



Wake Up Eager Workforce Podcast, Episode 30
A Podcast about Brain Research -- Produced By Suzie Price

Brain Research – Negative Reactions: What You Need to Know to Lead Yourself & Your Team
– Transcript

www.pricelessprofessional.com/brain2

Suzie Price: All right. I'm excited about episode number 30. This is the second half of an interview I did with Dr. Ron Bonnstetter, the Senior Vice President of Research and Development for TTI. The topic is "Brain Research and Negative Reactions: What You Need to Know to Lead and Grow Yourself and Your Team." This is episode 30 – second half of that interview. Let me tell you quickly what we're going to cover in this episode through that interview. We're going to talk about the development of soft skills, understanding what happens in the brain around things we like and are good at and things we're not good at. That's an interesting discussion about how the brain lights up or doesn't light up around those areas. Dr. Bonnstetter's going to talk about some advice, top takeaways that he'd give. He's going to talk about projects that they're working on coming up in the future which is interesting – I think you'll find that interesting – around emotional intelligence and intuition. I am eager to learn more about that. He's going to share his advice that he'd give his 30-year-old self, it's relevant to many leaders, so I think you'll want to hear that. He tells us what his billboard will be, and I'll just go ahead and give you that because it's interesting and it gives you some insight into who he is. His billboard is: "Listen for those things you have never heard." We're back on the topic of listening, which is what we closed on at the end of episode 29. Listen for those things you have never heard. Very profound and so smart. He's going to share his number one takeaway for all of this talk about brain research and leading and development. Without further ado, let's get started!

Intro: Welcome to the Wake Up Eager Workforce Podcast, a show designed for leaders, trainers, and consultants who are responsible for employee selection and professional development. Each episode is packed full with insider tips, best practices, expert interviews, and inspiration. Please welcome the host who is helping leaders, trainers, and consultants everywhere, Suzie Price!

Suzie: Hi there, my name is Suzie Price. I am the creator of this podcast – Wakeup Eager Workforce Podcast, and I am the interviewer that you will hear today in the second half of this short series with Dr. Ron Bonnstetter around brain research. My company is Priceless Professional Development, and our focus is building energy, commitment and communication in organizations, and I have been doing that for 13 years. Right when I started my business, I became a distributor for a company called TTI Success Insights, and that's where Dr. Ron Bonnstetter hangs his hat these days doing his brain research. I'm so eager to bring the second half of my interview with Dr. Bonnstetter to you. Episode 29 can be found at pricelessprofessional.com/brain (lower case), and then today's episode, 30, can be found at pricelessprofessional.com/brain2. What you can find there is the show notes, there's a link to all of my social media if you want to connect that way, and also an opportunity for you to download the Priceless Professional WakeupEagerWorkforce.com app, so that it's on your smart phone and you'll always know what episodes are coming up. In episode 29, I read Dr. Bonnstetter's bio. You can go back to that if you'd like to learn more about him, if you're just catching up with

us in this episode. Let's go ahead and get to the interview. I know you're going to enjoy what he shares and get some good takeaways from it. Let's go there now.

Dr. Ron Bonnstetter: I recently was trying to maybe justify... I originally wanted to justify that I only read scientific books, and my wife, of course, is a voracious reader and reads all kinds of things, and as a result has a much more Renaissance knowledge of life in general than I. I used to justify it by I don't have time to learn all that stuff. I'm afraid that if I had to live my life over, isn't that an interesting concept? If you could go back to being middle school with the knowledge that we possess now, what would you do differently? I love to play that mental game a little bit, the one lesson that I have learned in life is that things are connected. I once wrote a paper that talked about the concept of "the more you learn, the more you know." Fact is, that needs to be inverted. The more you know, the more you learn. Here's what goes on: Every time you learn something, it creates a dendrite; it creates a memory bank in your brain. When you know more things, you simply are in possession to make more connections to a new concept. I'll never forget where that came to bear in my life. I was on a beach in Brazil, and I was experiencing for the first time a drink called Caipirinha. Now Caipirinha, for those who haven't had that experience and that joy, is nothing more than our version of Everclear with a little sugar in it to make it palatable.

Suzie: With a very lovely name!

Ron: It is a lovely name, and the liquor is called cachaça. It's just a lovely process. I was trying desperately to remember, "Okay, Caipirinha, I've got to remember this drink. This stuff is awesome. It's like lemonade, only it seems to have a kick." The gentleman beside me said, "Well, it's not that hard to remember. It obviously is the Latin derivation and has similar meaning and similar bearing to both Italian, French and Spanish, so it's an obvious word that makes perfect sense and makes connections in various ways." I looked at him and I said, "Yeah, it makes sense to you because you just made all these connections in your brain that I don't possess. I don't speak Italian. I don't speak Spanish. I don't study Latin languages." It really hit me that the more you know, the more you learn. We simply have to embrace learning and the connections follow. If you're always just waiting to learn something meaningful, you're going to miss the boat. Spoken like a true theoretical.

Suzie: But it is true, the more we learn, the more expanded, or if you think about what's happening in your brain, our brain dendrites, I think you called them, the more they are so when we hear new things, we can grasp them more quickly or hold onto them because we have somewhere to put it. Is that what you're saying?

Ron: True. If you really try to take and try to simplify what the brain does, the brain is nothing more than a pattern-seeking organ. It's looking for patterns, and if you have more knowledge, you have more opportunities to build patterns and to build connections. As you mature and grow, you simply have more places for connections to occur.

Suzie: Yes. It's something, if we think about the personal skills, one of the personal skills that we've measured over the years in the TriMetrix Assessment, we have found that often continuous learning shows up when companies are doing benchmarks, so the motivator might not be high theoretical, because you were giggling on yourself, "Oh, I love to learn, that's my driver, that's what puts gas in my tank." But it's a skill, the continuous learning, is often found in

many of the benchmarks because so many positions today require continual knowledge, continual updates because things are changing. I might have a conservative personality style, and I might not be high theoretical, but under the hood, it's good to have some interest in knowledge and be willing to learn. According to your research with the brain, that makes sense why continuous learning shows up and it's a personal skill that matters.

Ron: I almost hate to embrace a new concept this far into the podcast, but I'll make this brief. We have done some exciting studies on 23 and 25 soft skills, the competencies. What we find is that the first five to seven have a left hemisphere flare. Your brain agrees, "That is a skill I possess. Yes, I'm a leader. Yes, I'm a good presenter. Yes, I delegate." Those just come across very solid. Then we have this next group that sort of flash back and forth; they're not as intense, they may be right, they may be left, they're in the middle. Then we have a group at the bottom, not for everyone, but we do have a group of people at the bottom... It almost looks like they're brain dead.

Suzie: No hits.

Ron: Yes, and here's what's happening. There's no emotional connection. They have no experience with it. Soft skills are experience-based, and if you've had no experience you simply have no reaction in your brain. I think it's absolutely fascinating. The other problem that we have is, let's say, "Yes, you got a new job and you're going to have to move number 13 skill up to the top five." You'd better have a conversation with that personal about what previous experiences they've had in this because you could have some baggage. If I had you in the brain lab, I might be able to show that you've got a huge right hemisphere flare, some negative experiences with that concept. If you don't deal with that negative experience first, you're never going to develop the skill.

Suzie: Let's go for goal achievement. Goal achievement shows up a lot in benchmarks, and so we're measuring, and it's in one of the top five or seven in a job for benchmarks, and the candidate has it midway...

Ron: And it's a right hemisphere flare.

Suzie: We wouldn't know that on the assessment, but if we know it's kind of low and it's not well-developed and it's not needs development, but it's somewhere in the middle, we would guess it would be that right flare thing, right?

Ron: No, I don't think you can assume it is, but I'll bet you anything that if you don't take the time to find out, you may be wasting your developmental time. You'd better find out, "Okay, goal achievement. What comes to mind when we look at this goal? What are some previous experiences you've had with setting goals? Were those positive or negative experiences?" If they're honest with you, in a good relationship that stuff will start coming out and now we can deal with it.

Suzie: It goes to why, when we do benchmarks, we look at the top seven for someone.

Ron: That's correct.

Suzie: If that goes to that... What I always, I never say, "Don't hire someone," but if they did not match, if they're fair to poor compatibility, let's go back to these interview questions because they're specific competency, behavioral-based interview questions and if the interviewer will be a good listener and ask the question and press for specifics, you can start to see where they stand with those. How good are their examples? That gives you some idea. What you're saying is taking it to the next level, which is to say they're on the job already, or you need to hire them because they're a good fit and they're the best prospect you have, or for many other reasons... When you go to develop it, you need to get to what is their emotional relationship to that competency.

Ron: That's correct.

Suzie: How would you get to that? How would you get to the baggage? What comes to mind, you said, what previous experience have you had?

Ron: Yes, I think that will start opening the doors. What you need to realize as an interviewer is that you, again, use real questions, meaning no yes/no and you don't know the answer to the question. Once you've opened that door, you need to follow with what I call probing questions. Never let one question have one answer; it opens a doorway to a series of questions. Once you get an answer, "Tell me about the previous experiences you've had," they will give you an answer, and now you follow up by listening to them, and have a follow-up probing question that takes you even deeper.

Suzie: Yes, we have really good interview questions that come with the benchmark that will make you go deeper if we'll listen. I always say it's a 25% to 75% process, the interviewer's talking 25%, and the candidate is talking 75%, but I don't think that always happens. What you said earlier...

Ron: There's another missing component that we would be delinquent in not mentioning, and that is that silence is not lost time. Silence is thinking. When you pose a question, you'd better realize that in most cases, people will either rephrase the question or answer it themselves in less than three seconds. When you say three seconds, you go, "Oh, I can't believe I do that," but the fact is three seconds feels like an eternity when you're actually not having vocalization occurring. You have got to allow people time to think. Real questions require real thinking.

Suzie: Yes, very good point. I like that. And leverage the silence. Sit there, don't fill in the blank. Especially us high D's and I's, don't fill in the blank, let it be there.

Ron: Let's talk just a little further. Not only leverage the silence, leverage the silence, that's a beautiful term, that means that you keep eye contact, you do not start writing notes, you don't go get water from the cooler, you engage, you mentally engage, and literally allow them to think, but you do not also allow them off the hook.

Suzie: No, exactly. You're so right.

Ron: Those are powerful concepts. We've sort of covered the waterfront this morning, Suzie.

Suzie: Yes, we have. You're awesome. Let me ask you this: You said there's no emotional connection, so when we're doing the personal skills and we're rating the 25 and we see where they're the strongest, and you see when you do the brain research that it matches up, wherever they're the strongest, there's some intensity of brain research. Does the same thing about avoidance apply on the lower personal skills or is it more of... Talk about that, what you talked about... We have an intense reaction to things we want to avoid. Does that show up in the personnel skills, and personal skills, and if so, what does that tell us and what can we tell when we're looking at the assessment and looking at how they ranked in the assessment?

Ron: That's absolutely a beautiful question because that's the assumption that I had: We would go with left side intense, and we would move down the list. When we got to 23 or 25, we would have right side intense flares showing avoidance. That was the hypothesis. That's not what happened.

Suzie: The left side is "like," the right side is "avoid." You assumed the higher scoring things would be "I like these things," the brain relates to them, they have a place to put it. The lower ones would be avoid, "I don't like these." What did you find? It sounds like maybe you found something different.

Ron: We did! Not with everyone. In some cases, it's lights flashing back and forth, right and left all the way through the entire list, but we do find a lessening in intensity as you move down, even if there's right and left, the intensity starts to reduce. In other words, these are by definition experience-based. You don't gain soft skills by reading a book. These soft skills are experience-based, and if you've had no experience in a phenomenon, you're not going to have a brain reaction. You're going to have these toward the bottom, in most cases, will have very little reaction to very little intensity. That's fascinating. It's not an avoidance, it's just non-existent. I had a person doing "presenting" and the "presenting" showed up with no reaction at all. When I had the debrief he said, "I've never had to present. I don't do that."

Suzie: Does that make it easier or harder for him to learn how to present?

Ron: I've tried to come up with an analogy, I'm not going to use my analogy, but I'll do the explanation. In some cases, it might be easier to work on some of those lower skills and develop them because they have no emotional baggage. Some of them in the middle that you think, "Let's move number 13 to number 7. Let's just move this up a little bit instead of working on number 20 and 21." You may have baggage on some of those middle components that you'd better overcome before you think can move them up. You might be easier to develop somebody who has no past experience with a phenomenon than to develop a concept where they already have some negative baggage.

Suzie: How does that tie to what you were talking about, about that drink, the Caipirinha, and you didn't have a place to put it? Does it tie to that story at all?

Ron: It does in that you have dendrites for some concepts that are firmly in place, that have to be overcome. Let's think back... When I became a professor, I knew I was going to be at a university, I was going to be teaching, and that I had a blackboard in front of me, or a white board. I had to run classes. The idea of walking up to a board and writing something on that board was almost an intense anxiety attack, and I'll tell you why, I'm extremely dyslexic. I can't

spell, and I certainly can't walk up to a board and write a word, a scientific word, no less, with any degree of accuracy. The idea of doing that was such a flare, even in classes... What I did was I had workarounds. First of all, I got used to the idea of letting people know that I can't spell. "Okay, I've got other skills, but this is one I don't have." Secondly, I found other people more than willing to play that role in a class while I am facilitating the discussion.

Suzie: Right.

Ron: We're brainstorming, and so others write down the brainstorm. I'm not trying to do two things at once, one of which I can't. You find ways of overcoming it. But if somebody had given me this test and said that you're going to have to do this as a skill, and they said, "Okay, we'll just have you do that tomorrow." No, that's not going to fly. We'd better talk about this. A lot of people feel that way about presenting in front of groups. I present in front of thousands of people, and I've done it for so many years, I simply, I love the idea of an audience. I feel like I am being able to step up in front of an orchestra and given the opportunity to make beautiful music with those skilled people that are in front of me. That's how I feel about when I'm on stage. They're not threatening to me. They're wonderfully skilled people that I have the opportunity to take 15/20 minutes and direct. But a lot of people freak at the concept of standing in front of a group. They freak.

Suzie: Yes. So you have a strong left flare of your frontal lobe, I'm looking at my notes, which means, "I love it." The association, the flow in your brain, and probably on the assessment it scores really high. It's like, "Yeah, that's me." It's obviously one of your strengths. But if it had some question, which it doesn't, that said about blackboard all those years ago, having to write on the blackboard, you would have had an extreme right flare which would be "avoid." If we're just trying to... I'm making this up. If blackboard writing was one of the personal skills, you would score it, you would probably have scored it low, you wouldn't have scored it low, you might would have scored it midway?

Ron: Probably.

Suzie: Probably midway. It's like, "I can do it, but I don't like it, so I don't score it like a positive, and I don't score it as neutral." On the assessment, the way it would show up is somewhere in the middle. Out of the 25, number 16 or 17 or whatever, depends on how everything else was. But what that would say is there's baggage, which is what you're saying. The middle of these we have some emotional association with them, and it isn't a positive one. With that emotional association, the development of it is doable, but you need to understand the baggage around it.

Ron: There's an extra step that has to be implemented.

Suzie: Yes, that makes sense. That makes a lot of sense.

Ron: You don't need a brain scan to do this; you just need a good conversation.

Suzie: A good conversation, and know even to be looking for those things. What your brain scans are doing, though, are giving us this insight.



Ron: It really is. It's explaining the causality behind observations. You know, a lot of us have worked at the symptom level. I would like to think TTISI is really going to causes and not symptoms.

Suzie: That's exactly my experience of it, and what my clients say all the time, "Gosh, we don't want to hire without this tool," or, "This is having really strong ROI because people are really understanding themselves," and that includes all three assessments. I always feel like the acumen piece and the DNA and all that, the under the hood part, really gets to causality a lot of times, as well as the motivators.

Ron: Let's talk briefly about that. I like the analogy that our assessments, our five sciences, are sort of like an onion, with the outer being, maybe behaviors. But what happens is each additional science goes deeper into the understanding. Now some jobs, all you need is behaviors and you've got what you need. If you're hiring somebody to run the cash register at Amigo's, you know they're only going to be there for four weeks and that's the way life is, then that's fine.

Suzie: Behaviors work.

Ron: But if you want a CEO, you better take him and go full five sciences and figure out how these people click. And each one does go deeper. There's no doubt about it.

Suzie: Yes. Awesome.

Ron: What other things might you want to talk about? Or have we covered the waterfront?

Suzie: We're close to there. If we were to summarize a little bit about... There are leaders listening to this call right now who are saying, "Now how can I use this, this is interesting," they're enjoying all the information, and I think we've given them some ideas on how to use, but maybe we could summarize some of them. How would we use some of this understanding of avoidance and brain flares and how the brain works? When you think about, what would maybe the top three or four things?

Ron: For the CEO that just wants solutions, they need to realize that there are some companies doing all the work behind-the-scenes for them, and I'd like to think that they could trust TTISI as being one of those companies that is doing the groundwork and building the foundation so that they don't have to feel vulnerable. That's one takeaway. The next takeaway, though, you're hitting them absolutely correctly, recognize the role of avoidance in decision-making, recognize the need to understand self, as phase one, and others, for phase two, and then apply the knowledge of self to an interaction with another, for phase three. There's these levels that you have for interactions that can be developed. By the way, I just outlined at least a decade of work for a person. That's not something you do overnight.

Suzie: It's a process.

Ron: It is. A total process. Multiple sciences are absolutely crucial. Rarely do you find that one science is going to answer all of your questions. And even multiple sciences require a good understanding of questioning, listening and debriefing. I think that this is the age of the brain.



When I grew up we had the space program and we went to the moon, and then we had oceanography with my favorite person on Earth probably, Jacques Cousteau.

Ron: By the way, I had the opportunity to speak before Jacques Cousteau in Paris many years ago, talk about a hard act to set the stage for. Nobody wanted to listen to me, they wanted me to get out of the way so Jacques got up there.

Suzie: You're very engaging, though. I'll bet they liked you.

Ron: I was okay. That was a learning experience as well. In fact, I'll tell you the learning experience. My advisor was with me on that trip, and I was too young to be doing what I was doing. I was at the World Council for Science Education. We had 44 different languages in the room; there were translators in little glass booths all over around the edges of this room. I'm speaking, and it's being translated simultaneously into 44 languages, and I'm pulling this off and trying to set the stage for one of the purposes and outcomes for the conference and what we're going to accomplish worldwide. Afterward, I'm at the back of this thing at noon when it's over, and a gentleman comes up and he says, "That was an awesome speech, and you really pulled together and were passionate about our purpose and our goals." My advisor is standing beside me, and I said, "Well thank you, but frankly I didn't have a clue what I was going to say when I got up there." The guy sort of walked off, and my advisor said, "I have never been madder at you than I am right now." I said, "Why?" He says, "You lied to him. You told him you were not prepared. I know you got up there and read your audience and figured out what was working and what was not working. You modified what you were going to do, but you were prepared. You were over-prepared. Number two, you insulted him, you told him he had no ability to determine quality." Notice that I didn't say I had two things before I started that statement.

Ron: No more than had I finished that when a little, short lady comes up to me, and she points to the podium, and she says, "Others be missable. You..." She points to me and she throws her arms in the air and she says, "You, more to say." I looked at my advisor, and I bowed and said, "Thank you." There are times when you have to acknowledge and let things go and not put yourself down and not put others down. I don't think people realize the effect they have on other people. I was trying to be humble, and in the process I insulted a person.

Suzie: That's a good point.

Ron: There's a difference between humility and insulting, and that comes from reading people and listening to people and understanding their worldview. It's not easy folks, and it does take mirror neurons.

Suzie: Yes, understanding their world, and then we talked about listening which is a big part of that, ask real questions and shut up.

Ron: Mentally putting a camera in the corner of the room, and taking and listening to the conversation from a third eye. Attempting to view the reality you're living from outside that reality so that you can actually see how they're reacting. You can see their non-verbals, you can hear what they're saying from their perspective. By the way, these things are easy to say and they are hard to do.

Suzie: But I think they're doable. I see people doing it all the time. I can think of an executive that I've gotten to know over the years that has really dived into the assessments and works really hard at understanding what he's doing and what he's bringing to the equation. Every time one of his employees takes the assessment, he's very tuned into, "Okay, what does it say? What do they need? How do I read it?" That person is a really effective leader, was good before and stronger now by just doing the work.

Ron: We recognize when we see it. We rarely break down what we see into doable, replicatable process. That's what I think this conversation today has attempted to do is to start people to think about, "This is replicatable. It has multiple layers and multiple dimensions, but if we embrace each and work at each, ultimately they are brought together in a synergism that leads to far better communication, far better leadership, and ultimately, far better productivity.

Suzie: Yes, wonderful. Great research that you're doing – so interesting. I'd like to, as you move forward and discover new things, have you back on the podcast. What is next for the Center of Applied Cognitive Research? What's next for you and what's next for the center? What's on the horizon?

Ron: First of all, I want to replicate the process we've been using and delve into emotional quotient. The EQ is one of our assessments, and I want to revisit it from the viewpoint of exposing the pathways, again, that are being employed for decision-making and see if we can capture when people are losing their emotional quotient and emotional intelligence, when they are referring and going into a reptilian brain reaction. I think we can really accomplish that.

Ron: The other one is a little bit outside my comfort zone right now because I am a scientist, but even scientists need to realize there are things we don't understand and maybe we ought to embrace those mysteries. You see, we have something called intuition in our driving forces, intuitive. I need to figure out where intuition comes from. Where is that? Is it simply experience or is there more to it? I'm starting to work with a group of neurologists, and this is premature to even let the cat out of the bag, but we're looking at five brains, not just one. We're going to start looking at the interplay and the activity and the purpose of the neurons that are already a massive neuronet associated with the gut, and a massive neuronet is associated with the heart. New age people like to talk about the gut and the heart.

Suzie: They're talking about chakras.

Ron: I want to talk about true neurology. Can we identify the neurological function and interplay of those neuronets in decision-making. There's some literature out there, and there are a group of us that are embracing this and trying to look at it more scientifically. That excites me.

Suzie: That is so interesting, and people can relate to that. You know when you feel something.

Ron: You do. It's like everything else in our assessments. We really know these things at a gut level. We know that we exhibit different behaviors, but as we said earlier, we are now giving voice to that and an explanation that we can work with. That's the same thing we want to do with these other concepts is to try to understand them well enough to relate causality instead of just verbiage.

Suzie: Yes, that's awesome. I can't wait to hear about that, both of those are interesting.

Ron: I'm only 67, so I've got a few more years to work on it.

Suzie: Yes, you do, and I look forward to hearing all about it. We're going to head to a close. I've gotten so much good information from you that I know is going to be helpful. I look forward to listening to it again and pulling together the show notes. As we go to a close, let's switch gears back to a little bit of personal because I think that will give some good insight and inspiration to people who are listening. When you think about what advice you'd give your 30-year-old self, what would you say? What would be the advice you'd give to younger Dr. Ron?

Ron: We talked a little bit about the fact that I think embracing and learning... Every experience we have is really an opportunity to learn, and we have no clue where that knowledge fits, but we should not be so selective in what we learn. I have to tell you that as a high theoretical and a high D, my younger self would go to a social gathering and if I couldn't find somebody that was intellectually stimulating, I'd literally leave. I'd either leave physically or leave mentally. That was a mistake. Every human being has something to offer us. We can learn from everyone, no matter their age, their nationality, their race. We have to embrace opportunities in ways we've never done before because the world is growing in its complexity. We have to embrace that complexity by really examining possibilities. That's one of the things I would do.

Ron: The other regret that I, frankly, have in my life is that I did not have a mentor that helped me recognize who I should have been meeting and interacting with when I was younger. I say that because I started to recognize that mid-career. I had actually made an appointment to go meet with Richard Feynman, and he died on me before the appointment could take fruition. I recognized that there were so many people that came before me that I should have tried to meet and been a part of and go places. I've done more of that than a lot of people. I mean, how many people, as an assistant professor, are on stage with Jacques Cousteau?

Suzie: Really. And got an award from Carl Sagan.

Ron: I have had opportunities, but think of all the people we've missed that we could have learned from, that we could have engaged with.

Suzie: The key term there is a mentor. So helpful for us to mentor as we grow, and then for younger folks to be looking for the right mentor or mentors.

Ron: I think that's absolutely crucial. By the way, a mentor is not just somebody you need at the beginning, I think it's a lifelong process. This may sound strange, but I did my PhD in my early thirties/late twenties, and I had an advisor that, when I decided to do a PhD, I had to have an advisor. I asked a number of people, and I finally had this meeting with this gentleman, and he says, "I am considering you for a PhD student." He said, "I only take three PhD students at a time, and I will spend a full year with you before the other two engage." So he said, "Here's the expectation, and you can take it or leave it: If you decide to work with me and I decide to work with you, 5:30 every morning we lift weights. Ten o'clock we teach methods class. 12 o'clock we debrief and have lunch over what we did right and what we did wrong. 3:30 we play racquetball. If you're not willing to do those things and work with me in that manner, I will not be your advisor."

Suzie: Interesting.

Ron: My advisor was Dr. John Penick, and he expected me, and he, that we would share mind and body, we would be one, that he was going to spend quality time on me to form the rest of my career, and if I wasn't willing to put that energy into it, he wasn't going to waste his time on me.

Suzie: Wow.

Ron: I lost racquetball badly one day and played terrible, and the next day we were going to lunch and he said, "I want you to go into that building and ask where a McDonald's is," and I said, "Why would I do that?" He said, "Just do it." So I walked in McDonald's and asked where McDonald's was.

Suzie: And?

Ron: He came out and he said, "Are you a complete loser? Are you a failure? Did that hurt? Are mistakes irreparable? Are they destroying you? No, we all make mistakes. Live with it. Get over it."

Suzie: He was interesting to be around and really set the course.

Ron: Yes, and for years I would do talks and he would show up at national and international conferences and once in a while would walk in on my talks, and I knew at the end of the talk I would always get one to two pages on his yellow pad of things that I needed to improve on.

Suzie: Wow. Goodness. You don't get that that much anymore today. Young people aren't getting much of that...

Ron: They don't think some of us that are old have anything to offer because we don't know how to pinch a computer screen and make the picture bigger. They just dismiss us. They dismiss us because of some things that technologically... But we need to realize that every human being offers insights that we need.

Suzie: Yes. I love that. Let's talk about... I'm interested in hearing your answer to this question: If you could put one billboard anywhere, where would it be and what would it say?

Ron: One billboard... I don't know where I would put it, but I know what it would say.

Suzie: What?

Ron: "Listen for those things you have never heard." I am shocked by how many times, and I used to do this with students. I'd take them out into nature and I'd say, "Identify a one square meter area. Now get down and identify every different species and every different organism and every different thing you can find in that one square meter." We ignore detail. We ignore complexity, it frightens us. As a result, we miss out, so many times, we don't see the trees for the forest.



Suzie: “Listen for those things you have never heard.” Subnote, embrace complexity and detail, right?

Ron: Yes, and I’ve learned that with the people I work with with Asperger’s. They have such a unique view of the world. I just can’t fathom the complexity that they, many times, see, that we have no clue exists.

Suzie: Learn from everybody.

Ron: Yes. Now they could learn, too, because they also have difficulty reading emotions and understanding interactions, so it’s not a perfect world for them either. But they also see some things that I can’t see. They understand things that I can’t fathom. I learn from them. I learn a great deal from them.

Suzie: Right. Yes, that’s beautiful. We’re going to close out. I’m also going to reference some ways to reach you. But if you could think of, out of all that we’ve talked about today and you think about who’s listening which is probably people who are running companies and leaders who are on team, consultants, people who are in training and development, there’s a wide mix of listeners for the Wakeup Eager Workforce Podcast, if you could think of what you would share as one piece of wisdom or advice that you’d like everybody to take away. Maybe it’s about acceptance and avoidance and diversity. Wherever you want to take it. What would be that piece of advice?

Ron: Embrace uniqueness. Uniqueness scares us. If people don’t look like us and talk like us and act like us, they scare us. Yet that uniqueness is something I think that actually adds richness when it’s embraced, when it’s given credit. There’s one topic we have not talked about, but I haven’t figured exactly out how do this. There’s a new concept out that is being embraced by a very small group of people in business, and it’s called neurodiversity. We embrace the concept of having age diversity, having gender diversity. In fact, in some cases, it’s mandated by law. Yet, I think there’s a place for neurodiversity. There’s a place for these people I work with with Asperger’s in our businesses. We have to figure out, and we’re having a growing number of people that are on an autistic spectrum. We cannot house them the rest of their lives. We need to help them be productive citizens. This concept of embracing uniqueness in its whole fashion, I mean uniqueness on a whole spectrum, including neurodiversity, there are places for every human being no matter their intellect, no matter their social graces. There are places that we can help people enter and grow.

Suzie: I can see that so much, what you said about autism and Asperger’s. Then if you pull out from that, you just think about on a team, how complex it is and then how unique each person is. Then if you can learn to not label it as negative or create resistance within it and embrace it, wow, what a difference from all avenues.

Ron: Absolutely. This has been a privilege and an honor to interact with you. I truly hope that there are some insights that we have been able to discuss that will trigger ideas in your listeners. I think this is a wonderful service you’re providing. There are a number of us who have time in our commutes, and times in our lives when we have an opportunity to listen to a podcast and to give true thought to some of these concepts where reading a book or actually taking the



time to do it in another media is difficult. Thank you for embracing another media that I think is filling a major need and gap.

Suzie: It is my pleasure. I love doing it, and I love interacting with interesting people like yourself who are willing to take time out of their schedule to share and just appreciate you spending your time here today with us.

Suzie: I hope you enjoyed that interview with Dr. Bonnsetter. I'll put a link to all of his contact information in the show notes for this episode. It's pricelessprofessional.com/brain2, and I'll give you a link too, he has a neat YouTube channel that has Science of Self in 60 Seconds. I've enjoyed those. I think he has maybe ten now, of different episodes, and they're coming out periodically. Those are good. I share those on my Wake Up Eager Facebook page, just insights and tips about the brain and how the brain works. I do believe, and I think after you've listened to this interview, you'll feel the same way, that the brain and brain research is everywhere now. Maybe not everywhere... It's the future of what we're talking about. How we think, how we make decisions. That's why we use the assessments that we use with the TriMetrix is how do we interact, how to become a stronger, better version of ourselves, how do we understand others. It truly is the science of self, and I love that the company I'm associated with has people like Dr. Bonnsetter and his team thinking about and working on continually refining what we do and making it relevant and making it more powerful so that we understand how we really do make decisions and how we do work.

Suzie: I look forward to future podcasts. I think the next thing I'm going to do is I'm going to do a podcast about the driving forces assessment. We talked about it, it's the next version of motivators which is what puts gas in your tank. I want to explain what the driving forces is, how it's the next version of motivators, and for those who are interested, give you some more insights on those avoid areas that we talked about. If our brain is saying, "That's the one I want to do the least," and how that becomes a motivator. I'll probably, in that episode, give you some opportunities to take or get a complimentary copy of your driving forces if you're curious about that. Tune into that, that'll probably be episode 31.

Suzie: For now, I'm signing off. If you want to reach out to me, suzie@pricelessprofessional.com or any of my social media channels. If you have ideas for a podcast or insights or information or want to share a review on iTunes, gosh I'd love it. Until we meet again, we'll see you on the next podcast or if we connect via email or social media. Take care.

Outro: This episode of the Wake-Up Eager Work Force Podcast was brought to you by Priceless Professional Development. Thank you for tuning in. If you enjoyed today's show, head over to pricelessprofessional.com to gain access to more professional development resources.