

Frederick Fiver Transcription Service

EMAIL: Jammed2575@gmail.com

Website: <https://frederick-transcription-service.mystrikingly.com>

Title: Living with a purpose

Number of Speakers: 2

File Duration:00:59:20

Transcriptionist: Mr Frederick Daniel Di

Speakers:

Francis Lynch

Alicia Curtis

Transcript

Intro: Welcome to living with purpose, the interview series where Francis Lynch speaks to various people about what purpose means to them, and explores what gives them the energy to do what they do. Most people have got a story to tell, and these interviews show that extraordinary stories come from ordinary and not so ordinary people. So listen up, as we explore purpose and meaning and hopefully learn a little about. Some great people.

Francis Lynch: This interview with Alicia Curtis is jam packed with so much to think about. Alicia has been supporting the leadership development of people since she was a teenager, and she was full of ideas on how to expand this work. I hope that you enjoy listening to this interview and that you might get the chance one day to meet and work

Francis Lynch: with Alicia. Hi, Alicia. Thanks for coming to be interviewed for the living with purpose interviews. And as part of this, I've given a an introduction before we've started the interview, but I'm really interested in in hearing from you what it is that you see yourself as as being what, what do you do? Who?

Alicia Curtis: Are you? Who am I? I am. Mum over 2 1/2 year old. I'm a wife. I'm a. Sister and a daughter. I'm I'm a volunteer and very much identify with being a community volunteer and I run my own business and I have done never actually had the job before so I went straight into being a business owner when I was 19 years old. And so through that, I'm very fortunate to be a leadership facilitator and speaker. So that's me in a. Nutshell. Yeah, so lots.

Francis Lynch: Of different things really. Yeah, she hacks and this is something that is a life that has evolved. Or is it one that was planned?

Alicia Curtis: Definitely evolved, definitely evolved, but there was definitely some catalyst moments in my life, and I think the first one really was when I was 12 and I was accepted into an international children's conference and.

Francis Lynch: Oh wow.

Alicia Curtis: That had a. Huge, you know, impact in my life. I was just a dorky 12 year old who lived out on A5 acre farm in Bullsbrook. And previous to that I had been involved in my school environment club. And that led to me being accepted into this international children's conference on the Environment. It was the first one that the United Nations had won for kids talking about the environment. So I had two free tickets to

Alicia Curtis: fire me and my mum over to England to attend this conference. Three days, 800 kids from 90 different countries, and I just felt so fortunate to be part of this amazing world. Went and yeah, it really changed the trajectory of my life. And I came back from that conference just thinking, really realising the power that I had as a citizen to make change in my world. And yeah, that that led me down a pathway. To connecting with other kids who had a similar sense that they could make a. Fruits and we started the Millennium kids. Well, the kids helping kids conferences as it was called back then and yeah, by the time I was 15, I'd run three of those conferences. We, you know, decided to run our own conference back here in Perth after the International Children's Conference. And so yeah, from a very early. Stage I sort of got led down this pathway of then it just became this big snowball effect that you

Alicia Curtis: know, I just. You know, saw the opportunities and I took them so.

Francis Lynch: So 12, I mean, most kids don't really have an idea of where they're gonna go or what's what's really, you know, their core sort of interest or passion. So was that, you know, being part of it in that school environment group that was showing that you were interested in? Nothing wasn't interesting.

Alicia Curtis: Yeah. You know, I sort of think, you know, I I. Owe a lot to volunteering. And not only volunteering, but just committing deeply to a purpose that's bigger than just you. I think you know, for for kids especially, but for anybody just to sometimes look, you know, outwards and, you know, instead of just looking inwards and. How am I doing? You know, how am I? You know, achieving my goals, but actually just having that broader focus, how can I impact the? World around

Alicia Curtis: me. How can I impact people around me who are not doing as well as I am? I think that can. And teach us so much.

Francis Lynch: So who are the people who really influenced you in those younger years when you were sort of 12, 13, 14, 15?

Alicia Curtis: Well, my mum, obviously my mum and. My dad? Really. You know, both in different ways. My mum was very compassionate, sort of person. She was a nurse, but she became an early mentor for me. You know, I still remember we used to have the meetings in South Perth for the kids helping kids conference. So from Bullsbrook it was a 45 minute. Our trip and you know Mum and I. Got to chat. A lot. And then the debrief, you know, on the way home. My dad was has been a business owner all his life, had his own business. So I learned, you know, different things from him. I you know, we when I was 15, we went to Ostrom club meetings to

Alicia Curtis: progress by speaking public speaking skills. So you know they were hugely. Integral in my. Journey. But teachers also were, you know, huge part of of that journey as well. When I went into high school, the principal changed over when I was in year 10 and he really took me in and and continued helping.

Alicia Curtis: I developed my journey as a leader, as a community advocate, as a team builder. So yeah, a lot from just, you know, whole range of teachers. And then just other kids as well, you know, just getting different perspectives from other kids, you know, being involved in the kids helping kids conferences. You know the international element of it too, seeing that we were just we were broader than just Australia that this is you know we're interconnected with. We face the same challenges as. Kids all around the world. We can come from very different cultures, very

Alicia Curtis: different religions, but we all still. Had the same aspirations in life, the same challenges. So that was, you know, a wonderful learning to have early on. And and and yeah. Grow from that experience.

Francis Lynch: So services like there was a lot of bouncing off other people's energy and and their ideas and passion as well.

Alicia Curtis: Well, definitely, you know, I'm realising. That you, you. Become even stronger when you have that diverse view of perspective and opinion. You learn and grow so much from talking to people that are very different to you, and then you realise that they're actually not that different at all you. Know that we have a. Lot more commonalities than we do. Differences so you know, I can see how all of those have shaped the person who I have become and. And and have led me down different experiences that

Alicia Curtis: have been just really beneficial to me personally.

Francis Lynch: So when you moved into that, sort of. More you know, getting into your late teens, early 20s. Did things changed? Were there different people that came into that sort of role of influence with you?

Alicia Curtis: Yeah, definitely. So obviously graduated from high school, went into university and and probably struggled a little bit to find my. Place in uni. You know, I was. I was, you know, head girl at my school. I you. Know had a very. Long community around me in high school and then, you know, changing to become, you know, this very small part. Of a huge university was.

Francis Lynch The big change?

Alicia Curtis: You know, it took me a a while and in the end, you know, I I decided, you know, was wasn't what I was looking for. And was lucky enough to be offered a different

Alicia Curtis: course to do my Masters degree before before I'd finished my undergraduate. But it was a masters in leadership and management which was just So what I was looking for really at that point because it gave me, you know, I have a sense that, you know, obviously Community leadership, learning about leadership but also thinking about leadership in a different way, how it could be accessible to young people. That was something of interest to me. I started my business just as I was changing over courses. And and I suppose that was, you know that that second catalyst in my life that I realised that, you know you you make life what it is, you know, don't start, don't follow anybody's pathways just because they're the pathways to to be had. You know, so many kids get lumped into university and have no idea why. That they're not they they can't connect that purpose to what they're studying. And I suppose I was a little bit like that. And so I just

Alicia Curtis: went right. This is not for me. I'm going to change it. I'm going to start a business. Why not?

Francis Lynch: And that early business was doing what?

Alicia Curtis: Youth leadership training so you know, just before I turned 19 a I set up a business. I went into a small business centre and applied to do the Nice scheme, which is the new enterprise. OK. And he the the mentor there, he said, oh, you're not gonna be able to make a business out of, you know, talking about leadership or, you know, working with young. People with leadership. And you know, that was a bit of a. Red flag to. All there, right? Well, I'll show you and. And so for you know, many years I would just go out and talk to. High school groups develop leadership programmes. For a whole range of kids. So. I worked with, you know, indigenous borders at risk, young people right through

Alicia Curtis: to, you know, student leaders, student leadership groups. So run half day, full day weekend retreats for student leaders. Just all sort of developing my own from my own experience. And then. What I was reading trying to create different leadership experiences for young people. And and and it resonated with the young people. It resonated with the teachers. There's still some teachers that I work with and some schools that I work with still today who still remember my mum driving me up to retreat venues when I was. Yeah, yeah, 19 years old.

Francis Lynch: OK. Is this before you had their licence?

Alicia Curtis: Pretty much so yeah, there's been some great, great people that are connected with throughout the way and continue to work with.

Francis Lynch: And it's funny, when I I was saying who I was interviewing at home here, one of my daughter's well. My daughter, she. Said, oh, I remember her coming to my school.

Alicia Curtis: Yeah, yeah, I did a lot of speaking. You know, he was a really good grounding into professional speaking because if you could keep a group of, you know. 150 and nine students occupied for 45 minutes. You could, you know, adults are brave to talk to, but that that was great because it kept you honest. I think you know it. Keeps you really honest. To show your true self in those situations to not try and play anybody else but. Who you are. And get really good at telling stories and and and and show young people and the opportunity that you know, is really important to them because. They they feel the the. Issues that are surrounding the. You know they've they've got access to the

Alicia Curtis: Internet, to media, to 24 hour media, you know, no world events can happen in the world without you finding out within hours of it happening.

Francis Lynch: No, that's not and.

Alicia Curtis: So they're feeling that they're feeling that helplessness. They're feeling that vulnerability. So to give them skills, to be able to do something. About that and show them that they've got power to make change. I think is really important.

Francis Lynch: Yeah, and. I I suppose I'm I'm hearing. Some of the things. That you're saying, you know, around leadership and and giving people those skills and. And you know that that sense of working with other people that they seem to be really important to you and strong if I was. To ask you. What do you see as the purpose in in your life now? How would you describe that?

Alicia Curtis: It's interesting. I think you know when you're trying. To work out what? Your purpose is there's a few things that I. Think you can sort of do and this. Is what I've done really? For me, I think purpose is is really simple concept. It's really about, you know, giving your greatest tolerance and. Greater service work. I think a lot of people get caught up in this Holy Grail search. What is my problems? And I think it's it's nothing more difficult than just working out what are you good at and how can you serve the. World with that. And and so for me. When I look at the patterns in my life, it's always been around developing or igniting other people to see their leadership potential. To be able to transform the world, you know that's the leadership that I'm really excited about and passionate about and you know, not leadership for leadership's sake or not leadership for, you know, the the status or, you know, the profits at the end of the, you

Alicia Curtis: know, the business day it's, you know, how can we utilise. The individual privileges that we've got to make the world a better place. For those around. Us and you know our workplace, our our broader community, our family. It's all integrated and so for me it's, you know, I really work from that strength based approach really getting people to understand what their key strengths are. I think again you know we can be clouded by or we're told you know follow your passions. And, you know, passions are great. But you know, I have a passion for tap dancing and, you know, watching theatre. But I'm not necessarily gonna make a career out of that. Yeah. And I think this. This encouragement that you've got to be totally passionate about what you're doing in your work can sometimes misguide young people, but I think you'll get there in the end. I think if you work on your strengths, if you develop mastery around your strengths. Focus on

Alicia Curtis: that. If you put the hard yards in the hard work ethic. Then you start to become really passionate that you know your craft, your your piece of mastery. So I. Think for you. Know young professionals or for anybody focusing more on you know, what are your key strengths? And then developing mastery around that, you know, doing being the diligent patient assistant. Person that works on your your key strength. Will lead you down. A pathway that. You'll become incredibly passionate about, so you know, I I'm really boring in that way that, you know, just really encourage people just to put in. You know the. The the deep. Effort and commitment into the areas of strength. And then yeah, look at how they can use those strengths to better, you know, the people around them to better society, to better their workplace.

Francis Lynch: So finding the purpose and the passion from where you are in what you are doing. Yeah. Do you see a distinction between purpose when it's related to work or in having a purpose around life as a?

Alicia Curtis: Exactly. Exactly. Yeah.

Francis Lynch: Whole because sometimes people.

Alicia Curtis: They do. I mean, for me, it really has been integrated, but I suppose. It's it's. It sometimes is, it sometimes isn't. I think it's also good to remember that there is a purpose outside of work as well. I think our culture can very much have us focused in on our careers only, and that is the source of all satisfaction. And then we kind of forget that. There's this whole other side to our lives and that nobody gives you awards for and nobody you know, interviews you on TV about, but it can be deeply rewarding and, you know, satisfying too. And so. I think you know, for

Alicia Curtis: me, leadership really starts at home. It starts within the family, starts about, you know, creating relationships that you know are meaningful and you know, that's I I don't think you can have one without the other. I think you've got to start at home. And and we've got to focus in on or? Get back to. Family being the core of our community. Because I think we've lost that a little bit. And and obviously you know in the last couple of years, I've, you know, had my first child.

Francis Lynch: Yeah, being a mother, yeah.

Alicia Curtis: Brings that brings that on in, you know such a huge way, and obviously my my husband and I have always been a really strong team together. But you know, having you know that first child just brings it to a new level and you learn things about yourself and you're pushed to your absolute. Chips and and and you. Get just the best rewards out of that.

Francis Lynch: Ohh look absolutely it's. It's an amazing part of life. It really is. So do you think that over the last few years and and maybe? As as you've. Become married and then. And had a child. I mean, do you think that that had that's influenced what it is you're trying to achieve through through your life with your?

Alicia Curtis: I think it has given me a different perspective on that. Definitely, definitely. I think it's reminded me that there is more to life than just career goals as well, which is a good reminder. But I think. Also that I acknowledge that you know the person that I am is somebody. Who loves my career as well? And so that's not a bad thing. Either and so it's. That constantly balancing that to how I'm feeling, you know what? What's the best split for me? And and and just reminding people, you know who have that strong extrinsic motivation to succeed career wise

Alicia Curtis: just to challenge them. On their, you know, assumptions around that and making sure that they are living that holistic life, because I think you know any one extreme is is not good for us. So you know to have that you know I think one of the. Questions I often ask myself is, you know, am I doing things in my career that my family would be proud of and using that as a question to, you know, keep me making the right ethical and moral choices as well. So I think our family can help guide us around those. Wise decisions.

Francis Lynch: So is that been a question that? You know when you've asked that question of yourself, you've actually decided, no, I won't.

Alicia Curtis: Do something. Yeah, definitely. Like, you know, I think even just things like, I don't know, being on the computer in my office and having my daughter come in and,

Alicia Curtis: you know, and being focused on my work and. You know? Come on, mum. I wanna you know. Come play with me and you. Know I've got two choices there for the. Choice to go. Go. No. Go on back to Dad. Dad. Dad to look after you or you know, or I could just take that moment and just walk out with her. So yeah, it comes back to really simple things.

Francis Lynch: Yeah. So it's not always those big, big ideas, big choices, so.

Alicia Curtis: The type of you know you. Gotta think about who who's who. Is the person you want to be. You know who you wanna be remembered for? What are those personal qualities that. You want to be described. As and just and leaving that moment to moment to moment.

Francis Lynch: Yeah. So it sounds like almost the sense of mindfulness. In in what you're doing.

Alicia Curtis: Yeah, definitely, yeah.

Francis Lynch: Do you have a a sense of looking forward and and are you one of the people in the world who plan 51015 years ahead or do you have the and the purpose for asking really is to sort of say do you, do you have a sense of what whether your purpose is? Going to change. As you go through the next 10 or.

Alicia Curtis: 15 years. I think the purpose that I've. So I've been able to articulate for myself as something that's probably encapsulated something for the last, you know, 30 odd years of my life. I probably don't see that changing too much. You know, I think I'm on that journey of mastery, and I'm happy to keep working on that and get deeper and deeper into what I do and being the best at that and and serving the world with that. So don't think it will change. I think the ways in. Which I do, it might change. And

Alicia Curtis: you know certainly for my business I've got. Plans now to sort of expand, expand the business now. So it's, you know, bigger than just me presenting and facilitating. So that's, you know, an interesting challenge. So you know the the context of of the overall purpose will will definitely. Evolve and keep. Finding new ways that will challenge me personally so, but no. I'm very committed to sort of igniting leaders to be able to make the world a better place, really.

Francis Lynch: Yeah, I know your your current, your company is called Elysium. Yeah. And but. You used to use the the. Terminology of revolutionary lives. So I mean, I'm interested in in what that meant to you at the time. What? What you know, what was that?

Alicia Curtis: Yeah. So I still, I still. Do presentations on revolutionary lives and revolutionary leadership. And for me? It's

Alicia Curtis: really about. Becoming a revolutionary, an almost a rebel, somebody who doesn't take what society throws at them, and I think to live a really fulfilling life in the way I see, you know, fulfilment, you do have to be a revolutionary. In modern society because. You know, at every turn you're pushed into fame and fortune and and beauty. Basically, those are the things that are external, you know, society admires and encourages. So I think to actually stand strong and actually. Turn away from. That is actually. Yeah. That's what you know, brings about the the revolutionary, you know, point of it. You actually have to, you know, look like. Yeah, you just have to be courageous in that because everything around you is pushing you in another direction. So that's what revolutionary lives are meant to me to actually really live a, you know, a happy, healthy, fulfilling life. You actually needed to invoke some sort of. Revolutionary tactics.

Francis Lynch: And so and part of what I take from that too is is the sense of, you know, there's those, those individual decisions that I need to make about my life, about whether I'm going to live the life that others may want me to live versus the life I want to. Manifest. Yeah.

Alicia Curtis: Exactly. Exactly. And you know, there's the decisions every day that we make around that. And what's important to us. So it's always, you know that that ability to self reflect and making sure that you are living the life that you want that is important to you. You're being the person that you want. To be and and making sure that your behaviours your everyday actions are actually aligned with that. It's an ongoing process because we can so easily fall into bad habits. You know, you know, just a couple of weeks ago, my husband was saying to me, you know, mobile phones. You know, infiltrating the bedroom.

Alicia Curtis: And and he was right. You know, I got into this horrible, you know, had that, you know, checking the phone. Before I went to bed checking it. You know, when I woke up and intellectually I know that that's pretty terrible thing. Like, you know, it's not gonna be good for focus, for mindfulness, for. A whole raft of things, but you can. Just you've gotta pull yourself. Up constantly and just make sure that you you know the habits that you're doing every day is representative of the life that you wanna live and and that purpose.

Francis Lynch: So self reflect. Really. Yeah.

Alicia Curtis: Yeah, exactly. And I think people find self reflection really hard these days. And I think it is because we're living in such a distracted world that we don't actually have the ability to focus. And, you know, objectively look at our own actions. And so. Yeah, it's it's one of the, you know, the best

Alicia Curtis: techniques I think you can practise as a as a leader is that ability just to be mindful of your own actions and the impacts it's making. And whether your intentions is really linked to the behaviours and whether the outcomes or the impacts of that is really you. Know aligned with that. Intention. And so yeah, it's. And it's hard in today's society. When you know you've got. E-mail and. Media and you know. You just bombarded with it completely.

Francis Lynch: There, your phone can keep buzzing all the. Time. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Alicia Curtis: Pretty much.

Francis Lynch: So I know in. Your work from what you were telling me, you have the opportunity to speak to groups and to work with. Smaller groups of people and. And so a variety of different things. And I'm just wondering, you know, at times whether you get people come to you and and really have

Francis Lynch: the conversation of, you know, I'm not sure where I'm going and and. You know I. I need to to get a little. Bit more focus or purpose in in my life. What do you do? What do you? Sort of say if somebody comes to you. And asks you those sorts of questions.

Alicia Curtis: Yeah, all the time. I think we're living, living in a meaning deficit world. You know, everybody's trying to find what their overall meaning is for them and what they should be doing. Look, you know a couple of things like obviously that you know that reflection around strength. So I think is important First off.

Alicia Curtis: That was definitely, you know. I do a lot of that in my leadership programmes. Mark Seligman has a you. Know a wonderful. Online survey that you can do and authentic on his website authentic happiness.

Alicia Curtis: So you know, just firstly getting your character strengths, you know off of there and again reflecting on you know what's really resonating with you. Obviously, volunteering is another thing, but I highly recommend so again you. Know you've gotta. Have that introspection and then just, you know, and then focus on, you know, outside. So you know, what are some ways that you can give that strength or skill set to a purpose that's broader than just who you are? And I think, you know, I think in our instant sort of culture, we tend to. Or over the, you know, the 20 odd years that I've been volunteering. I see peoples volunteering, commitment gets shorter and shorter and shorter. They expect all the benefits of volunteering and a three month stint. You know, at an organisation or with a project. And I I think it actually comes from. You know something that you've gotta commit a lot more deeply than that. So you know, how can you really see through

Alicia Curtis: something, you know, over many years? I think that's only, you know, when you're gonna really gain a huge benefit from from that involvement. So you. Know if you're. Willing to commit to that. You know, being in it for the long term, you know, really commit to something and and, you know, have it sort of integrate into your whole lifestyle. Yeah, you know, volunteering and has been the ways that I've built networks built skills, learned different perspectives, and gained insight gained, you know, mentors and. And I think it it can just lead us. Path down. Pathways that we wouldn't expect. So yeah, I'm a huge advocate, obviously for volunteering.

Francis Lynch: I know one of the programmes that you're involved in is the emerging leaders programme that has been run over the. Last three or four years, is it coming up? For its fourth or.

Francis Lynch 4th and. That started off, as you know, getting younger people involved on aged care boards, but it sort of expanded into sort of non profits generally.

Francis Lynch: And that's really in a sense what those people are saying is, is that they're prepared to volunteer to be involved with organisations over a. Longer period of time. So. So what? What is it? Do you think that really draws those people into that, that desire, the people you've seen on the programme?

Alicia Curtis: If we have such a range of people involved in that programme and some people are working, you know, within sort of the Community sector, especially like aged care or health industries, and they're looking for ways to be able to make a broader impact. Over the last. Couple of years in particular, we've gained a lot of young people. From different, you know, professional industries,

Alicia Curtis: law, accounting, engineering, they see it as a way to develop their skills. And I suppose through the programme that we do, we really challenge them to make sure that they've got that commitment, because I'm not going to, you know, provide, you know, connect them with an opportunity to sit on a board unless they really understand who they are as a person, what their values are and making sure that. That volunteering commitment is really aligned with who they are as a person, so we start a lot with that personal development and and then and then we look at, you know, cause anybody can learn governance. You know it's it's anybody can learn the skills to be a direct.

Alicia Curtis: In fact, you know, sometimes not having you know, a deep understanding of of the, you know, the. Sector or the? Issues can help you have a different perspective and that's what you want on on your boards and

Alicia Curtis: you know mixture of people who are going to provide different and perspectives. Ideas. Ask different questions and and a lot of the time the anecdotal feedback is that yeah, they're asking hugely different questions than their typical board. Characters. So they I think one of the things that we've done differently with this programme, though, is really foster those Connections and and relationships. A lot of the young. People who have come to us have tried to get onto a not-for-profit board before. And it's not their skill level or. Their their governance knowledge that's held them back. It's really those relationships and Connexions. So we're really lucky, you know, like yourself to have people. All leaders in the sector who have been able to give their time their mentorship, their Connexions to these young professionals, and it's made it a hugely different opportunity to, and I think else, that's out there, but yeah. We we challenged.

Alicia Curtis: Them pretty, pretty hard through the programme. To really think about what those values are and why they want to get involved, and then when they do, they just they just shine. You know, they just. We've had so many so much feedback from different organisations that just revelled in this opportunity to bring diversity in the into the boardroom. And obviously, you know, diversity is really seen a lot of the time as that gender or cultural background. And to get people getting their heads around aged oversite being, you know, another type of diversity that we can bring in has been challenging for the sector as well because it challenges a lot of notions around leadership. And and and who can provide what value. So yeah, we've we've come up against quite a few traditional mindsets.

Francis Lynch: And and also, what's the role of the board? You know, I think that's that's a fundamental question, which probably is in there as well.

Alicia Curtis: Yeah. Yeah, exactly. Yeah, very much so. Yeah. And and it's changing all the time because you're, you know, traditionally a lot of those organisations, the the visionaries, were a part of that board and now it's sort of changing to the visionaries of not for profits a lot some of the time, especially sort of younger people. People are coming from the CEO's. They're the founders of the organisation. They're running with the organisation. So how can a board support them in that journey? And and when you know traditionally your boards have been sort of an extra very, you know risk averse traditional lawyer. Townsend type people and yeah, it's it's really changing the landscape of what a not-for-profit organisation looks like.

Alicia Curtis: And in the same way, business too, you know, business trying to find that purpose within business and look at ways that you know businesses don't have to be a bad word. Business doesn't have to be a bad word. Business doesn't have to be. You know, the the bad guy all the time and really having those social. Enterprises or purpose focused businesses, you know, I really sort of see myself as, you know, that business with a, you know, a broader purpose. It always has been that.

Francis Lynch: I think the the black and. White sort of you. Know not-for-profit and for profit. Is long gone. I mean, there's there's.

Alicia Curtis: Yes, usually.

Francis Lynch: Only huge difference. Yeah, I think interesting about the emerging leaders programme, too, which sort of blew me away is I think it's both in year two and year 3. You had people come from there since it's like a

Francis Lynch: each time one person come over who actually moved here for three or four months to. Do the programme.

Alicia Curtis: And we had. More that had applied as well. So it's definitely something that's needed right across Australia and you know you're getting younger people who, yeah, have that strong desire to come.

Tribute and are looking for ways to to build their skills, knowledge and and Connexions in this area. So why wouldn't you tap into that? Why wouldn't you? You know, these are young people who are willing to volunteer their skills to serve the world.

Francis Lynch: And I think the. Value to knowing that, I'm not sure how many community partners you have in that programme now.

Alicia Curtis: I think it's 34 now.

Francis Lynch: 34 So it's 30. Four different organisations who are saying, look, we value the. And are prepared to put some money on the table so that that's I think that's the sort of, yeah. Money and time. Yeah. So it's an amazing shift over that four years.

Alicia Curtis: Money and time, money and time. Yeah, exactly. Again, it's showing a different type of leadership that real collective leadership. And I know you've had experience with with this too. It's not about, you know, whose logos at the. Top it's about thinking about. What are the things that it's going to? Make our sector. Better and working together across, you know, organised organisations to make that happen. I think that real shared leadership is going to continue to be a marker of, you know, new leadership that's required to solve the problems that you know we're facing. And you know, that takes a lot of. Change around.

Alicia Curtis: You know how we view and you know, ego and status and and all those elements and and not derive that satisfaction from being the first or being, you know, the one who's leading this project but actually deriving. The satisfaction from the outcomes that you're actually achieve. Being and actually, you know, being supportive of each other around that.

Francis Lynch: I think that's really important. I think I see increasingly the opportunities or the the examples where people are prepared to almost reduce their ego or reduce the the profile if they can see that there is a a better outcome than everybody, you know that the community receives. As a result of that collaboration and. It's really it's. A. It's a much better way of. Doing things.

Alicia Curtis: Ohh exactly and you know to some extent. You know, I think that's why people get into. The community sector, they

Alicia Curtis: you. They want to see that collaborative efforts and so I think a lot of people there. You know, supportive of that. You know, there's a few that are, you know. Still getting it. And that's OK too.

Francis Lynch: So you're a busy person. I mean, you know. With your family and. Your work and all the things that you're doing. So so how do you how do you make it all work? Where do you get the energy to? They do everything every day.

Alicia Curtis:

The energy is not the problem, yeah. The energy is the. Problem it's too much energy and too many goals. Know I couldn't achieve any of it without, you know, my family. Yeah. You know, having a husband who is willing to, you know, not be supportive just of me, but. We're supported that you know, we both got goals and ambitions and and also we want to both really Co parent you know our our child

Alicia Curtis: and so he's been involved you know. From the very start, you know he's taken half the parenting responsibilities and I think for women to step up in, you know, leadership and career roles, we're gonna need men to step up into those parenting roles. More and more often. Because I think it's. Very hard for women to be able to do that without that support. At home. But I think you know, our kids get so much out of having, you know, you know, my daughter gets so much out of, you know, having my, you know, my husband around, you know, she learns different things from him. He's, you know, definitely got a different parenting start to me, and that's a good thing. You know, they're going to learn great things. From that, so you know that's obviously a key part. Of that, I think. Obviously you know broader family as well. Having the support of my mum and my sisters to support my community and family life. And I think then

Alicia Curtis: it's it's realising that you know in, in your business and in your volunteering that it's not all about you, you know and it's about having really that team approach. You know I can't do everything with the volunteering you know. Boards that are part of, but that's not what it's supposed. To be about. Anyway, so really drawing on the strengths of the teams that you're working in and making sure you know that you're contributing your strength to that team and everybody else are contributing theirs, so. You know, so it's not this whole. Oh, my gosh. You know, if I step off this board, it's just going to crumble. It's not. You'll keep going. Somebody else will stand in. You know your place. So just realising that and you know you don't have to do everything.

Francis Lynch: Keep going.

Alicia Curtis: So just keeping focused on what you can provide to the organisation and

Alicia Curtis: making sure that the time that you do have to spend on that, you're very effective in what you have to do.

Francis Lynch: So when's your learning now do you? Are there particular? Books or blogs or podcasts or. You know where? Where do you get your inspiration from?

Alicia Curtis: Ohh my gosh. My husband cringes every time the doorbell rings, and there's another, you know, packet of books that you know, come from, you know, some online bookstore. I'm a very avid reader. Of different books, especially in that leadership philanthropy team building. Space. I like books that really focus on what's the evidence based science that's coming out in these areas. So you know, a lot of the positive psychology sort of stuff and and the conscious leadership sort of stuff is really. You know. Yeah, yeah. Interesting to me. I I'm always looking for a learning opportunity. One of the

Alicia Curtis: ones I I got this year was going over to Bhutan to the gross National Happiness Centre.

Francis Lynch: I'm glad you got. That I'm gonna ask you anyways. Tell us.

Alicia Curtis: Yeah, that was an amazing experience. They I had heard one of the facilitators speak at a philanthropy conference over in Melbourne and connected with him, and he connected me with the centre and it's it's still a growing centre. So obviously Bhutan has the gross National Happiness Index, which is a way that they. Measure progress of their country. So the king basically. Replying back to a journalist question around the GDP of his country clipped back, well, we actually don't measure our success based on GDP. We measure it based on our gross national happiness, and so every two years their government actually surveys everybody in their country. According

Alicia Curtis: to the gross National Happiness Index, which has nine different areas from health to education to time with family to good governance, it's all part of it. And so. The gross National Happiness Centre is a not-for-profit organisation which has taken the concept of GNH and looked at spreading that across the world and really looking at not only at a country level but how we can utilise it in other in other sort of sectors or industries. So education, the one that I went to was a business transformation course. So how can we use the concepts of gross national happiness in our business? So again, when you think about? How do we measure success in a company? You know, the innovative organisations are looking at, you know, not just profit as a way of measuring success. And so. We we, you know, over the week we had, you know, international delegates from a range of countries we talked about or what is enough. You know what, as a business, are

Alicia Curtis: we really striving for this continual sort of need for more growth, bigger, better, you know, is is that the goal, you know, and trying to look at it from a multi stakeholder approach instead of just seeing the shareholders? As the be all and end all who you know benefit from business, there's actually a whole range of stakeholders that we need to look at and and they all have needs and the research is now showing us that companies that actually do look at that multi stakeholder approach that do value their employees, their clients. The environment community. Actually outperform companies that don't, that actually have just that shareholder focus. So it's a really interesting time in business where we're actually really shaking the notions of what a successful company must look like. And I find that really exciting.

Francis Lynch: So if you've got. Ideas about how you kind? Of work with that.

Alicia Curtis: Yeah, definitely. So firstly, it's just really about sharing the, you know the concepts and thinking and asking those questions. And I think business transformation can't happen without us first having that personal transformation. So you know a lot of my work is focusing on that personal transformation side and then promoting. The different measurements and opportunities for business to really look beyond what they might be looking at currently. So there's a great. Organisation called B Corps or Benefit Corporation. So that's a measurement that businesses can go through to actually showcase that they're looking at things more broadly than just profits and and and it's sort of like an accreditation that businesses can get to show folks.

Francis Lynch: And I think there's. Been a couple of it in Australia there, yeah.

Alicia Curtis: Yeah, there is a few. Yeah, definitely. And and it's growing. So it's it's great to see and that came from America. I mean there's different measurements that are happening in you know other parts of the world. So it's great to see, you know, different countries taking on or different geographical areas taking on these concepts and really challenging the status quo and what business. Is and does and how? We how we relate to growth, because in the end we've only got finite resources and we're already pushing our world to its limits. So how are we going to keep pushing this growth agenda? I think it like and I think I think it's going to be taken in balance and. And looked at more holistically and I think business just gives you. Know you ask people. Who they are, you know, they identify through their jobs. So we've got a

Alicia Curtis: great opportunity to change people's identity of who they are through business. And yeah, I find that really exciting.

Francis Lynch: It sort of just. Strapped me while you were talking to that. It's not so far away from that 12 year old girl who went to a conference in, you know, whatever it was, whenever it was. And you know some of those same concepts actually sound like they're. Still there when you went to bed.

Alicia Curtis: Hugely hugely. You know, I like I remember the speakers at the International Conference, you know, and and talking about. Yeah, the the same concepts that we still strong, I mean what is it, the 27th climate change conference we're just about to have the 27th like how much talk do we need people like let's just move it to the next level. Come on.

Francis Lynch: Well, it's sort of nearing the end of this interview, and it's been such a nice conversation. I'm just wondering, is there anything that that you're involved in that you'd like to sort? Tell them the truth with that.

Alicia Curtis: What my latest volunteering project is again trying to shake up the status quo in an area and that's in philanthropy and and so 100 women. We launched March last year and it's a giving circle, so. Are giving circles where people come together and donate a set amount of money or, you know, base amount of money that goes into a funding pool that that then there is.

Francis Lynch: OK.

Alicia Curtis: Given given away to different causes and. I'd had this idea for. A couple of years, but just not have the time to really put it out there. And then connected, you know, it was in the car talking to a friend about ideas,

Alicia Curtis: to change the world and shared the 100 women. Idea. And she said, oh, this is great. Let's let's make it happen. So she was really the, you know, the push to, you know, get things rolling. But it's amazing to see you know how it's resonated with people. And I think this concept of citizen philanthropy has really sort of started to excite people as philanthropy. You know, when you look at the root of that word, it's about lover of humanity and people are looking for ways to contribute to that. Greater purpose that greater humanity and philanthropies are great way to do that. And so yeah, we we started last year. We fundraised just over \$100,000 and gave it away to three causes. And this year, we're in our second year. We're just, we've just released our five finalists and still taking donations till the end of the year and and hopefully we'll have hopefully around 90 to \$100,000 to give away. And for me? It's exciting to show that, you know, philanthropy

Alicia Curtis: or philanthropists don't have to be. Rich, famous. You know, a lot of the time older men, you know, that's the face that we associate with philanthropy. And it's been exciting to say, hey, actually, philanthropy doesn't have to be. Like that you. Know you can come. From a whole range of different backgrounds and be a philanthropist, you can give your money. You can also give your time. You can get your networks.

Alicia Curtis: So really trying to redefine or change that story of what philanthropy is about, and I've just come across the most amazing people and and causes and learned so much about Grant making myself that it's been great to, you know, we're trying to empower people to be for anthropologists. Be powerful philanthropists. How can we use our money to make the world a better place than for me? And I've I've always to donating my time and my skills? It's been great to learn

Alicia Curtis: about. OK, well, you know, now I'm a part of a group, a collective. Group that's, you know, giving away \$100,000 a year. I've not been in that, you know, had that experience before.

Francis Lynch: All right.

Alicia Curtis: So it's great to develop my skills around philanthropy and how you choose. You know, organisations and projects, they're really going to have that long term change. And it's a bit of the. Head and heart sort of stuff. But being able to do. It with others who. Are still learning too. Has been a great experience.

Francis Lynch: And I think in the last interview I did with Nicky Howe, she also mentioned 100 women.

Alicia Curtis: Yes, I heard. Thanks, Nikki.

Francis Lynch: And I've spoken to a couple of. Other people just. Personally, who've been connected to it, and I think one of the things which you. Were mentioning but I've I've heard others say too. Is it is that? Sense of, you know, probably in the past over the year. Individuals have given money to other organisations or charitable organisations or whatever, and you get tax time and you might have given \$500.00 or \$1000 or. Whatever over the. Year. But in this way it's a lot more personal in the sense of that you actually are. You know, taking responsibility for where it's gonna. Go and.

Alicia Curtis: You get to choose. Yeah. In the end, like you, you. Know the grant. Subcommittee goes through all the applications. They read them, they ring, you know, the organisations that they do the. Cheques. Yeah. In the end, you know, every member gets a vote on where the. Money

Alicia Curtis: goes so there, there. Is that concept of you educating yourself on what the issues are and for us, you know, we give a lot of credit to the not for profits who are doing the work and we don't have themes or you know topics that we will fund versus others in the space of you know. Empowering women. We really try. And allow not for profits to tell us what. Are the key issues. In a lot of the time they're, they're the experts, you know, we we can learn from them in that way, but we can also share. Our knowledge and. Expertise our perspectives and and challenge each other around. OK, well, here are the finalists. You know, where do we think that money is best going to be spent? And in the end like, you know? I'm going to give \$1200. That's not, you know, a small contribution for a person you know, on an average. Age, but I know that the money that I give that \$1200 is going to be spent in the absolute best way because of the rigorous

Alicia Curtis: grant making process that's going to happen. We've done the cheques, we've asked the questions, we know that we're going to get the impact for that money and in our time poor society, you know where people do wanna donate. But they're not sure where to donate to, who to start with, what projects need most help. It's a really great safe environment for people to come. Learn more about. Philanthropy come together as a collective, and then you know. See the. Benefits of that money and and, you know, go visit the organisations and have that long term, you know, relationship with those organisations. And see the benefits of, you know what you've helped make happen.

Francis Lynch: Yeah, long may it continue, I hope. It goes from strength to strength and then it continues and that, you know the energy around. That really goes. And in the next few years.

Alicia Curtis: Really, it's really sort of, you know, it's a simple concept that just resonates with people. It's it's nothing more than that. And we're bringing together such a diverse group of people that I can't see how can't keep. Improving like we're we're. Definitely a young organisation so you know we're testing. Things out or experimenting, but I think with the people who are joining both men and women who are joining families, we've even, you know, innovative slightly around, you know what you can give so usually. With different giving circles, it's that minimum of how much you can give. And for us it's \$1200. \$100 a month, really. But there were a lot of people who said, oh, I can't do the \$1200 a month. How can I still be? Involved and we had that right from our. Launch and we thought about it. And we said, OK, we're gonna start mini circles. So you can get your book club together. You can get your family together, you can go. Whole bunch of

Alicia Curtis: friends together or some people are, you know, joined a mini circles as absolute strangers and combined their money, and they've got their one vote between them. But it's again, you know, it's just changing the rules when they don't work for you and being inclusive and, you know, trying new things. And we've had a lot of mini. Circles joined this year, which is great. Great. Yeah, so. Perfect.

Francis Lynch: Six people might join or put 200 on them, yeah.

Alicia Curtis: Exactly. Exactly. So mini circle you can, you know, from a reseating point of view, we can give up to six receipts in a really circle, but you know, even some clubs. Have joined, you know. You know, community clubs, which has been great to get their support to, you know, traditional clubs of organisations that have been around for many, many. That's how they're supporting,

Alicia Curtis: you know, new sort of innovation around philanthropy. It's been great and comes back to that collective leadership. You know we're. All working towards the same things. How can we support? Each other and. Share our own sort of organisational strengths.

Francis Lynch: And even the name, I think 100 women actually signifies strength. Yeah, it's it's the IT is that collective, you know, as 100 people exactly are strong. Yeah. And yeah.

Alicia Curtis: Exactly. Exactly. Yeah. And that's what it's about. It's a symbol of what? What can happen when people come together? Really.

Francis Lynch Right, yeah. I think we better finish.

Alicia Curtis: The guys will start talking.

Francis Lynch: It's been such a wonderful time to have you here and to talk about a whole range of things and and I can see I can really get the idea that, you know, we could have spoken probably for 30 or 40 minutes on a number of those topics, but it's I can really see that sense of purpose in what you're doing. And you know the energy and the the vitality that you have around that. And I've seen that in the way that you've worked with people in, in groups and and sessions. And long may it continue, I hope that you get the opportunity to. To continue to really build and and express those those strengths and purposes that you have in all the things that you're doing over there. That coming years.

Alicia Curtis: Thank you and thanks always for your. Support. I really appreciate it.

Francis Lynch: No worries. Thanks, Alicia.

Outro: Thanks for listening to the living with purpose interview series. They're showing it's for each episode that you can get on the www.livingwithpurposeinterviews.com website. You can also connect with Francis on Twitter at underscore, Francis Lynch on LinkedIn, or on e-mail at francislynch.Me@gmail.com. And if you've enjoyed this episode as a podcast, then subscribe your player and tell your friends thanks, and join us again soon.