

**Ep #7: Leading Yourself and Others to Intuitive
Greatness with Katherine Eitel**



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Allison Watts, DDS

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Welcome to *Practicing with the Masters* for dentists with your host, Dr. Allison Watts. Allison believes that there are four pillars for a successful, fulfilling dental practice: clear leadership, sound business principles, well-developed communication skills, and clinical excellence. Allison enjoys helping dentists and teams excel in all of these areas. Each episode she brings you an inspiring conversation with another leading expert. If you desire to learn and grow and in the process take your practice to the next level, then this is the show for you. Now, here's your host, Dr. Allison Watts.

Allison: Welcome to *Practicing with the Masters* podcast. I'm your host, Allison Watts, and I'm dedicated to bringing you masters in the field of dentistry, leadership, and practice management to help you have a more fulfilling and successful practice and life.

Katherine, I really appreciate you being here. I know you haven't been feeling well and I've been so excited to have you and I appreciate you coming. Anybody that has heard you before is excited to hear you and anybody that hasn't heard you is in for a real treat. If you don't know Katherine, she's the creator of the Lioness Principle. She has 25 years of experience as a personal performance coach, helping individual speakers, trainers, as well as dental and health care practitioners achieve extraordinary results.

Her revolutionary training company, Lioness Learning, helps professionals access and harness intuitive leadership, instinctive greatness, and phenomenal non-scripted communication skills. The Lion Camp Leadership experience at the San Diego Wild Animal Park has become one of the premier team retreat experiences for progressive work teams nationwide. You can sign up for Katherine's weekly newsletter and inspirational message on her website. I know you guys have her information because I sent it to you.

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Katherine, we are thrilled to hear you tonight. I know you and I already talked about what we were going to talk about today a little bit. I'm really thrilled, it's one of my favorite things. But if you want to just kind of start us out by telling us a little bit about the Lioness Leadership and how it's different from other approaches, that would be great.

Katherine: Okay, good, well, I've always addressed the leadership issue with dental teams and work teams in the healthcare industry but it never really had a distinction, and certainly not the title of Lioness Leadership until I found the Lioness Principle. I did that sort of accidentally. I had been asked to put together a course that you've attended, Allison, which is a course for people who are trainers, or want to be trainers, and it's to help them, teach them material in a more interactive and more productive way.

I was looking for a story that would kick that workshop off, and I ran across ... my son was actually watching a Discovery Channel program about how lionesses teach their cubs to hunt, and how they teach them that skill. In this program, scientists had identified seven steps that the lioness took her cubs through pretty predictably in a really short amount of time, really small window of time, and in a very, as we know, hostile environment.

It occurred to me, watching that, that those steps were actually the perfect analogy for how ... at the time it occurred to me that it was the perfect analogy for how great teachers teach others. But what it has grown into, and what I have discovered about it, is that it's actually also the perfect analogy for how great leaders lead because great leaders are almost always great teachers. At some juncture, those roads cross usually.

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So it has taken on a life of its own. And I'll tell you what it is at the core. At the core of that story, the cubs, it's evident, actually were already born with the instinct to hunt. So in fact, she's not really teaching them that skill, though that's what it looks like she's doing, and probably what she thinks she's doing. But in truth, what she's really doing is creating an environment where she can have all the right components that actually teases out of those cubs what they already know, and shows it to them.

I believe that's exactly what we do as leaders. Our job is not to necessarily have all these perfect answers or a perfect leadership system. In my own efforts to be a good leader in my company and in my family and in my community, I have discovered that it truly isn't something that we're doing as much as who we are becoming. That's what helps us become better leaders, who we are becoming personally. Because I believe we can lead others to the degree that we can lead ourselves.

In other words, if you can't inspire yourself on a bad day, or when you've lost a big client, or the economy has taken a dive, or something tragic has happened, or you've received bad news, or someone has quit unexpectedly or wronged you, or whatever it is—if you don't have the ability to reframe that, retool that, and lead yourself out of that to a better place, then you will not have the ability to do that with others. That's my belief. It's really personal growth, is where it originates. And to the degree that we've grown personally, I think it is definitely commensurate with our ability to lead others to some sort of a vision or some accomplishment of a goal.

That's really where the Lioness Principle fits in. It assumes and sort of asserts, if you will, that the people that are

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looking to us for leadership, and ourselves also, have intuitive wisdom, intuition, have intuitive greatness, internal greatness, that I think often goes untapped. I think we have, just as humans, and definitely as Americans, I think we have forgotten how much natural intuitiveness we have and I think we have a workforce that wants and needs, they think, to be told what to do, and how to do it, instead of how to think and how to be.

That's where the Lioness Principle comes in. How do we help ourselves to do that more? Then, by example, and by asking the right questions, communicating in the right way, how do we help other people tap into their own greatness and bring that in and play a bigger game at the office and really in life in general. That's really the difference I think. It's not a list of things that you need to do as a leader, it's more of some ideas about how we want to be. And what we want to become.

Allison: It sounds like also creating a learning environment.

Katherine: Definitely.

Allison: A learning environment, having the tools available, and I'm curious what goes into that, creating that "how to be" thing.

Katherine: Well, here's the thing, I think people want two things from us as leaders. They want clarity about what it is we want from them, what it is we need from them, what we're expecting, what we're hoping for and what we're looking for. They need clarity. Then, coupled with that, they need to be inspired. Or, they want to be inspired, and I think they do better when they are inspired.

A good example, I tell this story in my leadership speech, it's one of the first stories I tell there and I'm going to tell it just in

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a straight method. When I tell the story in the speech, it's actually in third party, and I reveal that it's actually me I'm talking about at the end of the story.

I'll just start out the story by telling you that the girl in the story is definitely me. It was one of my very first jobs. I took a job in college as a dental assistant, and so I was young. I was 20 years old or so, and the gentleman that I went to work for, he was a general dentist. I don't remember if he had been extremely clear with me about a vision for the practice or anything like that. But I think I had been given pretty clear instructions on my job.

I had worked there for a few months, and I remember one day, he had come back from—he had gone to the Pankey Institute—so this is 30 years ago, or plus. Back then, he came back with all of this new knowledge of implants and bonded restorations and a little bit about all-porcelain restorations, all of that stuff was very new on the scene at that time. He was super excited. A few weeks after he had been back, we had the first full-mouth reconstruction case he had diagnosed and had accepted. We were getting ready to start that case this morning, and we did.

We're rocking along in the morning, and he's prepping, and I'm suctioning away, and more than an hour has gone by. My mind is wondering, my mind is drifting, and at some point, something happened in the procedure where he needed an instrument that I did not have on the tray. So he waited, because he assumed that I was seeing the same thing he was, tracking with him, which I was not.

I don't even know what he's doing, or even register that this is happening. He finally makes a motion to me and I don't understand the motion. I look him kind of puzzled, and my

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mind is off on what 20-year-olds think about: if I can get my paycheck in the bank at lunch, or I have a date that weekend or whatever.

Finally out of frustration, he says something to me, which of course I then jump to, but of course the patient also hears as well. He leans back, "It's not on the tray." I jump up, I run to sterilization, nobody can find it. He told me years later, "I could hear cupboards slamming and drawers opening and people scurrying." He said, finally, I came back breathlessly, slid into my chair, and handed him the instrument and kind of grinned a sheepish grin, and we went on, we went on working.

He made a decision then. I didn't know it, but he had made a leadership decision. At the end of the day or toward the end of the day, he said, "Before you go home, could I just steal a couple minutes of your time? I just want to talk to you privately." And I knew, or I was pretty sure, that it would be about my lackluster performance that day. He brought me into the consultation room after everyone had gone home. When I walked into the room, he had this huge smile on his face, which was not at all what I was expecting.

He said, "Have a seat. I appreciate you staying for a few minutes. I just wanted to tell you that I think you are a remarkable young woman. I think that you are incredibly bright and enthusiastic and energetic and articulate," he gave me all these nice things. "And I think if you decide to become a dental assistant as your full-time, lifetime career you're going to be ... If that's what you decide to do and you put your mind to it, you're going to be really something. But unfortunately today..." And I was very confused by this because I'm thinking, well, I don't know what this is all about, but I'm waiting for the other shoe to drop.

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So then he said, “But unfortunately,” and I thought, well, here it comes, he said, “I’ve decided that I no longer need dental assistants in my practice.” And I said, “What do you mean?” and he said, “Well, I really don’t need dental assistants, so I’m going to let you go.”

I said, “Oh, my gosh, I don’t know what you mean by that, but I know that I didn’t do very well today and I know that I really need this job and I can do better. And I promise I will do better. Please, just give me another chance. I’ll concentrate, I’ll really do better.” He said, “Yeah, it wasn’t a great day today, it really wasn’t. But it’s not just that, I’ve made a decision.” And I said, “Well, I don’t understand.”

He said, “Well, let me help you. Let me just be really, really clear. I need someone but what I’ve decided I need is a colleague. I am going to start interviewing for a colleague position tomorrow. Let me explain to you what that means. That is somebody that is as excited about what we’re doing and the future of what we’re doing, as I am. That couldn’t peel their eyes away from that prep if they tried. That wants to be taught how to read X-rays, that wants to be taught to look at things through a dentist’s eyes. Because you’re smart enough to do that, but whether you want to do it or not isn’t my choice. That’s your choice.

“But I know, as of today, what my choice is. My choice is the bar is here.” And he puts his hand way up high. “And you can totally reach this bar but it is going to be something nobody else is going to be hiring when they say dental assistant. Because it’s not that. It is somebody that I can teach to recognize the difference between a good margin and a bad margin. That will never bring me an impression where the whole lingual margin has been torn off and ask me if we’re going to retake the impression. They’re someone

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that already knows that that's not going to work, and comes in and announces that it's torn and we're going to need to retake it, and you're all set up to retake it in the other room. I need that kind of person.

"You're not going to give injections or pick up a drill, but I can teach you how to recognize decay or a gross abscess, and I want someone who's putting brochures from different courses on my desk, and begging me to go. I want a colleague on the other side of the chair. I'm going to have a colleague, no matter what it takes. I hope it's you, but if it isn't you, you're going to be fine and I'm going to be fine. It's just not the right time. You've got a great future ahead of you and this may or may not be the right time for you. So I want you to go home and think about it, you're welcome to call me with questions, but I'm going to start interviewing for this position tomorrow at 7:30. I hope you show up, but if not, then here's your check."

I remember, I said, "No, no, no, I'll show up." And he's like, "All right, but we're going to have a formal interview, and we're going to talk about whether you're ready for this." So I tell the audiences, I remember walking out to the car and thinking, "Why do I feel so good? Why am I smiling?" Because I'm positive I just got fired. Absolutely positive. And I did end up working for him for seven more years before I actually got married and moved.

But I told that story a few years ago, I spoke at the Texas Dental Association, which is where I'm headed in the morning, this was within Texas, and he was in my audience. He came up to me afterwards and said, "You know, I don't remember that being that big of a deal." I said, "Well, it might not have been a big deal to you, but it was a huge deal for me." Life-changing, a life-changing conversation.

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Because what he did for me was that sweet, sweet combination of describing an expectation to me in a crystal-clear way that I could not misunderstand it, and of course he continued to clarify that for me in the days to come. But he also inspired me. He basically fired me and I left feeling better about myself than before I sat down. If you asked him if he was a good leader, he would tell you, “Absolutely not.” But I’m going to tell you that he surely led me and I learned something from him that I’ve never forgotten, and that was that that’s what people want.

They want real clear expectations and often tough expectations. Good people don’t mind the bar is set high. But they want to know what it is and they want to know that you aren’t trying to change them. You’re just clear what you need, and you’re not making a judgment as to whether they’re going to reach up. That was the beautiful thing of that, is he wasn’t judging me. He wasn’t going to say I was just some ditzy blonde, 20-year-old nothing. I hear that sometimes, young people don’t have a good work ethic, that’s just not true. There are great, great young workers out there. I think there’s a whole lot less great leaders that know how to communicate with any age group about how to be really clear.

As a matter of fact—I know I’m jumping around, but—I just about two hours ago had a conversation with a young gal at a national practice that I consult with, and she is 22 years old, and one of the brightest stars that I have seen in the dental field in a long time. And she is just on fire at this practice. It’s just a really good reminder to me, that there’s no blanket statement we can make about work ethic.

What we can say is, as leaders, it’s our job to get the right players, right people, in the right seats on the bus like you

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hear. That's really incumbent upon us to make sure that they're clear and they are inspired by us and there's very, very little judgment about where they are in that equation. There's this complete assumption that they're going to be fine, and we're going to be fine, but the question really on the table is, "Is it a good fit right now and is it a good match? Are we in alignment at the moment?"

I don't know if that's really answering your question about creating the environment, but that's a great place to start, I think, is to examine are we clear with what we need and what we want, with no justification. He made no justification. He didn't care if another doctor in the world wanted it that way. He just suddenly that day got clear he did. He wasn't making any apologies or justifying it in anyway, but he wasn't also going to judge me if I wasn't ready for that kind of responsibility or that kind of relationship. It was a beautiful conversation, a very substantially—what's the word—forming conversation for me as a human.

Allison: Cool. Wow. I have had very few moments in my life where I'm that clear, I think.

Katherine: I know, I know.

Allison: Then to be able to describe it to the other people, that's another thing. You might feel clear in yourself but then to be able to share with them exactly what you're seeing or wanting is another piece of it.

Katherine: I think that goes back to what we just talked about, and that is that before you could ever help someone else be clear. You must be. Right? Doctors ask me all the time, "Should I hand out my vision statement? Should I type it up?" It's just such a silly thing, right? Because it's not about the paper, it's not about the timing, it really is. If you have a really fantastic

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vision, I think putting it in writing is a great exercise but if you have great clarity, you don't need to read it to anybody.

You can sit down in a very brief conversation and say, "Over the next few years, this is what I'm excited about creating, a business that does this for me, that serves people in this way, that delivers this product and service, that does it in these hours, that gives me this income, that works with these kinds of people, in this kind of facility, on these days of the week, and I take this much time off, and I donate this much to this charity I love."

But whatever it is, you don't need, usually, to be reading—it's not a marketing tool. Right? It's a way to express to your team that this is what I'm building. And if that excites you as much as it excites me, then I'd love to have you on board. If it doesn't, then, there's nothing wrong with you or me, it's just not a good alignment, and we need to call that. So I think it's about alignment, but we can't have alignment if we don't know what we're aligning with.

That's where that clarity, you have to have it first, whether that is what kind of home life you're going to build. Leaders are leaders, it's not just business. It's in our lives everywhere. So you're sitting around your dinner table and your family is not organized or functioning in the way that makes you happy, then there's a leadership conversation that needs to happen. First of all with you, and then secondly, with that group of people that are looking to you for that direction.

I think that's where people's lives change, is when they get that clarity and they're able to deliver it to others in this way that leaves them feeling better about themselves and hopeful about the future. Whether it's with you or not with

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you. All the best things that I have in my life right now have come from those kinds of conversations, where I said, “I don’t know what this is going to be for you, I don’t know what you’re going to decide around this, but I’ve made my decision, and I’ve thought long and hard about it and I’m really clear and I’m really at peace with it. And here’s what I’m going to create. I hope you can join in or not, either way we’ll both be fine. But this is where I’m going.” And I’m clear.

So in business, in relationships, in all of that it’s just been freeing, and so we’ve built good stuff. Really, at the end of the day, that’s what we’re after.

Allison: When we talked a little bit yesterday, you were kind of weaving in how beliefs play a role in this, and how important they are. Can you talk about that a little bit with us?

Katherine: I think they are incredibly fundamental to how we lead. But the reason that is so, is because our beliefs make up, and I think define, what is possible for us. What I mean by that is, whatever we personally believe to be true or not true, right or wrong, or good or bad, whatever those beliefs are, they put the bookends on what is possible for us. Because outside of that, we don’t really look, right?

So in other words, when the economy took a crash, there were some speakers out there saying, “Well, the recession was just in some people’s minds, that’s just how they saw it, but you don’t have to see it that way. And if you don’t see it that way, then it isn’t.” Well I think that’s hogwash. I think there absolutely was a recession and we’re still working our way out of that. Those are pretty neutral facts, actually. But it’s the meaning we give to those facts. It’s not the fact that it happened or that it’s here.

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I think if someone dies, they died. I don't think, if we don't believe they died, they didn't die, I think they died. Someone dying that you care about, or your office burning down that you just built and just loved, right, burns to the ground in the night. Whatever it is, it's the meaning we give to that. Because whatever we decide is true about that event, defines what is possible out of it.

So if what you believe is that that recession was going to have some sort of negative impact on you long term and that you would just have to hunker down and get through it until it got better, if that's what you believe to be true, then every possibility exists within that framework. And that's it.

So how you speak to your people, how you speak to your vendors, your patients, your family, all of it is going to revolve and be contained in, within those walls of those beliefs. So there's no question we all have them. What I've done, and what I try to teach my clients to do, is to just notice that we have them. I think a lot of us go through life thinking that it's just the truth, and that it's everyone's truth, and it's not.

Once I understood that we're all sort of making this up as we go along, that we are all brailing our way through this world, through all of these neutral things that happen, and these neutral facts that we're presented with and all of the things we see and smell and touch and taste. We're interpreting it through our life experience, through what we've been told, through our culture, and we come up with a definition of it and an interpretation of it.

I just started the practice, once I kind of clued into this, I started practicing noticing and I don't worry about it unless I'm feeling bad. The way I feel as a person is my barometer

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and my guide to what I need to question, if that makes sense. I think that bears repeating. How I'm feeling is what determines for me what I'm going to examine and what I'm going to question. What I mean by that is, if I'm feeling really happy, really successful, really fulfilled, really prosperous, I am going to assume I am right where I am supposed to be and everything is in alignment.

But the minute that I don't feel as prosperous as I think I should be, or I want something that I can't get, or I just had a long-term employee of mine, she had a second business and it is now booming, which is fabulous because she's like family to me, but it boomed so much she couldn't do both jobs. So I lost her as a full-time employee. Suddenly, this place I had been tremendously happy suddenly became an issue for me.

So anytime I'm feeling stressed, worried, angry, anxious, sad, concerned, unfulfilled, any of those negative emotions, I start to question now, or start to at least notice, what I believe to be true. When that happened, when she quit, gave me her notice, I instantly had fear. I said, "But what am I afraid of? What do I believe is true about this?" Well, clearly I didn't think I could find someone who could take care of me and my business the way she had in just a few weeks' time, that could be as smart as her, and as intuitive as her, and as terrific as her. That was where that fear was coming from.

The first thing you have to do is just start being aware that we have a belief that's causing this negative emotion. Then once you identify what it is ... I don't want anyone to think that I'm suggesting that every time you question a belief, you're going to decide that it's wrong. Because that's actually not the truth. You may sometimes question your belief and say, "Do I still believe that? Do I think that's the

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only way that story could go?” And sometimes you’ll say, “Yep, I still think that’s true.”

If I’m standing on the top of a twelve-story building looking down at the concrete below, my belief is that if I jump off I’m going to kill myself. I’m pretty sure if I question the belief I’m going to come up with the same answer. I think it serves me, that belief serves me.

But most of the time, people never question their belief. So when you question it, a lot of times you find out, man, there are some other ways to challenge that belief and to say, “Well, what if that weren’t true?” What if it weren’t true that I couldn’t find someone in that short period of time? Or, what if it wasn’t true that I only just needed one person? What if this was the fantastic opportunity to explore what do I really need?

Maybe what I could do is break this job into two or three pieces and never be here again, right? Never be here where one person leaves and all of my support goes with her. What if I examined this and came up with a much different way of supporting my company in a way that really is better than it ever was? What if I went about finding that and who has done it that way, and how can I talk to them?

And suddenly, do you see? There’s all these possibilities, I’m feeling much more inspired, much more on track. I know I’m on the right track and more in alignment because I’m feeling more hopeful and better. That is where possibility lives is in that moment, when you begin to question those beliefs. As a leader, you’re constantly being faced with challenges and things that are working or not working. I think when we model and we expect the people who work with us to embrace this idea of, “Things aren’t working the way we

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want, so what beliefs do we have around what patients will do, what they won't do, why it's working this way and why it's not." That's where possibilities live.

I had a client recently say, "Well, my new patient count over the last five years is 50% of what it used to be. Everything I put money into doesn't work anymore. Direct mail doesn't work for me, ads in the newspaper don't work for me, and I'm not doing that social media." And I said, "Oh, really? Why?" And he said, "First of all, it's just a colossal waste of time." And I said, "Okay." And he said, "You don't agree." And I said, "It doesn't matter if I agree. What I would ask you... are you up for a couple of questions?" And he said, "Sure."

I said, "So, what if that were not true? What if I could have you talk to someone who doesn't really spend any more time than you are doing these other things, on that strategy, and it's not their only strategy, but it's part of it, and they've actually had huge measurable success with it? Would you be open to looking at that?" "Well, I guess so." And I said, "Well, I would only recommend you do so if you're truly open to the possibility because you're going to hear what you want to hear."

So if you're looking for options, you're going to hear more than if you're looking for reasons it won't work. This is just a good example of, you can imagine what the staff meetings must have sounded like when they were all trying to figure out how to get more new patients in the practice. Until we examine that belief, or question it in some way, as a leader, then we're stuck. We're just stuck.

I think it's a huge part of leadership, is recognizing and definitely playing in that playground of questioning our

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beliefs and expanding the possibilities that are available to us. Again, great leadership is an extension of our own personal growth. So to the degree we do this in our personal lives, we become way more comfortable doing it in our business lives, our professional lives.

Allison: Yeah. I love what you're talking about. It's the art of asking good questions [laughs].

Katherine: Of yourself and others, right? Because the answers we get are commensurate with the quality of the questions we're asking.

Allison: Yep. The hard part, Katherine, I think for me is, that being present enough in the moment to be aware of ... I don't know, it seems like so many of us, and maybe I'm just projecting on other people, maybe it's just me, but we kind of get into this auto-pilot thinking. We're not even aware, like you said, you've become almost sensitized to when you're not in a good place, so then your awareness kicks in and then you are asking yourself questions in that moment. But it seems like, I don't know if you have any suggestions for that, becoming present in the moment and becoming more aware in the moment. How did you get to that point where you were?

Katherine: Please don't think that I'm perfect at this because I'm not. As a matter of fact, I don't think we ever really will be. The human condition is that we're very physical beings, and yet we can play in this more emotional, spiritual realm, if you will. There's another piece to us, a more intuitive piece. I definitely spin out. I catch myself spinning out sometimes and getting into this downward spiral of how bad things are, they're disintegrating, I can totally do it. I remember during the election I did it a little bit ...

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But it's just like anything else. It's like physical fitness or just deciding at some age you want to have more energy so you're going to eat differently or pay attention to your hydration or anything like that is a good analogy for we're not going to probably do it perfectly all the time, but it's a practice. It's absolutely a practice.

What happens with a practice is you get way off track and then you get on, way off track and then you get on, but the more you do it, the easier and the quicker you get there. I relate it to a cork. I sometimes feel myself getting pulled down, pulled down under the water. And then all of a sudden, I just am like, "This is heavy. Why is this so heavy?"

I was asked to do this project and at first I was really excited about it. But from the moment I got started on the project, it felt heavy. I was having to force myself to do it, I was staying up at night to do it because I'd put it off and put it off, and finally after weeks of ... Then it was like, "You know what? I don't want to do this. I don't want to do it." I didn't realize what it was and it is not in alignment with what I like to do, and what I really think I'm naturally good at.

And the minute that I said so, because the first thing I thought is, "Well, I've already gotten myself here and I've made a commitment and there's no way out of this commitment. So I'm just going to have to do it." Well, that felt heavy, like the cork was way under the water. Then all of a sudden, I thought, "Now, wait a minute, that's based on a belief." That's based on the belief that there's no way out of this, where everyone will still be whole and okay. What if that weren't true? What if there was? And what if other people on this project are feeling the same way?

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So I opened up the conversation and guess what? There were other people feeling that same way. Now I wasn't able to get out of it completely, but I was able to reestablish my role, change my role, the cork floats to the top, I feel much better, and I'm on my way. It's that practice of stepping out and saying, "Wait a minute, this is not feeling good here. So what do I believe is true about this? What other options might there be? What other possibilities might there be?"

Sometimes you don't know. So then I ask myself, "Who might know? Who could I talk to that might shed some light on this or help me?" They're there. Those people are there. I want more new patients, I want some new ways to do it, but I don't really know. This practice in Nashville, they have two doctors. They don't take one PPO, they had 104 new patient calls this month. They converted 78% of them to some kind of a new patient appointment. Not all comped exams, but they could hardly see them.

Allison: Wow.

Katherine: Do you see what I'm saying? They are doing a number of things that other people maybe wouldn't try or wouldn't do, but it's just blown my mind because that practice is open to ideas. She's a D personality, she will try anything. It's really paid off.

Their struggle is how to handle all the prosperity, not where to find it. It's just a great example of that. I want your audience to know that I'm not at all saying that I'm perfect at this. But the more you practice it, the quicker you start to recognize it and the quicker you start to get back into the flow of what you like and what you want and what works well for you.

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I can't coach every dental office in the country, right? That's not possible. So my job is just to find where I'm going to be in best alignment that I'm having a ball, and they're having a ball, and we're a perfect match for one another, and my job's just to find those twenty. And then I've got everything I want, and so do they, and off we go. So it's the same for dentists, it's the same for cosmetic surgeons, it's the same for trainers and speakers and the people that I deal with. It's no different.

It's a practice, Allison, it really is. You can't expect yourself to be present in every moment. I don't think we're quite wired that way. We're the only creature on the planet that can even imagine a future, right? It's just the human animal, and that's really fabulous for us, because we get to dream. They don't dream about the future. They also don't worry about it.

Allison: Right.

Katherine: Sort of the flip-side of the coin. And they often don't really spend too much time, I mean they might have a memory of a past, some animals. But most of them don't spend much time there. But we do. I think it's just a practice that gets better as we do it.

Allison: Yeah. Just like everything. I do tend to be kind of ... and it's funny, I don't hear it until you reflect it back to me that I'm being perfectionistic [laughs].

Katherine: Yeah, we expect so much. If you say "I'm perfectly evolving."

Allison: Right. I do have another question. I was curious if you could get back into, you know, you were talking about the belief systems and before that we were talking about communicating with our team. So we become aware in the moment of our beliefs, and we start to, at least become

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aware and ask ourselves better questions. Then we are communicating more clearly, right?

Katherine: Right. And I think in operating and communicating in more possibility, which is where that inspiration piece comes in, right? So that someone comes to us with an issue, as a leader, if we practice with ourselves figuring out, okay, so, where is this issue coming from, and what beliefs is it based on? If we practiced that with ourselves, you can't even believe how easy it is to do it. As a matter of fact, it's much easier to do with others.

So even a little practice with yourself will make you really good if you're a manager or you're an owner of a business, really good. And this has been taught to me as a consultant and coach. When people come to me, immediately my mind starts to go to, "What beliefs am I hearing swimming around in that conversation?" Because they're right there for you to see.

You've said some already this evening. You believe you are a perfectionist and you believe that often has a negative impact on you. Right? And I pick that up, do you see what I mean?

Allison: Yeah. [Laughs]

Katherine: So when you're talking to someone, and I'm not saying I judge the beliefs, I'm just saying, I start to hear, "Okay, this is one thing she believes is certain, and this is another thing she believes, either about the world or dentistry or me or her coworker, or this piece of equipment, or whatever." If somebody comes and says, "This just isn't working. This software is complicated, and it's, blah blah blah blah." And they're going to rattle off things they believe are true. It could be that they are.

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Allison: Yeah.

Katherine: But if we haven't even questioned it, a leader is going to not try to fix it necessarily. A leader is going to say, "Well, okay, let's just step a couple steps out of that, we'll get a bigger view here. It's clear that you're frustrated and that is a really good sign that we need to pay attention to it. So let's look at what do we believe is happening here that's causing you to feel this way." Okay, so we get that out in the open.

"Well, I just believe it's too many steps to schedule an appointment, and it just takes too long to balance the books," whatever the issues are.

"Could we just explore, what if there was a way to do it in this software simpler and we just don't know what that is yet?"

"Well, I'm sure there isn't because I've already called their company and talked to a trainer and she didn't have anything to tell me."

"Okay, would you be willing to see if there are any other practices like ours that have figured out a better way to do it? Would you at least be willing to talk to them?" I mean, hopefully you've got people who would be willing to—when you begin to put some possibilities out there, right?

So at least now as a leader, I'm saying, let's at least expand what we're willing to look at to solve this issue. It could be that you all come to the determination that it is too complicated and you're going to buy a new software. But do you see how, when I try to go in there and fix it, she never learns how to do this? She never learns how to back herself out of an issue with a bigger view and ask some better questions.

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Allison: Right.

Katherine: To expand her possibilities. Once I've done it with people a couple of times, I do this with my teams all the time, they'll say, "I feel so much better." And I'll say, "Great. So before we leave this conversation, can we just recap what we just did? Because I want you to know, you're going to be here again about some other issue, and I want you to see what we just did. So that you can do that again and you can help others do it."

That's the Lioness Principle. Once you start to show them that they had the ruby slippers on all along, right? Then they start to be able to be better leaders to the new person that sits beside them in a year that you just hired. It all flows downhill. I think it's a really important piece.

Allison: Speaking of that, Lisa, my office administrator, has raised her hand, and she's so good in the process of training a fairly new person. Okay, Lisa.

Katherine: Hi, Lisa.

Lisa: Hi, Katherine. I am truly enjoying this call. Thank you so much.

Katherine: You're welcome.

Lisa: I actually think you may have answered my question in this last section that you were just speaking about. My question was, is it healthy to have an office, or even in our life... I try to surround myself with people that are encouraging and want to move forward and see vision, because it inspires me and that motivates me, it's where my energy flows. And I wonder if it's okay, if it's just normal, to have people in certain functions in our lives, or people in certain functions of

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our team, that don't just do that. That they just show up, do the work, and leave. Is that okay?

Sometimes it feels like a drag for me, and I'm wondering if it's my own resistance to that person not doing what I hoped that they would do, or what I think is fun and energizing and exciting. Am I putting that projection on them? Or is it okay that they just want to come in, do a great job, and leave?

Katherine: I think that is an incredibly good question. Here's my take on it, a couple things. You're the manager, not the owner. So it's primarily, fundamentally, Dr. Watts' call in that if she has said, in her vision conversation, if she had said, "One of the most important things to me is to have people on my team that every time I see their face, I feel inspired." Then that person would not be a good fit.

Or, if you, in terms of friends, or really significant relationships, I don't think we can give our kids back, we're kind of stuck with them, you know what I'm saying? Our parents, you know... In terms of friends or things, if it's important to you feeling good and really happy and fulfilled, then, yeah, I think it has to be that way.

But if what's most important in the vision is that things get done a certain way, and people are at a minimum pleasant and positive, at least not negative, and that person does their job to the degree that you and Dr. Watts are really satisfied with their work, and the caliber of their work, and the accuracy of their work, and all of that, then I think that works too.

It really comes down to, is that piece essential to you really, really loving showing up at work every day? Because I have some people that I'm working with right now, that I would say to you, would probably not be my choices for going on a

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personal trip. They're just not interested in the same things I'm interested, they're not interested in some of these kinds of conversations, but they are really positive, they're definitely not negative, and they're very good at what they do. So for the role I have them in, it's very satisfying to me, and I get those other needs filled with other people. So I'm really happy with them. And I'm not looking to them to fill that. Does that make sense?

Lisa: Yes. It does. And one of the pieces that you added just before I answered the question, you were talking about ... what I heard from what you said, was that we can teach them this new way of seeing things. When you talked about backing myself out of an issue to see a new possibility and an answer and you were talking about teaching that to someone, there was a hope there.

And you did speak to it, it really is just me expecting that this is an okay way to be, for this environment, or for whatever thing it is, and letting go of what I wish other people would feel. I just feel like they're missing out. I feel kind of bad for them.

Katherine: Yeah, so, we have to let that go, right? We have to just completely honor that their timing will be their timing and it's just really not our journey in that sense. But be careful, because sometimes we'll accept things that really, especially in terms of a professional relationship... I've seen practices hang onto people, that their work is good, sometimes excellent, but the feeling when they're around them, is so harsh, or so negative, or so down, that I just finally have to say, "You've got to own the fact that you want more and you're not happy with this environment."

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I had a client one time say, I've got this, you know, she wasn't necessarily an office manager, but she was an administrator, and she was very integral to the conversation at their morning meeting. In other words, she was explaining why people were scheduled, and she was really leading those meetings.

She was a grumpy person in the morning, especially in the morning, kind of always, but for sure in the morning. She kind of was proud of it. She would talk about, "I'm just not a morning person, I don't really kick in until two cups of coffee later." And she was just this really negative, grumpy person. He hated it. So, I said to him, "Let's address it." And he said, "I have before, and she doesn't think she is. She'll say to me, 'Well, I'm not negative, that's just who I am.'"

And I said, "It's not up to her. Does that make sense? It's not up to her, you don't feel good. You can't change her, but you can say, 'Okay, here's the deal. This is the way I want to feel at my morning meeting. I want to walk in and I want to be laughing, I want to look at everybody and feel a certain way. I want to have a certain feeling, and I don't have it. You may think that you're positive, but in terms of how I feel, it isn't there. And it's just not happening.

"So here's what I need: I think you do an awesome job in every other respect, and if you can find a way to make me feel that way in the morning meeting, we're going to be set. But it's up to you. I'm happy to help you with it or not, but I have to have it. And I'm going to give you a week to figure out how to show up at my morning meeting and leave that meeting, and have me walk out of there feeling on top of the world. And if you can't do that, it's not going to work."

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Because I said, “If it’s that important to you. If it’s not that important to you, then stop talking about it. Stop thinking about it, and stop worrying about it. And accept it and know that you accepted it, and don’t be mad at her.”

That’s what I tell employees all the time: “Nobody’s making you put that key in that car and drive to that practice. So for you to be mad at your coworkers or your boss because they’re a certain way, is ridiculous. It’s ridiculous. Nobody makes us do that, right? You can go and find a better place for you anytime. But if you put your key in the car to come to work, you are saying, ‘For today, I’m signing up for this program the way it is. And I take responsibility for that decision.’”

I think leadership is in every position, and certainly in our lives, we are the leader. It’s all up to us. I often have those conversations. I’m willing to talk to you about anything except how we’re going to change the other person. Because it’s just not going to happen. But what we can do, is be more clear about what we need and do it in a way that lets them know that we’re good either way. We’re good either way.

I’ve had people come to me and say, “I think I deserve a raise, and they’re not willing to give me a raise. And here’s why,” they lay it out. “Why I think I deserve it, and I need this. I need it to send my kids to the school that I want to send them to. To do the things ...”

And I say, “Then you have to be ready to own that. You go in, you make your case. You let them know that you want to work here, you’re open to the conversation of what we need to do to make it so that it works for the practice and it works for the doctor and it works for you. But by this date, you need

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to be making this much for it to work for your life. Are you ready to own that and all that comes with it? Because once you reach up and own that, it's a powerful place to be."

And to know it works both ways. I think we often feel like we have to convince the other people that they should come to our side of the light. And really it's not so much that, as it is just describing it in a way that allows... A great example, I had a doctor that revealed this vision to his team. One of the items on the vision was that he was passionate that they go to a team retreat once a year where they went and did something extraordinary. Like they were going to go do zip-lining one time, and they were going to go on a cruise, and every year they were going to work for this big adventure thing that they were going to do. Probably around a dental convention, but it was going to be ... that's what he wanted.

Everybody was on board except for, they had a gal that soon after quit. So, they were hiring. They had found a favorite and they wanted me to talk to her on the phone. So I did. Then I spoke to them, I said, "Well I really liked her, what did you guys think?" And they said, "She was actually our favorite until she read the vision." I said, "What happened?"

And they said, "Well, she said that she couldn't do any kind of travel that involved evenings or weekends because she just could not be away from her family if it involved an evening or a weekend, ever. So she's clearly not a team player and she doesn't understand what we're committed to. She's just not a team player, so she's not our gal."

And I said, "Well, that's interesting, because here's what I found out about her. What I found out was that she and her husband care for, I can't remember the number, but it was like three or four handicapped foster children. And that was

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part of her life vision. And so how they did it, is she worked days during the week, and he worked evenings and weekends, and they switched off taking care of these children.” And they were like, “Oh.” But do you see how quick it ... she wasn’t a good fit, they were right about that, she’s not a good fit for them, but not for the reason they think.

The greatest leaders will say, “This is what we need. And we’re okay either way, whatever you decide. We just need you to know that there’s no judgment about it, but we need this. I need someone that shows up like this at my morning meeting. I need someone that makes me feel this way at my morning meeting. I need someone that’s going to be excited about going away for a week doing an adventure trip. And if that doesn’t work for you, that’s A-okay. Just probably not in alignment with where we’re going.”

So it’s just about aligning, and that requires us to be clear and inspirational and we leave the judgment—we don’t need everybody to see it the way we do. We just need just enough people to, just the right people to.

I want to apologize if anybody came on board late and they didn’t hear that I’m fighting a case of bronchitis, so if I sound gravelly and sniffly, I apologize.

Allison: I liked what you were saying, Katherine, about ... or at least the way that I caught it, was you started to say, we just kind of describe our side of the light. Like if Lisa has what she thinks is the better way, that her sharing the better way might inspire them to come over to her side of the ...

Katherine: You have to believe they’re okay either way.

Allison: Right.

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Katherine: And so are you. Now, if their work is not satisfactory, of course, that's a completely different conversation. And I wouldn't accept less. And it may be that the attitude or the positivity or enthusiasm... it may be that what really you need to really feel happy in that work environment, is to have a full team of enthusiastic people. Any adjective is subjective. What I might consider really enthusiastic, someone else might not.

Again, when we say enthusiastic, what does that mean? We have to really be clear about that and trust that—or maybe understand that everyone's not going to hear that with the same image and understanding that we see it. It's very possible. But if that's critical to you, then it's absolutely okay to keep looking until you find that person. And that's enough to say this isn't a good fit. It's really us questioning ourselves to say, "Is that good enough that I could live with it, given all these other good things right here?" And that means that you really do feel good when you're with them. It's good. And that's just only a question you can answer yourself.

Allison: Cool. Thank you so much. I know we are coming to the ... or actually we are past a little bit, time, so if anybody wants to get ahold of Katherine, is there anything, Katherine, you want to say to close down?

Katherine: Well I just think everybody has the ability to lead from wherever they are, as do all the people in your life. I think this world is hungry for better leaders. Hungry at every level: teachers, people who are on the front lines working, and people who own businesses, we're hungry for leaders. I think it's a worthwhile effort and worth the time to look for ways to improve our own leadership abilities and to model that in our conversations and in our examples to others,

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because I think the world is hungry for it. I think it's a worthwhile effort, it definitely is.

I think it can be more fun and easier than we think. More of a game that we play with ourselves. I sometimes talk about the fact that people would be hard-pressed right now to draw me into an argument because it's kind of a game with me to not be drawn into an argument. Whether that's someone throwing me a barb from an audience, or whether it's someone I'm in a relationship with ... because it's a fun game to play, to stay sort of neutral and not drawn into that. It's the same with leadership, it can be a really fun, positive game to play. And a lot of good can come from it. I would encourage everyone to do that.

If you want to be in conversation about anything, I'd love that. A couple different ways, my website is LionessLearning.com or KatherineEitel.com, it will take you to the same place. We do have a free weekly, we call it a Monday Morning Stretch. You can sign up at the website, and it comes every Monday morning, really early, into everyone's inbox. It's just some musings and some insights that I've been learning about leadership, communication, some skills, frontline skills, communicating client-service skills type things, but most of it's just some things I'm learning or remembering in my journey. We'd love to have you sign up for that.

If you are a dental office or a healthcare office, I do team retreats and coaching. If you are a speaker, or a consultant, or trainer, we offer some train-the-trainer and train-the-speaker courses as well. Check them out on the website and let me know how I can support your leadership growth. I'd be happy to do it.

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