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**Title: Living with Purpose**

**Number of Speakers: 2**

**File Duration: 00:47:40**

**Transcriptionist: Mr Frederick Daniel Di**

**Speakers:**

**Francis Lynch**

**Dr Nicky Howe**

## 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 on, as we explore purpose and meaning and hopefully learn a little about. Some great people.

**Francis Lynch:** Thanks for joining me. As I have a chat with Doctor Nikki Howe. Now I've known Nicki for about 10 years, but I learned many things about her in this conversation that I hadn't heard before and I came away even more thankful that I can count her as one of my colleagues and friends. Nicki has a headline on LinkedIn that goes CEO, Business  
**Francis Lynch:** Builder, leadership and

management coach, writer, philanthropist. In this conversation you'll get some insight into the purpose that drives Nicki in her pursuit of these varied goals and how they come together in a life that is very full and authentic. Nicki is the CEO of South Care, which is a community and aged care services provider in Perth. And from this position collaborates with many other leaders and organisations in her community. She has a doctorate in business administration and other qualifications in areas such as coaching and public administration. I'll include links to many of the things that Nicki mentions on the website at [www.livingwithpurposeinterviews.com](http://www.livingwithpurposeinterviews.com). So let's meet Nikki. Well, thanks for joining me, Nikki. The I've just given you a really good glowing introduction in the podcast, but can you tell us in your own words about who you are?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Yes, I was interesting, isn't it? That notion of. Yeah. Who are you? Who am I? Well, I think partly I'm somebody who is really interested in in humanity. So I think, you know, that really resonates with me around working with people. So I'm a person who's a people person. So when I think about who am I, I'm a. Yeah, that's that's who I am.

**Francis Lynch:** OK, that that's something that you feel? You've sort of that's. Followed you through the different things that you've done in Your life?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Yeah. When I think about everything. That I've done. And it's been varied. You know, I've worked in chip shops. I've worked in prawn factories, I've managed organisations. I've done, you know, I was started life as a nurse. I've done a whole lot of things, but when I think about, well, what is it at at at the core of that, it's always people. So I'm always engaged in something to do with

**Dr Nicky Howe:** people, whether it's caring for them, building their capacities. Talking to them, whatever, it's always about people. So that that question, sometimes people say to me, well, what do you do, you know, what do you do? And I think to myself, well, what I do is I listen. I talk. And I write and I might do that in a variety of contexts, but that's pretty much what I do.

**Francis Lynch:** So by that listening and by. Like there's a connection between the listening and the doing.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** I think so. I think you know, we all want to be heard and really in my, you know, particularly in my role or some of the other things that I do in my life, I think well, if I'm not really listening to the person. Do I really have clarity around what it is you know? What are their concerns? We were talking before about human beings being concern for being so If you don't listen to **Dr**

**Dr Nicky Howe:** them, do you really know what you know what their concerns are? And then if you don't listen, you may well act and act in the wrong way. So you might be doing the wrong things.

**Francis Lynch:** So is that something that you've sort of Understood and known through your life or. Is that something that's changed over time?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** I think. I would say maybe intuitively, I might have known it, but I think that my training, you know, my variety of training that I've had has really made me see that as the crucial linchpin to whatever you're doing. And you. Know in a previous role I did a lot of sales organisational development, so I would go into different work areas and do reviews. And the the overwhelming thing with that was the number of people who said to me how much they appreciated the fact that I just sat there and listened. To them. You **Dr**

**Dr Nicky Howe:** know, I didn't actually. You know, I wasn't actually doing anything. I was actually just interviewing them to find out, you know, how did they do their job, what was working? What wasn't working? but at the end. They would always say to me. How much they appreciated the fact that I listened and it was, you know, it's those points where you realise how powerful listening is. If you can truly listen to somebody. And that's that can be very hard, of course, because we're always on our own stories.

**Francis Lynch:** So tell me a little bit about the journey that brings you to where you are now so you know a little bit of what might be interesting to me?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Oh yes, how did I end up where I am? Look, I think. I've always as. I said before, I think I've always really been interested in things that are. About building the capacity of people of individuals, whether

**Dr Nicky Howe:** that be in a care environment or you know, I've worked in employment, education, welfare organisational development. So I think the path that has got me to where it's where I am now is because. I've always followed that path of well, what am I doing that's actually contributing to the human condition, to making things better? And I think underlying that is it always comes down to your values. You know, what is it, what is it that you value? And I think that. You know, overwhelmingly for me my values centred around relationships and around community and around people. So I think I'm here because. I can I can connect and I can build individuals. I can build organisations and I can build communities. So I think all the different things that I've done have just led me to be here at this point in time. To be able to do that.



**Francis Lynch:** Yeah. And so, you know, you've obviously, as you were saying, you've moved, you mentioned that you've been involved in nursing and organisational development and then you know range of other things so. You found. Over time, through. Your life, different ways of being able to. To practice that.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Yeah, I think different ways to practice it. And also I think you know for me, the realisation that. If you wanna make change and if you wanna change things, you actually have to be in positions of power and authority. Even though we might not wanna language there, so I think you know that I realised that very early when I was nursing that if I wanted to change the situation in a hospital, I certainly wasn't going to be able to do it from a point of view of being an enrolled. So I think. You know what, I've what I've observed and seen is that if I want to deal

**Dr Nicky Howe:** with societies injustice or the things that I don't like about, you know, a situation or an organisation or whatever, then I actually have to be in a position to do something about that. And sometimes that means I've got to be. In a position of authority to do it. Not always, because I think you know we can do a whole lot of things in terms of social change and social movement without actually holding a a position of authority. But I think when it's about leadership, you know, I think it's about us being in in a position where we are prepared to lead. To step up and do something. And to take you know, the action that we want to take cause we see the see, we don't think it's right and I think that comes down to our values cause what I might think is right or wrong, you might have a different interpretation of that.

**Francis Lynch:** Absolutely. So do you, you know when You've spoken about values is. There something for You that has remained very constant or you sort of as your experiences have changed. Have you changed your interpretation or even your understanding of what you've done?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Look, you know, I think this is a really interesting question because. One of my children recently said to me that they weren't going to work at this particular place because they didn't like their values and you know they're in their 20s. And I I. When he when he said, I thought to myself, I didn't even think. I thought about my values at that age. I just thought about. And you know. Feeding myself and then of course feeding my family so I don't think that values where that I was that aware of my own values and I think I really only became aware of my own values, probably in my mid 30's. I don't think I had **Dr**

**Dr Nicky Howe** that clarity before that I'd love to say I did, but I. Didn't I was just too pragmatic and marching. Myself through life. But certainly now I'm much clearer and I'm much more. Committed and a and an advocate of the of the importance of values, particularly in an organisational setting or in a community setting that without that, and you. Know you get. Drift because you're not aligned so.

**Francis Lynch:** Yeah. And if you know if you are aligned, I get the sense from what you're saying is is if you're aligned, then you're feeling of of energy and purpose really gets sick.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Absolutely. I worked in an organisation for a couple of years and I remember when I started. Within the first couple of days. I knew I had made a mistake. And I did stay for 18 months cause I'd made a commitment, but my soul wasn't inside me. I I

**Dr Nicky Howe:** I there was no alignment. You know, there was no alignment. It was never going to work for me, and that was a really good awakening for me about the choices that you make. About where you work and why where you wouldn't work.

**Francis Lynch:** I'm interested. You're saying in terms of values and perhaps becoming clear, you know in your mid 30's or whatever. I mean, I've got. An interest in really in terms of what were the major influences for you in your life? You know, it may have had influence and your values. It might have been something else, but you know, it could be ideas that your major influences or it could be People? but I'm interested in that.

**Dr Nicky Howe** Yeah, because I think one of the major influences when I get asked this question, I really can't. I'm not particularly clear about who are the people that might have influenced me. I mean, certainly my

**Dr Nicky Howe:** parents have had an influence in teachers and work colleagues, but I think the biggest some of the biggest things that have influenced me has been education. You know, I I didn't actually go to university until I was in my early 30s. And so that had a big impact on me going to university as a single mother and and then continuing that. Journey the ontological coaching doing that diploma has had a significant impact on me. So for me I think obviously that's connected with people. I mean, I think Alan Siler has had a significant influence on my life and I think some of the. Other people I've. Worked with, but I think the biggest thing for me. Is that being, you know, is education.

**Francis Lynch:** I'm interested. You mentioned ontological coaching and Alan Siler. Many of the people listening may not really understand what are what the logical

**Francis Lynch:** coaching is and can. You give us an idea of just some of. The key ideas behind it.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Yeah, yeah, I look the the key idea is between that that when we think about ontological coaching as opposed to another form of coaching is that it's premised not only in our language. So not only how we speak and listen to each other, but it's also around our moods and emotions. So very much our emotional awareness of ourselves. And also our Physiology. So are somatic bodies. So as an ontological coach or an ontological practitioner I'm not working with the person just in the domain of language. I'm actually working with them in those three domains and then and through that we're able to. Alan uses the word perturb, you know, as a coach we're able to perturb somebody to help them shift. Maybe how they languaged the situation, how they saw

**Dr Nicky Howe:** what was possible or not possible for them in life. And we do that through supporting them to look at not only how they're they're speaking it, but also how they might be holding it in their body and what emotional mood they might be trapped in. So you know, so somebody who's in a mood of resentment or resignation, it's very difficult for them. To move forward. So as an ontological coach, we're really exploring that with them. So we're really exploring those 3. Areas of their life. And how much they're intertwined in that person's the term we use is their way of being. So those 3 domains create a particular way of being. You know you have a way of being Francis, the same as I do and sometimes those ways of being serve us and other times they limit us and they close down possibilities for us. So as an ontological coach, what we're doing is we're trying to open up and perturb people to see



**Dr Nicky Howe:** different possibilities in their lives. It's very powerful.

**Francis Lynch:** Yeah. And I know that. The books that you've written really uses those principles in in applying it to an organisational setting. With allot you've used in done that within your work here at Southcare so.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Yeah. Yeah, we have, yeah, so. You know, just as a human being has a particular mood, an organisation can also have a mood. And So what I've been really working on here is to try and look at how you use that material in an organisational setting. So how do you make it really practical? And so my book. Is very practical around how do we use these particular approaches? In in a work environment to create a culture where we see possibilities, we see opportunities where everybody's a leader. So it's been a really interesting journey and I'd say it's been,

**Dr Nicky Howe:** you know, two steps forward, one step back. So it's an ongoing process.

**Francis Lynch:** Just I'll. Put some notes. On the website on the show notes for the the podcast. But what's the name of the book?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Oh, so my book is called better relationships with those you lead. And I'm just just finalising the 2nd edition, so I've yeah. So I've learned from writing the 1st edition and I've added some things and included, you know, a little bit more around some of the things that I've learned through that, you know, through the process of actually writing a book. Yeah, which has been a big learning process.

**Francis Lynch:** Sure it has. Well, we'll look forward to that and I'll. Put some links to that. So what I mean what I'm Interested in really is is do you? Do you have a sense of of purpose? Or direction in life?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Yeah, I do. I I do have a sense of purpose and direction. And I think at a really fundamental level. I want a fair and just civil society. That's what I want. I see all this injustice around. And I just think to myself, the world doesn't have to be that way, whether it be and you know, I was saying to my husband the other night, I can't believe that half the world is dying from poverty and the other half of the world is dying from from obesity, you know, like it, you know, just let's look at that very starkly. You know, at what's currently going on at the moment in Syria. So you know, they are big things and and I might not necessarily engage in the global world, but I certainly engage at a local level to. Say, what can I do to make this world more fair and just? And how can I do that with individuals? How can I do that in an organisation and what the organisation stands for and how can I do it in a community? So I think at real grassroots level

**Dr Nicky Howe:** that's what I want to do. I want to have an influence on our civil society.

**Francis Lynch:** And you try and from what I know of you, you try and do that proactively

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Yeah

**Francis Lynch:** so If you got some examples that you can give us.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Yeah. Look, I think you know when I think about it proactively, I mean one of the great projects that we've worked on over the last few years. Is how do we engage young people onto boards and committees in aged care in the community sector? So how do we take a group of, you know, people and and say, yeah, look, why are we not looking at the capacities that these people have and engage them and bring them into these different areas within Within society, while we exclude them, so it's been a really interesting project around. How we exclude how we might include and I find myself in this

**Dr Nicky Howe:** really interesting space of, you know, advocating for young people, but because I also work in aged care, advocating for seniors. And so for me, it's like, again that notion that we we exclude. Or we, you know, have more of something in one area and less of it in another. So I think you know, there's a great cause for diversity across a range of things. So I'm very interested in how do we build the capacities of our organisations by engaging everybody. And I and and deliberately at that governance leadership level, rather than at the. The lower levels, so let's. Bring them in and see what they can, what they can teach us, and what they can bring. And one of the other things that I am very, very committed to in a number of forms. Is women and girls, so I'm a so optimist and I am also with 100 women, so I'm very committed to again, how do we create more of a just and fair society for women and girls? And I am, you know, I'm appalled, shocked.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** And sometimes ashamed, when I think about, you know, more women in Victoria die of domestic violence than than and from car accidents. And I think in Australia, really. So I'm very committed to doing what I can in those areas. Of helping to build the capacity of women and girls to transform their lives, and I think, you know, that's again through education through economic empowerment so.

**Francis Lynch:** So just you mentioned a couple of things for optimists maybe something that people know of, but 100 women can you just explain?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Yeah. Look, 100 women amazing. You know, I've been working with this young woman, Alicia Curtis, who read a book, half the sky and decided she wanted to do something. So it's the the principle behind it is you get to gather 100 women. Who give \$100 a month and at the end of the year **Dr**

**Nicky Howe:** we've got \$120,000, which enables us to give three grants of \$40,000. So we want impactful grants, but what we're really trying to do is we're really trying to create this idea that we are all philanthropists and through collective giving we can actually make a difference, and some women wouldn't be able to give \$100 a month. So we create giving circles where you know a group of six women might decide that they're gonna be a member and and therefore they'll create a giving circle and they'll be philanthropists. So it is very much about, yeah, how do we claim philanthropy? And say that. We are actually philanthropists to actually make changes in the world.

**Francis Lynch:** and it it. It it strikes them that that. Example of 100 women, but also the. The young leaders on boards project a lot of that is about working collectively and

**Francis Lynch:** collaboratively, is that something that's really important to you?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Yes it is. It is I I think that we can solve the world's problems if we chose to work, you know, collectively and collaboratively. And if we left all our little egos at the door and we worked together, we could solve the world's problems and I think. You know, certainly working in the not-for-profit sector, I see the amazing things that go on when people choose to collaborate. I mean, we wouldn't have the engaging young leaders if we didn't have people who collaborated and committed

**Francis Lynch:** Much bigger than you and South care

**Dr Nicky Howe:** absolutely it's. It's not about Nicki in South care. It's about a collective group of leaders in the sector saying, you know what, there's a problem and we can solve it. So let's work together to do it. So I do



**Dr Nicky Howe:** believe. That, you know, working collaboratively and is a great way of going and you know it's not, it's not always. You know, sunshine, I mean, you've gotta have difficult and sometimes interesting and challenging conversations with people to be able to do that well. So, you know, sometimes it's easier to just do it alone, but I I don't think you get the you, you certainly don't get the diversity of of what you want it to be if you. Just, you know, operating by yourself.

**Francis Lynch:** And i suspect that those examples that you showed, I'm sure there are others that were involved in that they people noticed. And they, and perhaps take some ideas from that.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Yeah. Well, I I hope that they, I hope that they notice that in in the sense of saying actually we could do that too to solve this problem or to, you know, to do whatever. So yeah, I think you know one one of the

**Dr Nicky Howe:** things I do want to engage more in is how this model. Can be used to solve other problems. You know how how you can say? Well, what are the steps that we took and how can we then use that for something else? . And it's, you know, it's easy to do.

**Francis Lynch:** Easy to say

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Easy to say I just need. A day to write it.

**Francis Lynch:** So do you think that your purpose has Actually changed over the years that that your sense of maybe even if you look back five or ten years, do you think what you see in yourself or you know is where you're going, do you think that that has is something that changes over time?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Look, I think for me it might not necessarily be great change, maybe it's more clarity. Yeah, I've got a bit more clarity now about my purpose than I did 10 years

**Dr Nicky Howe** ago. I'm also in a different situation in terms of, you know, my my family life. You know, my children are growing up, so. I think that those sorts of things possibly change you, but I think for me it's probably that I've. Got more clarity around what is it that I want to leave the world with? you know, I don't know whether that's also cause, you know, I'm in my 50s now, and you go well, you know what? What contribution are you really making?

**Francis Lynch:** And do you feel that, you know, given, as you say, you know, you're in that that 50s bracket, but can you say that what you're interested in or what your purpose or your goals are gonna be. They are going to just continue on the same. Path. Or do you feel that there's going to be some shift coming out?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Ohh no, I think that they'll continue on the same path, but maybe not in the same context.

**Francis Lynch:** Okay

**Dr Nicky Howe:** So I think you know, I think I have these dreamy ideas that, you know, I would like to go and actually, you know, do volunteering somewhere else, you know. Just be able. To step out and actually really immerse myself in some. Volunteering role that's really going to make a difference. And I want to engage more in philanthropy and help people see that as a way forward. And and yeah, I just want to keep building sustainable communities. But where those communities are, I don't know that I know yet. So I think the context might be different, but I think I'll still be doing the same thing. Because that's what I love doing and that's where I get energy.

**Francis Lynch:** Which leads me on to I was gonna ask about that because really, you know what? Is it that that? You notice actually gives you energy and and sustains you in the way that you were doing?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Yeah, what I notice gives me energy is people. People give me energy. So, you know, when you work with people, you know, I was working with some people on the weekend. Actually it was with 100 women and you know, they were so vibrant and engaging and passionate about the. You know the grants that we were reading and what what decisions we were gonna make. Like I was really energised by that. I'm energised at work when you know. We've got at the moment we're going through a bit of change and we've got a. New manager and she's got. All these ideas and. And and that really. So people energise me and I think also. Injustice gives me energy, so when I see that. When I

**Dr Nicky Howe:** see this injustice is in the world, I say, well, you know, what am i doing about that?. I need to step up and I need to use my resources to actually do something about that and the the other one. This is a bit of a funny one, but incompetence gives me energy because when I see incompetence, I want to change it.

**Francis Lynch:** In your own self or in others?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** It can be myself in others, in systems, you know it can be anywhere. I wanna change that. So yeah. If I was seeing competence in myself, I think right, I I need to step up here. I need to learn. I need to teach myself more. I need to practice more so, I think. That, you know, even though. That's possibly a strange thing to say. It that gives me energy, it says I want to improve. I want to get better. I want to make that better.

**Francis Lynch:** Is it something that. Again, I'm interested really in terms of, you know, has there been any change in that for you over time Do you Was that something you always knew about yourself in terms of, you know, that connecting and working with people was something that really Was driving you, was giving you the the energy to do what you're doing or is again. Is that something that changed?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** No, I don't think I. I mean I've, I've I've never been frightened of people, I've always I. Remember, as a young girl working in a fish and chip shop. And I used to do the Sunday night shift and that's when they had the Taverns. You know, the Tavern. And they always used to come in on a Sunday night because they were always, you know, pretty three parts to the wind. And I used to I wasn't ever frightened of that. You know, I used to get in and engage and and joke

**Dr Nicky Howe:** around and and just do what I could to manage the situation. And so I don't know that. I mean, I certainly didn't have. The clarity then about what I was doing. I was just wanting the paycheck, I suppose, but. Yeah, I think maybe for me it's just. More that I've. Got clarity and I'm also in a privileged position to be able to make decisions about where I what I will and won't do. You know where as a as a younger woman, it was about saying, well, you know, I remember someone saying to me, oh, geez, Nikki, you're really ambitious. And I said, yeah, I'm ambitious to get that next level, I said because I'm a single mum with two boys and I wanna feed them like, you know, I can be very pragmatic as well.

**Francis Lynch:** Yeah, I'm interested to know whether there's any. Particular practices you have in their life or. Or routines or. Yeah, just the way you you set up your day, that



**Francis Lynch:** makes a difference for you and really keeps you on track.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Yes. Look, I was talking to a young girl the other day. About values and. I said to her, she said I. Didn't. I don't really understand what they. Are and I said. We'll go to what you. Do all the time, I said. Cause that'll give you a sense of your values. And I said to her, she said, well, what are yours? And I said, well, one of my values is well-being I said. And every morning I get up, I do a bit of yoga. I go for a walk with my dog and then I come back and I get on my little, you know, exercise machine so very rarely will a day go by that I have not engaged in some sort of physical activity for my own well-being. And I also, you know. I love yoga. I love trying to practice mindfulness. I'm not a great meditator, but I like to walk in the mornings by myself and talk to myself. So I do believe in reflective practice, so I do spend a fair bit of

**Dr Nicky Howe:** time trying to reflect. So I think for me. In order to have the energy to do the things that you wanna do, I think you do have to look after yourself. You know you have to look after your well-being and and I think the other thing for me is that constant notion of being a learner. So you know, when you when you're a learner, you don't have to hold that you know. We think. So I think that holds me in pretty good stead and I try and read or look at something every day to just, you know, just to keep my mind active and and just look at things from a different perspective. So I you know, I try and engage and practice in in being a learner. I think the other thing. Is, you know, you, you. Don't wanna be taking yourself too seriously. Really. you know, so. People who know me, they know. I like a glass of Shiraz, you know. So it's you. Know you know,

**Francis Lynch:** Ill note that

**Dr Nicky Howe:** You'll note that and life is a balance. Yeah. It's. It's easy to go. Oh, I'm not gonna drink. Well, I'm not gonna eat chocolate cake and and, but I think the the challenge. For us is to. You know, have a glass of wine and have a little bit of cake and try and. Keep everything in balance, yeah. Keep your friends in balance. Absolutely. Keep your family. You know, keep managing those relationships because really they'll they are the thing that will sustain you and look after you. In the long run.

**Francis Lynch:** So I know that you know, obviously you were saying earlier that a lot of your energy comes from being in contact with people and working with others and and whatever. I mean I'm I'm guessing that there are times when people might be in conversation with you, where they're trying to work through some stuff for themselves,

**Francis Lynch:** trying to understand what their purpose is where you know where they can put themselves to best use or you know can get the to sort of work towards their potential. What sorts of Conversations do you have with people, or if someone's actually asking for you for advice. What? What do you sort of go to?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** I use a coaching approach, I have to say I have to declare that that that that is my natural approach and you know you get asked if you'll mentor somebody or you'll coach somebody and even in a mentoring situation I find that I tend to operate as a coach. So I tend to. You know, ask those questions and. Listen and and if I am going to give advice, I say I say look, you know, would you like me to give you some advice? And I'm I'm happy to do that. But I think I tend to engage with people using a coaching approach which is listen and ask

**Dr Nicky Howe:** questions. Because, you know, I don't really know the answers. Anyway. They do. They know them. They know them the the answers are inside them. It's just giving them that space for them to hear themselves.

**Francis Lynch:** Yeah. And you were saying, I think before we started recording, but you know, talking about that, you know, the sense of people being given the space to be heard and to speak and to be given the respect of listening in itself is very powerful.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Ohh It is a. It's an amazing gift. People don't get listened to. We don't, you know. We're always trying to push our agenda. You know, we're putting forward what we wanna say. Do we really stop and go Oh, hang on a SEC. What is this person really saying to me? I mean, how many times you know we're in front of a computer were on the phone and somebody walks in. Are we

**Dr Nicky Howe** really listening to them? So I do think that's one of those great free gifts that we don't necessarily give enough of. We don't give it out enough.

**Francis Lynch:** And how do you balance that you know being in the. Chief executive role here at southcare when You know the. The value of listening but then also having to. To use authority and to be accountable.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Look, I think it's really important to create that, create that space in terms of. Like I I. Will always start off my engagement with somebody around expectations. So whenever I start with a new staff member, I will always say what is it that you expect of me and I get them. Always get them to tell me first. Their list is usually quite light on and then I say, well, these are my expectations and I will. So I start with setting that up right up front and that is that. You know, be honest with me. We're both

**Dr Nicky Howe:** learners, and if you've got a problem, come and talk to me about it. I don't want any surprises, so I think you're really setting that up right at the beginning. You're setting that up as a foundation. And then you're. Really just creating a whole load of structures and processes within your organisation. To enable that to happen so you know I meet with my people every fortnight individually, so I am going to listen to them and then if they're not performing then you know I have the conversation with why what's why what. What's going on? Why are you not meeting the commitments? Is there a problem? Do you need training, blah blah blah? And of course, you know. You're right, as as the CEO at times you have to take those hard decisions and let people go. But you always want to do that, holding them as a legitimate human being and being respectful to them. And going to the data and the facts,

**Dr Nicky Howe:** not your, you know, stories which of course we all get. Caught in,

**Francis Lynch:** Yes easy to.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** We love a story. If there isn't one, we'll create it.

**Francis Lynch:** Talking about stories, do you do you think Sort of any suggestions to people who are really interested in in thinking about direction and purpose? You know, ideas around books or? Blogs or podcasts or? People that they could go and find.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Yeah. Look, I think you. Know I I do do. A lot of reading and I. And I I look at my bookshelf and it is quite eclectic. So you know, some of the things I like are things that are really practical. So I like to read some very practical books. And what I've just recently read is. A book called Talk like. Ted, which helps you with your presentations.



**Francis Lynch:** Oh like the ted talks ,yeah yeah

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Like the Ted talk, so he teaches you how to talk, you know?

**Francis Lynch:** Is there actually a ted?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Well, now his name's not Ted, but there it is there. But I think that's a fantastic book and.

**Francis Lynch:** So I'll put that in the show notes, though, so its talk like ted. by Carmine Gallo.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** And then this other one that I like is. The spirit of leadership.

**Francis Lynch:** By Harrison Owen

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Yeah, I think his stuff's fantastic. Nick and then you know, you can have these really simple books that you just open up and go. Ohh. OK, so what's the thought thought for the day? So I do read a lot. I loved this one, this one by Geraldine Do the crime. And that was just a load of

**Dr Nicky Howe:** conversations with different Australian. Women in power found it really fascinating. Book.

**Francis Lynch:** So is that recent or?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Yeah, I think I just got it last year. So I do read. I look i think you can't you. Can't go past the meeting somebody for lunch.

**Francis Lynch:** I think it's a grant.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** You gotta go and you know you've gotta go and talk to people. Go and have a coffee with them. Go and talk to them and you know you'll always learn something from engaging with somebody on a one to one. And I do like podcasts. I think that they're a great way of learning. And I was just listening to. One the other day, which was Valerie Taylor, and she was talking about her journey with sharks, and I just found that fascinating was actually at the dentist and I had the podcast in while he was doing what

**Dr Nicky Howe:** he was doing because I thought, I don't want to hear that drill. I'd rather hear a podcast.

**Francis Lynch:** That's a good idea what was that was that a rigid fibre?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** it it was, it was, but it was there. The lady that was doing while it. While it.

**Francis Lynch:** Sitting in his place for abit.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Yes. Yeah. So it was. And look, I I really like Parker J Palmer. I think he writes some really interesting books. And of course I love the work of Alan Syler. I think his books on ontology and his articles are really fascinating.

**Francis Lynch:** So we skipped over Parker J Palmer what What's the sort of things?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Ohhhhhh look, Parker J Palmer's got this really neat little book called. Let your life speak, which is about your

**Dr Nicky Howe** vocation. And he's really talking about, you know, follow your vocation. So follow what it is that you love doing. So he's really saying let your life speak. Look at what you do in your life and that tells you what, what your vocation is and what you should be doing.

**Francis Lynch:** Now I know that. You work. You know in your. Outside of South care time, you do some coaching and you also ran retreats or seminars, so some of those are based on Parker J.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Yes, yes. Yes, yes. So I've I've been working with Our Lady by the name of Ann Courtney now since about 2008 when we decided we'd run these. Well-being retreats for women. We had no idea what we were gonna do, but we just started doing it.

**Francis Lynch:** Winged it,

**Dr Nicky Howe:** we winged it and we used the work of Alan Siler. So we based them in ontology and also some of the work of Parker J Palmer . And then we then started another collaboration with a lady by the name of Catherine Chulls, who does mindfulness and and so. So we've now got this really nice mix of retreats and, yeah, well-being days and afternoons where. Part of it, I think, is about inviting people to get some space to hear themselves speak. Which is really interesting. That's been a really interesting journey for us when we first started, we gave them so much information, it was like information overload, and now it's less is more.

**Francis Lynch:**

So your roles as is retreat Leaders are very much scaled back.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Scaled back being very deliberate about what we put in and what we don't. Really creating a space so we're very deliberate about how we set up our retreats to create spaces where people can actually hear their own souls. I know that sounds, you know, not necessarily language we use in everyday the business world, but that's what we're doing. So we're trying to create safe spaces for people and give them resources, give them practical resources, so when they come away, they. You know, actually make some changes in their lives so that they, you know, they they're more resourceful.

**Francis Lynch:** So those retreats are. Now are are held across the year in the. Sort of hinterlands of. Perth how how do people find out about that?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** So that look, if they went on to my website. So [www.nickyhowe.com](http://www.nickyhowe.com) there's a there's a page that talks about the

**Dr Nicky Howe:** retreats that we run. Yeah. Yeah. And also about, you know, my individual coaching that I do outside of South Care.

**Francis Lynch:** OK so. Sort of touched. On this, but I'm really just. Interested. Is there anything else that you'd like to sort of talk about? And then I've. Asked the whole series of questions, but you know. Is there something that you're hoping you're gonna get a chance to. Sort of reflect or mention.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** No, not really. I mean one of. The things you when you were talking to me about how do you keep yourself motivated? What do you do? And we, we did talk about. Ted talks, I do think. That the whole use of youtubes and social media. I've I've really experienced in the last few years is extremely powerful in terms of creating communities. You can create amazing online communities

**Dr Nicky Howe** with people that you don't really know and you can get information and share information and you might not be an expert in something that you can contribute. So I think. The the, the now the access to using social media really opens up the world for us to be much bigger, so we'll global world. Yeah. And I've got a young guy doing a piece of work for me at the moment through a website called Upwork. So I think that we can do work. And we can engage people differently and we can engage people with their using their strengths and skills and therefore enabling us to do that the same for us and going well. I'm not very good at that. So I'm going to outsource that. So I think, yeah, I think. Very really that's. Going to be really interesting. Times for us around what's the world going to look like in 10 years time? What is the world of work going to look like? I think one of the things is that what we will always want is we will always want



**Dr Nicky Howe:** relationship. You know, we'll always want to be in relationship with each other and we'll always want to be in communities, whether whatever that's gonna look like. So. And I'm really interested in that.

**Francis Lynch:** And I think that you know. It it ties in. With what you were saying earlier about collaboration and community is that you know the relationship building and the collaborative approach, you know, it's very often when you know our history, our, our, our experience as a as a. People is face to face, but you know we're now having get our heads around. How do we do this virtually? How do we do? This in in a space where you know the person who you're contracting throughout, where it could be on another continent.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** At the moment. He is.

**Francis Lynch:** And and so you know, how do we how do we create those trust related groups across time and across space?

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Yes, well, trust is a really interesting thing, isn't it? And I'm. I'm just about to give a talk on trust and next week, and so I've been really immersed in this whole notion of, well, what is trust and how do we build it and how do we know what breaks it so that we don't break it. And how it really is that whole emotional lubricant of an organisation, but also the community. So when we think about, you know, building these collaborative communities, how do we build trust? As the foundation for that, so that when things don't work out, it doesn't fall apart. So Interesting.

**Francis Lynch:** Sound like that would be a verry good talk.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** I hope so.

**Francis Lynch:** Well, Nikki, I think it's been a pleasure I've certainly really enjoyed the time that we've spent today together and I can get the sense of a really strong purpose from what you were talking about. And also I think a really. Cold brewance points between what you're doing in the various parts of your life and the way that that even though you're saying you may not have understood what you've found, is where that, you know, looking back that you've had that sense of of value and purpose and and constantly almost through a long part of your working life, maybe all of it. So it's been a real pleasure and an honour today

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Thank you.

**Francis Lynch:** to continue some of that and to be able to be able to share that with people through this podcast.

**Dr Nicky Howe:** Well, thank you for inviting me into the conversation I've really enjoyed.

**Francis Lynch:** thank you.

**Dr Nicky Howe** Thanks Francis.

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