



**Wake Up Eager Workforce Podcast, Episode 54
Why Moving from Watchmaker to Beekeeper Matters and How to Make the Move with the
Seven Stages of Growth Model-- Produced By Suzie Price**

Transcript

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Suzie Price: “We all want to be the watchmaker, but if the watch breaks, you’re the only one who can fix it.” That’s a quote from Business Strategy Consultant and Seven Stages of Growth expert Laurie Taylor and I interviewed Laurie and John Garrott today in this episode it, the title of the episode is, *Why Moving From Being a Watchmaker to a Beekeeper Matters and How to Make the Move*. It’s a great interview, I just got off the phone with them and from our discussion, and I can’t wait to share it with you. Michael, hit it.

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 and with Priceless Professional Development and you are listening to the Wake Up Eager Workforce Podcast. This is our 16th year where we help Senior Leaders build an energetic, committed, drama-free wake up eager workforce. So we do this using hiring science, helping you put the right people in the right seats and then using that same science to help you throughout the lifecycle of an employee, to helping with anything from onboarding to training and working with teams. We also do what we do, building a Wake Up Eager Workforce through our books, our newsletter, this podcast and our website. And so we’re all about Wake Up Eager here, which is the art and science of bringing the best of who you are to everything you do, to create a rich and satisfying professional life and personal life. And so wakeupeagerworkforce.com is where you can find the directory of all of our episodes.

Suzie: This is episode number 54 and again, the title is *Why Moving From Being a Watchmaker to a Beekeeper Matters and How to Make the Move*. And we are talking with Seven Stages of Growth experts, John Garrott and Laurie Taylor. Now Seven Strategies of Growth, they will explain what it is, it’s a powerful assessment tool and process that leaders can lay over their business to understand what stage of growth are we in, what are the challenges and what exactly do we need to do about it. The show notes for today’s episode can be found at pricelessprofessional.com/beekeeper, that’s all lowercase and all one word, pricelessprofessional.com/beekeeper.

Suzie; Today in this episode we talk more about that tool, the Seven Stages of Growth, so you’ll understand the components of it and how it helps organizations know what they need to do to grow, going to understand some of the keys to strategic growth and successful strategy. And then we had a great time talking a little bit about influences in Laurie and John’s life, their favorite books and training and just things that have mattered to them as they’ve grown as very successful professionals. And so I always feel like all of that is so interesting and particularly



today in this episode, what Laurie and John share about their tool and about who they are as humans on this planet and things that have mattered to them and make them who they are today. It's just a good, good discussion. So I'm so happy to share it with you.

Suzie: Let me tell you a little bit about John's background. John works as the Executive Director of an organization, his organization, Glen Eagle Resources and he is also one of our partners here at Priceless Professional Development. So we have strategic partnerships with folks like John and he collaborates with Priceless in the area of strategic planning and team development. And he is our Seven Stages of Growth expert for businesses. He also focuses on succession planning and project management and we just really value his knowledge, his strategic insight, and he brings a very caring and thoughtful approach to everything he does. He is certified in this tool that we're going to talk about today, the Seven Stages of Growth, and is a Certified Professional Behavioral Analyst. So he and I met and he talks about it, we talk about it in the interview, at TTI Success Insights, which is our partner, our key partner here in our business. He also serves as an Adjunct Faculty Member at the EJ Ourso School of Business at LSU. He has an international development experience in Africa, Russia, Belarus, Honduras and China. He has a BA from the University of Mississippi and a Masters of Divinity from Emory University and has completed doctoral work at Asbury Theological Seminary. So he has led the First United Methodist Church and plant teams all over the world and he is the Executive Director of 4M Foundation and Glen Eagle Resources. He has his wife, Jennifer, he talks about her in our discussion and he has two sons. He lives in Senatoba, Mississippi, which is just south of Memphis.

Suzie: Laurie is the President and Founder of Flashpoint and she is the Founder, or the creator of training and developing Seven Stages of growth experts around the country. She has a solid foundation, which she references in our discussion today. She was a reluctant entrepreneur, but she took that experience of being an entrepreneur, parlayed it into a multi-million dollar business. And so for many years that business had 65 to 67% revenue growth. So she has great experience in helping being a leader who has led businesses and she has now taken this Seven Stages of Growth process and helps others, helps not only organizations and CEOs use the process, but she helps consultants like John and others in the country learn how to use the process. So she's an Author, Speaker, Business Consultant and she has spoken to 4,500 CEOs in the last three years and she's built this growth curve specialist community and she also partners with our key partner TTI Success Insights, so she brings that tool to our partner. She's written many books and I've got a link to all of her books in the show notes at pricelessprofessional.com/beekeeper. Laurie lives in Tucson, Arizona with her husband Dave. So I wanted to mention that.

Suzie: So without further ado, let's get into the interview.

Suzie: All right. I'm excited today to have Laurie and John here. Welcome guys, glad you're here.

Laurie and John: Thank you Suzie.

Suzie: And we're going to jump right in and have Laurie talk a little bit about going from a watchmaker to a beekeeper and share a little bit about what does it mean and how does it relate to business and the work that both John and Laurie do around the Seven Stages of Growth. Laurie?

Laurie Taylor: Thanks Suzie. You know the thing I love the most about the Seven Stages of Growth is it gives us such a rich place to talk and in a story that James Fisher, who is the author of the study behind the Seven Stages of Growth, he tells a story about the fact that there's a watchmaker who is very, very precise about making time pieces and they're very, you know, they're very intricate. Everything takes a special kind of tool. And so you're very, it's very, very specialized work. Whereas a beekeeper goes out to his hives every day and he has to manage all these bees that are swarming around. So the story goes that most people tend to want to be a watchmaker. They think, well, I want to be precise. I want to know exactly what I'm supposed to be doing. But in fact, if that watch breaks, if that watch splatters on the concrete, the only person that can put the watch back together is the watchmaker, if the beekeeper drops the hives from five feet and the hive just breaks open, guess what, those bees are all programmed to know exactly what to do to build a new hive and the beekeeper doesn't need to do anything, he can just stand back. So the correlation is, in every business we've got to have a team that understands what they're supposed to be doing and be very clear about their roles and responsibilities so the CEO isn't the only person that knows everything. And that's the value of the Seven Stages of Growth. And as I've done this now for 15 years, the model helps CEOs really identify what they need to do and how they need to react to the growth happening in their organization. So that's a fun story about the watchmaker and the beekeeper. We need more beekeepers.

Suzie: I like it. And what's interesting to me in organizations how often the bees don't know what to do.

Laurie: Exactly. And you know, we sometimes assume they do and that's where we get in trouble. And the other thing this model does really well in the process that we take them through it's called the Stages of Growth X, right? There's a lot of dialogue that shows up and when people start talking about things they're not used to talking about clarity becomes the name of the game and suddenly people go, "Well I didn't understand it that way. Why didn't I understand it?" And the CEOs may be a little taken aback that, "Well I thought I had explained it very well," but we know how tough communication is on a day to day basis, we have to be better at communicating. And this model kind of forces you down that path.

Suzie: That's great. And it is true, if you can ask an escalator, do they know, do they know what's expected? Absolutely. And then you go to the team or individual, "Nope, I don't have a clue. I don't know what he wants."

Laurie: Exactly. Exactly.



Suzie: It happens all the time. So when you said there's dialogue that shows up that's not usual, what would be some examples of unusual dialogue? Is it about, "Do you know what your responsibilities are," or what are some examples, you said it's dialogue that they don't usually have.

Laurie: Well, and good question, Suzie. So sometimes we talk as CEOs, I've run a company, I was a COO of a company and we took it up to about 120 employees, so everyday we assumed we were talking a language that the rest of the team understood. But we, we're the owners, we understand we live in a different world than those employees do. So the model helps break down the mystery, what I call the mystery of running a business and makes it just more comfortable for people to talk about things. So if there's a couple of statements in there that says, "So do we understand what key indicators are and are we tracking those key indicators on a regular basis?" So the conversation comes up like, "Well, wait a minute, what's a key indicator? Great question. Let's talk about what a key indicator is and why it's important." So when they go through these assessments, there's probably 50 to 60 statements they're responding to from their own perspective and now we're getting that conversation going and everybody's going, "Oh, I didn't know what a key indicator was and I didn't know what cash flow was, now that you explained cash flow, I have a much better understanding of it or what is a master process," so now we're giving them what I call the language of growth and that just, it's just a much easier way to communicate.

Suzie: I love the giving them the language of growth. That's good.

John: Yeah, that's good.

Suzie: Hey John, why don't you share, since we're talking about the Seven Stages of Growth, what are they?

John Garrott: Oh gosh, they are seven, they are all built around the number of employees of an organization, when the Fisher, I believe was kind of the guru that came up with this, and Laurie studied under and I picked up some of the training, some from Laurie too by the way, this is a real privilege to be on the call with both of you guys. It's built around the number of employees that are in the organization. Other strategic planning uses different approaches, this one has to do with the number of employees. So Stage One, I'm having to call it approximate now, but anyways, it goes up to 500 employees and each stage has a different number from one being the smallest, seven being the highest, and all of them are different. That was the interesting thing to me and an amazing part of this journey was to understand that all organizations, one size does not fit all organizations, and Seven Stages doesn't try to do that, which was wonderful stuff, a great approach.

Suzie: So when you think about the Seven Stages of Growth, you're looking at seven based on size and different things are happening in each stage?



John: Yeah, if I could put it this way, Stage One is Startup, I think it goes, what Laurie, 1 to 11, something like that?

Laurie: 1 to 10, yep.

John: Number of employees. And then Stage Seven can have up to 500 and that's when an organization that has departments in it and it's pretty good size. So yeah Suzie, that's kind of how it works.

Suzie: Are there names for each stage? Is it worth it to dialogue around what they actually are?

Laurie: You know John, I'm happy to help to with this if you would like me to?

John: Yeah Laurie, you might be able to dial in on this, yeah, good help.

Laurie: Cause Suzie, one of the things that is so cool about this, and John's absolutely right, it was based on the fact that as a company grows, the complexity increases and if you've ever run an organization, you know that people are the hardest things we manage when we're running an organization. So this model is the only model out there that defines these specific stages by number of employees, not by revenue, not by profitability. And so the, Fisher also gave titles to each stage. As John was saying, Stage One is Startup, it has 1 to 10 employees and it's obvious if you're starting up a company, there's different things you need to pay attention to than when you move into Stage Two, Stage Two is called Ramp Up. It's got 11 to 19 employees and I'll just go through the names so I can come back and talk about any one of them. But Stage Three, so in Stage One and Two, Suzie, you are CEO-centric, it's all about the passion and the vision and the excitement of that CEO who started the organization, it's their vision that's going to take that company forward. But when you flip into Stage Three where it's called Delegation and you've got 20 to 34 employees, now it becomes enterprise-centric and that CEO just can't manage 34 employees by themselves anymore, they have to start delegating responsibilities and roles. And that's why each name of each stage of growth is so critical to understand. I always start by explaining the name, because that starts everybody understand what's happening underneath.

Suzie: So see, it is Stage Three is when you, when the beekeeper, you need to switch from being the watchmaker to beekeeper.

Laurie: Yes.

Suzie: Or it would help if you did it during Stages One and Two but really, you have to make that move.

Laurie: Exactly, exactly. Cause one of the other rules, there's four rules that govern the model and the first one says, "As soon as you land in any stage of growth, you're going to get ready for the next stage of growth." So this is again, really indicative of this model where you can actually



predict what's coming. So if I know, we've got a CEO in Stage One and in, you know six to eight months they're going to flip into Stage Two, we can actually prepare them for what's coming. And the second rule says, "What you don't get done in any stage of growth doesn't go away." So now if you're in Stage Four called Professional, now you've got 35 to 57 employees, you may have forgotten to take care of some things that happen to you in Stage Two or Stage Three and that becomes a drag. You can't figure out, "Why can't I get beyond here? Why do I keep having the same issue show up?" So this model is really good about helping you go back a couple of stages and saying, "Hey, you didn't get this done that's why you're not getting the traction you need." So those are two critical rules that CEOs really resonate with, when you say, "Hey, what you didn't get done in a previous stage of growth may be the thing that's causing you to stop growing." We can go into what we call these "Hidden agents," and we can dig underneath the surface and find the root cause of what's holding them back. And we can fix it and clear it and get them that traction they need.

Suzie: That's awesome. So we've got Stage One and Two CEO-centric, Stage Three, delegation enterprise, 20 to 34 employees, Stage Four, Professional.

Laurie: Yep. Stage Four is when you have to start recognizing that now divisions are creeping into your organization. You've got maybe a sales division or a marketing division or there's a production group that's now showing up. So Professional is when that CEO has to recognize they've got to start hiring professional managers who have been there, done that, or train people to become good managers. And that's critical in Stage Four, if you do that well, and those managers develop their divisions very confidently, you want them focused on their divisions, kind of a silo thinking, when you move into Stage Five now that has 58 to 95 employees, that's called Integration. Now you want those managers who were running their divisions well to work together now as a team, become that leadership team that's actually going to start helping that CEO make decisions that run the company. So Stage Five is another really critical stage of growth to recognize because when those managers have been working by themselves, kind of in their own little world, now imagine the challenge of getting those really good managers to understand the dynamic of bringing all of their knowledge together and helping run the organization. It just gets a little more challenging, but it's doable. But we can help the CEO understand what they need to do to do that.

Suzie: Right. So what is Stage Six and Seven?

Laurie: So Stage Six is called Strategic, now you have 96 to 160 employees and Strategic is now where you're no longer this little fish in this huge fishbowl, you're a much bigger fish in a smaller fishbowl. And everybody now has you on their sites, competitors that you didn't realize were out there now show up. So this Strategic Stage of Growth is when that CEO has to really start looking out and beyond, maybe a year, now they've got to start looking out maybe three to five years to see where they need to take their organization to make sure they're still relevant and you know, they're not getting caught up in, "Hey, we're already doing really good stuff."



We might not need to think about a new market, a new location.” So that's the Strategic. And then when you flip into Stage Seven, we've got 161 up to 500 employees, it's called Visionary. When you've got a company that's that big, now it's very easy for the organization to become complacent or for your products and services to become commoditized. And now the CEO has to go around and inspire the organization to start thinking more entrepreneurial so they don't get caught up in, “Oh, that's how we've always done it, we're good, our customers love us, everything's fine.” No, you have to make sure in Stage Seven that your products are still differentiated in the marketplace and you're not looked at as a commodity and those competitors that have just been waiting in the wings for you to do that come in and what I call kind of create all kinds of havoc for you. So that's Stage Seven big, big again for that CEO there to kind of wake up and go, “Whoa, I can't just rest on our laurels. We've got to make sure we're still relevant in the marketplace.”

Suzie: It's interesting to think about how the CEO, if it's the same CEO, which I'm thinking often, maybe it isn't, I don't know, but I've seen over the years where the Founder/CEO really doesn't make it to the next levels and maybe if they had a tool like this, they could, because it's requiring different things throughout, you know? And those are different personal skills or different attributes that some of us have or don't have, right?

John: The startup guy usually it's not the long-term guy, if that's a way to put it, or gal.

Suzie: Yeah.

John: Yeah. The startup leader, that's a different leadership skill than the long-term manager.

Suzie: Right. With this tool, they could grow, cause we all can, if we have the capability to and the interest we can grow into each one of these roles it would give you specific steps which I think would be interesting. So what are the four rules, you started them, let's finish them.

Laurie: So the third one, is time will make a difference. So time will make a difference, meaning, if you're a startup and you get some outside capital, you could literally grow from 5 employees overnight to 30 if you were, I've been given some capital to expand your markets. So time in that case is kind of your enemy, meaning it pushed you through from Stage One to Stage Three overnight. And you have to even be more diligent as the CEO to make sure you're not ignoring the challenges that showed up in Stage One. For instance, cash flow, you're going to be destabilized by chaos, what are you doing to manage that chaos, so that time can work against you or Suzie, for instance, I've got a, there's a client out in Philadelphia who's been a manufacturing company for 30 years and they only have 10 employees, they don't want to get any bigger. So in this case, time is, they've had time to really figure out what they're good at, get that cash flow under control; make sure their employees are really clear about their roles and responsibilities. But even then, you can learn things. So even if you're in one stage of growth for a long period of time, there's 27 business challenges that impact this model and you're going to hit all 27 of them as you go through these stages of growth. So that Stage One company who's been a Stage One company for 30 years still is going to get introduced to all 27 of those



business challenges. So in this case, they'll have time to really work on the ones they need to. And then the fourth one says, if you're not growing, you're dying, so something has to change in your organization. We don't dictate, you know, John and I aren't out there saying to people, "You have to grow by numbers of people," no, what we're saying to you, what I said to this manufacturing company, you, "What else are you doing to refresh your organization?" Because just like in nature, if it's not growing, it's dying and in organizations we've got to make sure that we're refreshing our training, we're refreshing our processes, we're refreshing our philosophies. Maybe we're refreshing our vision and our mission. Those things just can't stay the same. And have you maintain a good, fresh, healthy organization. So those are the four rules.

Suzie: So it sounds like this tool, for an organization that says, "You know, I don't want to become 500 employees, but I do want to remain relevant and I want the business to prosper," they could still benefit tremendously because they're getting assessed on this X-Ray tool you use, assess is based on these 27 business challenges, is that what you're saying?

Laurie: Exactly.

Suzie: So they would get a report to say how they're doing in all of those and even though they're not going to Stage Seven or Six or, they still will get input, they can say, that will help them focus. I think the biggest thing that I see with businesses is, not knowing what to prioritize on, and the thing that got John got so excited, got me so excited about as he's using this tool, is that it helps leaders prioritize and companies prioritize what's the most important thing to do. Right?

Laurie: Yes.

John: Yes, exactly right.

Suzie: So I mean they see it all, but what I often see is they're just overwhelmed and so it's like, "Let's prioritize. Let's figure out what's most important right now." And this tool seems like it would accelerate that process.

John: Absolutely. It's a 30,000 foot view, and a lot of our leaders and managers, people I guess nowadays, are just overwhelmed with information and stuff and things to do, this gives them a 30,000 foot view.

Suzie: That's awesome. So John, talk a little bit about, I think you started using this with an organization and I know you're in the midst of the process, but anything you could share about how it's going, how you set it up, anything about that, that would be awesome.

John: Well, it's just going amazing. This is a regional organization I was part of, and I had been a part of a succession leadership track with them, they realized that perhaps we needed more and I realized that we needed more than the level that we were hitting on, and even though it's been well received and that's when I came across Seven Stages of Growth. They are a level



four company and their vision, the vision they already had, was to go from \$700 million in assets to \$1 billion in assets. The CEO right now realizes that he needs to cast that vision and the thing that I was able to share with him and get him kind of working with for a while was the understanding that we really needed that vision to have some infrastructure to it with this up and coming set of VPs. In other words, it was great to have the vision, but we needed a plan that was bigger than, in this case, the turnover of the two, three top leaders within the next two years, so we need it not only the vision, but we need a strategy for how to get there. Stages of Growth has allowed us to do that.

Suzie: So how did you implement it, like you were to give someone a 30,000 foot view of implementation, what happens to, do you talk to people? Does everybody in the organization complete something? Do they, just kind of give an overview of how this actually happens, this X-Ray?

Laurie: Well the X-Ray in this case was given to the CEO, CLO, CFO, and about eight or nine other upper level managers and they took the assessments, which case, I began to process it, put some stuff together, for the delivery of the X-Ray? Sometimes it, some people do it in a day, I did it in two days and it was an amazing discovery, an uncovering process that is very complete, very detailed, but amazing clarity, which sounds contradictory, but the amazing clarity that comes out of it. What we're watching now is the main challenge for a Stage Four, they are a Stage Four, is two things, one is the processes has gotten too cumbersome, that's exactly true for this one. And two, that this is the Professional Stage, and the managers, in some way had to be accelerated and that's exactly fit this organization, so we're watching now as the end of the process, the end game so to speak, to come out with five initiatives and the beauty of this strategic planning is that you don't hand them a plan, this is what my recommendations are. It's a collaborative process where you help them uncover the non-negotiable leadership rules, their five strengths, five challenges, etc., etc., and at the end of that they get their five initiatives, they pick it and it's been amazing to watch these branch managers that are VPs with the consent of the CEO and COO now, recognizing that they needed to be a little less controlling and a little bit more coaching. And these branch managers have taken off, absolutely taken off with these five initiatives. It's been an exciting thing to watch, Suzie.

Suzie: Well it's the power of facilitation and coaching, which is buy in, so they are all part of the whole process, just amazing And I love that you call it an X-Ray because it's like, "Okay, when you go to the doctor and you get an X-Ray, what's the doctor looking for it?" Specific things based on whatever your quote unquote injury might be. And in this case you're looking for certain things based on where they are. And I mean it's just a really sharp... Go ahead, what were you gonna say?

John: Well the other way, that was new to me, that, and I have really locked this down, that alignment precedes engagement, alignment precedes engagement. Everybody wants to get their employees engaged, so the disengagement of the engagement, all that. But more than likely, particularly in a lot of these stages, there is an alignment problem and they don't know that. And what the Seven Stages of Growth allows for, is the recognition that we are out of



alignment kind of like your back, I guess sometimes, if you can get everything back in alignment, the employees engage and we're watching these VPs that will one day, some of them will be elevated to the top positions, we want to keep them together, they own this now and ownership, if you get to create it, right?

Suzie: Yup.

John: And they're, that's what they're doing right now.

Suzie: That's awesome. And when you said it was amazing, the two-day debrief of the assessment that they all completed, did they complete it online or is it handwritten?

John: Yes. It's an online process. Some of the assessments we work with Suzie, it's the same thing.

Suzie: And you said amazing clarity, what was it that they were like, "Oh," so you could see the alignment happening even starting during those two days, when they could have objective information about what's going on in the organization. You said it was amazing and there was amazing clarity, what it that, that they were all seeing the problems in a new way for the first time or?

John: I thought it was amazing to me was that there is a lot of data, rightfully so, that you first start with and from that, because the training of this is so suburb, what a facilitator can do and what we did, what I did, was work them through that to where, out of all that data, there came this clarity, there wasn't any doubt about the five they wanted to run with and it was amazing to watch it run from just thousands of bits of data too, "Hey, these five things we really need to work on," and they are hard after it right now. That's the clarity.

Suzie: Yeah. So that's interesting, so much data, but it became clear. And usually when you are doing strategic planning, not that I'm an expert at it because I don't really do it but I have been in it, but you know, but there's all this fracture, it like, "No, I think this is important, no, I think this is important." Which is good because it is part of the facilitative process, but it sounds like to me, when you get real data, that really explains what's happening and you have a framework to apply it against such as the Seven Stages and that all organizations go through these challenges, then I could see why it was amazing and why they're engaged. That's awesome.

John: The Achilles heel of strategic planning, and we've all been in a thousand meetings when you have 20 pieces of paper on the walls and everybody has a great idea and you do that in January and in March people go, "What was that, what did we do?" And it's just lost. The key to strategic planning is intentionality over time, it's intentionality over time, and the Seven Stages of Growth, and because they co-create their own plan with your help, allows these initiatives to roll out over time, it just a totally different process with amazing results.



Suzie: And I bet this CEO is seeing that there is real possibility to reach his, or their, vision of \$1 billion in assets.

John: He's very, very excited,

Suzie: That's awesome. Well, you are a caring facilitator and a caring and thoughtful person John, and so I know that that, you have to have a great tool, but you also have to have a great facilitator. And that's you, and that's awesome.

John: You're kind, you're kind Suzie, thank you.

Suzie: I'm just telling it like I see it Mister. Let's talk about this and maybe Laurie, you can take this question. You know, so doing something like this, with the different opinion surveys that we do, you know that I do, 360 feedback, it can feel vulnerable to a CEO. And one of the podcasts interviews I did with the guy from Amazon, he said, "You know, at Amazon open the Kimono," which is, you know, we just lay it out on the table, that's our culture, that's what you do. And so this can feel like that, opening the Kimono, which is okay, I'm going to show you all, the good, bad, the ugly. And I think that holds people back sometimes, or has them feel tentative about something like this. So talk a little bit, Laurie, about how you prepare someone for this, a leader, a CEO, you know, and what has to be in place so that something like this is successful?

Laurie: Exactly, Suzie, because the reality is CEOs take things personally because it's their baby their, they care a lot and they don't want things to go bad. And so they really feel vulnerable. So the process that John talked about so well, and it's just so exciting for me to hear John talk about his experience with this, is right before we do the actual X-Ray, there's what we call the CEO Debrief and we make sure that we have sat down prior to the actual process and sat down and talked at least two hours, where we bring that CEO into the results of all the assessments that the team has taken, we don't go into great detail, but we just make sure that they understand one, what's going to happen, so here's the process is going to go on in the next few days. And then you walk them through how people responded to certain aspects of the assessment. So there's a, as John mentioned, there's the 27 challenges assessment, there's what we call the Builder Protector Assessment. And then there are the non-negotiable rules. So it is funny when I usually sit down with the CEO, one of the first things they ask me is, so how did I do? You know? And it's like, "This isn't really about you." How it takes it away from them feeling it's about them is I talk about this is an organizational issue, this isn't a CEO issue. This is how everybody is viewing the organization and everybody is the organization. So this, they're all coming clean. They're all being vulnerable saying, "I don't know this, I didn't understand what this was about." So we try to take the surprise, I say we never want a CEO to be surprised about anything, but we also manage during that process, that debrief, to explain, here's how they reacted to this, we're going to have a dialogue and it is quantitative, Suzie, we do have scores that actually come out of these assessments. But the first thing I say to the CEO is, "I don't really care about the scores, I, you know, they're nice and I want us to be able to come back in six months and do another one and see if we've moved the needle and what that looked like. But the reality is what we're looking for is that rich dialogue. I just want to get people talking



to find out why they feel the way they do. So don't worry about the score. Let's get the dialogue on the table and let's get some conversations going that we know we need to be talking about." So that's how we make sure we're taking that feeling of, "Oh my gosh, this is all about me." away from the CEO.

John: And Suzie and Laurie, if I could interject something real quick, not to block that flow because Laurie that's a really important part of this, but, part of the training recommends that you take the CEO out to dinner beforehand, don't go to the office, take them out to dinner, and if I can add, make sure you pay, you pay the bill that night. And it puts it in a different setting; it's a relaxed setting. You bring your, your reports, bring the data with you and let him look at it, but if I can interject that, Laurie, I thought that was great, great advice to take them out to eat, drop the anxiety level down a little. Yep.

Suzie: And that worked with this group that you are working with now? That's how you did that with that executive?

John: I did, I did.

Suzie: You could feel his, I'm assuming it's a him cause I think you might've said a he, but did you see him relax more into it?

John: Yeah. It was a little bit challenge, he's a high C and it is personal as you know, sometimes, but I had some time and credibility built up with them and he relaxed, and as Laurie said, "This isn't about him, this is about the organization, this isn't your personal assessment, this is a system assist." And yeah, by the end of the meal he was ready to get onto the next day.

Suzie: That is so cool. And just that reminder is, what we started with today, moving from the watchmaker to the beekeeper, is to help retrain the CEO's mindset and habit of thought around, "Okay, I like being a watchmaker," as you said Laurie, we like being the watchmaker because it is tactile and we get to be the expert, but at the end of the day that hinders all the goals that most leaders have and it disengages people because it is like, "Where do I fit into this, how do I matter," it just feels like to me it can be a huge culture change just going through the process, helping the CEO shift.

Laurie: Exactly, Suzie, exactly.

Suzie: And on the website, we'll put this in the show notes, we should, we have a sample, we've got an overview of the Seven Stages of Growth and we have a sample of some of the output. And so I'll share a link to that in the show notes so people could see that and just understand what's being measured, but powerful tool and it's so exciting to be able to talk about it and for people to know about it and to consider something like this as they're trying to direct their organization. We're going to go into some, talking about your career and get, let people get to know both you and John a little bit and some of that will surely Segway about Seven Stages of Growth. But are there any other key points? We've talked about the rules, Seven Stages, you



know, how you help a CEO relax. Is there any key thing that we should share that I'm not asking about that you think is super important. And I'll let Laurie, you start, and John, you finish.

Laurie: Well there is Suzie, just because I love talking about them, the language again is kind of cool, we have what we call hidden agents and a hidden agent is something that literally, literally lies beneath the surface of the organization. So we don't really understand what's causing it, we will chase it around, so there's surface symptoms that show up but if you've ever run an organization, you get frustrated because you think, "I just fixed that."

Suzie: What would be an example? What is something that you see?

Laurie: A good example would be, "I thought we understood how that process was supposed to work, so I thought we did the training on it, why are you all so confused about it?"

Suzie: Oh yeah, that happens all the time.

Laurie: All the time. So the root cause of that could simply be the process doesn't work anymore, but nobody's asking the question. There's a couple of things, there's, I should mention, transition zones, there's two transition zones that you move through as you go from one stage of growth to another. And the first one is what we call a Flood Zone. And the Flood Zone is when the level of activity increases so much and so fast that you feel like you're drowning and the Flood Zone happens when you go from Stage One to Stage Two. So think about a startup with 1 to 10 employees suddenly landing in Stage Two, you've got more people, you've got more money, you've got more processes, you've got more customers, suddenly everybody in the organization is feeling like, "Oh my gosh, we were just this little thing starting out yesterday and now suddenly everything's crazy." Then when you go from Stage Two to Stage Three, you go through what we call a Wind Tunnel. And the Wind Tunnel is when you have to let go of old methodologies that no longer work and you have to address and accept new ones that do. So in my example, we might've gone through a Wind Tunnel and we may be holding on thinking, well it worked yesterday, everything was fine yesterday. So we didn't think to look at those processes and we might have outgrown them, they may be too small for the size of our company today and we're just ignoring that issue because that's harder to fix than to blame somebody for not knowing how to do the process. So that's what we call hidden agents. And then those transition zones are critical. Another hidden agent is something we called the Builder Protector Ratio. And the builders are people in our organizations that love risks. They're always looking for ways to improve the revenue stream and they're anxious to get out there and try new things. Those are builders, they're very confident. But on the flip side we have what we call protectors and that's people that tend to want to slow things down, they're a little suspicious of growth and they might not be as comfortable with that risk as a builder is and those, the builders, tend to be our CEOs and probably our sales teams, and our protectors tend to be our financial people and maybe our operations people and you need both of them. So the other way I think about it is the Confident Caution Ratio. And if I see or I'm talking to a CEO and I get a sense that they're not as confident in talking about issues or talking about their folks are talking about their growth strategies, then I can kind of get to the place where I'm thinking they need to

show more confidence because their caution is holding their team back. If the CEO isn't confident, I'll guarantee you there's fear and uncertainty in the management team. So by understanding how that Builder Protector Ratio changes with each stage of growth, somebody like John or any other one of the Growth Curves Strategists that are out there working this model, can quickly identify how they can help that CEO become more confident. And just that little tweak, just making a slight adjustment in this thing we call a hidden agent could truly make a huge difference and not take that long, quite honestly. So the hidden agents are really an, there's about seven of them that are in this model and we talked about them all the time with our CEOs, so they, cause they're changing as they go through like Stage Three, the Builder Protector Ratio is 1:1 and when you get into Stage Four, it's three builders to two protectors. And there's all kinds of reasons for that. So these are really, again, rich conversations you can have with your CEO. So the hidden agents and those transition zones are pretty critical to understand.

Suzie: That's interesting. And so it, you have that framework is, as John is a facilitator and you're the facilitator of the conversation, you have that framework, you're looking for it, but the X-Ray also, is the X-Ray revealing the hidden agents as well?

Laurie: It is.

Suzie: Or it just allows you to talk about, so it reveals those to where those are. How amazing is that? It's kind of like if you went to the doctor and they didn't do an X-Ray and they just, you know, just pie in the sky, let me come up with a suggestion, you know, so it really focuses what you do and where they go, it's really amazing.

Laurie: Exactly, exactly Suzie, that's what's so very, very cool about it, because you're absolutely right and bubbles it up, it gives everybody a sense that now we're talking about the real issue, not just the surface issue, now we're actually fixing it and that's what John was saying, when you get into those conversations, it's magical how people just suddenly go, "Oh my gosh, that's exactly what our problem is, let's put that on a board, let's fix it, let's get it done."

Suzie: Yeah. Instead of like we put it on a board and a situation where you don't have such clarity and where we are visiting it again in four weeks or six weeks or six months, like fix it.

Laurie: Exactly.

Suzie: That's awesome. And then with all of these terms, they are so interesting because they do paint a picture, but if somebody is getting saying, "Okay there's seven this," it doesn't matter, they don't need to know all that. The questions and the way that you know who they select to participate, it guides you through all that, and your facilitator guides you through all that as well.

John: That's right.

Laurie: Exactly.



Suzie: It's good to hear all the terms cause it makes sense, but I could see someone saying, "Okay, gosh there's a lot of pieces to this." Well they don't need to know it, all they need to do is go through it and if it's a match for them. What would be some of your comments if you have some more to share, John, about what Laurie shared or what we've talked about, about Seven Stages of Growth.

John: Suzie, in a nutshell, I have worked a lot, and still do, with assessments that have to do with people and teams with my primary focus being strategic planning, there was, kind of limit to that. I, you know, the, well for me with these Myers Briggs, and EQ and DISC, and listen, those are awesome tools, I use them with great fondness, but what Seven Stages of Growth does is gives you a system snapshot rather than an individual or subsystem snapshot. And it's unique that way. It gives the CEO in their organization something unlike anything else I've ever seen. It's that good.

Suzie: That's amazing. That's great. So John, I am so glad that you and I are connecting on this, I mean, you are the lead on this through any of my clients, but I like being a part of it and knowing about it, and getting more familiar with it with this conversation as well. So let's jump into some, so people can get to know you, and these always just interesting to learn more about people, and John, why don't we start with you, who's most influenced you in your life and career? And how did they influence you?

John: The first person I would say is my Mother, that is just as short and sweet as I know how to put that one. The first university, we all go to is the family, right? And Mom had a lot to do with the kind of person that I am, the good parts.

Suzie: There is a lot of good parts. What in particular stands out for you about that, is there one thing that really stands out?

John: No, there is a thousand things, a thousand things in my life.

Suzie: Well you are very altruistic and you are very giving, I am thinking that was from your family, no?

John: So the other thing that I would share is that there was a time in my life, I was about 40, 42, where I was at a stale point, knew that I needed some more training and needed kind of a jumpstart, anyway, I got into a doctoral program and there was a guy out of Georgia, Suzie, I think he's living in Florida now, but was trained, it was a TTI, like you and I are, and ran a, as part of the intake program with the doctoral program, a TTI Management Staff DISC. And he basically said to me, and this was when I realized the power of these kinds of things, something I was first offended by and then I thought, "Oh my gosh, this is real stuff." He said, "Look, you're really a not a managerial type, John, you are startup or kind of a turnaround guy." And I went, "What? And you know, tell me more." It was a tell me more by the time it got over it, but you run up onto these people that are terrific at this kind of thing of what we're doing. I said, "Man, I really want to learn about them." So that was my engagement with the company out in Phoenix,



Suzie, that you and I apart of, Laurie is too. And that was a game changer. That was a career change. I will mention his name, I don't guess it matters, some guy named Bob Calvert from North Georgia and he had been in banking all his life and got TTI and began to use these assessments. Powerful, powerful stuff in my life. And I am very thankful that I run across him.

Suzie: Yup, yup, that's great, I love that. Laurie?

Laurie: It's funny I would say my parents, had obviously again, that's where we start and I just remember my mother teaching me the Golden Rule. I mean she, she was such a caring, giving person and she said, "You know, you need to recognize that you want to treat others as you would treat them." So I always kept that in mind and I always try really hard to recognize how somebody else's feeling about something before I judge or before I go there, cause that's just a really important rule in my world, it kept me strong with the values that they taught me, the belief system that I grew up with and the work ethic that I continue to have throughout my career. And then I think also, my very first boss, you know, when you're young, you're about 20 years old and you're getting your first job, there are many things you don't know and you don't understand. And I had a really good first boss who was caring, but good at teaching me things and not letting me just slide through if something didn't go well, he corrected me. He nicely said, "Laurie, that's not the best way to handle something like that." And back then we didn't have all these other tools to determine our personality traits. He was definitely, I'm certain at that point, a very high D and a very high D, but I learned so much from him. So those were huge influences in my life that I still think about today.

Suzie: So the power of your first boss, that's a big deal, that he could encourage and correct. Look what you're doing today and all the books you've written and impact you're having, so all bosses out there talking to millennials and other, or other at young ages, helping them become better, it makes a difference.

Laurie: It is huge Suzie.

Laurie: Yeah, we remember it. Hey, so talk about education, books, training programs that have been most instrumental. One of the links that we want to put in the show notes, we'll put links Laurie, to your books and also...

Laurie: It's Navigating the Growth Curve.

Suzie: Okay, good, so we will put that on there.

Laurie: Yeah, I think you can still find it on Amazon, Suzie.

Laurie: All right, all right, we'll put a link to it if we find it. All right, so John, kick us off, talk about education, books or training that have been most instrumental in your development.

John: Gosh, I would mention two books, that just jump out, they are both different in a way, one of them is probably familiar with you, maybe, maybe not, one is Stephen Covey's classic *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. I have never forgotten, "If you want to be heard, listen first," you know I have used that over and over and over. The second one is a book called Theory U and it's very long, it's 500 pages, very detailed, but I've never found any other books quite like it that allowed you to engage in the collaborative process for a positive outcome. It's the best.

Suzie: Do you remember who that's by?

John: Otto Scharmer. There's a very short pdf online that you can also find of that. But that was, the training, look that the association with Target Training International Success Insight has been fantastic. And that whole process with them, the association, the people much last, what you learned using the EQ and DISC and all the other assessments that TTI offers has been wonderful. So I'd say those two books and that training.

Suzie: Cool. Laurie?

Laurie: I can remember employed, again very young and working and not really having any training in how to manage people. I was running recreation centers back then and so I eventually went and got my Master's degree and I was one of these people, I admitted because I feel so silly about it and had that, "Oh, it's all about experience, education, who cares?" You know, I was just glad I got through my Undergraduate program and I'm actually working, this is the big deal, I'm working. Well, it wasn't working that I was working and I went got my Master's degree and that was when all the lights started going on about organizational development issues and people issues and why I was trying to treat all of my people, all of my employees exactly the same cause I thought that's what would work, when in fact they're all individual people and I needed to adjust my leadership style to what their needs were. So my Master's degree really, I think just sky rocketed me to be a much better, much more authentic leader. And I stopped trying to talk to people and I started engaging people in conversations. That was a huge turnaround in my own personal career. And then I've also gone through, I'm sure you're familiar with John Maxwell and I went to his program and went through his speaking program that they teach and had a wonderful experience, I met Les Brown, I met John personally, he is such an authentic, real person. So that was another good place for me because I love speaking and that's how I built my business. So again, going back and just reminding myself of some of those critical principles that make you a good speaker was extremely beneficial.

Suzie: Has Maxwell written a particular book on speaking?

Laurie: He has not; his is all based on leadership. He's got, I think 70 some books, just on the whole leadership topics, Suzie, but I don't think he's done one on speaking. No.

Suzie: Do you have a favorite John Maxwell leadership book?



Laurie: You know I do, it's *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, and this is one I use all the time when I'm talking to CEO audiences because one of his, the very first law, is the law of the lid. And the law of the lid says that your company will only rise to the level of the leaders' competency. So if your leader isn't constantly learning and getting better, the company is going to hit a ceiling with that leader's ability to take the company forward. And that always speaks so clearly to me. And I think it helps CEO's recognize, your the block, if you're not continually learning and helping yourself be better, your organization is not going to move beyond your own competency level. So that's a big deal.

Suzie: Yep.

John: That is a big deal. I heard somebody put it this way, "Growing leaders grow, grow growing companies, Growing leaders grow, growing companies" that's a nice take, I wish it was original, but it's not, but it's still good.

Suzie: I love it, love it, love it, love it. And using that law of the lid is a great way to introduce it. I always think about how can I introduce or talk about this topic and reduce resistance, ensuring more acceptances. You can have all the knowledge in the world, but if nobody wants to hear it, it doesn't work. But that, introducing that is, super helpful, so that's good. I did not, have not read that book, but now you've caught my interest in it, especially with the law of the lid. I love that.

Laurie: Yeah, it is pretty powerful. It really is.

Suzie: Put that on my list, we'll put it in the notes too. I know he has a million books. So when you think of the word successful, John, who's the first person that comes to mind?

John: Gosh, a supervisor that was early on in my career, he was a former WWII, WWII Veteran, I believe he was POW for a while, just a remarkable, type of guy that you thought you were growing up and nonetheless, that's who you want to be, would you still want to grow up, you know? When Brooks called it the greatest generation, I'm not so sure he was off the mark the, he was a great human being. And, and it's been a blessing in my life to run into a bunch of them, but he, Truman kind of jumps to mind. Yeah.

Suzie: Was his name Truman?

John: Truman Brooks. Yeah. Yeah, that's the one that jumps to mind. He was clergy. He performed our wedding, when Jennifer and I got married. That was a real, I had to talk to Jennifer into letting him do it. So that was a real challenge. And she loved him too. He just did a beautiful job but he had that awesome combination of intelligence, integrity, authenticity, transparency, toughness. I mean he just, he was an iron fist but a velvet glove, that's what he was, just a tremendous human being. Yeah.

Suzie: That's nice. And a wonderful influence on you and he married you two. That's so cool.



John: And he married me.

Suzie: And it worked, it stuck. How long have you been married?

John: Yeah, he did a pretty good job with that.

Suzie: And you have been married how long, John?

John: Gosh, 30 some years now.

Suzie: Oh you should know the specifics; I am going to hold you to it.

John: It's 30.

Suzie: It is 30?

John: Yes.

Suzie: Okay. I'm just teasing ya, I'd have to think for a minute too, cause I can't always track what year it is and when do we, you know, it goes so fast. Laurie, when you think of the word successful, who's first person that comes to mind for you?

Laurie: You know, here's what popped into my mind and a little different than an individual. Honestly, business owners. Especially business owners who are juggling families and trying to run a business at the same time, I just, I have so much respect for somebody who's out there working hard everyday to build a business which employees people, provides people with, you know, incomes that they can raise their own families with. That, I always just feel so proud too find successful business owners and get a chance to talk to them. So they are truly the people I feel very close to and appreciate it all that they do every day, especially single women who are running businesses and raising kids at the same time.

Suzie: Yeah, that's an amazing feat. It seems like that should get more honor.

Laurie: Yes.

Suzie: Just in our media or just as humans, I put that right with honoring older people, seniors who, you know, it's like we should honor their journey and then the business owner, what they're doing, like you said, employing people and yeah, that's tough job and having taken risks every day.

Laurie: They are taking risks every day, their houses on the line. I mean this is, this is not an easy place to play and there's tons of them every day working their selves into a frenzy and there's good rewards, I mean there's rewards that go with running a successful business, but they don't take a lot of time too celebrate those rewards, do they?



Suzie: No, well there's always the next thing.

Laurie: There's always the next thing we have to go chase down. So those tend to be my heroes, not to mitigate other people that do other wonderful things, but my world is full of people like that and so they always come to mind first.

Suzie: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. And you know, with a great coach and facilitator, I'm sure we all work to help them celebrate.

Laurie: Yes.

Suzie: How great this is, what you just did, be their champion too.

Laurie: Yup, exactly, Suzie.

Suzie: When they want to brush over and go on to the next thing. So a lot about we talk about here, I have Wake Up Eager Wednesday, which I do mind, body, spirit tips, kind of a personal hobby of mine. But it is the work that I care most about, is helping people get to where they want to go so that they can enjoy every day. And so the term I always use is wake up eager. So let's talk about things that you all do that helps you create the days that feel good and right for you and a mind, body, spirit. What would you share, John? Some quick, quick things that work for you.

John: Well, gosh, I like to open the day and close the day with some quiet time where I prayerfully look at the day or close the day, study a little perhaps, and a new habit I picked up is making sure no matter if I'm playing tennis later on in today or going to the gym or riding horses or whatever, I'm doing a 20 minute hard walk that can include some running in it, but I'm making sure whatever else that I'm doing that even before breakfast. And that's been a nice daily habit to pick up. So the other thing I'd quickly mentioned that there is an ancient tradition in certain circles of dividing the day between study and manual labor or physical exertion. And it's either quiet time or worship. Those three things, mentally there is studying involved, physically, in this case, physical labor and then where the soul and the spirit of nurture too. So I've tried to divide my day three quadrants and making sure that all three of those are part of each day. In a nutshell, Suzie, that's how I've answered that. Yeah.

Suzie: I love it. That's you in a nutshell, John. Feels good. I love it. Laurie, what would you say?

Laurie: Well, I'm going to take my cue from John. I'm just going to do what he's doing. But what I try to do is I'm an optimist, I've always been an optimist, I always find something positive about the day. So I know, you know, like today I was going to get a chance to talk with you Suzie and interact with John. So I always look for the positive things that are going to happen that I can influence or create because I'm completely in charge of those things. So, and I walk, my husband and I walk every morning. We have two pups, dogs and I play ball with them, they're a joy. So I love to see them chasing their little ball around the yard. So the clarity that comes with



my day, helps me to feel in control of the day, knowing that I'm going to have interruptions, but as long as I feel like I've gotten some stuff done, I'm very good, I feel good about myself, I feel good about what I do. So there's that piece that, that clarity and that optimism and then I try again, to exercise. I love what John said because I love working outdoors. I love working in the yard. I think we're happier when we're active. I think our minds are happier when we're active. And I spend a lot of time in front of a computer, so it's better for me to make those breaks happen often. And I don't usually sit in front of my computer more than maybe 30 to 45 minutes or except when I'm writing, I tend to do a two-hour writing thing, but still. And then my family, you know, I'm very close to my sister, my brother, my nieces, my nephews, and yeah I love to be around them.

John: That's so important, Laurie.

Laurie: It is. And I say this all the time, family is everything. There's always some things that may not set right, but it doesn't matter, they are family. And that's what we all want to, I always want to believe that we'll always have each other and they'll always be there for us. And then the other group that I enjoy so much working with Suzie, is my Growth Curve Specialist and Strategists Community. I get such pleasure out of talking to them, just like what John is talking about, I get to share in his successes, I get to hear what he's doing and when I can answer a question or help them do something, I just feel solid and I feel good about that. So those are the things that kind of keep me, I love sunsets and I love sunrises and we're in Tucson, Arizona and they're just spectacular and I just, I breathe them in.

Suzie: That's awesome. Love that.

John: That is awesome.

Suzie: So let's do some get to know you questions. John, what actor would you want to play you in a movie?

John: Well, I have two Charlton Heston and Gregory Peck. Gregory Peck or Charlton Heston, flip a coin.

Suzie: Okay. I can see both of those. What's your favorite possession?

John: I'd have to say my horses. We have horses, but I'm not sure sometimes if their possessions, you know, there's a partnership when you are riding on a thousand pound animal.

Suzie: Yes.

John: It's, but yeah, I just, I love, and there's a lot of leadership, some of the leadership stuff, you know, horses, you have to learn their language in order to communicate with it. They don't talk English. So there's a lot of stuff that you can learn from working with horses anyway, short, horses, I'd say those are my favorite possessions, but they're more friends.



Suzie: So you have more than one horse?

John: Yeah, we have three horses and two donkeys.

Suzie: Oh my goodness.

John: Yeah. The donkeys are kind of like big dogs, pasture dogs.

Suzie: Fun, fun, fun, fun. So Laurie, what about you? What's your favorite possession?

Laurie: You know, I love John's story about horses and I gave this a lot of Suzie, and it really is my sense of who I am, I know that seems kind of weird as a possession, but I don't look at things as possessing them, I look at how I look at things and we've all gone through it, right. I'm, you know, older and wiser, and there have been times in my life I wasn't clear of who I was or how I reacted or things that I did well or the reasons I did things, so today I'm very confident and comfortable about who I am and how I've evolved as an individual. So that would be how I would answer that. But to John's point, we used to have horses, John, and there is nothing, I don't think more spiritual than being on a horse or being with a horse and I just, I can get very emotional about what they bring to our lives, so good for you. We don't have, but I love them. Yup.

John: Yup, Yup, Yup.

Suzie: Love that. Both of those. And how about share a funny story that your family tells about you.

Laurie: Well, you know...

John: I'll let Laurie take that one.

Suzie: You're not doing that one, right?

John: Yeah. Yeah, I'm going to dodge that one.

Laurie: It's literally early on, I've always been directionally challenged, I can't tell up or down North from South, East from West. I lived in Colorado all of my life, mostly all of my life, and in the Colorado, the mountains are mostly in the West. So it was very clear and easy for me when I was in Colorado to know where I was going, if it was daylight. So the story that my family tells about me is I was at a restaurant with my mother-in-law and we left that restaurant, in the hometown I grew up in, and I drove out of the parking lot, it was dark, I drove the wrong way, I got as completely lost and you know, she was so sweet, I would, I'd say, "Okay, Anna Marie, I think, I know kind of where we are, we're not really lost, I'm just kind of misdirected right now." She goes, "Laurie, don't you worry about it. I know you'll figure it out." I'm in my hometown and I'm driving around lost, because this is before GPS. So, even today, and it's, you know, my



husband has just given up on me now and I'm very clear and okay with it, I can walk out of a store in a mall and turn the wrong way.

Suzie: You and I cannot go shopping together cause I always tell my husband like, "Okay, you're Daniel Boone." Like, "Daniel Boone, tell me which way to go because I'm not sure."

Laurie: I don't care where my husband is, he's got, "Okay that's North." I'm going "How do you know that?"

Suzie: Yeah, he does too. I know, what is that.

Laurie: So that's the story and they all tell about love.

John: Yeah, that is great, Laurie. Yeah, you're human Laurie, I like that. You know I think so much of you and to hear that little human touch. That's just good.

Suzie: If you ever want to challenger her, put her in an obstacle course.

Laurie: Yeah, don't let me drive.

John: Yeah, let her drive.

Suzie: Hey John, what advice would you give your 25 year old self?

John: Suzie, we don't have the time.

Suzie: We don't?

John: There's just so much, you know, looking back, gosh, I would say the number one thing is enjoy the journey, seize the moment.

Suzie: Yeah.

John: Pick the day, carpe diem. Kind of live in the now, the big curve then and continues to be, how do you love people? You know, how do you love the not me, you know? And that's still the journey. And I was certainly, I wasn't that as a 25 year old, but at any rate, that's the short answer.

Suzie: Love it. Laurie?

Laurie: Well I thought about this, I would say, save for that rainy day. And know what you value, know what your beliefs are and stay true to them. Don't let somebody misdirect you. It's hard sometimes when we're younger to run into people who don't respect our beliefs and we're a little



vulnerable and we can be manipulated more than we like to believe we could be. So, to me, it's just be true to yourself and know what those values are.

John: Yeah.

Suzie: Great advice, both of you.

John: Good Laurie.

Suzie: So John, if you could put a billboard anywhere, what would it be? What would it say?

John: Well, you know Elvis grew up kind of close to where we live here and there's one out on 55 is, and you know Graceland is not too far from here. And of course Elvis is the billboards out there, it's directions to Graceland and Elvis is he young, you know, he's got the guitar and I've often thought driving past it, you know, if I was right beside Elvis Presley on that billboard, Elvis would make me look good. Yeah, yeah, probably that one.

Suzie: You would get on the Elvis billboard?

John: You could get me on the Elvis billboard, I know you're well connected, Suzie, but that would be awesome, pull that off.

Suzie: Would you say anything next to it? Or would you just be hanging out next to Elvis?

John: You know, I wouldn't care, if I could just get next to Elvis, for just a second.

Suzie: Everybody would be talking about you in your hometown, that would be awesome.

John: Who is he? They would run me down.

Suzie: "Hey, he's friends with Elvis." Laurie, what would you say?

Laurie: I just said, "Believe in yourself," that would be what I would put on my billboard.

Suzie: I love that. Alright, so we're going to close, a last bit of wisdom and around Seven Stages of Growth and executives and leadership and getting where you want to go. I'll start with you Laurie and close with John. What's your last bit of advice or wisdom that you'd want everybody to take away from this podcast?

Laurie: You know Suzie, it would be this, you do not have to figure it out as you go. There is a model that will help you figure out what you need to do next to grow a successful company and that model is there to help you predict how growth is going to impact you. It's there to help you focus on the right things at the right time and it'll help you adapt your leadership skills to what the company is telling you it needs today. So in my thinking, please, if you are a business



owner, don't think there's not any help out there, especially CEOs who tend to live in their own world, they don't really have people they can turn to unless they have a coach or they're in an advisory group. But I want them to recognize you do not have to figure it out as you go, there is a model to help you grow your business.

Suzie: Awesome. John?

John: Pick up the phone and call somebody about Seven Stages of Growth, just begin the conversation. That's the first step to bringing on board, and awesome, awesome material, resource and some wonderful people out there that could really help take an organization to the next level. That's what I would say, Suzie.

Suzie: Right. Great. Thank you both, you've been awesome.

Laurie: Well thank you, Suzie.

John: We really appreciate the time. It's been a privilege, Suzie.

Laurie: It has. It's been fun and you do a great job, Suzie, so thank you so much.

Suzie: So I hope you enjoyed our discussion and got a better understanding of the Seven Stages of Growth. Some of my key takeaways or favorite quotes, when John said, "Alignment precedes engagement," we get, all understand that, have seen that, when the team is aligned and they're out there working on engagement, it's a totally different story than if there's not alignment in the message and the vision and what we're actually doing and why we do it. You need alignment and to get it you have to have clarity and you have to have buy in. And I just love that this process creates that. He also said something that I thought was very sharp and smart, which is, "The key to strategic growth is intentionality over time." So if you want to be, grow, and you want to do it in the way that's most strategic and helpful to the organization and to yourself, you have to be intentional about it. And that's another thing that I like about their process is it helps you be intentional, you know exactly what you need to do, as we talked about you know what the priorities are and you know, cause your job is to figure out what the priorities are. And so this tool helps you do that. And lastly, when Laurie closed with, "You know, you don't have to figure it out as you go, it's not, doesn't have to be hit or miss, there is a way to be very specific and correct about going forward." So we have information on our website about Seven Stages of Growth and some contact information for John, you'll see all that in the show notes, so got a summary and we'll have a link to the sample Seven Stages of Growth X-Ray output just so you can see that and I would just encourage you to go over to John's profile and click on it in, on our website and shoot him a note, we've got a contact form there and just have a conversation with him about what's this about, here's what I'm thinking about and learn about it and just start a conversation. He's a great guy and he'll take good care of you if you decide to move forward and if you don't, you'll at least have had the conversation to figure out whether it is a match.



Suzie: The show notes for today is pricelessprofessional.com/beekeeper, that's all one word. Next up, the next episode is going to be about the DISC assessment and a particular bugaboo of mine is that when the DISC assessment is weaponized, so when it gets overused or it gets applied assuming certain things about people or is used to judge or pigeonhole people, so when the DISC assessment is weaponized. I'm going to talk about that and I see it and then what do you do about it and how to make sure that doesn't happen with that tool.

Suzie: Also want to mention our Wake Up Eager Wednesday tools and tips. I do those every Wednesday and if you go to wakeupeager.com you'll see my favorite tips for waking up your mind, body and spirit and I've started that here in 2019, I also post them on our Facebook Wake Up Eager link and is on LinkedIn and so if you are interested in that, go check it out. Look forward to catching up with you in the next go round. If I can help you in any way, please reach out. Take care. Have an awesome day.

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