain will heal itself. Here's some of the steps that you have to take. That's a book I'm reading right now. It's not light bedtime reading, but it's very interesting.

40:35

Charlie

We'll put a link in the podcast show notes. Great resource. We're going to put a link to your LinkedIn, make sure everybody reaches out, connect with Jeff, carry on this conversation, maybe team up on some projects together. Last two questions as we start to wind down. Jeff, I'm really enjoying our conversation here, getting to know you. If you look back on your career, is there anything you wish you'd have known earlier?

40:58

Jeff

I think that my career was in something that was kind of new and was considered kind of off to a tangent, of mainstream business type operations, whether it was in a hospital or whether it was in a corporate setting. Wellness was never considered mainstream. Over the years, we always kind of had to fight to justify why we existed within our own organization. We sold ourselves as much internally as we did externally. I felt, and I've learned, probably many years later than I needed to, that over communicating is a really great way to help yourself out. No matter what situation you're in, if you're trying to consult with or LEED a project team on a LEED project or a, WELL project the number of individuals who have to buy into that and have to be engaged in that process to get it done right is more than the number of individuals who actually understand what they're doing and understand the value of LEED, the value of. It's part of their job, along with the other 50 hours worth of work that they have to do. And so over communicating what you're doing, why you're doing it, why this benefits them. Try to put yourself for a day in the shoes of this individual

who now has one more thing dumped on them. Why is this important to them? And why does this make their job easier and their department or whatever? I didn't learn then. I don't think as early as I probably could have in my career to just over communicate. I felt like since I believed in it, everybody believed in it and that was a misconception.

42:51

Charlie

Thank you for giving us these pro tips. You've experienced a lot. And that's what I love about the podcast, is we're learning from your journey, we're learning from the 300 guests I've had on, and I appreciate you sharing. As we come to a close, let's say someone listening right now is really getting inspired by your story, Jeff. And maybe they're just now jumping into this wellness movement, this green building movement. Maybe they're a young professional early in their career, maybe there's someone that's making a career change, but if they're just now jumping in, any words of encouragement for them as we come to a close.

43:23

Jeff

I would say, welcome. We need you. And I would say reach out. Talk to everybody you can. Charlie and I, if you're listening to this podcast, reach out to us. I think you'll find that people in this industry are more than happy to help, to share, to listen, to answer questions, to give guidance, and don't hesitate, I would say, to reach out to people that you come across, that you read about, that you bump into and ask them for help. I think that would be it. I think you'll be very happy with the response that you get from most folks.

44:01

Charlie

Jeff, thank you for being on the podcast today. Again, everybody that's been listening, make sure you connect with Jeff on LinkedIn. Keep an eye

out for some of the, well, education we're going to be doing together. And I really appreciate you listening to the Green Building Matters podcast. Sometimes we remind you that healthy buildings definitely matter, too. So, Jeff, hope you have an amazing day. Thanks to all of our listeners, and we'll talk soon.

44:22

Jeff

Thanks, Charlie. Enjoyed it.

44:25

Speaker 4

Thank you for listening to this episode of the Green building Matters podcast@gbes.com. Our mission is to advance the green building movement through best in class education and encouragement.

Remember, you can go to gbes.com podcast for any notes and links that we mentioned in today's episode, and you can actually see the other episodes that have already been recorded with our amazing guests. Please tell your friends about this podcast, tell your colleagues, and if you really enjoyed it, leave a positive review on iTunes. Thank you so much and we'll see you on next week's episode.