



Wake Up Eager Workforce Podcast, Episode 52
A Series About Wake Up Eager Leader Habits: Activate Greatness: What Great Coaches and Leaders Do -- Produced By Suzie Price

Activate Greatness - Transcript
www.pricelessprofessional.com/denise

Suzie: Price: “I can listen, I can acknowledge what I heard, I can affirm what I hear you saying is, what your biggest concern is, and I can also listen behind the words they speak, to the emotions that I hear and the commitment that's behind the words, the commitment and the vision behind the words are bigger than the words they're saying right here, right now.” That's important information from Professional Coach Denise Hedges. She's also my coach and today we're talking about how to activate greatness in others and Denise is really good at activating greatness in others, otherwise she wouldn't be my coach. I've worked with her since 2013. Our topic is *What Great Coaches and Leaders Do to Activate Greatness in Others*. Hit It, Michael.

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, my name is Suzie Price of Priceless Professional Development and you are listening to the Wake Up Eager Workforce Podcast, I'm so glad that you are here. Welcome to 2019. I'm recording this on January the 18th, 2019 and this begins our 16th year in business at Priceless Professional Development where we help Senior Leaders build an energetic, committed, drama-free, Wake Up Eager Workforce, and we do that through hiring science, helping leaders put the right people in the right seats, then we'll use that science as people come on board through the lifecycle of their work with your company, by coaching leaders to be more successful, training leaders, and then working with teams and creating a Wake Up Eager Team Dynamic. We also help with this idea of creating a committed, drama-free, Wake Up Eager Workforce through our books, newsletters, and this podcast. So we're all about Waking Up Eager here, it's the art and science of being the best of who you are, bringing that to your work so that you create a rich and satisfying life and as you become a, and are the Wake Up Eager leader, you can influence the Wake Up Eager Team Dynamic, you can influence having a Wake Up Eager Workforce, people have less dread, you have less dread, regret and turnover, you have more joy, more success, and the focus is basically on helping everybody operate at their highest level of contribution. And part of the series that we're doing, and this episode today, episode number 52 of the Wake Up Eager Workforce Podcast is talking about five Wake Up Eager Habits that we think are important for Wake Up Eager Leaders. We use the acronym eager, E-A-G-E-R, and here are the five habits that we've been talking about on the podcast recently. E, enter the zone. A, activate greatness, that's what we're talking about today. G, grow trust. E, evaluate job fit. R, recalibrate daily. So if you want to listen to the other podcasts that talk about these habits, have some great interviews and discussions around the habits and what they look like for a leader and how do you do more of each, you can go to wakeupeagerworkforce.com and you'll see our



complete directory of all 52 episodes. After this interview with Denise Hedges today, it's who we're talking to today, I'm going to share with you six workforce trends to expect in 2019 and talk a little bit about some new tools that we're creating for you and kind of what's up with Priceless Professional Development this year.

Suzie: So our episode again is episode number 52 is *What Great Coaches and Leaders Do to Activate Greatness in Others*. Three main headline topics today: Three things leaders can do to activate greatness in others. Denise gives very specific and helpful information there. We talk about the power of how to listen behind the words for emotion and commitment and that ties to the quote I started with today and the power of being present with people and coaching people effectively and seeing their best so they can rise to that occasion, seeing where they want to go, not getting caught up in where they're wobbling and over focusing on that, helping, inspiring people. And she is awesome at that. We also talk about how to get out of the problem, so when there is a problem, how do you acknowledge it and let that be the balance to move towards solutions, and Denise is also good at that and good at giving very effective feedback, so you can hear something that you need to correct, not be defensive, take it in and use it.

Suzie: So I want to tell you quickly about Denise's background and then we'll hop into the interview. She's a Business Development Coach and a Speaker Coach with over 30 years experience in sales and marketing. I first heard her speak at an Atlanta training and development session or a breakout session. And she was awesome. She's helped me and thousands of business owners nationally and internationally. She specializes in helping people grow their business using the strategy of speaking. She also works with leaders in organizations to refine their presence in front of the room so they connect with their audiences and present themselves and their ideas in the most compelling and impactful way possible. She is really good at that, has a great process around that. And while that's a skill always to be upgraded, she's helped me make great movement there. She is a Professional Certified Coach and a member of The Coach University Faculty, she trains personal and business coaches all over the world. Her website is denisehedges.com. Let's go to the interview now.

Suzie: Denise, so glad you're here, thank you for coming to talk about activate greatness where we're talking about honest and straightforward conversations, finding the right balance of, you know, focusing on strengths. And what I want to do is just kick it in right away and ask about the things that you think, and maybe you can pick your top three, that leaders and coaches can do more of to activate greatness, and the people they lead and coach every day, something that I experience you as being very good at doing. So tell us, how do we do more of this?

Denise: Well, I think the key is Suzie, is to be a stand for somebody's greatness. What do I mean by being a stand? You believe in their greatness, you are committed to their greatness, even when they can't see their greatness. It's easy to be a stand for somebody's greatness when they're behaving greatly. It's not quite so easy to be a stand for their greatness when they're challenged. So no matter where they are, listen for their greatness, listen for their strengths, their commitment for the positive intention behind their words.



Suzie: Love it. I love that, take a stand. How do you think, how does that serve you as a coach? When you think about that, how does that help you serve others, when you take a stand for their greatness?

Denise: Well, Suzie, you know, when I'm coaching folks, there's, it's always because big things that they're up to in their life and in their business and their work, right? And so because they're up to big things, they are stretching themselves, stretching themselves beyond where they know that they can go. And like any human being, when we stretch ourselves, guess what, there's gonna be a point in which we waver or we wobble in our commitment, and as a coach, the key for me is not to get sucked into the wobble, to stay committed for what I know in my heart of hearts they can do, to stay in my belief of what they want and their vision of what it looks like when they have it, even when that rubber band is being stretched and there's some tension on the wire because of it.

Suzie: Yeah, yeah. How did you get to a place where you did this well? Is this just something you've always done well? I've been the recipient of you doing this and you do do it well. Is it something you've always done well? And I guess I would add onto that, that is not what we see in everyday culture, it is a natural tendency to, for many of us to dig into what's not working and to really point that out. So I guess my two-fold question is how did you get so strong and oriented this way? And then what can others do to change that tendency to say, "Well, you did this wrong, you did that wrong, you did this wrong, you said that wrong, you did this wrong." Talk a little bit about that for yourself and others.

Denise: So it doesn't come naturally ingrained in me, my personality type is such that I'm going to see what's wrong automatically. Okay? Just ask my partner in life, just asked my children, right? And they'll tell you that's the first thought, the first thing that comes to mind, is what's wrong? What's not working, right?

Suzie: Yeah. Right.

Denise: But your first thought is not always your best thought.

Suzie: Yeah.

Denise: Just keep that in mind. That's critical. Your first thought is not my best thought. So it's much easier in life for me to do this with my clients than it is with the partners and my children that I love. Right?

Suzie: Yeah. So why do you think that is? It's easier with clients than it is with family. I think for me, I find I have more distance, I'm less kind of ensnared in their challenges, I'm less, you know, I've had less experience with them. There's positive distance with clients, so, it's easier to, my habit is different. Would you say the same?



Denise: I would say that is a big part of it, absolutely a big part of it. The other big part of it that I know is that with my clients, I don't have the same agenda as I do with the people closer to me in my life, right? With people closer to me in my life, I know the way they should do it, they should do it my way.

Suzie: Right.

Denise: Okay. So there's less distance, there is more of an agenda. I'll never forget, one of my clients, this is from 15 years ago said to me, "Denise, the thing I love about you is that you never ever have an agenda of how I should do something, your only agenda is that I'm happy and successful."

Suzie: And I think that is a skill, like you said, "My first thought is not my best thought," because if my natural habit might be to look at what's wrong and then there's other skills that you have developed, that you've helped me develop and that I personally am in developing for myself, is this idea of never having an agenda. What are some of the other things that you say to yourself or that you help others do to make sure that their agenda is first and foremost when you're coaching and leading others?

Denise: So when I'm coaching and leading others, the agenda that's in front of me is simply, only, that the client be happy/successful. And the reason why I say happy slash successful is because for me, you aren't successful if you aren't happy too, right?

Suzie: Right.

Denise: So it's got to be about what they want, what they need, and how together we can reach those goals. So number one, don't get sucked into their story of why they can't do something, affirm that, acknowledged that, I see that that's a challenge, how can we help you to get past that? What do you need in order to get past that? Keep their commitment and their vision in mind, affirm their strengths, even when they don't see them themselves. So I have a brand new assistant, he's been with me a couple three months now, and there have been, as any new employee, right, there have been some challenges in learning the job, getting the job done from like some impatience on our part, like why don't they know that already, right?

Suzie: Yes.

Denise: And the challenge with my assistant, who's part time, is also the fact that he's gone one week out of the month, and I knew that when I hired him. So I wanted this person and I took him on with three weeks out of the month. And so while I'm here in Mexico, there are certain chores, certain tasks that need to get done for the Christmas season, all the gifts that go out to my clients, the cards, that kind of thing, so what I did was instead of delegating to him when it had to be done and how it had to be done, and you know, it's got to be done on these days, what I did instead was say, "Okay, here are the tasks at hand, here's what needs to be accomplished and by this date, how you accomplish that is totally up to you." What that did was empower him,

I mean he got it done in record time, he's brand new and he did it faster than the person who did it last year who'd been with me a couple of years, but he was empowered to do the task, he knew the parameters of the task, he knew when it needed to be done by and he knew he had me as a resource if he had questions. But other than that, I got out of his way so he could do his work.

Suzie: The empowering is so important and the parameters being clear, but let them figure it out. That's great. And he did.

Denise: He did. And you have got to have a by when. So a lot of people will give people the parameters and then say, "So why isn't that done yet?" "But when did you tell me it needed to be done by?" Very clear communication, clear parameters, end result, and by when?

Suzie: Yeah. Awesome. I liked when you gave your list of three, where you said don't get sucked into this story, acknowledge/ask them to keep their commitment and vision in mind, and three, affirm their strengths, even when they don't see them. The first one I think can be challenging for folks because it's the habit of listening and everywhere I go with every group and every individual I talk to, somewhere along the line they come to the conclusion that they need to be a better listener, and so I think that is key. And that first one about let people say what they need to say, they need to be heard, you acknowledge it, but just because you're listening and you're acknowledging and supporting them by saying, "I understand, I hear what you're saying," it doesn't mean you're buying in. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Denise: Absolutely, you said that profoundly. I can listen, I can acknowledge what I heard, I can affirm what I heard, so what I hear you saying is, what your concern here is, and I'm also listening behind the words they speak to the emotions that I hear and the commitment that's behind those words, the commitment and the vision behind those words are bigger than the words that they're saying right here, right now.

Suzie: That's profound right there. Yep. The commitment and vision behind the words are more important than the words, and when people are logical listeners and they can say, "I heard everything you said, now let me tell you what you need to do," that is not activating greatness, but what you just said, how, it's the way a coach listens. And I know for myself, listening just like a day to day, I'm with my girlfriends, and I do listen, but there's a different way of listening. Talk to me a little bit about, how do you, are you always in that mode of that very close listening? Does that happen for you naturally all the time now, or how did you get so good at that?

Denise: Oh heck, no.

Suzie: Ok good, I'm glad, you're human. How did you get so good at that? Like listening, and what tips can you give folks, because I hear it all the time, it was just with a group of people, and out of 14 people, 5 people came to the conclusion that you know, they need to listen more closely and be more effective. So talk a little bit about how you have grown that and how do you listen behind the words.

Denise: Okay, good. So number one is you have to absolutely present in the moment. Most of us aren't listening in our day-to-day life because we're busy doing something, we're thinking about something else, we're multitasking. So the first key is to be absolutely present in the moment. Most of us in our everyday lives, we're multitasking, we've got things going on in her head. Most of the time we're not listening, we're preparing what we're going to say next week. We think we're listening, but who we're listening to is ourselves. So in being totally present, first of all, take away all distractions, easy for a coach, easier for a coach than a leader in a busy environment, right? But for those important conversations as a leader, as well as a coach, turn off all the distractions, the bells, the whistles, the computers, the reminders, all of that, and just be in the moment. The second key to that is, listen to what they're saying, not what you want to say next, recognize that you always have that little voice that's preparing what you're going to say next, but really do your very best to just be with what they're saying, shaft out what you've heard. Most of us think that we've heard something but we don't say, "So what I hear you saying is X, Y, or Z. Is that right?" We just assume that it's X, Y, or Z, and no wasn't, it was A,B, C and D, and we just weren't listening. So check out what you hear and, Suzie, listen with all of you. Not just your ears in your head, but with your heart and your gut, listen and be able to distinguish and this may take some time, but it can happen, distinguish between what your head is saying and what your gut or your intuition is saying. There are times that I say to a client, "You know this might sound pretty crazy, but it keeps coming up in my awareness, so I just want to check it out," and I say what's come up in my gut and they go, "Oh my God, yes, that's it." So if you're in a conversation with somebody and something comes into your awareness the first time, you might not check it out the first time, but if it comes back to you two or three times, then all of a sudden you know that it's probably something you want to say to somebody, but you don't want to say it like it's the truth. So now we're transitioning from the listening to how you speak it, right? Say things like, "Have you considered this? My gut is saying this and I want to check it out. What do you think of that?" Don't tell them, but ask them, "Does this resonate for you?"

Suzie: I think, with the listening, the distractions get in the way. I think sometimes, worry about how you're looking and you have to say something profound, you know, so I'm trying to like, be impressive, and as soon as I let that go, I think I have pretty much, I think of let that go, I'm way more present now than I used to be and just to be, don't, not trying to be profound and like making my first priority being the person in front of me and their success and that they're heard and really understanding the more they're heard, the more I can activate their greatness because I'll know what they want and what they're looking for. I think that's a key part of it is just trying not to be impressive or just putting all of that, I hate to use the word ego, but that's kind of what it is, all the ego and all the insecurity aside, and just remembering that my responsibility is to be with and help this person in front of me be great, find their greatness.

Denise: Exactly. And they will if you trust in that. Years ago, Suzie, there was an experiment that was done in coaching, and the coach, they had multiple coaches in front of clients and the coaches were instructed not to say a word through the whole session, they could say, "Uh huh," they could nod, their only job was to listen and not give advice, not respond, right, nothing more than you know, affirmations, "Uh huh," nodding, that kind of thing, right, nonverbal behaviors.

And they compared that to a control group, another group where the coach was doing more of what we do in coaching, was speaking back and forth with a dialogue, and they had the clients rate the coaching and overall the very best ratings, the par excellent rating, went to the coaches who said nothing but “Uh huh.” Now I'm not suggesting that as a leader in an organization that you simply nod and say, “Uh huh.” But that is the power of letting somebody figure it out for themselves. So what if leaders just did more of that? Just a little bit more of that.

Acknowledging, affirming, letting them to work that out for themselves. What if somebody comes in and says, should I do A or B, and instead you're default is, what do you think you should do? What do you think is the best course of action? Right? Allowing them to think that through, to discover it for themselves has much more power, now, if there is faulty thinking in there you can say, “I can see where you're going with that and have you considered?” So again, whether you're a coach or a leader, it's trusting that the person generally has the answer inside of them and you can help them to find it and when you need to switch over to consulting mode to give them more information so that they can make an even better decision, you're able to do that.

Suzie: The trick is, is to not switch to consulting too fast, you know, so here, “Let me tell you how to do it or let me tell you some advice,” you know, letting them talk it through, which is the whole, like the example of this story of people rating the conversation where all they did is listen, the difference that can make, that's awesome.

Denise: Absolutely. And most of us are impatient and when we're a leader in an organization and we're really, really busy or even your own business, you've got a lot going on, right? You want to cut to the chase. And the key is if you slow down in the moment, it's going to save you time in the long run. But that's sometimes hard to realize, right, until you try it.

Suzie: Yup. And the thought is too, so little of this is done if you just do, you know, 25 percent more than what you're currently doing in an organization, you will stand out as somebody who listens. You know, coaches, that's your full time job. And so, you know, that's what, but if leaders can just build that into their tool chest and realize how powerful of a tool it is and they can do it some more than what they're currently doing, it will have an impact. And I think the thing with patience is, I'm very impatient, I'm, you know, my communication style is off the chart impatient. But what I do is, I make a conscious choice, you know, and like I say, I don't have this all figured out all the time, but I actually for a coaching call or a client call, I have a notebook and a pull it out and 10 minutes before the meeting, you know, I look at my statements to myself about how I want to be in a call and I ready myself. So I think that that's, you know, something leaders could do more of in regard to maybe they just take care of themselves more or maybe they meditate more or they journal or they do things that fill up their tanks so they can be more present. What are your thoughts on all that?

Denise: Absolutely, I agree with everything you said. And I want to add one other piece to it, just to expand it. I think they can appreciate more. So say you're going to have a difficult conversation, a critical conversation, or say you're just going into a coaching session, right? One of the things I really like to do is think about what I appreciate about that person. What that does is it takes my eye off of the, my automatic default of what's wrong, what's not working, and

I go to the things that I appreciate, that I love about that person, the things they're doing well. And I spent, it doesn't even have to be long, it can be two minutes of really thinking about what I appreciate, what their strengths are, what they bring to the table, it can even be, you know, how funny they are, anything, but if I get into that place, it's going to help me to have a different level of conversation than when I'm critical verse, and finding what's wrong.

Suzie: Yup. And when you have a better conversation, the likelihood of, you know, getting the results you want go up exponentially because they're present, they're present too, you know, and involved, as opposed to shut down and resistant. Yeah, that's great.

Denise: And there are some times Suzie, when I'm in a meeting with a client and the client is struggling, and first of all, I have got to get unattached to the fact that I have got to get them out of their struggle, right? Like what am I going to do to help them? And so I just center on, "It's okay, I trust, this will work," right? "I trust the process. I trust myself, I trust them." And instead of having the agenda of, "How the heck am I going to help them?" Right? I go to that place of knowing that it'll all be okay, knowing that together we'll work it out, so I'm not so attached to, like you said, being smart or profound or whatever. Right? But instead, I'm trusting the process.

Suzie: So what do you say to, and actually I was on a call with colleagues recently and they were hammering something and I was of the mindset that, you know, there's no reason to hammer, it was a problem with a group that we all work with. And so I was like a, more neutral and more like, "Well, wait a minute, you've got to see it from their perspective." And they were having none of that which could be a similar situation and is this, you know, and they were really into what was wrong and they were right in what they were saying was wrong, but what I know is that a, if we go at it to that group of people that we all work with, in that mode, nothing's gonna change, but I didn't know how to verbalize it or how to change that, but it ties to the conversation you and I are having right now. You know, in the moment because I was part of it, so I wasn't able to stand back, but it's, but it is what happens, like if this person's not performing and I got a, I have to go after them, you know, it's kind of what happens, you know, without, it's a human thing, "I have go after what they're doing wrong and they need to know it," what say you about that?

Denise: Well, I can't help but be reminded by one of the gurus that you and I share, the teachings of Abraham Hicks. Abraham would say to us that you can't be in the energy of the problem and find the solution from there. There's the problem and that's one set of conversations and energy, right? But when you're in that call and everybody's picking at the problem, that solution is not going to show up.

Suzie: Yup.

Denise: So we'll have one conversation when we're talking about the problem, give yourself, your team, whatever, a certain amount of time, "Okay, you got 10 minutes to talk about the problem and the impact and even complain about it if you want, and then after 10 minutes we're

going to go to neutral, and then from there we can move towards the solution, but we can't find the solution in the same place where we're digging up the problem. Does that help at all?

Suzie: Yeah, it does. And you know, I think about it's one thing when you're in the middle of it and then it's another thing when you're the facilitator of it, because I just did that on Friday. It's like, "Okay, let's all get out why this is a problem," and you know, then everybody's saying this and this and this it's like, "Okay, boom," like you said, neutral, "Now let's start brainstorming solutions." And that makes sense, and you know, Einstein said, "You can't solve a problem at the same place it was created," or he says something like that. So that is an eternal truth that shows up. So it's, so leaders that are trying to help someone be great, feel great, activate their greatness, but if they hammer on the problem the whole time, nothing's going to change, even though they may be right. Not much will change, for sure, I think nothing will change is probably too, too traumatic, but not much will change.

Denise: Agreed. So when you're in the problem, you're in what we call a "Don't want," right? I don't want this to happen, this is the problem. "Don't wants" are really useful, as I know, you know, right? And the biggest use of the "Don't want" is then to flip it over, so say, okay, if we don't have this over here, what is it that we do want? Let's change our thinking to the vision that we see when it's all working right, when it's working well, let's get into the energy of that, what it looks like, what it feels like, what it tastes like, right? All of that, and from that place, that's where the solution can emerge.

Suzie: Yup, and you have to kind of stop the momentum of the "Don't want," which, what, which might mean, "Okay, let's just say everything we don't want right now and get it all out," and then people are like, "Okay, I'm done with the "Don't wants," now I'm ready to talk about what the want is." That's great. That's great. So we're talking about focusing on strengths, we're focusing on talking about listening and activating greatness, so it's hard, sometimes for leaders, let's just list some of the reasons why it's hard, it's, well, we've talked about, we talked about it being, their super busy, we can tend to be impatient.

Denise: We're juggling multiple objectives, all at the same time. We have an agenda.

Suzie: Yep.

Denise: We're leaders because we've demonstrated leadership, which often means that we quote unquote know what's best, right?

Suzie: Yes.

Denise: So we're attached to our solution versus being attached to the outcome.

Suzie: And there is a difference. Okay, so let's talk a little bit about focusing on strengths and doing more of this, what they're doing right and seeing their value and believing in someone and even if they don't see it, and this idea of, you know, that everybody has it within them to be

great, because that is a belief system that I hold and I looked for, but I did recently have a situation with an organization where we were going to talk about genius and they said, “Oh, we can't use the word genius, we're, we are, we're all about humility here, you know, our mission is about being humble,” and so we had a great conversation around that and so I took the word genius out because they have a problem with it and we talked about strengths and blind spots and it all worked perfectly, but it got me thinking about this thing about, I do think this happens to all of us or many of us, is that if I talk about their strengths so much and I trust them even if they're making mistakes, if I trust them and see their possibility that somehow that's not humble or somehow that works against me, I'm not asking the most clear question in the world, but talk a little bit about that, about being humble and how that ties with acknowledging strengths or not acknowledging strengths.

Denise: Well, let's first talk about being humble and then we'll tie it to strength, remind me if I forget, okay?

Suzie: Okay.

Denise: So what is the absolute mirror opposite of humble?

Suzie: Arrogant.

Denise: So you've got humility on one side and you've got arrogant on the other, and most people want to err towards humble because they don't want to be arrogant. What they don't see is there's this place in the middle, this place that I'm going to call, for lack of better words, healthy competence. You're not arrogant, you're not puffed up, but you have a sense of confidence, a presence around you, so you don't have to go to either extreme, whenever we go to an extreme, we can tell that we're going to cause problems for ourselves, so getting to the middle, the healthy confidence, is, I think, really where you want to be.

Suzie: And people who have healthy confidence, and with the TriMetrix Assessments that we do, their sense of self is solid. In other words, and you see it in their performance, they don't, they aren't arrogant, but they have enough confidence that there are more resilient, they bounce back from stress more easy because they're just not eaten up with, those are my words, eaten up with worry about their value, which triggers arrogant behavior often, people who act arrogant are oftentimes are the least secure. Yes, yes. So tie this into strength now or say more about healthy confidence and paying attention.

Denise: So, if you're confident in yourself, you have a healthy sense of self, right? And if you acknowledge that other human beings are just as ordinary as you are and can be just as extraordinary as you can be, right? As human beings, we have both sides. We have the part of us that's absolutely ordinary, we have that, what you called genius, or which is that really extraordinary side, we all have that. So if we acknowledge that that is there, that means that we can really affirm the strengths and still in that place of confidence show people, demonstrate how they might even do a better job, “So you did a really great job on X, Y, Z,” affirm that and,



not but, you're using buffering words here, okay, "And what I'd love to see you do even more of or less of, is this, can you adapt, can you make that change?"

Suzie: And you know what I love about that is, it's actually a previous interview we did a while back, but we're talking about support and challenge together, in other words, they're not exclusive, they're not, you do this one and then you do that one, or you do only this or only that, it's like they can go together and there you are in one sentence saying, "Yeah, this is what I appreciate and here's something that I'd like you to focus on or would like to talk to you about," so it's support and challenge, which feels funny when you do it, a little bit, I think if, like I didn't grow up with that role model, so me actually doing it, I'm getting better and better with it, but when I do it, sometimes it feels funny, but it's so effective and it's so right.

Denise: Most of us, we grew up with the role model of the but, "You did a really good job in there, but." And so that, "But," cancels out everything that's in front of it, everything, and so just substituting that, "And," makes a huge difference for people, they hear the affirmation and we haven't canceled it out with a, "But" or a, "However."

Suzie: Right. To me that's honest and it's really caring, you're taking enough time to remember what the value is and you care enough to say, "Here's something that we need to talk about that may be challenging." You know, that's when I think about that group, that call that I was on recently, it just felt symbolic of what happens every day is, like I was feeling that, you know, it's like, this group is great and here's what they do great, and here's the challenge. And it's just human nature to just say, "Well, yeah, but they aren't doing this, this, this and but, but, but, but, but."

Denise: And then it grows and expands, right?

Suzie: Yes, yes, yes.

Denise: And so give suggestions for folks, when you're going into an area, "I really think you did a good job on this and I'd like to give you one more suggestion, would you be okay with that?" And listen for the answer, "Would you be okay with that" and give them the answer does not work.

Suzie: Yes. So I found you and your partner, Tom, particularly effective at this whenever I did the speaking training with you and we had the day that we were together. So we were a day in Asheville for if you're listening and not familiar with this, and we were all presenting our opening and our closing that Tom and Denise had helped us craft, and there were different levels of experience in the room, extremely different levels of experience and confidence levels and different things and I thought you all were so effective in calling out each person's strengths and being really present with them and not holding back on where the improvement needed to be a, but you did it really well in regard to nobody was shut down, everybody felt good about their contribution and everybody grew. So tell us some more of those secrets. I think maybe you feel like you've already shared them, but you know, speaking is the thing that most people are most



nervous about, and it is when you're more, I think, pretty vulnerable because you created something and you're going to share it. But talk a little bit more about how you all do that so well.

Denise: Well first of all, thank you for the compliment. I think the key is to affirm the strength, as we set a bunch of times, and then as you're making the request for changes, first of all, it's got to come from a place of a request, not a demand, not a have to, not a make wrong. Most of us when we're trying to change behaviors are coming from a make wrong, okay? So ask permission for feedback, most of you in the room were wanting that feedback, so that was easy, but you still want to ask for ongoing permission. Make specific requests. Use language that's not telling language, like you have to do it this way, but rather it's, "Consider this, try it this why, let's see what that looks like," because you're not making a difference for people, you're not really serving somebody if you don't also tell them how they can do better, right? It doesn't serve you, it doesn't serve them. But here's the biggest key, it all comes from the beingness inside, you can say anything, to anybody, if who you're being in the moment is a kind, loving human being.

Suzie: Yep.

Denise: I want the audience to really listen to that, "You can say anything to anybody, if it's coming from that loving space, that, not critical space." So if you're in that critical space, you've got to do whatever you can to get to more of that loving, appreciative space, whatever you gotta do to change what's going on inside of you, so that when the words come out of your mouth, there words that really can resonate with somebody.

Suzie: Yup. I think turning into the other person helps, you know, like what are their goals? How do they like to receive feedback? I mean, I think first you have to be coming from that place, but that can be a path to, you know.

Denise: Oh absolutely. Like for me, I'm that type of personality, tell me directly, just tell me directly, with other people, different personality types, they don't want to know directly, they need to have it softer. I had one assistant at one point with, who was very much an opposite type for me, and so what she requested for feedback is, "If you need to give me feedback on something, put it on my work list, put it in the written communication to me," that way I could craft and re-craft that written communication.

Suzie: Yup. That's ideal.

Denise: Making sure that I take out any of the criticism, you may have to go back to it a couple, three times, right? Trying to be obviously as clear as possible because sometimes written communication can be misunderstood, but it is much easier for me to crack that, but what she did was exactly what you told me, she told me how she best liked her feedback and even though I'd prefer to be direct, I didn't do it my way, I did it her way, and it worked better because of it.

Suzie: Yes. Yes, yes. That's awesome. Let's talk about, you've influenced me to my greatness, I'd say that you're one of my key influencers and you're somebody that I think about and go back to if I have a need, over the years I have since I've met you in 2013 and I know there's other people like me, who can say the same thing, but who has influenced you most, influenced you to your greatness and what kinds of things do they say and do that helped you evolve to your next greatness or your growth?

Denise: So, that's a great question, and I would have to say that one of my biggest influencers was a Seminar Leader that I worked with through a company called Landmark Education. So Landmark Education, there's an office right where you are in Atlanta, and offices all over the world, and they do basically, they do weekend coaching programs for the general public. And when I also talked to you probably about, you know, what resources, what's changed my life would be the teachings of Landmark Education, which was the basis of coaching for me. There was one particular leader, his name is Doug, he was my Seminar Leader and I want to wind back the clock to a different Denise prior to coaching, a Denise who had suffered some hard knocks in life, who had been widowed in her life seven years later, found a lovely man, fell madly in love, was with him less than a year, and he died on Christmas morning. So here I am in my mid-forties, having been widowed twice, Christmas is coming up, that my story is, like so big in my mind, right? And Doug refused to enroll in my little self. He refused to see me as my story, he refused to see me as my little self, he stood for who he saw me to be and even said things that made me angry at the time, like, "Guess what, there's going to be Christmas again next year." So he heard what was going on, but he didn't enroll in it and he challenged me, he totally challenged me to be my bigger, greater self and because of him I went on to be a leader in Landmark Education, leading introductions to the Landmark Forum. I thought I was going to be a Seminar Leader for them, what I recognized from that was really I wanted to be a coach and a speaker and a trainer, and all because he didn't stand for what I saw is my problems and my challenges in life, he saw me as bigger than that and I will forever be grateful to him.

Suzie: So it sounds like he said provoking things to you, but did he, what other like actual actions did he take? He didn't buy in, so that means you'd say the story and he would listen, is what I'm assuming, and he'd acknowledge, how did he help you move off the story? Because there's a lot of stories everywhere. What are the things specifically that he did?

Denise: And I had a particularly good story too, Suzie.

Suzie: Yeah, yeah, real reasons.

Denise: I could have you feeling sorry for me in like ten minutes. But he challenged me. So loving someone, and I use the word "loving" lightly, whether you're a coach or a leader, right, is your ability to lovingly, but firmly challenge somebody. So I would say that's probably the biggest thing, he didn't buy into my story, he heard it, but he didn't buy into it, and he challenged me to be my bigger.

Suzie: So what books or training programs have been most instrumental to your development?

Denise: So obviously is education in general, I have a Master's Degree in counseling before I ever became a coach. And the training programs that I would say in recent years have been extremely instrumental. So first one is the one I just mentioned, Landmark Education. I would not be the leader, the coach, the person I am today without Landmark. That led me to Coach University and doing the additional training I did with them and listening and questioning and asking powerful questions in helping people strategize, all the tools that we take out of our toolbox and use as a coach. I took that learning further by being part of the faculty and doing a nine month faculty training program where we teach coaches, we lead programs and we're doing it over the phone, now you gotta take your listening to a class a whole new level because you don't have all the non-verbals, so Coach University, extremely significant in my life, and then the whole area of mindset training, right? My attitude, my mindset, how I approach life, and we've mentioned this already, the teachings of Abraham Hicks, who I see as one of the leading, and I hate to use the word guru, because I don't follow them because like their a guru, but to me they are the gold star on how you manage your thoughts, how you manage your beingness, how you change your feelings, all that kind of stuff.

Suzie: Yep, agree. Alright, when you think of the word successful, who's the first person that comes to mind?

Denise: I'm going to be absolutely honest, can I tell you the first person comes to mind?

Suzie: Yes.

Denise: Suzie Price. Do you know why?

Suzie: I don't know why, I was not expecting that.

Denise: I know, and I'm not saying that to suck up to you or anything like that, you know, that's not who I am, but I'm always honest and forthright and what comes to mind, Suzie Price comes to mind because successful to me, means happy, we can be successful in the terms of the trappings in life, right? What is our position in life, how much money we're making, all those kinds of things that people typically call success, and for me, success is my ability to move through life happy, doing work that I want to do, making a difference in people's lives and doing it from a space of a happy, energetic being. This is you honey, you just embody that.

Suzie: Awww...thanks. I like your definition too. So let's get to the fun, get to know you questions and these are, first one is what's your favorite guilty pleasure TV show?

Denise: My favorite, favorite, I don't watch a lot of TV, but my favorite, favorite, guilty pleasure show is, "So you think you can dance?"

Suzie: I didn't know that.



Denise: I love dance and I think it's because I'm so darn uncoordinated, it's my alter ego, okay? I love dance. I love watching these young people. I think they're truly amazing and how they challenge themselves over the course of this, you know, small season and they have to learn two, three, four dance programs within a few days and it's amazing to watch them and it's amazing to see, truly extraordinary, on regular TV.

Suzie: Yeah, that's cool, I like it. Share a funny story that your family tells about you.

Denise: Okay, so I'm five years old, I am the first child in New York State to survive open-heart surgery, which no child has ever survived open-heart surgery to that date and time. Okay?

Suzie: Wow. I didn't know that.

Denise: Yeah, I know I'm dating myself a little bit, okay? So here I am two days after open-heart surgery and I'm sitting up in bed, and all these doctors fly in from all over the country and they're all, and I can see it to this day, and they're all surrounding my bed, right, and I start screaming for the nurse, "Nurse, nurse, nurse, nurse," and she comes running in followed by my mother and say to them, "Who are all these stupid men standing around my bed starring at me, don't they know they're taking away my air and I can't breathe." And they all burst out laughing, they knew that I was going to be okay and they walked out of the room.

Suzie: Oh my gosh, so there's determined Denise right there, showing her face, "I'm fine, what are y'all worried about? I'm good. You're wasting your time hanging out, looking at me. I'm good. I got this." I love to that, that's great. So you had said that you didn't love this question, but I'm going to ask it, prior to you and said, because I think it would be interesting to hear what you'd say, what advice would you give your 25 year-old self?

Denise: That actually wasn't the question that I didn't love, this one is fine.

Suzie: Oh, this one is good?

Denise: My 25 year-old self, I'd tell her to chill out.

Suzie: Ah, yeah.

Denise: I'd tell her to trust more. I'd tell her to believe in herself and that it's all gonna be okay. She doesn't have to be so controlling.

Suzie: Yeah.

Denise: And I'd tell her to get quiet, listen more to what's going on inside and do less. Yeah.

Suzie: Yep, that's a good one. Awesome. So was it the next question? If you could have one billboard anywhere, what would it be and what would it say?



Denise: Yes.

Suzie: Oh, okay, I love your answers to your 25 year-old self. What would you say on your billboard? Maybe it comes from your answers you just gave or.

Denise: Well, I am going to tell you how I got to your billboard answer, okay? What would I want a billboard? I'm reminded by one of my clients who did the 800 kilometer walk of the Camino de Santiago in Spain.

Suzie: Oh cool.

Denise: Okay. And so here he is, maybe halfway, three quarters of the way through the walk, he's got blisters all over, he's breaking down physically, he's breaking down emotionally because of the stuff that brought him there, right? He doesn't really know that he can do the rest of this and he's walking along and somebody wrote on the back of a sign, "You are very, very special." And that sign got him to the point where he could finish his journey.

Suzie: That's beautiful.

Denise: Yeah. So that story got me to my billboard, a little bit different, but my billboard would say, "Believe in yourself, trust in yourself." The problem I had with the question is where the heck I was going to put it.

Suzie: Where do you want to put?

Denise: I want to put it everywhere.

Suzie: Well, with our world, we could do that, we're going to put it everywhere. I love that, yeah. I do believe that we all have an innate, when you talked about, we have our ordinary part and we have our extraordinary part, I believe every one of us, inside, knows that we have the ability to be extraordinary and when someone isn't looking at us and helping us see that, part of us really just resist the heck out of it, even if we're caught up in it, you know? So when you're in the, like the light in the fog, you know, in activating the greatness, then it's like, "Oh yeah, I knew that. I knew that. I know I have it in me." So that's, I love that, trust in yourself, trust that you have it in you. Love it. Last bit of wisdom, advice that you want everybody who's listening to take away about activating greatness, and what would you say?

Denise: I would say that we are all tempted to go into what's wrong, what needs to be changed? Know that that's a default and comes with this organism called a human being, that's okay, and your first thought is not always your best thought. Put that aside and focus your time and energy on your strengths and what they're doing well, and hold the vision, the end result vision of what you want and what it looks like even when you don't know exactly how you're going to get there.



Suzie: So wise, and you're such a role model for that.

Denise: Especially for the part where it's like my first thought is, "What's wrong?"

Suzie: Yeah, I mean, yeah, you are, you know I just have gotten over the years very careful about who I let give me feedback because I don't think everybody does this really well and I need this, you know, when I need it, I need it. And I just feel so blessed to have found you those years ago.

Denise: You're so welcome, and know that it's just so much easier when you're a coach because you don't have that personal agenda, you have a bit more distance, you can do it easier for your client. When you're a leader, it's not quite as easy, and when you're with your family, the people that are closest to you, it's harder still. And yet the same process will still work if you give it time.

Suzie: Yeah, yeah, it's all about where you focus, and where you decide to focus and you have to decide on a regular basis because of that human tendency. Well, thank you Denise, you've been awesome, as I knew you would be.

Denise: Thank you, thank you, thank you for the opportunity. Number one to be with you, I love spending time with you, as you can tell, and thank you for the opportunity, I love coaching, speaking, helping leaders to be their best selves, helping leaders to present themselves in front of the room, so you've given me the opportunity to speak with your audience today and do what I love, so thank you for that, for that opportunity.

Suzie: And we will have your website and all of your contact information on the show notes so that people can reach, because I recommend you all the time, but also I hope that anyone who's listening that would like assistance with speaking, coaching, their business, that they reach out to you.

Denise: Perfect, thank you, thank you so much.

Suzie: I like at the end of the interview when Denise is talking about the runner, and the runner sees a poster board where somebody has written "You are very, very special," and that was the impetus that led the runner to finish the race and then Denise's billboard, "Believe in yourself, trust in yourself," if we can do that for ourselves and then bring that belief and inner valuing of our own value and our ability and capability, we can then bring that to others and as we bring that to others, we inspire people to finish the race, it's activate greatness, that is how you activate greatness. Doesn't mean you don't ever talk about something that's not working, but you talk about it from a place of valuing the human and when you do that, the discussion is different and they may or may not come along, but you have at least had the discussion and then you make your decision. But at the end of the day, I believe it ties into this desire, a lot of the research talks about, have I received, have I been appreciated, am I valued at work? And how that's such a key component for people when they're asked if they're going to stay or leave,



so don't undervalue your ability to appreciate and value others, lead and inspire that way and see what the difference is. So hold the vision and the end result of what they want, which is something Denise talks about and see the difference it makes.

Suzie: Again, the show notes for today's episode are at pricelessprofessional.com/denise. I promised when we started that I would share a couple of things with you, the first is six workforce trends to expect in 2019, this information was researched and put together into an info graphic by my strategic partners, TTI Success Insights, so you'll see a link to the info graphic in case you want to use it, share it with anybody in your organization. But quickly the six trends to expect in 2019, one, micro careers, two, work life balance will become work life blend, three, the impact of millennials on the workforce, four, micromanaging will continue to decrease, five, marketing will continue to grow more personalized, six, businesses will prioritize employee happiness. So check out the link, look for the six workforce trends to expect in 2019 in our show notes, pricelessprofessional.com/denise, to get more info on that. There's links to some of the research, but the info graphic is a really quick, good hit and visual that might be helpful as you're thinking about what you going to do as a leader and what your organization's going to do this year.

Suzie: Also want to talk about some new things from Priceless Professional Development in 2019, at the end of the year I listened to a podcast by Tim Ferriss, who's one of my favorite podcasters, he's just an interesting person and a lot of his books, bestsellers, he interviewed a gentleman named Greg McKeown and he wrote a book, and I don't know if I'm pronouncing Greg's name correctly, but he wrote a book called *Essentialism*. So that really caught my interest. And so I started reading the book myself, I listened to it on the plane on a trip I made recently, then on I've listened to it on Audible, *Essentialism*, and what it is doing is, it is inspiring me to go to my highest level of contribution. So that's what we talk about here at Wake Up Eager, helping others. But it's a constant, it's like clean out your closet, you constantly need to kind of go back and reassess what have I said yes to, is what I'm saying yes to essential for the goals that I want to create in my personal and professional life, is that clarify my thinking about how I spend my time, what I commit to, and so one of the things he talks about is the more successful you get, the more opportunities and people come to you and sometimes that can water down what you're doing, water down your focus, not that those people aren't good people, but are they essential to your goals personally and professionally? So, I'm, one of the things that I'm learning to do is to say "No," to the good but non-essential things that are pulling my time and energy away from being able to say "Yes," and go big on the things that are my things to do. So wanted to share that with you because maybe the book will be inspiring to you. For me, my big thing so do is about Wake Up Eager and the book helped me realize that I need a concrete measurement of this vision of a Wake Up Eager Workforce to help me stay focused on the things that matter most to me and that matter to the things that I came here to doin' my work life. So what I have come to, to create a more concrete measurement is that I want to, and I want Priceless Professional Development as an organization to influence 100,000 leaders to build a Wake Up Eager Workforce over the next 10 years. So that's something I haven't had before is an actual, "Okay, who, how many people do I want to impact?" And if I have that as a goal now that's gonna help me make a little bit more decisions on what is taking me away from



that goal. So a couple of things that I'm doing is I'm adding more strategic partners to the business so I can have more people help with delivery, help with the reach, I am going to be doing more podcasts this year, it's something that I really enjoyed doing, it is a format I, I went to school to be a journalist, so I never did become a journalist, but there's a lot that I love about this idea of meeting people and interviewing and taking ideas, figuring out what the essence is of the idea and sharing it. So that, just even saying that I can feel myself, I feel more energy and flow. We each have that; we have our big thing to do. And so this is episode 52, last year we published 11 podcasts in 2018, so we're going to increase that this year to 18. Hopefully I can double it to 22 podcasts, but we'll see. But at least 18 is the goal, that's going to help me focus my time and energy. With our books, I've written two books on the Wake Up Eager Habits, *The Five Habits*, *120 Stress Management Strategy*, that's about recalibrating daily, mind, body, spirit. And I wrote a book about *How to Hire Superior Performers*, that ties into the Wake Up Eager Habit, evaluate job fit. So I have talked about all of last year, and never got to it, never got to it because it didn't prioritize it, because it didn't know what my measure of success was necessarily. I'm working on book number three now and the topic is activating greatness. So that is in play, that will happen this year, I'm excited about it and it feels good to say it to the world or say it to you or whoever's listening that that will be happening.

Suzie: One additional thing that I want to tell you about in case it interests you, I have started a weekly, and I just started this week, Wake Up Eager Wednesday. It's a weekly dose of the things I'm thinking about, things I'm doing and feeling that are contributing to my Wake Up Eager life and work. It's a quick way to get mind, body, spirit tips. It's fun for me to share information and ideas that I'm running across that I think will be helpful. If that interests you, you can find those tips, I just have one for Wednesday so far, but they will be at wakeupeager.com. If you're not liked, or part of our Facebook page, go to facebook.com/wakeupeager, or connect with me on LinkedIn, it's Suzie Price, S-U-Z-I-E, Price. And I'll be posting it, all of those places wakeupeager.com, Facebook and on LinkedIn, so check out Wake Up Eager Wednesday, if that interests you. Look forward to talking to you more this year and with you more this year. If you have ideas or suggestions or comments, please feel free to share. Thank you for being a part of the podcast so far and listening. Have a great Wake Up Eager day, life, and lots of fun and goodness. Will talk to you soon at the next go round. Take care.

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