

Ross Dickie 0:07

Hello, you're listening to the Future Talent Learning podcast to help you build your leadership and management skills. I'm Ross Dickie,

Ross Garner 0:13

and I'm Ross Garner.

Ross Garner 0:14

This week, we're asking why is it important to have a happy team? Can we measure happiness? And what can I do to make my team happier?

Ross Dickie 0:21

To answer these questions we're speaking to Nic Marks. Nick is a world renowned happiness expert who uses statistics to research workplace culture, measure happiness, and create lasting positive change. He's the author of happiness manifesto, a TED speaker, and heads up the workplace happiness platform, Friday Pulse. Hi, Nic, how's it going?

Nic Marks 0:39

It's good. Thank you.

Ross Dickie 0:40

Excellent. Good to get to have you here. Today to get us started. deceptively difficult question, I think, what do we actually mean by happiness?

Nic Marks 0:52

Yeah, it's a slightly slippery word, isn't it? I mean, in English, we use it at least three different ways, which is to say, I feel happy. So a feeling we say, I am a happy person. So that's a trait, or I'm happy with, which is because of a cognitive judgement. And I tend to be most interested in the feeling into the cognitive jumps. Judgement is in you know, how's life going. And in that way, happiness is kind of good, bad signal that when we feel happy, life is going well. But when we don't, it isn't. And if, if we're not feeling happy, we should do something different.

If we're feeling happy, in many ways, we carry on, you know, in that sort of way ever, you can go to so many nuances about it, because other people will talk

about happiness being a mixture between pleasure and meaning, you know, with pleasure being more immediate meaning being more long term pleasure being a bit more what comes towards you, meaning a bit more what you contribute, and how you're part of something bigger. So if I quite like that is quite a wide thing. But it is a word, which is the sort of gateway to a positive world anyway.

Ross Dickie 2:00

Yeah. Are those two areas pleasure and meaning or those that the way you phrased it wasn't certain of you were saying they were opposite ends of a spectrum? Or can they both exist at the same time? And the reason that I'm asking is I was, I was thinking about happiness at work, and some of the efforts that are going on right now, to make people happy at work, in particular, to entice them to come to the office, where they can have a good time. So things like free food, beanbag chairs, foosball tables, these might offer a pleasure, but I don't know that they offer meaning. So maybe, Could you could you tease out those those two things a little bit?

Nic Marks 2:40

Yeah, I mean, this goes right back to ancient Greek, between the sort of hedonist and then

Ross Garner 2:44

love the ancient Greeks of this podcast.

Ross Dickie 2:47

They come up surprisingly frequently.

Nic Marks 2:49

Well, it's that they're that they're the birthplace of Western thought, aren't they? And where we started to, to doubt, you know, in a sense, you know, the great thing about the Greeks was that they question things. And the philosophers you know, that's what their job was to question things. So inevitably they had tensions about how they thought about things. But you know, Aristotle thought about the life well lived. As more about virtue hedonist more about pleasure. Epicurus, pleasure, though he seems more intimidating than you think he is. Anyway, there's that tension there going right back and

Ross Garner 3:22

What do you like about Epicurus?

Ross Dickie 3:24

he's more into meaning than you think he is.

Nic Marks 3:26

Like, yeah, he is Epicurean societies always tend to be about food and drink. But if you actually read Epicurus, I'm a really light read of him. I'm not, I'm not a classic Greek specialist, but he was he wasn't into, you know, wine and overindulgence. I mean, what we tend to think about is, when we think about hedonist, we think of them being over overplay over pleased. But you know, so in a way, if you have too much pleasure, you get too wet, if you have too much, meaning you get to dry, you know, you can think about it that way.

And so, so, I think we need both, I think a good life is both enjoyable and meaningful. I think that some people, you know, get too much towards the pleasure. And we know where that story ends. Some people get so much towards the meaning and they really sort of lose out on the joy of life. And I think we need both. And actually, if you really want to go serious that, you know, the worst possible life is to be unpleasant and meaningful. And in a sense, that's where people get a risk of suicide if they're not enjoying the life and they see no hope. So I actually do think it's really quite an important dynamic to think about, and, and that come times that things which are very meaningful to you, you realise aren't pleasant, and, you know, I'm a divorced man, and that's where I got to with my marriage.

It was very meaningful to me, but I was really quite unhappy. And eventually I had to move and you know, and now I'm married again and like pleased to say it's both pleasure where I'm meaningful, but it's like you know, so you want really the both of those things and I think that meet that pleasure. is very important for restoring us and renewing us. And you know, and the meaning is very important for full feeling part of something bigger and driving us. So they're both there. Sometimes I think about them. I did physics at a level and did log mass, I think of them as a wave. And they've got different wavelengths that the pleasure of wavelength is much more short and immediate. And the meaning wavelength is much longer term. But it's sort of thing I think of it that way.

Ross Dickie 5:27

Yeah, I think one of the challenges with trying to define happiness is that can really only exist in opposition to unhappiness. You know, it's not the sort of permanent state, so in a workplace context, and may be quite unhappy with a particular task have been assigned, but more generally happy and content with the work I'm doing. Overall. I wonder what your what your thoughts are? On on that? Why is happiness even something that we should aspire to and work?

Nic Marks 5:56

Yeah, I mean, again, going back to that wave analogy, I definitely think of it as a wave. And it's actually why I'm very keen on measuring very regularly, you know, like, weekly, because then it allows people to have the possibility of a bad week, if you sort of only measure once every six months or a year, you asked me about how happy you are, it feels like they have to be happy all the time.

Or even when you go into more general thing, but the reality is, is we have three ups and downs in the morning, you know, and then, you know, when you get as old as me, you have good and bad decades, and there were these different things. But you know, so I think if you if you kind of allow people to say they aren't happy, you've got to allow them say they're unhappy. And you've also got to respond to that is that so? You know, unhappiness is a is a is a signal that things aren't good in that way. And in the way that I use it, which is that very immediate is how you're feeling this week, it becomes a really good signal, things are good or bad for people.

Ross Dickie 6:49

That's a reason not to my next question was just how do you go about measuring it? So you're talking about asking that question on a repeated basis, because people's answers are going to change over time, happiness can seem like quite a nebulous term. So it's not something you can easily assign a number to. I'm sort of 95% Happy this week, perhaps. So I'm curious how you approach that,

Ross Garner 7:12

I like that he went from 95 in the example as well, that was like uh, that indicates a generally happy outlook on life I would think!

Nic Marks 7:22

I mean, there are different ways of approaching the measurement of happiness. There are at least three or four methodologies. So one is to do what they call experience sampling, which is that they interrupt you in the experience and ask you, how are you feeling right now? So it's momentary happiness.

At the other extreme, is you asked, you know, perhaps in a six monthly annual survey or population survey, you know, in general, how happy are you, and you go from nought to 10, or one to five on those scales. And then in between is what's called episode or measurement, which is that you look at an episode of time. And you ask people to reflect back on that. So I use a week for work because we work in week sprints, but it's entirely valid to say, how happy were you today. This month, they pretended to forgot, forget the beginning of the month, probably two weeks is about the maximum you could do. Other ways you can do is you can ask people to split up the tasks at all the things that they do in a day, and read each of them and then do a weighted average about the day. So that's where you get your 95% Happy maybe?

Typically, what you find with that is that what would you guess the least happy activity in a day is for people getting up checking emails,

Ross Garner 8:31

getting up checking emails, I love checking emails,

Nic Marks 8:35

it's the commute to work. And then the second least happy is to commute back from work. And the third is work, generally. And not surprisingly, if you happen to be lucky enough to, you know, having what the researchers delicately called intimate relations that day, that is the most happy experience, but a bit less frequent. So, you know, you get these different ways of doing it. And I think you have to think about your measurement about what are you trying to achieve with your measurement? And so I measure not, I mean, I have done research measurement, but I measure to try and empower people to make better choices. So by asking people repeatedly and repeating back to them, how you know, because people we forget quite quickly. And actually, I don't think we focus enough on what makes us happy enough, whether it's in our own lives or

at work. And so by asking the question, it gets people to attend to the fact that their happiness is important or their team's happiness is important, or their organization's happiness is important.

And the very act of measuring gets people to focus on it and to think, Well, clearly, happiness is a good thing, you know, in the sense that that, you know, there's different types of work, you're thinking about productive happiness where people are interested in engaged and you know, committed, good good colleagues, you know, whereas you might think of your home happiness as something different You know, you know, more fun base, more social base, whatever. But, but as a general rule, people are happier, you know, more productive, creative, loyal, all sorts of things. There's not many bad things that go with happiness.

Ross Garner 10:11

So it feels like you're using happiness as a as an indicator of all sorts of other things and the value for measuring and then discussing that indicator within a team as the conversations that regenerate. So if people are more happy than normal one week, it'd be interesting to find out why that was what was going on. Similarly, if they're, they're less happy than normal, then you could have that conversation. But what you're doing is you're, you're creating an environment where those kinds of conversations are expected and not a surprise. Like, if my boss asked me how happy I was, I don't know what I would say, the first time. But, you know, by the fourth or fifth time, you kind of getting into the rhythm of it, and I see what we're getting at here.

Nic Marks 10:54

It definitely tried to create your habit, and adapt the habit is to, to talk better to each other and create more safety, psychological safety and a team by building trust and things like that. So that's exactly what it's for. I mean, I, you know, I used to say that, you know, measurement achieves nothing is the conversations it provokes, but it matters. And in fact, something you probably don't know about me is I trained as a therapist when I was young. And I had this wise old woman who was my therapist.

Unfortunately, she died, I actually think it should be illegal for wise old women to die, I think they should be kept alive for the state of the nation. But and she

used to say to me that, you know, therapists only does three things. They listen, they reflect back what they hear. And then they ask questions, helping the client, understand their lives and live a better life. And that's what I do with data. You listen by asking people, how are they every week, you reflect back by reflecting that score back and you help them have better conversations. And so I really think it's quite like a sort of group therapy, but not quite, but you know, it's a way of helping people improve.

Ross Dickie 12:05

Yeah, and the more I mean, the more often you measure it, the more accurate results you're gonna get. So the way that most organisations approach this, currently is through a sort of annual or biannual engagement survey, where you can kind of increase the reliability of the data by serving the entire organisation, but you also can really account in that for somebody might just be having a really bad week out, my manager has been getting on my nerves this week. So

Ross Garner 12:31

I think are the most intimate relations that morning possibly might be skewing the sample as well.

Ross Dickie 12:38

Exactly, yeah, there's all kinds of things. Whereas if you do it more regularly, I think it not only conditions, your team, as you're talking about to think about this, and be prepared to talk about it. But it also just increases the reliability of the thing that you're measuring. If you do it more regularly at repeated intervals over time,

Nic Marks 12:55

You're increasing the reliability of the changes through time. Absolutely. And in a sense, that's what I focus on what I discovered, you know, I've done large datasets, and I've asked happiness at work. So it's with 100 questions in them. And you can do this thing, which is called factor structure, which is, it's a nerdy statistical thing, but you're looking for the dimensions underlying dimensions of the data.

And you basically have this one huge factor that comes through the middle, which perhaps explains 30 40% of the variance, which is a good bad signal. And that might well have been triggered by having a bad day or having a good day. And you just got this good, bad signal. And what I realised was like a capture that good bad signal with one question, which was how happy were you? Yeah. And then the rest of it is the detail. And that can be it could be it's you know that you're unhappy because the relationships at work are bad or because you don't have a sense of empowerment, or you don't feel inspired or meaningful about you whether it be different reasons for it.

But the good bad signal, you can pick up with one question. So if you're trying to create an efficient tool that is not burdensome on the respondent, and it gives you the most information, keep it short, keep it brief, and then move into qualitative stuff. Because even if I got 100 questions, I still don't know the detail of it. It's very, very specific about each team each person. So you may as well then move into the conversations and the qualitative. So it's sort of taught me to be very, to be more focused and more modest about what the measurement can do. I know it can really good job at picking up the good bad signal, it can do a very good job at doing a little bit of like diagnostics, but then really, it's about local things and helping local leaders to have better conversations. How

Ross Garner 14:30

How do you make sure that people are answering those questions, em, consistently across the employee population, but by which I mean we use a tool within our organisation where you can sort of rate yourself on a scale of zero to 10. And most of the people that I speak to, I think they tend to start at 10. And then they might subtract some points depending on how they're doing against certain measures.

There's one person I know who they're there Kind of starting point is always five. So if they're having a great week, they'll put it to seven. Whereas a lot of other people will have a great week would be, you know, right up at 10. So how do you kind of avoid that skewing the results,

Nic Marks 15:13

There's always a sort of positivity bias in data. So if you ask people on a nought to 10 scale, you pretty much always find seven, eight is where the average is



that you think the midpoint is five, but people go higher. So I always use an odd number in my response scales, which I use 12345. The reason we have a five response rather than say a seven is that it fits better than a mobile screen, simple as that really a little bit easier to colour colour coordinate as well, because we use traffic light system, so we do red, and the yellow, light green, green.

And so I try and reinforce visually, because I think people are quite visual. So if they hit the middle button, which is three, and it's yellow, and it's okay, they are kind of saying that they're below what they know they could be, which is one of the greens, people tend to find their setpoint mine tends to be the four, which is a good week. And if I have a great week, I go up and down. Some people start at the five and come down only if they have a bad week. Some people sit around the Okay. They do tend to be slightly different personalities. I think, you know, I think you're the ones who are always using the okay are, you know, slightly lower energy, probably are slightly less happy at work.

So, I hadn't really looked at the extremes. I do know from other research that Americans tend to use the extreme scales more than say, introverted nations like fins, you know, so fins, we use 234. Americans use one five years, you know, but, but you know, that, in a way, it doesn't really matter. If you're looking at a team, you're looking at the trend, if your team is normally at 75, we rescale it to nought to 100, we feed back the data, you know, if this week, there are 70, you're kind of going to think, Okay, what's happened? You know, so you're looking at your own baseline in some ways. So it doesn't matter as much as people think it does. I think

Ross Dickie 17:03

If we can just zoom out a little bit. I'd like to get your, your thoughts on sort of the relationship between happiness, resilience and performance at work or maybe slightly more bluntly, put, what's the business case for happiness? Why should businesses care, their employees are happy?

Nic Marks 17:22

So it's obviously very related to staff retention. You know, if you're unhappy, you leave. I mean, it's not the only reason you leave, you leave for some other reasons as well. But you know, if you're interested in the, you know, keeping

your talent, then obviously, keeping them happy is important. And it's more important than I mean, I don't want to say that salary is unimportant is not unimportant, being paid fairly, is very important. But people are just quite quickly to salary increases, and they, they don't adjust to having a great experience every day. So, you know, I think that's important. So retention, it is related to productivity in two ways.

One is is is the quantity of work that people do. So as I suggested to people about can do about 10%, more work when they're happier. There's also the quality of their work, which is harder to measure. But if there's some great data on, it's produced by Professor Manuel de nieve, who is at Oxford University, and it's on BT call centres, and he was measuring the weekly happiness of the core operators. And they, the best thing about Call Centre staff is they have virtually no autonomy, they basically just get their work, you know, this next phone call, you know, so you haven't got from an academic perspective, you haven't got the problem that people can chase work, we're not chase work, they basically just get given their work, and they do it. And then what they do is that they are, they are having to talk to the customer. And sometimes the customers are in the app and complaining or whatever like that, and they've got to use their skills to do it. What they what they discovered was that these called operators were 10 to 15%. making more sales a week.

And, and that's in a very narrow sense. That's I think, the more on defined people's roles are the more and more important positive attitude, good social relationships, good ability to respond to the other person, you know, emotional intelligence in lots of ways, negotiating skills, all those things become more and more important. So I think that the the biggest impact is on innovation, customer relations, Team relations. And these are very big impacts. That happens. So when I when someone asked me to make a sort of return on investment, it always comes out huge, because you know, even a small change in happiness will make a big difference.

I mean, BT is they did an intervention that made their call operators a bit happier. So let's say on that one, too. bytescout half a point happier, would save millions each year or make millions each year. Now what that would what would that be, you know, that sort of intervention, while cool operators, I think

they tend to be very isolated work. So introduce a bit more teamwork. So there's more camaraderie, maybe do some fun things in breaks, maybe allow people you know a little bit of supervision because they when they deal with a difficult customer, they must be left with some anger some things. So some things like that. And maybe you'd spend half an hour an hour a week on these other things.

And you'd probably get a return investment about six times just by doing that by increasing. So I think there's big our eyes here. The thing is that it's it's not just beanbags and table tennis, like he was saying it's more the relational stuff that really, really tried to.

Ross Garner 20:48

And presumably the converse of that would also be true. So if you are sitting here thinking, I don't need to make my my colleagues more happy at work, that's not a concern of mine. Possibly, you're the kind of person that would allow the situation to get worse, which you'd have the the opposite effect of decreased resilience, decreased performance, could lead to stress, burnout, and so on. You're pulling a face to face that implies it's completely wrong. But oh, no, you're

Nic Marks 21:16

You're not completely wrong, it's slightly U shaped in the sense that the reality is, is that fear can drive results. Actually, the very hard boss can drive results. And the problem is, is that if a team is successful and unhappy, they're likely to break up over time. If a team is if a team is happy and unproductive, they're gonna go out of business, the best thing is to have the happy, productive teams.

And and you know, it would be wrong to claim that driving your team and you know, you know, threatening to come down on them doesn't drive anything it does. It's just a very unpleasant way of working. And it's not as creative because basically, people when you're frightened, you try to avoid punishment and pain. So you wouldn't say something in a meeting, because it's not worth the risk, you'd rather be told what to do, go and do it.

So you really limit innovation and things like that. And situation. It's basically what Amy eversince called about psychologically unsafe environment, they can be productive, but they're very brittle and not gonna be as adept nearly as well. I mean, one presumes that's what one seeing in the Russian army at the moment is basically a very brittle force, that can't innovate in the moment because they're terrified of the command. So you know, and so, you know, you it's, it doesn't not work, it's unpleasant and brittle.

Ross Garner 22:48

Sure. And we're recording this on the tail end of April 2022. So the Russian invasion of Ukraine is currently ongoing.

Nic Marks 22:57

Yeah.

Ross Dickie 22:59

I'm curious to what extent you think organisations are responsible for employee happiness more broadly. So not just at work, but happiness in general, because quite big is quite big ask I started watching severance, which is a Apple TV series by Ben Stiller, who were sort of dystopian future. So where employees have this operation to basically when they come to work, they completely forget everything in their personal lives. And vice versa, when they leave work, they can't remember anything they've done at work.

And so their lives are completely separated. Obviously, to a certain extent, you can't really separate work from life. I think that's that trend has been increased over the pandemic, I think, working life with more and more integrated. But there's also there's so many factors that go into what makes somebody happy. And what makes one person happy won't make somebody else quite miserable. So I'm just curious philosophically, what role you think organisations should play in making people happy?

Nic Marks 24:05

It's a very difficult question, because I remember talking, I don't know if you've heard of a management thinker called Charles Handy, is quite old. Now. He must be his 80s. But he was he was a big management thinker in the 80s. And he was a mentor to me in the sort of 90s. And, and he talked about is it theft. If an

organisation sort of takes over your private life, you know, where they sort of want you to love the organisation to play with them? And yeah, so like, I went into Facebook, this is pre pandemic, and you can bring your washing in and do your laundry for you.

You know, and then you pick it up at the end of the day and you thought that is great service, but it's kind of infantile is you know, infantilizing? Your, your employees I didn't know it sounded, and they weren't meant to, you know, how easy I mean, I can get it but, you know, your future partner might know or your current partner might not thank you for their current webinar. But it's like if you can't do any housework or whatever, I don't know, it's a difficult thing. What I do think is I think a business is a place that leads, it doesn't just follow.

And one of the reasons why I decided to work on happiness at work, I'd worked previously in public policy, and then, you know, governments was that, actually, governments don't reach adults very much. You know, they reach children to schooling, they reach older people through health services, they reach people at the bottom of the income spectrum through socialism, but really, they, you know, they tax us and they collect our bins, you know, it's not, there's not much contact we have with with government, really, you know, and so if you want to get into people's day to day life, so I thought, well, let's work is where people spend their lives. So let's do that. And I think that, in a sense, you know, work is somewhere where we may not always be so happy, but it can bring a lot of meaning it can bring us a lot social structure to us, and it's a lot of contact hours. So if work can lead on things.

I think that's very, very good. So I think the fact that we talk about mental health much more and that workplaces respect mental health much more, is very good. I think with wheat now we're starting to see I mean, like, I mean, this this way, the stage at the moment, we're at the tail end of COVID, with people coming into work or not coming into work and what's the right way, you know, and Jacob Riis, MOG, from the conservative party seems to be leaving notes to people saying, you know, I look forward to when you're back in the office, like to sort of stick two fingers up, working from home, and you're like, well, where where is it that we that we need to do this, and I think work can really lead by saying, you're setting a good example about how we deal with

people from different ethnicities, different ways, and we work together and respecting the fact that we have lives outside of work.

I mean, that's what work life balance is about. It's respecting that you have a life outside of work. So that's partly what interests me, I don't think that work, for some people is a choice, and you want it to be all of your life. But for me, it's a third of my life is my work. You know, it's not all of it. It's a very important third, but it's not all of it.

Ross Garner 27:10

But it is, I think, to to well, to me to Ross's question, I think it is, it's, it's a little naive to say that you can totally separate your work and your life. Because if you have a bad manager, then that can infect every part of your life. And there's sort of no getting away from it, it can cause all sorts of ripple effects throughout your personal relationships. At home, and and all sorts. So because I'm conscious, this is a leadership and management audience, that we're going to be listening to this podcast, and you would not want to be in that position yourself, I think.

So. Focusing on the happiness of your team, is there's business benefits for it. There is interpersonal relationship benefits for yourself. And also, probably don't really want to be like, the bad guy that someone goes home and complains about, you know, at the end of each day, sounds very unpleasant, wouldn't you rather be the opposite? Ross reports to me, so perhaps he's, why is this guy talking about he's ruined my life for years?

Ross Dickie 28:19

Not at all

Nic Marks 28:19

Now, I think like, no one wants to be a bad parent, no one wants to be a bad boss. The startling thing is how much how little is invested in helping people be good people, leaders? You know, so you know, Ross did have Did you have any training for how to be a people leader?

Ross Garner 28:36

I'm on a course now. But I've been doing this job for two years. Yeah, it's taken a

while.

Nic Marks 28:42

So the Chartered Management Institute, I think it's what they call the Chartered Institute of Management sort of that they say that the UK is populated by accidental managers. Sure. You know, they've been they've been promoted for technical or length of service reasons, not people skills. And that the average spend on I'm not going to have the figure exactly, but it's, it's a few 100 pounds a year on people skills in their training budget, they spend about five times as much on there it training, as they do on their people skills training.

And that's pretty criminal, either. You're basically putting someone in charge maybe of five other people and their productivity and their creativity, and you're giving them virtually zero training. So what they've done is they've learned from the people, leaders that they've reported to before they've learned on the job. So if you're lucky, they've learned from good people, or they've had good parents or they've had learned to outside but you know, there are things that you can do to train people in simple things like, you know, calling out the positive, don't just call out the negative, you know, really try and call out people. I mean, this isn't pathetic, we'd like to be praised.

We'd like to be recognised for our work. So you know, shout people out thank people for what they've done when they've worked hard. You know, get the team To talk every week about what went well, last week, what didn't build on what went well in fix what didn't sit down had one to one. So people at least once a month, and you know, don't have it as a big thing once a year, make it smaller. And those sort of ways you build trust as a leader, and then your team want to work for you. And then everything goes a lot better.

Ross Garner 30:23

Thanks, Nick, you did a really great job though. I came across very insincere, I kind of meant to

Nic Marks 30:31

humour this is humour

Nic Marks 30:37

Well, you see humour, that's got to be another good quality, hasn't it? But wait, but

Ross Dickie 30:40

what you did though, was you just ran through like 10 different ways that people listening to this podcast could increase the happiness of their team. And you did it in such a natural way. We didn't even need to ask you about it. That was what was gonna be my last question. But you answered it for me before I even got it. So thank you.

Ross Dickie 30:58

Okay, so let's wrap up. Ross G, what will you be taking away from this conversation and applying in your life this week.

Ross Garner 31:04

So actually, I was struck by the U shaped and bet that you talked about next. So it is perfectly possible to come down hard on people and see productivity soar. But I think brittleness was the word that you used. Such a team is brittle, and doesn't handle shocks. Well, so far better to have a happier high performing team who are resilient and allowed to be creative, and innovate, and so on. So you can flex to changing circumstances because obviously, we've all seen circumstances can change very quickly, without anyone expecting it. So we need to be ready for that. So that's something I'll be thinking about.

Nic Marks 31:39

I think it's more of a J shape. The app for the fear one is not as high as the app for the happiness one. So it is, it's a J shape. I think probably I'll say that more clearly. Next time.

Ross Dickie 31:50

Yeah. For sure. Yeah, I think for me, I think it's this idea of thinking of happiness. Now, it's something you check in on once a year through engagement surveys, but something that should be part of a manager's at least, not day to day, but sort of weekly tasks, just checking in on their team and seeing how they're doing, and kind of getting used to having those conversations around happiness. Nic, what's what's one idea you'd like listeners to remember from this conversation?



Nic Marks 32:22

Aristotle once said, excellence is a habit and happiness, happiness at work is a habit. It's about that that things you do every day of the week, that really build it in it's not a big one off things. It's those regular things. That's I think the one thing to take away.

Ross Garner 32:37

Like, do you have anything else that you'd like us to know about? Where can people find out more about the work that you do?

Nic Marks 32:44

Yeah, so I created and founded Friday pulse, which is a weekly tool for team leaders and people leaders, who run divisions and whatever organisations to check in on their teams every week. So we you know, we asked how happy were you at the end of the week, we asked what's going well for you?

What happened if you've got you want to thank so basically, it builds positivity in teams by that sort of weekly rhythm. And, you know, the nice thing is, it's, it's free for single teams, so teams up to 11 people can use it free. And the reason it's 11 is that's the size of a soccer team. And so that's my idea of the biggest team, single team. And when you go to rugby, it's forwards and backs. So it's different two teams. So it's one team is 11. So it's like free for up to 11.

Ross Garner 33:28

Great, we will pop a link to that in our show notes.

Ross Garner 33:37

Okay, so before we go, just got time for a regular feature. One thing I've learned this week. Ross, do you want to get us started?

Ross Dickie 33:43

I would love to. And I learned this week from my brother that every NASA astronaut has to have their appendix removed before going into space to remove the risk of appendicitis. And then I thought, hey, let's Google that just to be sure it's true. It is not.

So according to quarter user, Clayton C. Anderson, it is completely untrue. Quincy understand who's that? Let's find out what his background is. He is a NASA astronaut with an appendix who was part of the exhibition 15 crew to the International Space Station where he and his appendix happily lived for 152 days. Any issues? So, in fact, what I learned is that there is no requirement for astronauts to have their appendix removed. Thank you, Google. Thank you, Cora. And thank you, Clayton. See Anderson, who has retired from NASA in order to spend more time answering inexact attitudes on the internet. I thought that was kind of fun. That is great

Ross Garner 34:49

TWhat do you do when you get appendicitis and space then?

Ross Dickie 34:55

never happened?

Ross Garner 34:57

If anything, you can you can get treated with antibiotics and flown back to Earth in time, right? Yep.

Ross Dickie 35:05

So this week I have a film recommendation I was recently on a flight to the US.

Ross Garner 35:11

I love it. When you fly to the US, this is like twice a year I get a film recommendation.

Ross Dickie 35:18

This is where I watch all my films on a small screen as the director intended it, find this, this fight I watched command command, which is a film by Written and directed by Mike Mills, starring Joaquin Phoenix, and essentially about the relationship between Joaquin Phoenix character who is a podcaster actually is recording this series about what children are thinking about the future how they feel about the future, generally.

And against that backdrop, he's asked by his sister to look after his nephew, sister's husband is unwell. And so she isn't able to look after a kid. And Joaquin

Phoenix is basically a serve. Come almost like a coming of age story is very, like sweet, but also sort of very honest, I think I'm not a parent, but I think anybody who has a parent will relate to it. I related to it, because I think a lot of it is the sort of awkward conversations that Joaquin Phoenix has with this, like eight year old child. I think as someone who often finds it difficult to know what to talk to children about. I just found it very true to life and heartwarming. Just yeah, one of the best ones I've seen this year, so highly recommend it if you get a chance to see it. Nic, what have you learned this week?

Nic Marks 36:35

Okay, here's something I learned this week, I'm reading a book on water. And water is a very simple substance, but it's also quite extraordinary. So the fact that ice floats rather than sinks, it's a solid, actually allows life to form on planets, because there's fluid underneath the solid surface.

But what I did not realise was that all the water on the planet arrived after the Earth formed. It all came from comets and things like that. So every molecule of water was not on the earth because the Earth was too hot when it first formed. And there's basically an ICE line or heat line around around the planet. And that was way out beyond Earth. So every drop of water on the planet arrived after the earth was formed.

Ross Dickie 37:24

Yeah, that's a good fact.

Ross Garner 37:26

Yeah, yeah. Because presumably, yeah, every every planet must be hot at first. So where would any water come from?

Nic Marks 37:37

What do you think comments are ice? Yeah, so there's a lot of water in the universe. And actually, most of it exists in comets and whatever like that. So they've got to hit the Earth. But there was a whole bombardment area at a time when the earth was very young, when there's lots of debris still in the solar system. And so we had masses and masses of collisions.

Ross Garner 37:55

And how does the water get on the get on the comets? This feels like a question for cleared and see understand. To answer on Quora.

Nic Marks 38:03

You see, you have to go to the fact that when the universe started three point 13 point 8 billion years ago, there was only hydrogen and a few other things. And then basically, the first forms of stars started to form heavier elements. So then you had to get to second form once before, oxygen would exist, something as heavy as oxygen. So you've got to go through a couple of phases of star formation before you can get h<sub>2</sub>o.

And then it formed an aid and hydrogen, oxygen is so attractive to each other, that they just they form very, very easily and very, very stable. So it's basically the whole history of the universe in some ways. But so we're, I think we're third generation stuff. So and then you start thinking, Well, how could life have formed? You know, well, it probably couldn't have formed that first phase. So you know, life is probably about ready now. You can have a pretty stable planet, lasted for a few billion years to get through the whole complexity of evolution. We might be relatively unique. But we need water. And it didn't. It didn't come too often. It's pretty pretty. I mean, I love sight I just science at uni, and I let it go. And most of my reading is reading science books these days. I just find them fascinating. Great.

Ross Dickie 39:18

And that's it. You listen to the Future Talent Learning podcast with me Ross Dickie and Ross Garner. Our guest this week was Nic Marks. Until next time, bye for now.