

**VERIZON
UP TO SPEED LIVE
March 7, 2024 10:00 AM ET**

>> COME BE INSPIRED.

>> BE IGNITED.

>> BE INCLUDED.

>> BECAUSE WHAT STARTS WITH A SINGLE DRAFT...

[APPLAUSE]

>> Kia Wilson: OH, MY GOODNESS!

WE HAVE A PACKED HOUSE.

YES!

OKAY.

SO HAPPY ALMOST INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY.

ARE WE EXCITED?

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

OKAY.

SO I AM KIA WILSON, THE GLOBAL LEAD FOR THE WOMEN'S ALLIANCE OF VERIZON EMPLOYEES, ALSO KNOWN AS WAVE.

WE ARE SO EXCITED TO HAVE EVERYBODY IN THIS ROOM, SO EXCITED TO HAVE THE SUPPORT ON THIS DAY.

WE'RE INSPIRED AND WE'RE IGNITED AROUND THE PASSIONS TO DRIVE FORWARD GENDER EQUITY AND JUST BEING ABLE TO SHOW UP AS YOUR AUTHENTIC SELF.

SO I JUST WANT TO REFLECT ON SOME THINGS THAT WE WERE REALLY PROUD OF IN WAVE FROM LAST YEAR COMING INTO THIS NEW YEAR, POWERFUL AND READY TO GO.

ONE OF THE THINGS IS PARTNERSHIP WITH WOW CONNECT.

SO MANY HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED THE EMAIL TO GET ENGAGED AND GET INVOLVED.

THAT WAS A YEAR'S LONG WORTH OF PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION WITH THE IND TEAM.

WE'RE REALLY EXCITED ABOUT THAT.

THE OTHER THING WE'RE EXCITED ABOUT IS COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT.

SO LAST YEAR WE HAD A GOAL OF OBTAINING 4,000 COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS, AND WE KILLED IT, ROCKIN' OVER 5500 HOURS FOR 2023.

[APPLAUSE]

AND THAT WAS FROM OVER 4500 V TEAMERS, UNIQUE V TEAMERS BEING INVOLVED AND DRIVING THEIR PASSIONS AND THE THINGS THAT THEY ARE COMMITTED TO DRIVING IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

SO I THINK THAT IS GREAT TO BE ABLE TO BE CELEBRATED AT THAT FORK, I MEAN, CELEBRATED AT WORK FOR THAT.

I'M REALLY EXCITED ABOUT THIS MONUMENTAL MOMENT.

ARE YOU READY TO BE PART OF HISTORY?

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

>> I THOUGHT SO.

BECAUSE THIS IS THE FIRST TIME WE ARE GETTING THE WOMEN OF THE VLC, WE ARE GOING TO HEAR FROM THEM, CANDID DISCUSSIONS, REALLY GREAT CONVERSATIONS.

SO WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, I AM GOING TO BRING UP APARNA, WHO IS GOING TO BE MODERATING US TODAY.

AND THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR BEING HERE.

[APPLAUSE]

>> Aparna Khurjekar: OKAY, AND CAN I INVITE THE WOMEN OF VLC ON TO THE STAGE?

I KNOW THEY NEED NO INTRODUCTION.

[APPLAUSE]

SO HELLO, LESLIE, SAM.

HELLO, STACY.

>> Stacy Sharpe: HELLO!

>> Aparna Khurjekar: YOUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT MERE.

>> Stacy Sharpe: NOT MY FIRST.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: HELLO.

HOW IS EVERYONE DOING?

HELLO, BEAUTIFUL WOMEN AND OUR ALLIES?

SITTING RIGHT UP FRONT HERE!

[APPLAUSE]

AND HELLO IN ALL OUR WATCH PARTIES ACROSS ALL OF VERIZON.

SO EXCITED.

JUST GIVE A SHOUT-OUT TO YOURSELF.

WE'RE EXCITED TO BE HERE TODAY.

I KNOW IT'S BEEN PALPABLE.

IT'S BEEN -- WE'VE BEEN LEADING UP TO THIS DAY, AND IT'S A PRETTY ICONIC DAY.

I HAVE THE BEST SEAT HERE IN THE ROOM.

AND IT'S ICONIC BECAUSE I WAS TELLING SAM THIS, IT'S THE FIRST TIME WE HAVE FOUR TRAILBLAZERS FROM THE VLC SITTING WITH US.

THESE ARE FOUR LEADERS OF THE BIGGEST AND THE BEST -- AND I'M NOT TALKING IMPARTIALLY -- THE BEST TELCO IN THE WORLD.

I WAS AT MWC AND I GOT A CHANCE TO TALK TO OTHERS, AND I WILL TELL YOU, THESE ARE THE BEST.

AND THEY'RE ALSO GREAT HUMANS.

AND THEY HAPPEN TO BE BAD ASS WOMEN.

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

SO JUST LIKE ALL OF YOU, I'M PRETTY EXCITED, BUT I WON'T LIE, I'M EXCITED ABOUT ONE MORE THING.

THROUGHOUT MY JOURNEY IN VERIZON, I WANTED TO BE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF 60 SECONDS.

[LAUGHTER]

AND BY THE WAY, I GET TO DO 120 SECONDS.

I ASKED FOR MORE BECAUSE THERE ARE THE FOUR OF THEM.

SO ARE YOU READY?

>> WE'RE READY!

>> Aparna Khurjekar: THE WAY THIS IS GOING TO GO, QUICK QUESTIONS, A DIFFERENT ONE TO EACH ONE OF YOU.

NO PRESSURE.

AND WE'LL SEE WHETHER MY CARD GETS OVER OR THE TIME.

CAN WE START THE CLOCK?

THE CLOCK STARTS.

WE'LL START WITH YOU.

>> BEYONCE.

ANYTHING BEYONCE.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: FAVORITE BINGE WATCHING?

>> OH, GOSH.

>> ONE CAUSE YOU FEEL PASSIONATE ABOUT.

>> FIG FOR KIDS.

>> VERY NICE.

>> A SUPERPOWER YOU WANT TO HAVE.

>> FEARLESSNESS.

>> A SUPERPOWER YOU HAVE.

>> AUTHENTICITY.

>> VERY NICE.

>> FIRST THING YOU DO IN THE A.M. WHEN YOU GET UP?

>> MEDITATE.

>> OH!

WOW!

[LAUGHTER]

>> THAT'S IMPRESSIVE.

[LAUGHTER]

>> FAVORITE PLACE TO VACATION.

>> MAUI.

>> A BRAND YOU ADMIRE.

ACTUALLY, IT'S PERFECT I ASK YOU THAT.

OUTSIDE OF VERIZON.

IT CAN BE PELOTON, YOU JUST CAME FROM THERE.

>> NO COMMENT.

[LAUGHTER]

>> I ADMIRE... I DON'T WANT TO SAY THE OBVIOUS, BUT NIKE IS A BRAND I ADMIRE.

>> A GUILTY PLEASURE YOU HAVE.

>> VIDEO GAMES.

>> OOH.

>> DID YOU KNOW THAT ABOUT HER?

>> I LOVE THAT ABOUT HER.
>> A SKILL YOU HAVEN'T MASTERED AS YET THAT YOU WANT TO.
>> MM-HMM... BOXING.
>> ONE THING YOU CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT.
>> SUNSHINE.
>> BEAUTIFUL.
FAVORITE BAND.
>> OH, U2.
>> I SEE YOU.
>> FAVORITE QUEUE SIN.
>>
INDIAN.
>> BEST LIFE LESSON YOU HAVE HAD.
>> HMM... ACTUALLY FROM BOXING.
BEFORE FIGHT BEGINS, THE RULES ARE PROTECT YOURSELF AT ALL TIMES.
SELF CARE.
>> AND THEN WE'LL END WITH YOU.
ONE THING YOU CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT.
YOU SAID SUNSHINE.
ONE THING YOU DO AMPLE OF.
>> AMPLE OF IS... PROBABLY TOO MUCH TALKING.
I NEED TO DO A LITTLE MORE EXERCISE.
THAT'S PRETTY AWESOME.
VERY GOOD.
THANK YOU SO MUCH.
THANK YOU FOR THAT.
[APPLAUSE]
>> I WAS ALMOST RUNNING OUT OF QUESTIONS.
THAT WAS REALLY GOOD.
SO WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO NOW IS I'M GOING TO SWITCH -- AN AMAZING
JOB WITH A WHOLE BUNCH OF QUESTIONS.
FIRST TIME WE MANY AND CARDS, WE WE'LL FIGURE OUT HOW THAT WORKS.
WE'VE GOT A BUNCH OF QUESTIONS FOR ALL OF YOU.
WE'RE GOING TO START OFF WITH WHAT WE CALL PITTISM, OR UNIVERSAL
TRUTHS THAT WOMEN ARE ALWAYS TALKED ABOUT IN THE LIGHT OF THOSE.
THE FIRST ONE I WILL GO WITH IS, USUALLY WOMEN NEED TO BE CHECKING
100% OF THE BOXES BEFORE THEY RAISE THEIR HAND.
HOW MANY OF YOU AGREE WITH ME?
YES?
YOU SEE THE MEN AREN'T RAISING THEIR HANDS.
BECAUSE THE NUMBER FOR THEM, YOU KNOW, UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED IS
60%.
SO MAYBE WE WILL GO WITH YOU, STACY.
>> Stacy Sharpe: SURE.
FIRSTLY, WELCOME.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: WE'RE VERY EXCITED TO HAVE YOU.

>> Stacy Sharpe: I'M EXCITED TO BE HERE.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR ABOUT YOU, BUT ALSO HEAR HOW YOU HAVE PUSHED YOURSELF AND REALLY KIND OF TAKEN THAT LEAP WHEN YOU DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE READY AND ADVICE YOU HAVE FOR WOMEN IN THE ROOM.

>> Stacy Sharpe: PROBABLY THE MOST POIGNANT MOMENT IN MY CAREER IS WHEN OUR GENERAL COUNSEL AND CEO ASKED ME TO MOVE TO D.C. TO BE A FEDERAL LOBBYIST FOR THE COMPANY.

AND IN MY OLD INDUSTRY, MOST, IF NOT ALL, OF THE LOBBYISTS WERE LAWYERS, CAME FROM CAPITOL HILL, OR THEY WERE STATE LOBBYISTS AND MOVED TO FEDERAL.

SO I WENT... WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

I'M NONE OF THOSE THINGS.

DO I HAVE...

SO I WENT INTO THE GENERAL COUNSEL'S OFFICE, WHO HAPPENED TO BE FEMALE.

I SAID, I'M FLATTERED THAT YOU WOULD ASK ME TO TAKE ON THIS OPPORTUNITY, BUT I DON'T HAVE ANY OF THE SKILLS.

AND SHE CLOSED HER DOOR AND SAID, DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE WANT THIS JOB?

AND BE CAREFUL WHAT I SAY, THIS IS MY FIRST WEEK AND I WANT TO SAY...

[LAUGHTER]

>> I KNOW SOMEONE IN HR.

[LAUGHTER]

>> SHE WAS VERY EXPLICIT THAT IF THERE WAS SOMETHING IN THE JOB DESCRIPTION THAT MEN CAN'T PHYSICALLY DO, THEY WOULD SAY, I WOULD FIGURE IT OUT.

I WON'T GO TO MORE DETAIL.

SHE SAID, YOU HAVE THE CAPABILITIES.

WE TRUST THAT YOU HAVE WHAT WE NEED GOING INTO THE FUTURE OF THAT ROLE.

DON'T EVER TELL PEOPLE WHO ARE OFFERING YOU AN OPPORTUNITY THAT YOU'RE NOT PREPARED FOR THE OPPORTUNITY, WHICH WAS A GREAT LEARNING.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: VERY GOOD.

AND I'M SURE YOU KICKED ASS IN THAT ROLE.

>> Stacy Sharpe: DOING WELL.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: THANK YOU FOR SHARING THAT.

AND PULLING ON THAT THREAD, SELF-DOUBT, ANOTHER THING THAT A LOT OF US HAVE, RIGHT?

IT'S KIND OF WEIGHS ON US.

ONE OF THE THINGS PEOPLE TELL US IS YOU HAVE TO MOVE BEYOND THAT.

MOST OF THE DREAMS YOU LOSE IS BECAUSE OF JOBS, EVEN MORE THAN FAILURES THAT YOU WILL SEE.

LESLIE, WELCOME.

YOU ARE NO LONGER THE NEWBIE IN THE CROWD.

BUT IT'S MONTH THREE, HOPEFULLY YOU ARE ENJOYING.

>> Leslie Berland: YEAH, I AM.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: AND HOPEFULLY THIS IS THE BEST DECISION YOU HAVE MADE IN YOUR CAREER.

>> Leslie Berland: IT IS.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: THANK YOU FOR THAT.

WHAT DO YOU THINK AND HOW DO YOU GET RID OF THE ITTY BITTY COMMITTEE IN YOUR BRAIN?

>> Leslie Berland: SOMETIMES THEY'RE NOT ITTY BITTY.

YOU KNOW, SELF DOUBT, AND BY THE WAY, OTHERS DOUBTING YOU, I THINK YOU JUST MENTIONED SOMEBODY WHO BELIEVED IN YOU, AND HOPEFULLY YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED THAT A, AND I THINK WE ALL PROBABLY EXPERIENCED THOSE WHO DOUBT US.

AND TYPICALLY THOSE THINGS HAPPEN AT THE SAME TIME, AND SORT OF CO-MINGLED, SO I WOULD SAY AT EVERY SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE IN MY CAREER, IMPOSTER SYNDROME IS REAL.

I HAD A SIMILAR EXPERIENCE TO STACY, WHERE MY ANSWER WAS IMMEDIATELY "NO."

LET ME TALK YOU OUT OF WITH THE NEW OPPORTUNITY YOU ARE NOW PRESENTING TO ME.

SO I THINK IT'S A JOURNEY, YOU KNOW, AND I KNOW IT SOUNDS A LITTLE TRITE, BUT CONFIDENCE REALLY COMES WITHIN.

SO AS MUCH AS YOU CAN, IN MY EXPERIENCE, DIAL DOWN THE NOISE, BE VERY INTENTIONAL IN WHO YOU SURROUND YOURSELF WITH, AND BY THE WAY, PROFESSIONALLY, THIS IS ALSO PERSONALLY, YOU KNOW, PEOPLE YOU TRUST, PEOPLE YOU RESPECT, PEOPLE THAT DO HYPE YOU UP, PEOPLE THAT DO BUILD YOU UP, RIGHT? BECAUSE I THINK WE HAVE SEEN VERY TALENTED PEOPLE TEAR THEMSELVES DOWN AND PEOPLE WHO MAY BE A DIFFERENT TYPE OF PERSON BUILD THEMSELVES UP.

SO IT'S REALLY WHAT WE CREATE WITHIN OURSELVES.

AND SO I THINK THE INNER VOICE IN YOUR HEAD, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE MOMENTS, AS I HAVE, WHERE YOU DOUBT YOURSELF, YOU QUESTION YOURSELF, YOU BEAT YOURSELF UP.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: BUT THAT'S OKAY SOMETIMES.

>> Leslie Berland: THAT'S OKAY.

IT KIND OF ENERGIZES US.

IT KIND OF MAKES US WORK HARDER AND DO BETTER, RUN THROUGH WALLS, SO I THINK THAT ENERGY IS CHANNLED FOR GOOD IS AWESOME, AND JUST MAKE SURE YOU KEEP IT IN BALANCE AND KEEP BUILDING UP THE VOICE WITHIN YOUR OWN HEAD AND MAKE IT SUPER POSITIVE.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: THANK YOU.

SO DOUBT DOES KILL MORE DREAMS THAN FAILURES EVER WILL, AND WHAT WE'VE GOT TO DO, AND WHAT I'M HEARING FROM YOU, IS REALLY TAKING

THAT DOUBT AND PUTTING IT TO USE, RIGHT? YOU SAID SOMETHING ABOUT ARMCHAIR QUARTERBACK.

I WOULD RATHER BE IN THAT KIND OF SPACE THAN -- YOU TALKED ABOUT IMPOSTER SYNDROME.

I WOULD RATHER BE IN THAT SPACE THAN THE ARMCHAIR QUARTERBACK WHO IS SITTING THERE GOING, I KNOW IT ALL, BECAUSE THAT IS HOW YOU LEARN AND GROW.

AND THAT GETS ME ACTUALLY TO BEING COMFORTABLE WITH THE UNCOMFORTABLE.

VANDANA, I HAVE SEEN YOU DO THAT, I HAVE SEEN YOU PUSH NOT JUST YOURSELF BUT ALL OF US INTO THAT UNCOMFORTABLE REALM.

TALK TO US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT HOW YOU --

>> Vandana Venketash: LIKE THE JACKET, ACTUALLY, I DIDN'T GET THE MEMO.

[LAUGHTER]

BUT I REALLY... I WANT TO START WITH A STORY OF WHAT UNCOMFORTABLE MEANS, BECAUSE IT'S A LITTLE BIT ABOUT WHAT LESLIE WAS TALKING ABOUT, REALLY ABOUT VULNERABILITY AT THE CORE OF IT, RIGHT?

BECAUSE BEING UNCOMFORTABLE MEANS YOU HAVE TO OWN WHO YOU ARE AND YOU HAVE TO SHOW UP WHO YOU ARE AND THAT MEANS BEING VULNERABLE.

AND SOME OF YOU HAVE HEARD BRENÉ BROWN TALK ABOUT THE POWER OF VULNERABILITY BECAUSE IT OPENS US UP TO THAT.

I WANT TO START WITH STORY OF SOMETHING THAT I DID RECENTLY.

I HAVE THREE BOYS, THREE TEENAGE BOYS, AND THEY, AS MANY OF YOU WHO HAVE TEENAGE BOYS ARE SORT OF HUNKERED DOWN A LITTLE BIT SOMETIMES.

THEY DON'T WANT TO TALK TO ANYBODY, THEY'RE DOING THEIR THING. AND USUALLY BEHIND A SCREEN OF SOME TYPE.

AND WE HAD A CHALLENGE AS A FAMILY THAT WE WOULD TALK TO ONE STRANGER A WEEK.

SO STRANGER DANGER, BUT THESE ARE...

[LAUGHTER]

THESE ARE TEENAGERS, THEY'RE NOT TWO-YEAR-OLDS.

AND IT CAN BE SOMEBODY AT SCHOOL.

IT CAN BE SOMEBODY SOMEWHERE ELSE.

AND I, YOU KNOW, WAS GOING TO MODEL THAT MYSELF.

SO HERE AT BASKING RIDGE CAFE, I WAS STANDING IN LINE, I TURNED AROUND AND DIDN'T I OFFERED TO PAY FOR THAT PERSON'S COFFEE.

\$30 LATER WHEN THE GUY BOUGHT A BUNCH OF STUFF -- BOY, DID I LEARN A LESSON ABOUT THAT.

BUT THE POINT IS, EVEN FOR SOMEBODY LIKE ME, WHO IS OUT THERE TALKING TO PEOPLE, JUST TO TALK TO SOMEBODY I DIDN'T KNOW WAS REALLY HARD.

AND MY KIDS STRUGGLED WITH THAT IMMENSELY.

JUST SOMEBODY AT SCHOOL THEY HADN'T TALKED TO.

AND THE REASON WAS... WHAT IF THEY DON'T LIKE ME?
WHAT IF I DON'T COME ACROSS THE RIGHT WAY?
WHAT IF I'M TAKING AN UNPOPULAR POSITION AND I HAVE TO SAY
SOMETHING HARD IN A MEETING?
THOSE ARE THINGS THAT EACH OF US STRUGGLES WITH DAILY.
AND MY ANSWER TO YOU IS TO THINK OF
UNCOMFORTABLENESS/DISCOMFORT AS A BUBBLE AROUND YOU.
AND YOU KEEP PUSHING THAT BUBBLE AND PUSH IT A LITTLE BIT THIS WAY
AND PUSH IT A LITTLE BIT THAT WAY AND YOUR DISCOMFORT EFFECTIVELY
STARTS TO, YOU KNOW, GO AWAY, BECAUSE YOU ARE EXPANDING THAT
BUBBLE, AND IT HELPS.
SO THAT IS WHAT I WOULD JUST TELL YOU AS YOU THINK ABOUT HOW YOU
DEAL WITH UNCOMFORTABLENESS AND DIFFICULT DECISIONS, STANDING UP
FOR WHAT YOU BELIEVE WHEN IT MIGHT NOT BE POPULAR.
JUST THINK ABOUT THAT AS A BUBBLE THAT YOU KEEP PUSHING AND YOU
KEEP PUSHING UNTIL YOU DO THAT.
>> Aparna Khurjekar: I LOVE THAT IMAGE OF THE BUBBLE AND PUSHING THAT
AND BEING COMFORTABLE WITH THAT, AND THEN PUSHING FURTHER.
THAT'S AWESOME.
THAT BRINGS ME TO THE DREADED F WORD.
FAILURE.
>> I'M TRACKING...
[LAUGHTER]
>> Aparna Khurjekar: AND THIS IS WHERE YOU, THROUGH ALL THE POST-IT
NOTES, WE ALL NEED, HOW COOL ARE THOSE, PRETTY AWESOME.
YOU TALK A LOT ABOUT USING FAILURE AS A GATEWAY TO SUCCESS.
SO TALK TO US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT HOW YOU EMBRACED FAILURE AND WHAT
ADVICE YOU HAVE FOR ALL OF US HERE.
>> Vandana Venketash: SO FAILURE -- HOW MANY OF US HAVE BEEN IN AN
INTERVIEW OR ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE INTERVIEW TABLE AND SAID, TELL
ME ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOU FAILED OR MADE A MISTAKE.
I ACTUALLY... IT'S A LITTLE BIT OF A JOKE BECAUSE YOU'RE GUARANTEED TO
GET THAT QUESTION, SO PRACTICE THAT.
BUT IT IS REALLY, REALLY IMPORTANT.
AND I THINK OF PEOPLE WOULD SAY LIKE, WHAT DO YOU HIRE FOR?
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?
AND I TALK A LOT ABOUT GRIT, BUT MOSTLY I TALK ABOUT EXPERIENCES.
AND EXPERIENCES ARE WHAT MAKE US A DIVERSE COLLECTIVE SOCIETY
AND COMMUNITY.
AND IN THOSE EXPERIENCES, I DO LISTEN FOR TIMES WHEN PEOPLE HAD TO
GO THROUGH A LOT OF TRIAL AND TRIBULATION AND FAILURE IS AN
IMPORTANT PIECE OF THAT.
FIRST OF ALL, I THINK IF YOU HAVEN'T FAILED, IT TELLS ME YOU MAY NOT BE
TAKING ENOUGH RISK TO THE THOUGHT THAT VANDANA WAS JUST TALKING
ABOUT WITH COMFORT, GETTING OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE, YOU MAY NOT

BE PUSHING YOURSELF TO GET OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE.
YOU MAY NOT BE PUSHING AND HAVING THOSE STRETCH GOALS, LIKE REALLY IMPORTANT TO GET THOSE DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES AND YOU KNOW, WHAT HAVE YOU SURVIVED?
HOW DO YOU ACT IN THOSE MOMENTS AND HOW DO YOU BEHAVE AND LEAD AND GET THROUGH THOSE?
AND IT SAYS SO MUCH ABOUT A PERSON AND HOW THEY WILL ATTACK PROBLEMS, HOW THEY WILL LEAD THEIR TEAMS, HOW THEY WILL ROLE MODEL BEHAVIOR.
AND SO FAILURE IS A GREAT THING.
FAILURE IS AN AMAZING THING.
AND SO MY ANSWER IS DON'T SAY YOU HAVEN'T FAILED, RIGHT?
DON'T SAY MY FAILURE IS THAT I WORK TOO MUCH, PLEASE, FOR THE LOVE...
DO NOT ANSWER THE QUESTION LIKE THAT.
BUT IT'S ACTUALLY -- IT ACTUALLY SAYS A LOT ABOUT YOUR OWN GRIT AND TENACITY AND HOW HARD YOU ARE WILLING TO PUSH IN THE BOLDNESS THAT YOU HAVE.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: PRETTY COOL.

I OFTEN SAY THIS TO MYSELF AT THE FIRST TIME, I HAVE SUCCEEDED, THEN I NEED TO TRY HARDER THE NEXT TIME, RIGHT? BECAUSE YOU JUST HAVE TO PUSH YOURSELF AND EXPERIENCE FAILURE.

YOU DO THE FIRST TIME, YOU GET USED TO IT, YOU LEARN AND GET THAT GRIT.

SO THANK YOU FOR THAT.

I THINK WHAT WE HEARD IN THIS CONTEXT IS YOU ALL HAVE DOUBTS.

YOU ALL HAVE THAT KIND OF IMPOSTER SYNDROME OR FAILURES THAT YOU ARE FACING, BUT IT'S ABOUT THAT GRIT AND ABOUT THE ENVELOPE YOU KEEP PUSHING, AND I THINK ALL OF US CAN TAKE INSPIRATION FROM THAT AND FEEL IGNITED, BECAUSE WE ALL HAVE THE SAME QUALMS, BUT IT'S ABOUT PLOWING THROUGH AND MOVING AHEAD.

WHAT I'M GOING TO DO IS ANOTHER QUICK RUN.

IT'S NOT 60 SECONDS, SO TAKE A LITTLE BIT OF TIME, BUT I'LL GO AROUND ALL FOUR OF YOU AND I WOULD LOVE TO KNOW ABOUT THE BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE GOTTEN.

MAYBE WE'LL START WITH YOU, LESLIE.

>> Leslie Berland: I SAID THIS IN ANOTHER SETTING, SO I'LL GIVE TWO QUICK ONES.

ONE IS GET OUT OF YOUR HEAD.

I THINK WE HAVE VERY MUCH COVERED.

AND I LEARNED IN MY CAREER, AGAIN, YOU NEED TO DO WHAT SCARES YOU, LIKE BECAUSE ONCE YOU DO IT, YOU'LL KNOW YOU HAVE DONE IT, AND YOU CAN DO THE NEXT THING THAT SCARES YOU AND THE NEXT THING.

BUT THE TRAINING OF YOU GO OF LIMITING THE AMOUNT OF TIME YOU ARE CYCLING IN YOUR HEAD -- I USED TO TIME MYSELF, SORT OF IN THE MIDDLE OF MY CAREER, LESLIE, YOU HAVE THREE HOURS TO OBSESS -- TRULY, I'M A

MOM ALSO.

WE BEAT OURSELVES UP IN LOTS OF DIFFERENT WAYS.

AND I WOULD LOOK AT THE CLOCK, AM I STILL THINKING ABOUT THE?

OH, I'M STILL THINKING ABOUT THIS, I NO LONGER CAN THINK ABOUT THAT.

I THINK IT'S A MUSCLE, AT LEAST I HAVE FOUND THAT YOU CAN TRAIN.

AND THE OTHER PIECE OF IT, TOO, AGAIN, IT'S WHAT IS IN YOUR OWN HEAD
AND WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND YOU, IT'S FOCUSING ON WHAT YOU CAN
CONTROL.

I THINK THIS IS MY ENTIRE CAREER, IT'S FOCUS ON THE WORK AND FOCUS ON
PRODUCING EXCELLENCE, HIGH-IMPACT RESULTS, AND TRULY EVERYTHING
WILL FOLLOW.

DO IT WITH HEART.

DO IT WITH COLLABORATION, DO IT WITH SPIRIT AND HONESTY, BUT THAT
REALLY WILL BREAK THROUGH AT THE END OF THE DAY.

ANYTHING ELSE THAT IS SURROUNDING YOU.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: FOCUS ON EXCELLENCE AND SUCCESS.

>> Leslie Berland: ABSOLUTELY.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: VANDANA.

>> Vandana Venketash: CAN YOU REPEAT THE QUESTION?

>> Aparna Khurjekar: BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE GOTTEN.

>> Vandana Venketash: I WOULD SAY IT'S REALLY SIT ON YOUR HANDS,
SOMEBODY TOLD ME, AND WHAT THAT REALLY NEEDS -- I KNOW.

I'M SUPPLYING ALL THE HUMOR, I GET IT.

[LAUGHTER]

SO THE REASON THAT PERSON SAID IT TO ME WAS BECAUSE I THINK OFTEN
WE REACT QUICKLY TO THINGS.

AND WE WANT TO REACT QUICKLY.

SOMETIMES IT'S AN EMOTIONAL REACTION.

SOMETIMES IT'S A, YOU KNOW, MORE SORT OF THOUGHT-OUT REACTION,
BUT TO JUST GIVE YOURSELF A LITTLE BIT OF SPACE TO SORT OF THINK
ABOUT THAT A LITTLE BIT, THINK ABOUT WHERE YOU ARE, THINK ABOUT
WHERE THE PERSON SITTING ACROSS FROM YOU OR THE PEOPLE ACROSS
FROM YOU ARE.

AND JUST ASSESSING THAT FOR A SECOND BEFORE YOU SAY WHAT YOU
SAY.

THAT'S BEEN REALLY HELPFUL FOR ME, BECAUSE AS I HAVE SORT OF GROWN
AND GONE THROUGH DIFFERENT ROLES HERE AT VERIZON, THAT'S BEEN
REALLY IMPORTANT TO CHECK IN WITH MYSELF, AS SHE SAID, GET OUT OF
YOUR HEAD.

MAKE SURE I KNOW WHAT SPACE I'M IN AND WHAT THAT PERSON IS IN
BEFORE I SAY SOMETHING THAT I THINK CAN GO IN A LOT OF DIFFERENT
DIRECTIONS.

SO THAT IS --

>> Aparna Khurjekar: AMAZING.

AND I HAVE GOTTEN THAT ADVICE DIRECTLY AS WELL.

I NEED IT.

I HAVE CONSTANT REMINDERS OF THAT.

STACY.

>> Stacy Sharpe: ACTUALLY, TWO THINGS.

ONE IS DON'T LABEL YOURSELF, BUILD YOUR CAPABILITIES.

IT'S SO EASY FOR US TO SAY, I'M AN HR PERSON OR A MARKETER OR COMMUNICATOR.

NO, THOSE ARE THINGS YOU DO.

AND THAT AFFORDED ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE IN A LOT OF DIFFERENT ROLES, BECAUSE OUR CAPABILITIES ARE PORTABLE, AND LATERAL MOVES ARE SO HELPFUL FOR YOU TO SEE, LIKE THE 360 VIEW OF A BUSINESS OR STAKEHOLDER.

SO BEST ADVICE I EVER HAD EARLY IS DON'T LABEL YOURSELF.

ALL THIS BEING IN OUR HEADS, A LOT OF IT IS BRAIN SCIENCE.

SO YOU REALLY NEED MANTRAS OR WAYS TO GET YOURSELF OUT OF YOUR HEAD.

AND FOR ME IT'S NEXT PLAY.

IT'S A COACH CASING.

I TRY TO OWN IT.

MY HUSBAND IS LIKE, COACH K SAYS THAT, THAT'S NOT YOUR SAYING.

[LAUGHTER]

IT IS NOW.

IT IS NOW.

BUT YOU SEE THAT WHETHER IT IS -- MY HUSBAND IS IN BOXING, WHICH IS WHY SO MUCH IN MY LIFE IS AROUND BOXING.

IN ANY SPORT, IF YOU STRESSING ABOUT WHAT YOU DID IN ONE MOMENT, YOU ARE GOING TO COMPLETELY LOSE THE NEXT PLAY.

AND SO AS YOU ARE GOING THROUGH THINGS, YOU ALWAYS WANT TO PROCESS AND LEARN FROM EXPERIENCES, BUT WHEN YOU ARE IN IT, YOU CAN'T BE OBSESSING ABOUT EVERYTHING SOMEONE SAID OR DID I SAY THAT RIGHT, YOU HAVE TO GO TO THE NEXT PLAY.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: THANKS FOR THAT.

SAM.

>> Sam Hammock: I JUST REALLY QUICK, BUILDING OFF STACY'S, AND WHEN WE WERE INTERVIEWING, SHE SAID TO ME SOMETHING, AND I MUST THINK ABOUT IT EVERY OTHER DAY NOW I WAS LIKE, DAMN, THAT WAS GOOD. SHE SAID, EVEN THE BEST ATHLETE NEEDS A TRAINER.

AND I THINK ABOUT HOW WE INVEST IN OURSELVES THAT WAY AND WE CAN'T TAKE OUR EYES OFF OF THAT.

WE CONSTANTLY NEED TO IMPROVE OURSELVES AN GET THOSE TRAINERS FOR OURSELVES, NO MATTER WHERE WE ARE IN OUR SUCCESS LADDER.

SO IT FEEDS OFF THAT COACH, AND I WOULD SAY I HAVE TWO.

ONE I TALK ABOUT A LOT, BECAUSE I SAY DON'T LET PERFECTION GET IN THE WAY OF GOOD ENOUGH.

THAT WAS AMAZING ADVICE FOR ME.

I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT AT VERIZON, BECAUSE IN OUR DNA, WE ARE THE MOST AMAZING -- OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE IS IN OUR CORE. AND SOMETIMES WE CAN STRIVE FOR PERFECTION AT THAT, AND IT CAN BE A DIMINISHING RETURN.

THAT'S ONE GOOD PIECE OF ADVICE.

AND THEN THE SECOND I GOT -- AND I THINK ABOUT THIS ONE ALL THE TIME -- IS YOU ARE YOUR BIGGEST BLOCKER.

AND SPECIFICALLY FOR WOMEN, WE CAN DO THIS, WE CAN TALK OURSELVES OUT OF THINGS.

WE CANNOT WANT TO...

AND OUR PEOPLE ARE MORE OF OUR CHAMPION THAN WE THINK THERE ARE. AND HOW DO WE NOT PUT THAT BLOCK ON OURSELVES?

>> Aparna Khurjekar: PERFECT.

THANKS SO MUCH THANKS FOR THAT.

SO THE TEAM OF THIS DISCUSSION IS REALLY LIFT AS WE RISE.

SO I WANT TO NOW SWITCH TO MORE ABOUT SPONSORSHIP, ALLYSHIP, AND VANDANA, I'M GOING TO START WITH YOU.

TO TALK ABOUT EMPOWERMENT.

SO ONE OF THE THINGS THAT VANDANA HAS DONE FOR ME, I THINK A COUPLE MONTHS AGO, REACHED OUT.

I MAY HAVE NEEDED A LITTLE BIT OF BOOST.

SHE SAID, LET'S GO DO DINNER.

YOU REMEMBER THAT?

WE SAT DOWN AND HAD A HEART TO HEART.

IT WAS REALLY GOOD.

I FELT LIKE SHE WAS ADJUSTING MY CROWN WITHOUT TELLING ANYBODY IT WAS CROOKED.

AND THAT'S ABOUT EMPOWERMENT AND LIFTING EACH OTHER UP.

SO VANDANA, TELL US ABOUT HOW YOU THINK ABOUT EMPOWERMENT.

>> Vandana Venketash: THANK YOU FOR THAT, ACTUALLY, I ENJOYED OUR DINNER, BECAUSE I CAME AWAY LEARNING MORE THAN I THINK, YOU KNOW, GIVING, AND IT'S ALWAYS THAT TWO -- SIDED THING WE DO TO EACH OTHER.

I GUESS I WOULD START BY SAYING IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT TO FIGURE OUT WHO YOUR MENTORS ARE, WHO YOUR SPONSORS ARE IN AN ORGANIZATION, AND THOSE THINGS ARE VERY DIFFERENT, AND I THINK YOU WILL HEAR DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THAT THROUGHOUT THE PANEL HERE.

BUT IT IS THE COMMON THEME, I WOULD SAY, ACROSS ALL OF THAT, IS WHO IS ACTUALLY GOING TO TELL YOU THAT YOU HAVE EFFECTIVELY SPINACH ON YOUR TEETH, AS I CALL IT.

WHO IS GOING TO GIVE IT TO YOU REALLY THAT THESE ARE THE THINGS THAT YOU NEED TO BE DOING TO DO THAT, TO NOT JUST IMPROVE AS A PERSON, BUT HOW DO YOU SHOW UP EVERY DAY.

BUT YOU HAVE TO BE IN A PLACE THAT YOU CAN RECEIVE THAT AS WELL.

AND I THINK THAT'S REALLY IMPORTANT FOR US AS WOMEN, BECAUSE ALL OF THAT STUFF THAT YOU JUST HEARD AROUND SELF-DOUBT, AROUND

CRITICALITY, ABOUT IMPOSSIBLE LEVELS OF STANDARDS THAT WE SET FOR OURSELVES, IMPORTANT TO DIAL SOME OF THAT BACK AND HEAR WHAT THE OTHER PERSON IS ACTUALLY SAYING TO YOU, AND TO BE ABLE TO TAKE THAT AND DO SOMETHING WITH THAT.

AND THAT IS WHAT I THINK A MENTOR GIVES US.

AND THAT IS WHAT BEST FRIENDS GIVE US.

AND I HOPE THAT, YOU KNOW, AS WE TALK THROUGH THIS AND DO THIS, ONE OF THE OBLIGATIONS OF LEADERSHIP, ANYBODY IN LEADERSHIP, NOT JUST THE WOMEN HERE, BUT IN ANY ROLE, IS FOR YOU TO TURN AND DO THAT FOR SOMEBODY ELSE.

DO THAT IN A WAY THAT IS EMPATHETIC AND CARING AND COMES FROM A GOOD PLACE.

NOT SIMPLY ONE THAT WHERE YOU ARE SAYING, WELL, THAT'S SOMETHING YOU'VE GOT TO DO, AND THEN LEAVE THEM WITH THAT HEAVINESS, BUT TO GIVE THEM HOPE, TO GIVE THEM A SENSE OF SORT OF INTENTIONALITY OF WHAT YOU ARE DOING AND WHY YOU ARE DOING IT.

THAT IS THE BEST THING THAT WE CAN DO AS WOMEN, IS LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER AND HELP EACH OTHER THROUGH THOSE THINGS.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: STRONG WOMEN EMPOWER EACH OTHER.

THANK YOU FOR THAT.

AND FOR THAT YOU NEED A NETWORK.

AND A NETWORK IS YOUR NET WORTH.

SO, SAM, ANY TRICKS OR TIPS ON HOW YOU CREATE THAT NETWORK AND WHAT IT IS THAT VERIZON CAN OFFER?

I MEAN, I GET THIS QUESTION ALL THE TIME.

A LOT OF PEOPLE SAYING, HOW DO I GET MORE EXPOSURE?

HOW DO I BUILD THAT NETWORK?

AND THERE ARE SO MANY FACETS OF NETWORK, AND VANDANA TALKED ON A COUPLE OF THEM.

MENTORS ARE PART OF YOUR NETWORK, SPONSORS ARE PART OF YOUR NETWORK.

I LOVE THAT YOU SAID THEY'RE DIFFERENT, THANK YOU.

BECAUSE THEY REALLY ARE.

AND IDENTIFYING WHO THOSE PEOPLE ARE.

ALSO THE NETWORK OF PEOPLE.

I ALWAYS TALK ABOUT THERE IS RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS TO TRY TO BUILD THE NETWORK.

BUT IT IS SO CRITICAL FOR YOU TO HAVE ONE.

SO FIRST OF ALL, A LOT OF PEOPLE, WOMEN ESPECIALLY, I'M JUST NOT GOING TO REACH OUT TO SOMEBODY.

I PROMISE YOU, THEY WANT TO -- THEY'RE NOT -- IF THEY SAY "NO," THEY SAY, NO, I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME.

THEY'RE GOING TO SAY NO NICELY, BUT ALMOST EVERYBODY IS GOING TO SAY YES.

FIRST OF ALL, MY BIGGEST ADVICE IS DO IT WITH PURPOSE.

DO IT WITH INTENT.

AND WHAT YOU DO MATTERS.

I PROMISE YOU, IT MATTERS, BECAUSE YOU WERE DOING SOMETHING THAT MAKES AN IMPACT TO OUR CUSTOMERS AT VERIZON, TO THE WORK AND THINGS THAT WE DO.

PEOPLE CARE ABOUT IT.

SO REACH OUT.

AND IF YOU WANT TO NETWORK AND LEARN ABOUT SOMETHING SOMEONE ELSE IS DOING OR YOU JUST WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE ON THAT PERSON'S RADAR, USE IT WITH INTENT AND GO IN WITH SOMETHING THAT YOU DO.

YOU ARE DOING GREAT THINGS.

THEY WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT.

USUALLY THERE IS A WIN-WIN THERE.

AND SAY, HEY, I WANT TO OFFER SOME INSIGHT ON SOMETHING YOUR TEAM IS DOING, OR LET ME EDUCATE YOU ON WHAT I'M DOING AND I THINK IT COULD MAKE AN IMPACT IN YOUR AREA.

IT'S THE BEST WAY TO CREATE A RELATIONSHIP.

BUT THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH SAYING, HEY, CAN WE JUST GRAB A COFFEE AND DO A COFFEE CHAT?

IT WILL BE MUCH DEEPER AND IMPACTFUL IF THERE IS INTENT BEHIND IT.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: THANK YOU FOR THAT.

STACY, AS WE THINK ABOUT THE NETWORK AND WE START TALKING ABOUT HOW IT IS THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO WILL TALK TO YOU, LIFT YOU UP, YOUR SPONSORS, AND PEOPLE WHO WILL TALK ABOUT YOU, YOUR SPONSORS AND YOUR MENTORS, RIGHT?

SO HOW DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE TALK TO YOU, HOW DO YOU CREATE THAT NETWORK OF SPONSORS, NETWORK OF YOUR MENTORS?

ANYTHING THAT HAS WORKED FOR YOU AND WHAT WOULD YOU SUGGEST TO THIS TEAM?

>> Stacy Sharpe: I WOULD SAY SOME PEOPLE CALL IT A PERSONAL BOARD OF ADVISERS. I JUST CALL IT A SUPPORT SYSTEM.

BECAUSE YOU HAVE MENTORS, SPONSORS, COACHES, YOU HAVE WORK THERAPISTS, LIKE PEOPLE THAT TRULY ARE LIFTING YOU UP WHEN YOU ARE CHALLENGED.

I ALSO THINK ABOUT IT AS BROADLY AS POSSIBLE.

SO THINK ABOUT THE THINGS THAT YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE REALLY GOOD AT AND WANT TO GROW, AND THE THINGS THAT YOU MAY HAVE GAPS ON.

SO, FOR ONE, MY FATHER IS ALWAYS TELLING ME, LIKE, STOP SAYING YOU'RE TIRED.

YOU'RE JUST REPEATING THAT.

I GOT AN ORA RING THAT CAN TELL ME ACTUALLY I AM TIRED...

[CHUCKLES]

BUT I HAVE A VERY CLOSE FRIEND WHO IS A UROLOGIST AND A SURGEON, AND SO WHEN I AM FEELING LIKE MY ENERGY IS WANING, I WILL CALL

COURTNEY.

NOW, REMIND ME, YOUR LONGEST SURGERY.

SOMETIMES 10 OR 12 HOURS, YOU'RE NOT EATING, HOW ARE YOU FOCUSING THAT LONG?

I MAKE SURE I HAVE PEOPLE -- I HAVE A FRIEND WHO IS A FEDERAL JUDGE, ABOUT LISTENING, LISTENING TO WHAT IS NOT SAID.

SO IN ADDITION TO THE PEOPLE YOU WORK WITH, OR THE PEOPLE THAT YOU SEE EVERY DAY, THINK ABOUT YOUR FRIEND NETWORK AND WHAT SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES THEY HAVE THAT ARE VERY DIFFERENT THAN YOUR OWN, AND HOW YOU CAN CALL ON THEM TO HELP BUILD YOUR OWN CAPABILITIES.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: THANK YOU.

SO PEOPLE WHO TALK TO YOU AND LIFT YOU UP AND PEOPLE WHO TALK ABOUT YOU AND SPONSOR YOU IN PLACES AND IN THE RIGHT PLACES. SO THANK YOU FOR THAT.

IT'S SAID, OFTEN SAID THAT BEHIND EVERY SUCCESSFUL WOMAN THERE IS ANOTHER WOMAN, AND A MAN.

RIGHT?

AND THAT IS WHERE ALLYSHIP COMES IN, THAT'S WHERE CRAIG COMES IN FOR ALL OF US.

AND I SEE A WHOLE BUNCH OF OTHER ALLIES HERE TOO.

SO TALK TO US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT ALLYSHIP AND WHAT THOUGHTS ARE THERE AND HOW WE SEEK --

>> THERE ARE SO MANY THREADS IN THIS CONVERSATION THAT ALL CONNECT.

I THINK GOING -- I'LL START WITH BUILDING ON WHAT SAM SAID, BECAUSE THERE IS ALLIES AND WHAT IS THEIR RESPONSIBILITY AND HOW THEY SHOULD SHOW UP, AND THEN THERE'S, AGAIN, WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL AND HOW YOU CAN SHOW UP.

ONE THING I WILL SAY BEFORE I GET INTO WHAT ALLIES CAN AND SHOULD BE DOING FOR US IS WHAT DO YOU NEED FROM THEM, TO SAM'S POINT, AND WHAT IS YOUR ASK.

SO AS AN EXAMPLE, CURRENTLY WE ARE WORKING ON A BRAND STRATEGY AND LOOKING AT THE BRAND AND WHO WE ARE AND IDENTITY.

AND I HAVE HAD A NUMBER OF -- I HAVE A NUMBER OF PEERS AND COUNTERPARTS ACROSS THE COMPANY.

SOME OF THEM MEN AND SOME WOMEN, WHERE I HAVE SAID, I NEED YOU. I NEED YOU TO BE A PARTNER WITH ME ON THIS.

THIS WILL NOT SUCCEED UNLESS I HAVE YOUR TIME, UNLESS I HAVE YOUR FOCUS, UNLESS I HAVE YOUR SUPPORT.

I THINK IF YOU JUST SAY IT, SAY WHAT YOU MEAN, SAY WHAT YOU NEED, THEY WILL -- TO SAM'S POINT, THEY WILL SHOW UP 99% OF THE TIME.

SO I WOULD SAY JUST BE AS CLEAR AND PROACTIVE AS YOU CAN BE.

AND ALSO CREATE THAT TYPE OF COMMUNICATION.

HOW CAN I HELP YOU?

HOW CAN I SHOW UP FOR YOU?

HOW CAN I MAKE THIS EASIER ON THIS JOURNEY AS WE GO TOGETHER?
WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT ALLIES OR YOUR NETWORKS OR YOUR MENTORS,
BE THE ONE WHO IS ALSO DRIVING THAT FORWARD.
I THINK FROM, YOU KNOW, TALKING ABOUT ALLIES AND WHAT THEY CAN DO, I
THINK IT'S TIED TO ACTUALLY THE WAY YOU ASKED THE QUESTION EARLIER
OF HOW YOU SHOW UP AND THEN HOW YOU SHOW UP BEHIND THE SCENES.
SO THERE ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS AND WE NEED ALLIES TO BE DOING
BOTH.

FIRST OF ALL, I LOVE THERE ARE MEN IN THIS ROOM.

THANK YOU.

I LOVE THERE ARE MEN VIRTUALLY.

THANK YOU FOR SHOWING UP.

THANK YOU FOR SHOWING UP IN MEETINGS AND ENSURING THAT WOMEN
ARE HEARD, THAT YOU ARE PASSING THE MIC, THAT YOU ARE FOLLOWING
UP, THAT YOU ARE BUILDING BRIDGES, THAT YOU ARE COLLABORATING.
AND ALSO IT'S IMPORTANT BEHIND THE SCENES.

THE CONVERSATIONS THAT ARE HAPPENING.

THE MEETINGS THAT ARE TAKING PLACE.

THE EXPERIENCES, THE ACCESS, WHERE YOU CAN ACTUALLY BEHIND THE
SCENES BE BRINGING THINGS FORWARD.

IT'S INTERESTING, I WAS JUST TELLING YOU ABOUT THIS PERSON WHO I SAID
THIS, I NEED YOU...

I WON'T SAY HIS NAME.

MAYBE ONE DAY I WILL.

HE'S BEEN AN INCREDIBLE PARTNER TO ME, BUT HOW I KNOW HE IS AN ALLY
IS HIS LEADER CAME TO ME AND SAID, THIS PERSON HAS JUST BEEN SO
LEANED IN ON WHAT YOU ARE DOING AND SO EXCITED AND RALLYING, YOU
KNOW, THE TEAM, AND TALKING IT UP, AND WITH SO MUCH ENERGY AND
ENTHUSIASM, WHICH SPOKE TO ME AS HE IS SHOWING UP AS A PARTNER
AND BEHIND THE SCENES HE'S A PARTNER.

SO THAT IS OUR ASK AND ALSO OUR EXPECTATION FROM OUR ALLIES.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: SO ALL THE ALLIES ARE THERE, THERE IS A CALL TO
ACTION HERE.

SO THANK YOU FOR THAT.

AND ALSO FOR THE WOMEN, SEEK IT OUT AND VERBALIZE.

BE VERY CLEAR ON WHAT YOU ARE EXPECTING, AND YOU SAID 99% OF THE
TIME.

>> ABSOLUTELY.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: YOU WILL SEE THEM, AND I HAVE SEEN THAT TOO.
FROM THIS SECTION, WHERE WE REALLY UNDERSTAND HERE, AS YOU RISE
UP, DO SEND THE ELEVATOR DOWN FOR THE OTHERS TO MOVE UP.
THERE IS A SPECIAL PLACE IN HELL, AS THEY SAY, FOR THE WOMEN WHO
DON'T HELP OTHERS.

YOU DON'T WANT TO BE THERE.

HELP EACH OTHER, OKAY?

[LAUGHTER]

SO WITH THAT, WE ARE GOING TO GO TO ANOTHER ONE OF THE ROUND PANEL DISCUSSIONS.

YOU INSPIRE ALL OF US, RIGHT?

WE ARE ALL INSPIRED JUST WITH THIS DISCUSSION HERE.

WHO INSPIRES YOU.

MAYBE WE'LL START WITH YOU.

>> YEAH, I WOULD SAY MY MOM.

GOD BLESS HER, SHE'S STILL LIVING.

SHE LIVES A COUPLE BLOCKS AWAY FROM ME IN THE CITY.

I WILL TELL YOU, SHE WAS A PSYCHOLOGIST, SHE'LL SAY SHE IS STILL A PSYCHOLOGIST.

WHEN I LOOK BACK AT GROWING UP, AND THIS IS NO EXAGGERATION, EVEN IN HARD TIMES, I LOST MY DAD RECENTLY, A FEW YEARS AGO, SHE HAS ALWAYS SHOWN UP POSITIVE.

IT IS -- I CANNOT THINK OF ONE DAY WHERE MY MOTHER SHOWED UP JUST CRANKY OR IN A BAD MOOD.

SHE SHOWED UP WITH POSITIVE INTENT, POSITIVE INSIGHT, A POSITIVE SPIN. IT WILL BE OKAY.

WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS, IT'S ANOTHER DAY, WE'RE HEALTHY AND GOOD, IT'S A BLESSING.

AND SO TIMES ARE TOUGH RIGHT NOW.

EVERYWHERE.

OUR JOBS ARE TOUGH, OUTSIDE IN THE WORLD IS TOUGH.

SOMETIMES OUR FAMILIES AND OUR COMMUNITIES, THERE IS A LOT HAPPENING.

SO I AM SO INSPIRED BY HER BOTH RESILIENCE, BUT THAT POSITIVITY.

AND I THINK IT GOES TO SOME AT OF THE THINGS IN TERMS OF WHAT WE'RE SAYING TO OURSELVES AND THE NARRATION IS, I HAVE MY MOM'S VOICE AND I LITERALLY HAVE -- SHE CALLS ME FIVE TIMES A DAY, SO SHE IS LITERALLY ALWAYS IN MY HEAD, AND SHE JUST HAS BEEN AN ABSOLUTE INSPIRATION.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: AREN'T WE LUCKY TO HAVE INSPIRATION SO CLOSE TO US IN OUR EVERYDAY LIFE.

THANK YOU FOR THAT.

VANDANA.

>> Vandana Venketash: I WILL -- I'M JUST GOING TO FOLLOW ON THAT THEME A LITTLE BIT.

I WOULD ACTUALLY SAY IT'S MY NIECE.

SHE IS 14 YEARS OLD, AND THE THING I LOVE ABOUT HER IS IT'S THE AGE WHEN MATH IS STARTING TO BECOME NOT COOL.

THERE'S A... YOU KNOW, A LITTLE BIT OF THAT GOING ON.

IT'S MIDDLE SCHOOL, THINGS ARE A LITTLE DICEY.

SHE HAS, YOU KNOW, GONE TO THE OTHER END OF THIS.

SHE OWNS IT.

SHE COMPLETELY LOVES, YOU KNOW, COMPUTER SCIENCE AND MATH AND

SHE'S KILLING IT IN ALL OF THAT.
SHE LOVES PLAYS.
SHE LOVES THE SING AS WELL.
AND I JUST SEE THE HOPE OF WHAT I THINK IS POSSIBLE FOR US.
AND THAT I LOVE, BECAUSE SHE HAS NONE OF THE SAME PRECONCEPTIONS
THAT SOME OF US COME TO TODAY.
I AM NOT ABLE TO... I AM NOT GOOD AT...
NONE OF THAT IS IN HER VOCABULARY.
AND I HOPE THAT STAYS.
THERE IS HOPE THERE AND POSITIVITY.
BUT EVERY TIME I INTERACT WITH HER, I SEE THE PROMISE OF WHAT THE
FUTURE CAN BE FOR US AND I'M REALLY OVERJOYED BY IT.
>> IT'S AMAZING HOW INSPIRATION COMES IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES.
THANK YOU FOR THAT.
STACY.

>> Stacy Sharpe: I WILL FOLLOW LESLIE.
A LITTLE BIT OF A DIFFERENT ANGLE, THOUGH.
MY MOTHER PASSED IN AUGUST, BUT HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY INSPIRATION.
SHE IS BRILLIANT, AND WAS A TRAILBLAZER IN TECHNOLOGY FOR BLACK AND
WOMEN WHEN THERE WERE NOT MANY OF US IN THAT PROFESSION AT ALL,
AND REALLY DEDICATED HER CAREER TO THE THEME THAT WE ARE TALKING
ABOUT, LIFTING OTHER PEOPLE UP.
SO THE POINT THAT SOMETIMES HER ABILITY TO GET ROLES BECAUSE SHE
WAS VERY DIRECT WITH LEADERS ABOUT WHO THEY SHOULD BE PROMOTING
AND MOVE THE ORGANIZATION.
AND MANY OF THOSE WOMEN ARE PEOPLE OF COLOR AND HAVE COME TO
ME TO SAY I'M IN THIS JOB OR I HAVE THIS CAREER BECAUSE OF YOUR
MOTHER.
SHE WAS A FIRE, SHE MARCHED IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, AND THEN
WHEN SHE WAS DIAGNOSED WITH ALZHEIMER'S, HER GRACE... I'M GETTING A
LITTLE EMOTIONAL.
HER GRACE THROUGH THAT OF JUST WHEN LIFE HAPPENS, IT HAPPENS, I'M
NOT GOING TO FIGHT THIS.
THIS IS WHAT IS IN STORE FOR ME.
AND THAT ROLE MODELING OF JUST FIGHTING FOR OTHER PEOPLE AND
HAVING GRACE FOR YOURSELF NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS IN YOUR LIFE IS
AN INSPIRATION TO ME EVERY SINGLE DAY.
>> Aparna Khurjekar: I JUST NEED TO HUG YOU.
[APPLAUSE]
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR SHARING THAT WITH US.
SHE TRULY WAS AN INSPIRATIONAL LADY.
I'M SORRY FOR THE LOSS.
SAM.

>> Sam Hammock: I DON'T WANT TO FOLLOW...
[CHUCKLES]

SORRY.

THAT WAS AMAZING.

I WOULD BE LYING IF I DIDN'T SAY THAT I TRULY GRAB INSPIRATION FROM EVERYTHING AROUND ME.

I FIND INSPIRATION FROM SOMEONE EVERY SINGLE DAY.

IT'S A LITTLE BIT OF WHY POSITIVITY IS TRULY AUTHENTIC TO ME.

BECAUSE WE HAVE SO MANY AMAZING PEOPLE TO BE INSPIRED FOR, IN THIS ROOM, AROUND US.

SO QUOTES DO GRAB ME AND I ACTUALLY FIND QUITE A BIT OF ENERGY AND MOTIVATION AROUND THEM, FROM PEOPLE LIKE YOU MENTIONED, BRENÉ BROWN -- BY THE WAY, DID STEAL A POST THING FROM -- BUT ALSO RUTH BADER, RBG, PEOPLE WHO HAVE BLAZED TRAILS, BUT THEY TRULY HAVE... I WOULD SAY ONE THAT FOR ME IS STICKING KIND OF WITH THE ROUTE OF FAMILY, MY SISTER.

AND FOR BEING SOMEONE WHO IS VERY MUCH LIKE ME IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.

SHE WAS A TEENAGE MOM.

SHE NEVER GOT THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET A HIGHER EDUCATION.

SHE HAS WORKED IN A FLOWER SHOP FOR DECADES.

AND THE THINGS THAT SHE SACRIFICED AND THE THINGS THAT SHE HAS DONE AND SHE IS NOW ENROLLED IN SCHOOL, SHE IS TRYING TO GET HER DEGREE RIGHT NOW.

I MEAN, SHE INSPIRES ME EVERY SINGLE DAY.

AND DIDN'T ALWAYS HAVE LIFE EASY.

AND CONTINUES TO BREAK BARRIERS.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: THAT'S AWESOME.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR SHARING THOSE.

[APPLAUSE]

>> Aparna Khurjekar: OKAY, WE CANNOT HAVE A WOMEN'S PANEL WITHOUT TALKING ABOUT WORK-LIFE BALANCE.

WE'LL SCRATCH THAT, WORK-LIFE CHOICES.

AND JUST GENERAL WELL-BEING, RIGHT? THIS IS A LOT OF DISCUSSION HAPPENING AROUND THAT RIGHT NOW.

AND I THINK IT'S AN IMPORTANT TOPIC TO TOUCH.

AND WHAT I'M GOING TO DO IS MAYBE LESLIE START WITH YOU.

WOMEN ARE EXPECTED TO KIND OF SLICE AND DICE THEIR LIVES AND DO IT ALL.

>> Leslie Berland: RIGHT.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: DO YOU DO IT ALL?

AND IF YOU DON'T, HOW DO YOU PLAN ON WHAT TO DO AND WHAT NOT TO?

>> Leslie Berland: IT DEPENDS ON WHO YOU ASK IT IS EXACTLY AS YOU ARE DESCRIBING.

IT IS A JOURNEY.

AND, YOU KNOW, THROUGHOUT MY CAREER, I HAVE BEEN IN SORT OF DIFFERENT STAGES AND PHASES.

OBVIOUSLY MY KIDS ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS IN MY LIFE.
SOME ARE MOMS AND SOME ARE NOT MOMS, BUT WE ALL HAVE LIVES AND
PEOPLE IN OUR LIVES AND THINGS IN OUR LIVES THAT WE CARE ABOUT.
BUT I WAS A DIFFERENT PERSON WHEN I WAS PREGNANT AT A COMPANY,
WHEN I WAS HAVING KIDS, YOUNG KIDS, WHEN THEY ARE TEENAGERS, WHEN
THEY ARE GETTING OLDER.
DIFFERENT SORT OF NEEDS, DIFFERENT PRIORITIES, AND DIFFERENT WAYS
TO BALANCE AND REBALANCE AS WE GO.
CHOICES IS THE KEYWORD.

I THINK CHOICES AND BOUNDARIES.

AND I FOUND IT REALLY HARD WHEN I WAS COMING UP IN MY CAREER TO SET
BOUNDARIES.

IT WAS LITERALLY I WILL DO EVERYTHING, I AM PREGNANT BUT YOU WON'T
EVEN KNOW IT, EVEN THOUGH I WAS... I WAS LIKE, YOU WON'T.

I'LL BE ON MAT LEAVE, BUT YOU WON'T EVEN FEEL IT.

I THINK AS I HAVE GROWN AND EVOLVED AND THE WORLD HAS EVOLVED IN
THIS AND THE EXPECTATIONS AND JUST THE ALLOWANCE TO BE ABLE TO
HAVE THESE THINGS IN OUR LIVES THAT ALSO MATTER HAS REALLY SORT OF
SHIFTED THE DIALOGUE, AND EVERY TIME A WOMAN OR A MAN COMES TO ME
AND SAYS, I'M PREGNANT, AND I'M LIKE, OH... AND I'M TAKING MY LEAVE AND
I'M DOING THESE THINGS, AND IT'S WITH CONFIDENCE AND OWNERSHIP, AND
YOU WILL NOT BE HEARING FROM ME, AND I'M LIKE GOODBYE, I WILL SEE YOU
WHEN YOU GET BACK.

I THINK THERE IS AN OWNERSHIP AND BOUNDARY, AND IF YOU CAN LEARN
THAT EARLY AND SORT OF EMBRACE THAT EARLY, PEOPLE WILL RESPECT
THAT FROM YOU.

I THINK THE OTHER JUST PART TO MENTION -- AND THAT IS A PRIVILEGE,
RIGHT?

-- THE PEOPLE THAT YOU SURROUND YOURSELF IN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE
CAN BE A PARTNER, DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A PARTNER.

IT CAN BE A SIBLING, YOUR COMMUNITY, YOUR FRIENDS.

SO IT TAKES A VILLAGE WHEN WE'RE TRYING TO GO ON A PATH OF A CAREER,
IT REALLY DOES TAKE A VILLAGE OF PEOPLE WHO ARE THERE TO RAISE
THEIR HANDS, THERE TO GET BEHIND YOU, THERE TO, YOU KNOW, PICK UP A
KID WHEN YOU'RE NOT THERE, SHOW UP WHEN YOU'RE NOT ALWAYS ABLE
TO DO SO.

AND SO, AGAIN, THAT INTENTIONALITY AROUND YOUR SUPPORT SYSTEM IS
MORE IMPORTANT PERSONALLY THAN ANYTHING YOU WILL DO IN THE
WORKPLACE, BECAUSE THEY WILL GUIDE YOU AS YOU GO.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: TRUE.

SO CREATE YOUR BOUNDARIES AND DON'T GIVE ANYBODY -- I

REPEAT -- ANYBODY THE PERMISSION TO MAKE THOSE BOUNDARIES FOR
YOU.

YOU DO THEM FOR YOURSELF, AND IT TAKES A VILLAGE.

SO SEEK THAT HELP OUT AND MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE IN THERE WITH

THEM MAKING THOSE DECISIONS.

SO THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THAT.

AND THAT DOES MEAN THAT, STACY, IT COMES DOWN TO YOU AS AN INDIVIDUAL, BUT ALSO PEOPLE AROUND YOU, AND HOW IT IS AT WORK, WE CAN BE A LOT MORE ACCEPTING, INCLUSIVE.

SO ANY TIPS THAT YOU GOT FROM YOUR PREVIOUS JOB THAT YOU ARE GOING TO PLAN TO BRING HERE TO VERIZON?

>> Stacy Sharpe: ONE MANTRA THAT HAD A PREVIOUS LEADERSHIP TEAM WAS "LEAVE LOUDLY," SO THAT YOU CAN BE AN EXAMPLE OF YOU KNOW, NOT JUST KIND OF LIKE... ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'RE WORKING FROM HOME, PEOPLE WOULDN'T KNOW PERHAPS THAT YOU WENT TO PICK UP KIDS OR THE DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT.

LET PEOPLE KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON IN YOUR LIFE.

MAKE THAT THE NORM.

AS LEADERS, WE CREATE NORMS WHETHER WE KNOW IT OR NOT, AND SO IF YOU LEAVE LOUDLY, THEN OTHER PEOPLE KNOW, OKAY, WELL, I CAN DO THAT TOO.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: I LOVE THAT.

>> Stacy Sharpe: ALSO WE MENTIONED BRENÉ BROWN MAYBE LIKE THREE TIMES, WE NEED TO BRING HER HERE OR SOMETHING.

BUT "VULNERABILITY," HER BOOK "DARE TO LEAD" WAS A LIFE CHANGER FOR ME.

THE POINT IS EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT IT, IT IS AFFECTING YOUR RELATIONSHIPS AND MEETINGS AND CONVERSATIONS, SO YOU MIGHT AS WELL PUT IT OUT ON THE TABLE.

WHEN MY MOTHER WAS FIRST DIAGNOSED, I COULDN'T KEEP IT INSIDE, I NEEDED TO LET PEOPLE KNOW THAT MY LIFE WAS GOING TO CHANGE.

IT WAS THE BEST DECISION I EVER MADE, BECAUSE THE RESOURCES THAT CAME MY WAY, THAT I HAD NO IDEA THAT I NEEDED WERE SO HELPFUL.

SO I THINK SETTING THAT ENVIRONMENT WHERE WE ARE LEAVING LOUDLY, LETTING PEOPLE KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON IN OUR LIVES, NOT ONLY HELPS WITH THE ENVIRONMENT, BUT ALSO HELPS YOU WITH WHAT YOU NEED TO DO IN YOUR LIFE.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: AND SO WELL SAID.

IN ALL MY TRAVELS WITHIN VERIZON, I HEAR SO MUCH ABOUT THE BENEFITS VERIZON PROVIDES FOR THAT TOO.

AND SO WE ARE LUCKY, INDEED, TO BE HAVING THAT.

BUT LEAVING LOUDLY AND MAKING IT KNOWN IS EXCELLENT.

I NEVER HEARD THAT, BUT I'M GOING TO BE SURE I'M EMBRACING THAT.

TO THE NEXT THING, VANDANA, I OFTEN HAVE BEEN TOLD TO PUT YOURSELF HIGH UP ON THE TO-DO LIST, TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

I WON'T TELL YOU WHAT GRADE I WILL GIVE YOU, I GIVE MYSELF, OR ELSE YOU WOULDN'T REALLY THINK THAT THAT ADVICE WAS BEING EMBRACED,

BUT VANDANA, CAN YOU AND DO YOU EMBRACE THAT ADVICE?

AND WHAT IS THE TRICK TO DOING THAT?

>> Vandana Venketash: YEAH.
SO I JUST -- TWO POINTS THAT I THINK ARE IMPORTANT.
SELF-CARE, YOU KNOW, AND WELL-BEING, THAT'S NOT SELFISH.
SELF-CARE IS NOT SELFISH.
IT IS ABOUT REALLY BEING AWARE OF YOURSELF AND YOUR NEEDS.
AND THAT IS THE FIRST THING.
I THINK OFTEN WE GUILT OURSELVES INTO THINKING, OH, MY GOD, I SPENT
TIME ON THIS, IT'S SOMEHOW NOT THE RIGHT THING, OR I'M TAKING AWAY
FROM SOMETHING ELSE.
THE SECOND IS IT WILL BE DIFFERENT FOR EACH PERSON.
AND WHAT IS GREAT FOR ME, IT'S PROBABLY NOT GOING TO BE GREAT FOR
OTHERS.
SO FOR ME, A GREAT THING IS I COME HOME, I HAVE A DOG.
NINA DOES NOT CARE WHAT KIND OF DAY I'VE HAD.
SHE REALLY JUST CARES THAT I THROW THE BALL, THAT I PAY ATTENTION TO
HER SINGLE-MINDEDLY SOMETIMES, AND I, YOU KNOW, AM AT HER BECK AND
CALL.
IT'S A GREAT WAY TO JUST REMOVE YOUR -- GET OUT OF YOUR HEADSPACE
AND REMOVE YOURSELF FROM KIND OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED.
I TELL YOU SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T WORK FOR ME -- AND WITH ALL
APOLOGIES TO THE MEDITATION PIECE, I HAVE -- I COME A CULTURE OF
MEDICATION, YOGA AND ALL THAT CAN, BUT I HAVE TRIED SITTING
CROSS-LEGGED AND...
[LAUGHTER]
IT DOES NOT WORK FOR ME.
MY TO-DO LIST KEEPS GOING.
AND THEN I END UP FEELING LIKE, OH, MY GOD, LIKE THIS IS JUST... I'M
TRYING TO MEET THIS IDEA OF SELF-CARE, I SHOULD BE MORE SELF-CARING,
AND IT DOESN'T WORK.
SO WHAT I FIND IS FIND SOMETHING WHERE IT ALLOWS YOU TO BE OUT OF
YOUR BODY, OUT OF YOUR MIND, TO REALLY FEEL THAT ONENESS.
FOR ME THAT MIGHT BE TIME IN THE GARDEN, TIME PLAYING A REALLY BAD
ASS VIDEO GAME WHERE I'M DOING SOMETHING THAT REALLY REQUIRES ME
TO BE IMMERSSED IN SOMETHING IN A DIFFERENT WORLD AND PLACE THAN
WHERE I AM.
WHATEVER IT IS, IT HAS TO BE SOMETHING THAT TRANSPORTS YOU, GIVES
YOU JOY, WHERE YOU FIND THAT SORT OF SENSE OF, YOU KNOW, LIMITLESS
IN YOURSELF.
SO IT SHOULDN'T BE A CHORE.
IT SHOULDN'T BE A LIST OR ANY OF THAT.
IT SHOULD BE HOW YOU CARE FOR YOURSELF.
>> Aparna Khurjekar: THANK YOU.
NOTE TO SELF: GET A DOG.
AND ON TO A LITTLE MORE OF A SERIOUS TOPIC AROUND MENTAL HEALTH.
SO I WAS ACTUALLY SURPRISED, SAM, IN READING THAT MENTAL HEALTH

AFFECTS WOMEN THREE TIMES MORE THAN MEN.
YET THERE IS A LITTLE BIT OF A TABOO, A STIGMA AROUND THIS.
THIS ENTIRE TOPIC.
PEOPLE, WOMEN, NEED TO SEEK HELP.
SO ANYTHING THAT VERIZON DOES THERE, WHAT IS IT YOU HAVE SEEN AND
HOW IS IT THAT WE CAN BE TAKING BETTER SELF-CARE OF OURSELVES,
INCLUDING ANYTHING WE MAY NEED FOR OUR OWN MENTAL HEALTH?
>> Sam Hammock: IT IS SO TRUE, AND WHAT WE SEE IN THE DATA, AND I'LL
GIVE A COUPLE OF THINGS THAT WE DO.
WOMEN TEND TO PUT THEIR OXYGEN MASKS ON LAST.
AND WE SEE THIS IN THE DATA.
FOR EXAMPLE, WORKING WOMEN WHO ARE MOTHERS TAKE CARE OF
THEMSELVES LAST.
THEY ACTUALLY HAVE THE LOWEST RATE OF JUST GETTING AN ANNUAL
PHYSICAL.
THEY WILL MAKE SURE EVERYONE IN THEIR FAMILY HAS ONE -- WE ACTUALLY
SEE THIS FROM OUR OWN DATA.
THEY MAKE SURE EVERYONE ELSE IN THE FAMILY HAS ONE ALL THE TIME,
BUT WE DON'T TAKE THE TIME TO DO IT FOR OURSELVES.
LITTLE THINGS LIKE THAT.
AND CERTAINLY MENTAL -- WE CONTINUE TO SEE THE PANDEMIC CONTINUE
FROM A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS.
SPECIFICALLY IN THE UNITED STATES.
AND IT'S NOT GOING AWAY.
IT ABSOLUTELY ROSE DURING THE PANDEMIC.
WE SAW IMPACT, YOU KNOW, GENERATIONS -- YOUNG GENERATIONS, FAR
GREATER RATE THAN WE EVER SAW FOR ANY OF YOU, LIKE MYSELF, WHO
WITH ARE WORKING TO HELP YOUR CHILDREN FIND MENTAL HEALTH
SUPPORT AND THERAPIST DURING THE PANDEMIC.
IT WAS SO DIFFICULT.
SO DIFFICULT.
WE BELIEVE IN HR, AND IT REALLY MEANS SOMETHING TO ME, THAT I DON'T
THINK YOU CAN WORK WELL UNLESS WE HELP YOU LIVE WELL.
IF YOU LIVE WELL, YOU WILL WORK WELL.
BUT IT'S HARD.
LIKE YOU SAID, IT'S SOME OF THE HARDEST THINGS YOU CAN DO IS TO TELL
THOSE THAT YOU WORK WITH SOMETHING THAT IS GOING ON OUTSIDE OF
WORK.
IT TAKES A DIFFERENT LEVEL OF BRAVERY TO DO THAT.
BUT ALMOST ALWAYS YOU ARE SURROUNDED WITH SUPPORT AND
COMPASSION AND EMPATHY, AND UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT YOU ARE
GOING THROUGH.
AND IT WILL HELP YOU WORK WELL.
SO WE HAVE SOME REALLY -- I MEAN, I'LL HIGHLIGHT ONE, BUT I'M REALLY
PROUD OF THE WAY THAT WE HAVE COME TOGETHER FROM THAT

PERSPECTIVE, BUT TO REALLY SUPPORT THAT ALL THE WAY DOWN TO LEADER TRAINING.

HOW DO WE SHOW UP WITH EMPATHY?

HOW DO WE HAVE THAT COMPASSION IN EVERYDAY CONVERSATIONS?

HOW DO WE MAKE YOU FEEL SEEN?

AND I THINK THAT'S WHAT WE ALL WANT AS HUMANS.

BUT, ONE, WE JUST ANNOUNCED SPRING HELP AS A NEW PROVIDER.

I CALLED THIS OUT BECAUSE I ACTUALLY WENT AND USED IT.

BUT I TALKED ABOUT THE STRUGGLE IN GETTING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT.

RIGHT NOW SPRING HEALTH, A PROVIDER WE ANNOUNCED FOR THE U.S.

WHERE YOU CAN GO IN ONLINE, IF YOU HAVE NOT DONE THIS, PLEASE, IT'S AMAZING.

YOU GO IN AND INTUITIVELY FILL OUT A PROFILE AND SAY WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR AND THERE'S TWO DIFFERENT LEVELS.

ONE IS THERAPIST, BUT OTHER IS EXECUTIVE CAREER COACHES.

NUMBER-ONE REQUEST, HOW MANY COACHES ARE HERE?

AND YOU NEED THAT OUTSIDE BIAS.

SO YOU CAN GET TWO DIFFERENT ANGLES I ACTUALLY TRIED OUT BOTH.

LAST WEEK I HAD A THERAPY APPOINTMENT.

IT WAS AMAZING.

I GOT AN APPOINTMENT LITERALLY THE NEXT DAY.

YOU TRIED TO FIND HELP, IT IS REALLY HARD. WE DON'T DO THAT ENOUGH FOR OURSELVES.

THE FIRST THREE SESSIONS ARE FREE.

BOTH, EACH ONE.

AND THOSE ARE THE TYPES OF THINGS THAT I THINK THAT ESPECIALLY WHEN WE ARE WORKING SO DIFFERENTLY, IT'S NOT LIKE, YOU KNOW, FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE USING THE GYM AND MOVEMENT, YOU NEED MOVEMENT TO DO YOUR SELF-CARE, YOU'RE NOT IN THE OFFICE FIVE DAYS A WEEK WHERE YOU ARE USING THE GYM.

SO WE NEEDED GYM PASS, WHERE IT CAN MEET YOU WHERE YOU ARE.

SPRING HEALTH IS ANOTHER ONE.

SO THINKING ABOUT BENEFITS TO MEET PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: THANKS SO MUCH.

SO PUT YOURSELF HIGHER ON THE TO-DO LIST.

AND, SAM, YOU SAID IT, IF YOU LIVE WELL, YOU WORK WELL.

SO IT'S HIGHLY IMPORTANT THAT THAT WELL-BEING IS COMPLETELY ALL ENCOMPASSING.

THANK YOU FOR THAT.

I'M GOING TO SWITCH AGAIN TO ANOTHER ONE OF THE AROUND THE PANEL, AND THIS TIME WE TALKED A LOT ABOUT GROWING IN YOUR JOBS AND CONSTANTLY PUSHING THE ENVELOPE.

HOW DO YOU STAY ABREAST?

AND HOW DO YOU CONSTANTLY LEARN?

ANY TIPS THAT YOU HAVE ACROSS THIS PANEL?

>> YEAH, I THINK THE FIRST AND FOREMOST IS REALLY JUST REMAINING CURIOUS ABOUT WHATEVER IT IS THAT IS OUT THERE. AND THE GREAT THING ABOUT A COMPANY LIKE OURS IS WE HAVE AN EXPERT ON ALMOST EVERYTHING THAT WE MIGHT WANT TO LEARN ABOUT. AND I JUST -- YOU KNOW CAN, SOMETIMES IT'S JUST ASKING THE QUESTION, AND TO BE ABLE TO SAY, HUH, I WONDER HOW... I WONDER WHY... IF WE BEGIN WITH THAT, I THINK IT HELPS US JUST KIND OF GET THAT BALL ROLLING, AND AT LEAST, YOU KNOW, GETS US GOING IN TERMS OF THAT EDUCATION.

>> Aparna Khurjekar: ANY PUBLICATIONS? DON'T TELL US ABOUT THE LEGAL ONES.

ANY PODCASTS, ANYTHING YOU WOULD RECOMMEND?

>> FOR ME, STRANGELY ENOUGH, WIKIPEDIA IS ACTUALLY A GREAT SOURCE. IT'S SAD, YOU KNOW, A NON-SAVVY THING, BUT I THINK IT'S GREAT FOR A LOT OF STUFF.

>> I WOULD DEFINITELY ECHO AND I WOULD SAY CURIOSITY AND BEING CURIOUS.

BUT I'M A BIG BELIEVER THAT IDEAS AND GROWTH AND LEARNING COMES FROM LIKE THE STRANGEST PLACES.

MY HUSBAND WILL BE VERY EMBARRASSED I'M ADMITTING THIS, BUT OUR NIGHTLY RITUAL WHEN WE WERE IN CHICAGO, HE WOULD RECORD JEOPARDY! AND DURING DINNER WE WOULD WATCH JEOPARDY!.

I REALIZED HOW MUCH I DON'T KNOW.

HE IS LIKE -- HE KNOWS LIKE EVERY -- HE SHOULD BE ON JEOPARDY!

BUT IT'S A WAY TO BROADEN YOUR CURIOSITY OUTSIDE OF THE REALM OF THE THINGS YOU ARE THINKING ABOUT EVERY SINGLE DAY, HELPS TO EXPAND YOUR MENTAL CAPACITY, AND HAVE A LITTLE FUN.

SO INVITE ME TO TRIVIA.

>> I DO LOVE PODCASTS.

I DO PODCASTS WHILE I'M GETTING MY MOVEMENT, WHETHER IT'S EXERCISING, WALKING ON THE WEEKENDS, ON THE TREADMILL, DRIVING TO AND FROM THE OFFICE.

ONE OF MY FAVORITES -- I -- HONESTLY WE NEED BRENÉ, BUT IF YOU HAVE NOT TUNED INTO THE "DARE TO LEAD" PODCAST, I TEND TO LIKE THOSE ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS.

I DON'T THINK IT'S BECAUSE I'M IN HR, BUT COULD BE A LITTLE BIAS WILL. BUT THEY'RE REALLY QUITE AMAZING AND HAVE A BROAD DEPTH.

>> DARE TO LEAD IS A GREAT ONE, ABSOLUTELY.

>> I'M ABOUT TO DERAIL THIS ANSWER, I'LL TELL YOU RIGHT NOW.

>> WE LOVE THAT.

WE'RE WAITING.

>> I SPEND A TON OF TIME ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

A TON OF TIME --

>> NO!

SHOCKING.

>> ONE OF OUR GUILTY PLEASURES.

>> LISTEN, WHEN YOU ARE IN A ROLE LIKE MINE AND DOING THIS TYPE OF WORK, IT IS CRITICAL THAT YOU ARE ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN.

IT'S A BALANCE, RIGHT? YOU WANT TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE NOT DRUNK ON YOUR OWN KOOL-AID.

YOU WANT TO MAKE SURE YOU ARE BOTH SEEING WHAT OTHER BRANDS ARE DOING, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, CLICK INTO THE COMMENTS, SEE WHAT REAL PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT OUR COMPETITORS AND ABOUT US. SOMETIMES IT'S GREAT, AND SOMETIMES IT'S NOT SO GREAT.

BUT I THINK WHAT HAPPENS IS YOU GET REALLY CLOSE TO THE CUSTOMER IN A VERY AUTHENTIC WAY.

THOSE CONVERSATIONS ARE OUR BRAND.

THOSE CONVERSATIONS ARE DOING OUR MARKETING, GOOD, BAD, AND UGLY.

TIKTOK IS MY FRIEND, MY BEST FRIEND...

CHUCK CHUB.

I HIGHLY DO NOT RECOMMEND AND RECOMMEND, DO WITH THAT WHAT YOU WILL, IT'S QUITE ADDICTIVE, SO LIMIT YOUR TIME.

BUT I THINK JUST SEEKING OUT THE TRUTH AND FINDING AND CONNECTING WITH ACTUALLY REAL HUMANS ON THE INTERNET.

IT'S FOR ME THE BEST WAY TO LEARN ABOUT WHAT WE NEED TO DO MORE OF AND STOP DOING, START RETHINKING AS WE GO.

>> YOU NEED A WORK BESTIE.

>> HAVEN'T TAKEN POLLS YET, SO...

>> A BEST FRIEND AT WORK, YOU'LL HAVE MANY.

AND YOU CAN HAVE MULTIPLE ANSWERS TOO.

>> I LOVE THAT QUESTION.

>> VERY GOOD.

SO WE ARE ALMOST AT THE END OF OUR CONVERSATION.

THIS HAS BEEN AMAZING, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?

IT HAS JUST BEEN...

[APPLAUSE]

... ABSOLUTELY.

>> AMAZING.

>> THE AMOUNT I HAVE LEARNED HERE, MAKING MENTAL NOTES, I CAN GO DOWN AND WRITE THOSE DOWN, BUT SOME IMPRESSIVE AMOUNT OF CANDOR HERE, IMPRESSIVE AMOUNT OF CUTTAGE TO GET STARTED, TO LEARN, TO FALL, AND CUTTAGE TO PICK YOURSELF UP AND RINSE AND REPEAT AND DO IT AGAIN.

AND THEY DO IT.

THEY DO IT EVERY DAY, AND INSPIRE US, IGNITE US.

AND I FEEL VERY INCLUDED IN THIS JOURNEY AS YOU SHARED YOUR STORIES WITH US.

THANK YOU VERY, VERY MUCH.

I ALSO WANT TO MAKE SURE, TODAY IS KIND OF A PRECURSOR TO

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY.
THAT IS TOMORROW.
BUT I WANT TO THANK EACH ONE OF YOU FOR WHAT YOU DO.
YOU KNOW WHO YOU ALL ARE.
EVERYTHING YOU DO IS AN INSPIRATION FOR SOMEONE ELSE.
MAKE SURE YOU ARE CHEERING FOR EACH OTHER.
REMEMBER THAT.
THERE IS A SPECIAL PLACE IN HELL AND YOU DON'T WANT TO BE THERE.
YOU WANT TO HELP EACH OTHER.
AND MAKE SURE YOU LIFT AS YOU RISE.
AND IN ORDER TO DO THAT, YOU START TOMORROW WITH A CALL TO ACTION.
I'M ASKING EACH ONE OF YOU ALL, AS WELL AS ALL OF YOU HERE, AND THE
ALLIES CAN DO IT TOO.
ONE INSPIRATION THAT YOU CAN HAVE AS A LEADER.
WRITE ABOUT THEM, CODE THEM, PUT THEM IN SOCIAL MEDIA.
LESLIE WILL BE THE FIRST ONE.
AND YOU HAVE TO PUT A HASHTAG OF THEM, IT'S IN THE CTA THAT CAME IN
VIA EMAIL.
SO PLEASE DO THAT.
WE WILL COMPILE ALL OF IT AND PUT IT TOGETHER, AND IT'S GOING TO BE A
GREAT SOURCE OF INSPIRATION FOR ME AND ALL OF YOU.
I WANT TO END THIS WITH SOMETHING PRETTY POIGNANT.
I WANT TO MAKE SURE, ALONG WITH THE THANK-YOU, I ASPIRE FOR ALL OF
YOU TO REALLY GO SUPPORT STRONG WOMEN.
SO HERE IS TO ALL THE STRONG WOMEN HERE IN THIS ROOM, AND ALL
THOSE WATCH PARTIES, IN ALL THOSE PARTIES ARE GOING TO HAPPEN
AFTERWARD, LET'S MAKE SURE THAT WE SEE THEM.
LET'S MAKE SURE WE RAISE THEM.
AND LET'S MAKE SURE WE BE THEM.
SO WITH THAT, THANK YOU, EVERYBODY, FOR YOUR TIME.
[APPLAUSE]