

# Transcript: bigQUEST Podcast | S1, Ep 01

## Andy Murray on How To Fill In Today's Leadership Gaps

In the field of human culture, how do you measure such an astonishing moment in history?

You're listening to the bigQUEST podcast with Andy Murray in a high stakes unpredictable world. Every day is ripe with blue ocean adventures, just waiting to be discovered. You need the mindset, the methods and the motivation to lead with confidence into the unknown. Come along as we talk to today's top leaders, known for simplifying challenges, outsmarting variables, and inspiring greatness.

**Ben Ortlip:** All right, welcome to bigQUEST podcast, episode number one. Andy Murray is here. I'm Ben Ortlip sitting alongside Andy, producing. Andy, we're excited about this. This has been a long journey for you. Tell us how you're feeling.

**Andy Murray:** Yeah, well, I got to tell you, Ben. You've kind of nailed it on that intro.

That certainly raises the bar for expectations. I love it. Well, it just gives me little goosebumps because it's been such a long journey of trying to get to launch. I'm so excited about what we're doing with bigQUEST. And this podcast series is going to be something I think is going to be very special.

**Ben Ortlip:** So we should acknowledge, we're in the middle of the COVID shut down here. But you know, I'll be honest. It hasn't slowed us down at all this year. Has it?

**Andy Murray:** No, no. I feel like I'm working harder. I understand Zoom fatigue, but it just feels like we're hitting it pretty hard on trying to get all the pieces together and launching as you know, because you guys help launch brands all the time. And, launching a brand is quite a bit of work to do to get all the pieces right and get it to where you're happy with it. And so I think we spent from April to now, working through all of the things that you need to work through to really understand your message, make sure it's clear, make sure all the ideas are flowing together.

There's just so much to it.

**Ben Ortlip:** Yeah. Well, it's kind of like a bigQuest, isn't it?

**Andy Murray:** Yeah. A Quest to define a Quest. So how's that?

**Ben Ortlip:** All right. So let's unpack this a little bit here because if I'm tuning in for the first time, I might be thinking to myself, "Okay, what do they mean by bigQuest?" There's a lot of

different ways to perceive and interpret those words. Let's start with, where did this come from for you? The whole idea of bigQUEST? Because it's really birthed out of a lot of the experiences that you've had throughout your career.

**Andy Murray:** Well, that's a great question. I'm sure we're going to get asked that quite a bit.

I've got really two sides to my set of experiences from a career standpoint:

One side has been in start-up. Selling the house, selling the furniture, and going for it — to do something from scratch, which means every day you're working, waking up doing something new, building a team, growing that team, scaling it to a global perspective. I think most of that journey felt like it was all blue ocean related.

But I spent 10 years in corporate prior to that. And, six, seven years after that in a big Fortune 50 type of company. There was a different feel to that corporate vibe that you could feel and you didn't really jump into big blue ocean work that much. It was much more about incremental, scaling optimization, being able to do things — small little things sometimes — but scaling them over time. I felt like I wanted that opportunity to do some of the bigger things inside companies where the norm is a bit more short term and is at times incremental. And it's harder to get bigger things done that are specialized in new spaces. It took some of those early, agency building-type principles we had used and put them to work inside of a corporation, and they worked.

We did some amazing things with Fight Hunger, Spark Change, Greenlight A Vet, some big programs that were hard to pull off like Asda. We spent four years in the UK — different country, different environment, but still the same big, big company challenges in doing new and exciting things.

**Ben Ortlip:** Going all the way back to your days at Dayspring, Thompson Murray, Walmart, Procter and Gamble, this idea of a bigQuest really was born out of a gap that you identified in the marketplace. Talk a little bit about that. What was the thing that you saw that was maybe missing from some of the mindset of the way things were operating at different places like that?

**Andy Murray:** You get into trying to do big, new things. It does take a different mindset in terms of how you approach so many different aspects and we can get into that, but how you invite people in to participate with you. That's a completely different approach. A lot of big things are done in skunkworks type of teams, but a lot of those fail. They didn't really get off the ground.

How do you get buy-in? There was a gap in really understanding buy-in development. There's a lot of leadership frameworks and different things you can do with leadership. A lot of it's been done. But the gap is the leadership approach to actually figure out how to put three things together: a mindset that's different toward leadership itself, how to lead from the back rather than leading from the front, and then some real methodologies that are proven

methods that I've seen in myself and have watched many leaders doing really cool breakthrough things they do regularly.

Some of those gaps are:

- How do you sequence change so that you can play on the house as money and move those forward?
- How do you simplify a really complex challenge? It's one thing to understand complexity. It's another to be able to make sense out of complexity so that others can follow you and buy in. I saw a lot of these gaps and when you start putting these pieces together into a collection of a string of pearls, you'll find ideas that could work together.

And that's what we spent the last six months doing. You see a little more clearly how it is accessible to anyone that wants to lead something forward and get something done. And the ideas are all around us. It's not like there's a scary abundance of ideas all around us. There's actually an abundance of opportunity, but there's a scarcity of leaders that can really take on and drive new channels. I think that's a bit of the gap that I saw.

By the way, I think it's important, Ben — there are so many people working in organizations today. As a matter of fact, a Gallup poll suggests 85% of people come to work disaffected, disengaged, disconnected from what they feel like their true value contribution can be. And you think about that 15% of capacity, that's discretionary. That's not getting put into play. My experience has been when you get somebody really connected to a meaningful piece of work, that can change the game.

And it's really clear. And you've got these things working for you. You tap into that discretionary capacity. The Wright brothers said they couldn't wait to get up in the morning! That energy is pent up in most organizations and waiting to be tapped. And I think the bigQUEST approach is to be able to tap into that and be able to get people excited and participating and co-creating with you on something.

I think agile is something that's putting more catalyst against this space as well because when it comes to e-commerce, the digital and physical are coming together. This idea of getting really close to the customer and inventing and coming up with new ideas, specifically blue ocean type of ideas for customers. That demand is, right now, through the roof.

And COVID has even accelerated that. The agile technology lets you do that; it lets you experiment with its methods. But there's still a gap there in the leadership side on how you lead differently in an agile project. And so what we've worked on — and are working on — is an agile core method. And to be an agile leader is a little different and to be a right-brained leader is a bit of a step from what I've seen in the past.

**Ben Ortlip:** You talked about discretionary effort. You talked about the disengagement epidemic. That's obviously rampant and has been since 1990 when Gallup first published

their Q 12 survey. So, is bigQUEST an answer to disengagement? You talked about the kind of daily grind that exists in the workplace and, you know, 15% of the population can actually say they're engaged by the definition of engagement.

Are you saying that bigQUEST is for the everyday situation? Is it for certain things that are requiring big things that require a bigger effort than the normal? And so if we have a big push coming up or a product launch, is that when bigQUEST is relevant?

**Andy Murray:** It's for both. Let me say it's not really after doing incremental project improvement kind of stuff. It's not a framework that goes after incrementality or helping you structure an operational efficiency type initiative.

It's not about big versus small either. In terms of ideas, bigQUEST is about taking an organization forward to achieve something really meaningful. Something that has a lot of uncertainty, ambiguity, and you need to have the collaborative forces across multiple departments working together.

And that can be a culture change you're trying to go after, but when it's multifunctional like most challenges today — small and big — cross many different functions. You have to leave, but you don't have the control or the authority or the positional power to make a change. Most of the important things to do today, they're so interconnected. You're not going to get those. We've been trained on how to lead from a sense of authority and leadership. But how do you lead across connected pieces where you really have to be getting buy-in of hearts and minds across an organization?

I think that is most likely going to happen when you're trying to go into blue ocean type spaces or blue sky spaces where it's never been done before. And you need the collaboration of a lot of different people, right? If you're trying to take on a cost-improvement project for your department on how to reduce the copy paper you're using? That's not a bigQuest. That's an incremental project of some sorts that you want to do.

But when you want to engage hearts and minds and get people to really commit to you to do that, and you need a broad group of people involved, and the future is a bit uncertain and it's not really clear there isn't a method to do that and do it well? That's a bigQUEST. And what I'm seeing is there are more and more opportunities for that all around us that it doesn't matter what level you're in, those opportunities are there.

**Ben Ortlip:** I want to make sure that it's crystal clear who needs bigQUEST, who needs this framework that you've developed, who needs the thinking. Is this for improving everyday leadership? Is it for improving engagement levels across the board? Or is this what I pull out whenever I need to put on my cape and get something really magical done? How would distinguish the scenarios where bigQUEST is right for a specific situation?

**Andy Murray:** Yeah, I build it really for a couple of different audiences in the corporate world. Most of the big opportunities are looked for or executed by a senior director, even VPs tend

to delegate it to a senior director type of person, and they're the people that have to lead real change. Even though the senior team might pick two or three big things to get done, they eventually fall as someone's going to have to lead.

This is to help them lead where they can keep that buy-in at the top and be able to marshal across multiple departments. And they're the ones that are getting stuck with real change opportunities. And it's a promotion opportunity for them. And that's where I've seen and experienced it firsthand. It's often really difficult. I've been on an executive team and you've got these really important initiatives. And you ask the question as a team, *"Who do we assign this to?"* And there's a certain group of leaders that are really good at command and control and they earn their stripes by driving at PNL, getting performance results.

But those typically aren't the type of people that excel at cross-collaboration and inspiration at driving when you don't have control of all the levers. And so this is for those people because I think we need more of them and there's a shortage of it, of those that can lead those kinds of initiatives. And those are the kinds of challenges coming at companies left and right. I also think it's very viable for top sales teams.

I had the privilege of working at Procter and Gamble calling on Walmart back in '91, when it was a time that Procter and Gamble was changing the whole relationship with Walmart together. It was a story time; I was really fortunate to get to do that. And the bigQUEST idea in my mind was really ingrained in terms of how you form top-to-top partnerships to go after bigger ideas that are really interesting. And a lot of the bigQUEST framework is built on that idea.

When I was in Asda, I had some big tech platform type companies call on us for a top-to-top discussion. We could have settled for, *"Hey, what projects you want to do?"* but we chose not to. We chose to go to more of a bigQUEST mentality, saying *"What is the biggest thing that Google and Asda can do together that could really change the game?"*

And that question, what's the biggest thing we could do with Facebook or whatever the platform was? That's bigQUEST thinking. Push yourself out there to say, *"What is the challenge that will really push us forward and then start there and work back, even if we're uncertain how to get it done."*

That is the key and central. If you're a leader of a sales team that has to call on a client and you want to take that much deeper relationship to do much more interesting things, this would give you the right type of questions to ask the right type of way to simplify. And the right way to sequence that is to get that commitment from your client to actually do things that can change the game.

That's the world that I've been living in. So I think bigQUEST is definitely for top leaders of sales teams or client teams that have that challenge in front of them and want to move beyond a transactional relationship to a strategic relationship.

**Ben Ortlip:** It sounds like you're describing any situation where the process is either not established yet, or the process may need to be challenged a little bit by some innovative thinking. Because as I'm listening to what you're describing, it sounds like there's a lot of kind of blue sky or the blue ocean. I pictured the executive team sitting around deciding *who are we going to get to lead this thing?*

So they have an idea of what it is they want to accomplish. They don't know how it's going to happen yet. There's a lot of variables that have to be figured out. But then there are also times when the executives' team is sitting around and going, *we think something might be broken and we need somebody to go in and figure it out.*

Is it about the process? Does the process become a sort of a milestone or a measuring stick by which you evaluate the relevance of a bigQuest?

**Andy Murray:** When fixing things that are broken typically you're going to have, in my experience, lots of existing data to go look at because it's been measured and you can see it. The data's there, and it's a bit more of a raw, scientific, left brain model.

And if I would look at it and say, if you could solve that with your left brain and you don't need your right brain to figure it out — which there are quite a few problems that you face in business that are really left brain — it's a spreadsheet problem. It's just a puzzle that needs to be worked out.

That's the left brain. The right brain says it's a mystery to be solved because you don't have the data, you don't have all the things there and it's a bit more uncertain. So if you're solving a puzzle versus solving a mystery and then that's one of the determinators if I would be using a bigQUEST framework or not. I wouldn't be wanting to apply right-brain thinking against a left-brain problem which is: *The machine's down, it's been broken, someone's got to fix this machine, or it's a challenge that can be absolutely sorted.* It's a complicated project, but it's not complex. The right brain is complex because it's dealt with a level of complexity that you can't see all the pieces together and you've got to work it out and you've got to have a lot of different points of view really engaged in it.

**Ben Ortlip:** I've heard you talk about the trajectory of leadership over the years and the difference between the left brain and the right brain and how organizations have tended to accommodate one versus the other, and therefore rewarding one versus the other.

And it's led to a little bit of a dearth and the kind of breakthrough thinking that so many companies find themselves needing right now. Talk about that a little bit in terms of the historical trajectory of leadership, left versus right brain.

**Andy Murray:** Well, it's something that's really starting to show up as a problem right now.

It's based on what's happened with post-industrial revolution where the whole idea of leadership was to take out uncertainty. It was to create order and repeatability. And so the

idea of what you wanted from workers is you didn't want a thinking worker, you wanted to do work or someone that would repeat the pattern.

Management comes from the word *manage*, which stands for the training and breaking of horses. So the management philosophy is that you're looking for repeatability so that you could get scale. And it was all about driving efficiency in scale. So you don't want a lot of creativity.

You know, the thinkers were up here and the doers we're down here and that's been going on for years. Actually, much research will point to the fact there is a bit of a bias against creativity in the workplace because the left brain primarily wants order and wants order out of chaos so that you can repeat it. If you can repeat it, you can measure it; if you can measure it, you can scale it. But the world's changed and the demand for creativity means that you've got to find what you're doing is not going to work in the future and you don't have the data necessarily because the data doesn't give you the answers.

You have to move into some right-brain thinking and think as an artist thinks, that it looks at a blank canvas and has to sort it out. One of the big differences in how that's played out then is that you've got problems to deal with. And it's how you look at a problem. So when you look at a problem and that problem is something that you immediately say, I got a solution for that. Your left brain really does push for a familiar pattern to pull quickly to jump to the solution. Oh yeah. I've seen that before. I got the solution for that. Let's go.

And in today's world of uncertainty, you can't really rely on those patterns. You've learned from the past because those answers aren't working, they're not working. A right-brained person will look at a problem and see it as an open idea to go explore and they'll fall in love with the problem.

Left-brain leaders will fall in love with solutions because you got to get to them quickly. And so that's one of the huge differences in what's needed today, such a passion for jumping into the problem and understanding it and seeing it with fresh eyes. As you interrogate that problem and fall in love with it, the ideas will reveal themselves versus trying to pull an idea as quickly as you can because you know our brains are a bit lazy. They want to get quick answers, especially our left-brain side.

And so here's the solution right away, but the world doesn't work that way anymore. It's far too complex and that's something that's been developed over history. We see that right-brain thinkers might be put into the innovation lab and they get to do that.

But now we need innovation coming from more places across a whole company. We need ideas coming from lots of spaces, so we need to figure out how to engage the right brain more, and that's one of the main reasons why I wanted to go down this journey. I do think we're going to see a golden era of creativity. I think it is going to be in front of us as new things we thought were new really don't work.

Look at Pepsi. I was talking to Jeff Swearingen over at Pepsi the other day and the number of SKUs they pulled out didn't produce results. All these brands that people thought, "Well, gee, you know, we need to have these brands." Actually, post-COVID when you go to that crisis and you look at the challenges of distribution and logistics, those brands are gone but the sales keep going up. So what are you going to do, two years from now or a year from now, once you get post-vaccine and you're looking at shelf space to fill, where are the new ideas going to come from?

And the data you had is not going to be useful because it's all been spiked by COVID, a historical bump into your data systems. That's what I mean by saying the creativity required to think through all the stuff that got ditched pre-COVID — that we knew were not working anyway, but we just didn't dare to pull the trigger and say, "cut that from the portfolio." That's what's going to also be in front of us.

**Ben Ortlip:** So where does this come from? You described falling in love with the problem and not just trying to reach for a solution or falling in love with a solution. And it really sounds like there's an impulse that comes because the speed and pace of business, almost trains us to come up with fast solutions and the first solution may not be the best. So you're describing a little bit more of an incubator mindset where you're free to think about things.

Does this require that you have a certain amount of time and resource allocation for additional thinking? How do you slow down? How do you get people to pump the brakes, and to enter into more of a bigQUEST mindset?

**Andy Murray:** You bring up a very interesting challenge. That's a leadership challenge. There are going to be people that are very interested and just wired to think more curiously about projects and opportunities and challenges. And we'll be able to help them with some tools that will absolutely help them accelerate as a mid-level manager, no matter what ecosystem they're working in, for sure.

The five big questions that we've worked on together — to figure out how to simplify in the right sequence to get quickly moving forward on work and where you need to guide yourself — that's very helpful and very clear in any kind of corporate culture. That's the beginning bits.

But, the hope I have and the dream I have for bigQuest is that it does enter into the consciousness of the CEO and the senior team that there is a different way needed and we need to build a corporate ecosystem that fosters ideation, that rewards creativity that has an innovation lab that rewards those that might fail because they've tried something and it doesn't work. That has sponsorships for those that raise their hand and say, "*I'll take that on. I will be responsible.*"

A lot of people don't want to take something like this because they come and say to the leadership, the senior leadership, I would like to be given this assignment and *I would like to have authority to take this*. I'd like to have the authority to lead that or whatever they might

say. What they're really looking for is control. Very few leaders show up and say, *"I want to be held responsible for this."*

Now I can tell you from a senior leader sitting around an executive team, if we have people walk into the team to show up and say, *"I want to be held responsible for this,"* that's a completely different thing that you don't hear.

**Ben Ortlip:** Automatically know who to pick then, right?

**Andy Murray:** You got it. Yeah, no question about it. We often encounter leaders who want authority but don't necessarily want the responsibility.

And so bigQuest is about helping people have more confidence to take and lead with responsibility when you don't have authority. You've done many years of work in organizational design and development. Tell me how you see this idea of responsibility versus authority. Have you crossed that before?

**Ben Ortlip:** Oh, of course. Well, you know, the first thing I think of is how it really is baked into the culture. My first thought was actually, it kind of boils down to who the person is and what their character is all about, but I've actually seen a lot of great people succumb to a culture of deflecting responsibility. You're talking about needing the need to shift the culture because you don't just go into a state organization and say, *Now we're going to pump the brakes. Now we're going to take time.*

Talk for a minute about it because this is more than just a series of epithets that sound great about bigQUEST and how to do things differently. You actually have a framework. Could you take us through at a high level, the depth to which you thought this through and made this transferrable into organizations? Or even it's into teams within an organization so this is really bottom-shelf accessible for people?

It's not just a podcast name and a bunch of great sayings. Take us through the framework.

**Andy Murray:** To be clear, I'm a boots on the ground kind of guy, right? I'm a boots on the ground field general. I don't have a lot of time for hyperbole, in just going through sayings, and nothing drives me crazier than hearing a saying posted by somebody saying, *"Hey, everyone should take more risk!"*

What does that mean? The world doesn't need more hyperbole about how to lead or how to be a leader. Yes, I applaud the mindset, but you've got to have a method that stands the test of boots on the ground. What does that really mean?

That's where I've been focusing on, connecting the mindset of taking more risks, but actually, I want to create a method that de-risks risk. There's a way to de-risk something that's unknown. That's what I want. I don't want to just take risks. Why would I do that? That doesn't make any sense to me. I've tried to say, *"It's this, not that,"* because a lot of what comes at us is hyperbole. And so that's the way I've looked at it. With all bigQUESTS, before you want to

take on a challenge, you really want to plan it out and you want to think your way through the launch and what you're trying to do.

There are five key questions that we'll get a chance to talk about over the series. First, defining the single biggest problem you want to solve. Why is that important? That is always the starting point. And when you really interrogate the problem, get close to it a lot of times ideas will reveal themselves.

The second thing is defining the outcome. I've talked to so many people from a mentoring standpoint, and when you get into a situation you could really lose sight of what's the outcome I want to achieve. And with that question we'll go into a lot of depth on what do we mean by outcome. But in my personal life, if I've gotten into a "discussion" with my wife, it could easily get into something that degrades down until you're not even sure what you're talking about and then it goes into bringing out the greatest hits. So it's when I get into those situations I've learned to stop and ask myself, *What's the outcome I want from this conversation?* and it totally changes. But that same thing is true in work.

So when you're looking at these problems, what's the outcome you want that customer to have? Outcomes that are so much bigger of an idea than objectives. And that's where we get confused. So we'll talk about that.

We'll talk about the single biggest barrier. You're going to find thousands of barriers when you start trying to do something new and you can get overcome by those. But in truth, there's almost always an elephant in the room that's the single biggest barrier and when you identify that and talk about it and work through it, you'll be able to take that on as a dragon to be slayed and go through it because you'll probably find the single biggest barrier is pretty common across different types of Quests.

And then, what holds up a lot of people in this idea of how it's going to get measured. What I've tried to do with this methodology is walk toward everything that gets you in trouble, or throws you off course, or is going to get challenged, because they actually parade out pretty easily that these are the common challenges of every big thing I've tried to do, I've run into. So let's walk toward the barking dog. Write them down: how the best people go about it, how they get the best results — that's what we've tried to codify. And so the biggest barrier, the problem, and the metrics is one of them. And if you walk past and ignore, how are you going to measure success? You're in for a real surprise as you get to the Chief Finance Officer asking, you know, *"How does this pencil out?"* So you want to get in front of that thing and be able to have some ideas on how you solve that particular problem.

And then last, what can you do every single day? If you want real change and real progress, it has to be in the psyche of the organization every single day. I can talk through many case studies where, by being part of one simple action every single day, it can absolutely create a movement of ideas.

And one of the misnomers, Ben, is that bigQUEST is about a big idea. It's not about having a big idea. It's about creating a movement of many small individual single ideas that add up to a movement. I've seen Harold Lee Scott, CEO of Wal-Mart, completely change Walmart's culture towards sustainability by creating a "single biggest challenge out of every single day" through the personal sustainability pledge, where every employee made one. You take 1.7 million people up against a challenge, all of a sudden ideas are coming from everywhere. And that's what I mean by *every single day*.

We'll talk a bit about the framework around sequencing change. That's important. Then there's stuff in there about how we can come up with what's really important and toward buy-in, which is how you tell the story having a visual value proposition, which really clears out A to B, how I am going to get from A to B. Then, people can understand that and jump into it. It's got to travel by itself. That is how you work through storytelling. So storytelling is really important.

We'll talk about how you overcome barriers, how you slay dragons. So the most common problems a Quest has that's been seen through multiple different lenses.

And then lastly, how do you invite others to participate? You're going to need people to want to commit and people will support what they co-create. It's really hard to kill something that you co-create, and getting people to co-create it means you're going to have to let go. You can't have all the control; you can't just give people tell-dos. You want them to participate with you and let them actually have a real meaningful contribution to that creative process. And so that co-creation is just magic in terms of creating commitment.

**Ben Ortlip:** So, it's interesting as I'm listening to those [5 Big Questions](#), and by the way, the questions are just the beginning of how you launched this framework. The 5 Big Questions are part of it. You also go through the mindset, the methodology, or the method, and the motivation to sustain the motivation. Those are sort of the big umbrella categories for those things. But as you were describing them, it dawns on me that you're really touching on all the pillars of culture. That's what shapes culture and all those different things. The interaction of people collaborating, the decisions at the top, and whether the tops are connected. All those things that you essentially have a model for culture in this whole thing and how to move meaningful work forward.

Now you've worked at some places I've heard of before. You've worked at Proctor and Gamble. I've heard of that. I've heard of Walmart.

I've even heard of Saatchi and Saatchi. So, I'm just curious, you know, I picture you having a 35 year or so career, working at these different places. And I'm trying to imagine to myself when the different pieces of the bigQUEST ideas fell into place and also think about how, you know, some of your careers were just flat out entrepreneurial ventures. And some of it was the exact opposite working for the largest company in the world.

And, you know, I always wondered did some of the innovative thinking, and then you go into these big, you know, lumbering companies and you get frustrated and it's like, "Oh, it should be more like a bigQUEST", but what are the different places that you think of that you, either birth the idea for this or saw it in action. Take us through some of the highlights.

**Andy Murray:** Procter and Gamble is a great example. Early in my career, everybody told me the secret to getting promoted was to stay in Cincinnati and be visible on the elevators.

And, I did just the opposite and I headed to the fringe because nothing really innovative, in my experience, happens in the fringe. Steven Gould talks about the punctuated equilibrium of how evolution really happens and that you have to get to the fringe and that's where you see the big leaps.

And that became a principle for me that I jumped in on. I went to Jackson, Tennessee, when everybody said, "*Why are you going to Jackson, Tennessee?*" And my wife's like saying, "*Why are we going to Jackson, Tennessee?*" But, we were able to do some really innovative things because we were outside of that core central ecosystem where no one was paying attention, and boy, did we fly and do some breakthrough stuff.

I came back to Cincinnati for a few years and went to Fayetteville, Arkansas. I had to look it up on the map and see what's going on down there. But I'd heard of a leader, Tom Muccio, that was one that you really want to get a chance to work for, as a top-notch leader.

So I came down to work for him and it's going to be a two-year assignment and it turned into the most amazing space. So I learned at Procter and Gamble to look for the fringe and get out of that. You can do some really interesting things in big companies, but it's a mindset and I think the mindset work really started to take shape in the P&G culture.

In the space of the Dayspring world, it was my first real foray into creativity and true right brain types of organizations, where you're working through the creative process and breaking creativity down to the process that you can repeat in a way that works at scale. That's where the methodology of creativity really took shape for me.

Starting an agency from scratch was all blue ocean, and there was nothing to optimize, and when we started that it was a dream to build a great company. And just put that on a card and started going and looking for those opportunities. The first day of that job was opening the paper being incredibly curious and the first thing I saw was an article from the Arkansas Gazette talking about how the Walton foundation had given \$50 million, the largest private grant at that time to a public university, to the college of business at the University of Arkansas. So I'd picked up the phone and called the Dean and said, "*Hey, congratulations on getting this gift. How would you like to be known as the Wharton School or the Kellogg School, rather than just the college that got the gift?*" Now's the time to do that. And he's like, "*Yeah, that looks great. Who are you again?*" I said, "*I'm Andy Murray and it's my first day on the job and I can help you.*" He invited me down and got a six-month contract to brand what became the Walton College of Business. And so, that opened up all kinds of connections.

But it was that moment of just being all in and fully committed, and thinking through: *What problem out there can I help solve?*

I recognized the Dean had a problem and he didn't know he had a problem yet, but he did have a problem. I helped point it out and became part of that solution and looked for the outcome.

Those principles have followed me, I think, in different various forms, and just having the last seven months almost of time to codify that, it really helped. When I was in the middle of building the agency and growing it, I did a TEDx Talk on how to live a compelling Quest, that was 15 years ago. So, it's always been something on my mind that there's an opportunity to engage people differently and to do new things that haven't been done before and those opportunities are all around us every single day and that you don't have to be at the top. You can be in the middle. And life becomes so much more interesting. As Henry Thoreau said, "Most men live lives of quiet desperation and they go to their graves with the music still inside them." And I don't want to retire at the end of my career with the music still inside me and head to Florida, where the rest of the retired people go, I suppose.

So I think there's an opportunity to get the music out. And, I guess that's my passion, Ben. Two things: One is to help people understand they can do more than they probably could imagine if they could tap a bit more comfortably into their right brain. And then looking at making meaningful work for others is just as important as doing meaningful work for yourself.

**Ben Ortlip:** Your development team and was talking about all the different things that you've experienced. You're a creative guy even though you say that you didn't start creative until you built an agency, but essentially you could look at bigQUEST as a codified method for introducing creativity in any situation. You've made the creative process so bulletproof that you could take it into an organization where there maybe not a lot of creativity and creative thinking going along, either because they don't have those kinds of people there, or they just have such rote processes that they nobody wants to touch because they're sacred because they are the cash cows. But what bigQUEST does for people is it allows them step-by-step, methodically, to go through and really challenge some conventions that maybe are overdue for challenging. Or in some cases, when the world changes and suddenly you have to reinvent everything, this is a framework that you can use to sort of walk you step by step through the process.

One of the things you talk about a lot, and it really is a trigger for bigQUEST, is the idea of leading into a situation where certainty is just not there. The conventional method of making a plan and then executing the plan and then debriefing with everybody. I think I've heard you say that there are a lot of situations where you're heading into something and you have no idea, even what the third step is, much less beginning with the end in mind.

Can I ask you to talk about the whole idea of viewing stores as a media channel? To me, that is just one of the best examples of a bigQUEST.

**Andy Murray:** Well, I was just thinking about that when you were speaking. When we started working in the space we called shopper marketing, we were one of the first people in that space.

**Ben Ortlip:** Who's "we" here?

**Andy Murray:** I think Procter and Gamble was the early pioneer in this space. They saw the number of eyeballs going through a store, at Walmart, a hundred over a hundred million a week, which is more than any TV rating kind of environment. So they said, there's gotta be a pony in there somewhere, asking how can you treat that differently? Through a series of events, and I was right at that epicenter trying to build an agency, I became a partner to Procter and Gamble to be able to figure out how we make something out of this different space that is different?

So, I began to grow an agency in that space where I hired guys that were psychologists, Dr. Chris Gray, to look at the whole shopping process to turn it into a methodology. And we turned it into a system of creativity that allowed us to help turn more shoppers into buyers for big brands that were selling at Walmart. We were the first to do that. That's where I probably understood how you take method, mindset, and motivation and put it into a system -- how you systematize creativity. We needed to do that and grow very fast.

So I went from, 15, 17 people to 65, 75, 150, 600 with 22 offices around the world. When we started opening up offices around the world to do this (because it really took off with P&G and Coke and other, other clients), P&G really wanted us to scale globally because they saw the power in what we were doing. They gave us a really great opportunity to work with them to do that scale. And that's why I partnered with Saatchi and got 22 offices to open around the world. And so you have to understand I'm going into Poland or I'm going into Moscow to the Saatchi office there, finding two or three people to teach them about a way of doing advertising they had never heard of, or thought of. They were learning that skill very quickly and learning how to motivate a team, to get excited about something that they didn't really understand, to build a quality product that could be put into play with Procter and Gamble, in a very short amount of time.

And so I did that in Paris, in Guan Jo, all around the world with a great team. We had to create methodologies that allowed creativity to come into an environment and do (for them) blue sky work. That's what I'm passionate about doing.

Your reflection on why would this bigQUEST thing be a legitimate process or what is it really? It is a creative approach, but it's based on years of taking mindset, method and motivation, because you gotta have motivation in there, and putting it into repeatable processes that scale and that have real business results.

And that's what we did with shopper marketing around the world. I'm trying to do that for new initiatives that have some blue sky uncertainty involved in them and that's the same thing.

**Ben Ortlip:** Well, this is a real moment for any real industry because like you suggested at the beginning, we're at an inflection point and sort of history, you know, coming off the industrial revolution really. But we're at a point now where creative thinking has made its way all the way up to the top of some of the most stable organizations. And so, you know, there's always been the 1% who will come in and provide just enough shakeup and new vision. But you know, honestly, the marketplace requires more than 1% of that right now and so the great thing that I see about bigQUEST is that you've codified it. You've created a method for people to maybe enable and empower 6%, 10%, 20%, 30% of leadership to execute on a creative mindset, to enact change at the level that.

**Andy Murray:** You couldn't be more right. In the IBM study they do with CEOs and executives, over a thousand CEOs they survey on a regular basis, they found that creativity was the number one desire. So you've got creativity as the number one desire. You've got disaffected people waiting to be ignited with something more interesting in life. And so what's the missing piece? We've got ideas all around us and challenges up to our eyeballs. We're missing the leader that can pull those pieces together.

**Ben Ortlip:** I think of all the Dilbert cartoons over the years, which has really just the soul crying out for creativity to enter into these places where it normally doesn't exist well.

So, we're just about out of time here, but in the coming episodes, we're going to dig into the [5 Big Questions](#). That's not the entire bigQUEST framework; that's simply a way to give some of your listeners just a foray into what bigQUEST is all about. You've created this download that can be found on the bigQUEST website, [bigquest.com](http://bigquest.com). People can go there, download the 5 Big Questions that you've created to help people start a bigQUEST. Even if that's all they did was to get their head around these 5 Big Questions, that would do immensely more to catalyze the creative process.

**Andy Murray:** Oh, no doubt. Those [5 Big Questions](#) are leadership gold for any leader who's trying to do anything, and it's the starting point then to go on to the other elements of how do you go do blue ocean work. But these 5 Big Questions are absolute leadership gold for people wanting to be effective leaders from the top to the bottom.

**Ben Ortlip:** If you listened to the description of those five questions, some of them may have sounded pretty intuitive, but there's some counter intuition involved, too. So you have to download these [5 Big Questions](#) on the [bigquest.com](http://bigquest.com) website. Andy is on there, he's in the download. He explains and walks you through that.

In addition, Andy, you're giving away certain reserved spots for time with you, Andy, when listeners execute and submit their responses to the 5 Big Questions.

**Andy Murray:** It's a money-back guarantee on the free part, right? But what I've found is, my goal is to really help people do this and understand it and be there to help. And sometimes you can get stuck. I would do 15-minute meetings all the time and open my calendar up at work. It really allowed people to come in and focus and that's all they wanted, they just needed to get unstuck. And so I'm pulling about 20 hours a week out of my schedule to make that time available because I want to talk to people. That's the best part of my day sometimes is being able to engage with someone and be there as a bit of a guide. I'm not a consultant, but I'm a guide.

**Ben Ortlip:** So you've been doing that already and you might as well keep doing it. So that's great. So run to your computer or your mobile phone, [bigquest.com](http://bigquest.com). Download the [5 Big Questions](#) checklist to help you plan your bigQUEST. And if you're one of the first people there, you can look for a spot to reserve some time with Andy Murray.

Also, I hear news of a summit coming up sometime in April. Tell us what you know about the summit so far.

**Andy Murray:** Well, it's pretty far in planning stages. We're getting ready to move into the whole next stage of production. We're looking at over 20 top thought leaders and practitioners that really have demonstrated some aspect of bigQUEST leadership, and thinking that I believe you're going to find very exciting. There'll be lots of content available, with seminar pieces, training modules, and opportunities for you to participate with your full team. It's going to be one of the most exciting summits that we've put together in some time for actionable leadership.

**Ben Ortlip:** And, all virtually delivered. So no matter where you are, you can access it. So look for that also on the [bigquest.com](http://bigquest.com) website.

So that'll do it for this time. Next time, we're going to dive in and for the rest of the series, we're going to unpack those [5 Big Questions](#), one at a time. So download your checklist at [bigquest.com](http://bigquest.com). And then tune in for the next podcast where we'll dive into question number one and then in later episodes, we're also going to have guests -- some of your world-famous practitioners and friends, through your network, join us and talk about some of the ways they've applied bigQUEST Framework thinking.

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