

# FINDING BRAVE

with Kathy Caprino

## Transcript

### Finding Brave Episode #31

#### How Imitating What You Admire Can Backfire and Get You Off Track With Eric Termeunde

Eric Termeunde: Imitating these people and trying to be these people does not and should not equal being inspired by these people, because if they can be inspired by these people and pull back some of those qualities, characteristics, best practices that they've got and apply them with a slight tweak to who we are and what we're trying to do, that's where the innovation starts.

Kathy Caprino: Hello everyone. This is Kathy Caprino, and welcome to my podcast, *Finding Brave*. I've created this show for everyone who longs to create something bold and brave in their life, to rise up, speak up, and stand up for who they are, and to reach their highest and biggest visions.

Each week, I'll be speaking with inspiring guests from all walks of business, leadership, entertainment, the creative arts, and the entrepreneurial world. They'll be sharing their intimate stories of finding brave and offer their best strategies for building your most rewarding, joyful, and meaningful life, business, and career.

Hello everybody. Welcome to *Finding Brave*. Kathy Caprino here. How is everything going? Are you having a good week, a brave week? I say that every time and I'm sure the answer, maybe the answer is yes, but I'm guessing sometimes we don't have brave moments.

We are going to talk all about the importance of knowing who you really are and even more about should we imitate, should we emulate, should we try to be like who we think we want to be? We're going to talk so much about that with my amazing guest, but before we do that, I want to give a quick *Finding Brave* tip along these lines.

My amazing guest, Eric, who I'll introduce in a minute, we were talking about at the foundation of building a great life and an amazing career and building an innovative organization is knowing who you really are, and so here's my tip. You know I work with so many women, mid to senior level women, and what I find is women tend to, and I don't mean to paint every woman with the same brush, but women tend to make themselves wrong about what they want, about what they believe, about what they think.

In fact, just was on the call with my Amazing Career Project group this season and someone, brilliant member said, "Am I selfish to want all of these?" because they were categories of what we want more of. I said, "I want to do a whole hour on that question, but the answer is no, you're not selfish. You are wanting a beautiful life, a life that matters to you, but to do that, you have to know who you are even in the face of that upsetting the tribe you might be in or the organization or your family or your friends."

So, how do we find out who we are? You're going to learn all about that, and I have a career path assessment just for you if you want it. I'll link to that at the bottom, but let's make you right, not wrong, today. All right, on that note, I'm thrilled to introduce Eric Termuende. Did I get it, Eric?

Eric Termuende: Nailed it, nailed it, nailed it.

Kathy Caprino: Oh my goodness. Eric, every conversation I have with Eric, I'm learning so much more about what you're going to hear about in a minute, which is how imitating what you admire can actually backfire, why it's kind of the wrong approach. Can't wait to learn more.

So, Eric, let me tell you about Eric, is the co-founder of Now Innovations, a bestselling author, and an international speaker. His work has been featured in Forbes, Inked, Thrive Global, Huffington Post, Globe and Mail, and elsewhere. Eric was recognized, this is so impressive, as the top 100 emerging innovator under 35 globally by American Express, wow, and is the TEDx speaker and represented Canada at the G20 Summit. I got to hear more about that.

Eric is a thought leader on optimizing workplace culture, the future of work, and engagement in the workplace. He provides key actionable takeaways on how companies can drive engagement through connection and trust, and in his over 200 presentations that are growing every day, he goes beyond diversity and inclusion to help audiences understand people and patterns in order to optimize the workplace. His new bestselling book is *Rethink Work*, which you got to get. We will link to it below. Welcome to the show, Eric.

Eric Termuende: Thank you for having me, Kathy. I was excited. We could keep learning how to find brave. I was excited to hear your tip and see how we could unpack that a bit and see what we can discover.

Kathy Caprino: Fantastic. So, can you start with the thing that I fell off my chair about in speaking to you the other day?

Eric Termuende: Sure.

Kathy Caprino: When I was telling you there's a person that I wish I could be like, and I say that tongue-in-cheek, but I would love you to unpack for us how that kind of thinking either for an individual, we're going to talk on two levels, individually in building the life and career you want and organizations, how looking at something out there that makes us say, "They're doing it right. Let's do it like them," is actually not really the right way to do it. Can you talk about that for us?

Eric Termuende: Well, I mean, who was it that you said that you wanted to be like?

Kathy Caprino: You're going to make me say that? It's Brene Brown.

Eric Termuende: Well, I mean, right, and obviously, right? I mean, how could you not? I mean, we look at the Oprahs, we look at the Elon Musks, we look at the Richard Bransons. I mean, in the music world there are so many superstars, in the acting world, so many superstars, so many people that are just living incredible lives, right, or least that's what it looks like to us.

Kathy Caprino: Can I interrupt you and make it clear?

Eric Termuende: Please.

Kathy Caprino: When I say I want to be her, it's that I just want people to understand this. When she gave her TEDx Talk on vulnerability, which she thought 200 people would see and 20 million people have seen I think, if not more, what I love is that she takes a topic that people don't think is about business that has been able to touch millions of people's lives and leaders, and I love that, how we can turn something on its head and not just make traditional leadership stuff about what we're talking about, and had great success doing it. Tell us how we go wrong when we're looking at, "I want to be like that."

Eric Termuende: Sure. I fall into the same trap. Trap's kind of a heavy word to use there, but I fall into the same trap because I look again at these entrepreneurs, at these speakers, at these people who are doing incredible things who just emulate positivity and everything seems so great.

If I were to ask you, though, if you were to talk to either weeks ago or years ago depending on the individual that I'll mention next, if you thought they were successful, what the answer would be, and the answer is obviously yes, but the people are Anthony Bourdain, Kate Spade, Kurt Cobain, Amy Winehouse, Elvis. Let's just take a look at Chester recently from Linkin Park, Audioslave singer Chris Cornell, all of these people with incredible wealth, success, in many cases, families, Robin Williams, Philip Seymour Hoffman.

Kathy Caprino: Robin Williams. I just saw his HBO documentary. I cried.

Eric Termuende: If you were to ask anyone on the street if these people were successful, I don't think anyone would say no. What I've started to realize is on an individual, on a corporate, on a leadership level, we often tell people or show people what either they want to see or what would reflect most positively upon us, right? How do we actually show what that looks like?

What I've started to understand now when I read *10 Steps to be Successful, 10 Habits of Highly Successful People*, it's an immediate discount of whatever's coming next because if I know the 10 things that Richard Branson does before lunch, there's nothing to suggest that I want Richard Branson's life. I just want what Richard Branson portrays or promotes to be a happy, successful life.

What we need to understand, in a world that's busier than it ever has been before, successful to me is different than successful to you and what that life looks like. In fact, I would actually go so far as to say that the American dream doesn't exist anymore. I would take it even one step further and suggest that it never did exist. Instead, what we need to consider is not the American dream, but the American's dream.

If that's the case, an American's dream can be unique or as unique as each individual that's living

in the country. We can be talking north of 320 million dreams that are all unique, that all have a different image of what it looks like to be successful.

What I think we need to be doing when we see these people, who again, aren't doing anything wrong and they're living their best life and doing an incredible job at doing it, is to understand that imitation or imitating these people or trying to be these people does not and should not equal being inspired by these people, because if we can be inspired by these people and pulled back some of those qualities, characteristics, best practices that they've got and apply them with a slight tweak to who we are and what we're trying to do, that's where the innovation starts because imitation doesn't require any innovation at all.

Inspiration, though, absolutely does. So, you want to be inspired by Brene Brown, right, and then take what she's got, what she's doing and some of the steps that she's taking to ultimately see her career jump to wherever she is now and the life that she's able to live and pick and choose, almost cherry pick the highlights of what you want to implement, put some Kathy Caprino spin on that, and know that you're making your own life by your own definition of success based on whatever it is that makes you feel fulfilled and happy, that's where not only innovation comes into play, but we can apply the inspiration to make success our own image of whoever we want to be.

- Kathy Caprino: Oh god, Eric. It's so good. It's so good. Can I build and ask you two things about this and see if I'm getting it right? A lot of times, people will say, "Ugh, I want her life," and they don't want her life. They want her house or the handsome husband who seems devoted, but then I've always said, "Yeah, but you don't know what the whole package is to it. You don't want that whole package. You want that house and that cute husband."
- Eric Termuende: I would even say that you want the image that that house and that husband— Yeah. You might not even want—
- Kathy Caprino: —how you would feel living in that house.
- Eric Termuende: That's right. That's right.
- Kathy Caprino: But we don't know, do we?
- Eric Termuende: We don't know.
- Kathy Caprino: I had a big house. It's an albatross sometimes. Okay. So, I think what you're saying is don't let yourself look at this whole package, the veneer of the whole package, and waste a second thinking that's what you want. Secondly, this is really important I think. You've given us permission and you've given me permission to do something. I am the digital person. I'm a thought leader. I'm a writer. I'm a coach. All of those domains have the top 10 people rocking it.
- Eric Termuende: Sure.
- Kathy Caprino: When I look at those top 10 people, I don't want to do what they're doing.
- Eric Termuende: No.

Kathy Caprino: I don't want to spend all my time doing digital marketing of digital courses where I don't appear. I don't really want to go and give a talk 100 days a year. I don't really want that, not that 99 wouldn't be great.

Eric Termuende: Sure. What I'm hearing is that you're looking at a lot of top 10 lists and seeing a lot of people that you respect and admire on these lists. What I'd like to invite you to consider is that your top 10 list only has one name on it because nobody else wants the life that you've exactly got. Otherwise, they'd be doing it.

I think organizations, corporations, small, medium, it doesn't matter, I mean, the small accounting firm wants to be like the big accounting firm; the tech startup wants to be like Google. No, we don't. We want to be inspired by these big organizations, by the accolades, by the awards, by the recognition that they get, but we never want to be them. We just want to be inspired by them.

Let me put it this way. When we try and be everything to everyone, we ultimately become nothing to anyone. What I think we're missing on the individual and organizational level is that the things that we aren't are ultimately what make us what we are.

Kathy Caprino: Oh. Hang on. That's a tweetable. What do you mean? I'm getting so much out of this. I feel so relieved.

Eric Termuende: The things that Chicago isn't versus New York, the things that Philadelphia, that DC, that LA aren't when you look at New York are what make it what it is, right? Sometimes, in many cases, it's not what we have that separates us, it's what we don't. It's not who we are, it's who we aren't, right, because in many times, we look at the positives and think we want that house, we want that cute husband or we want whoever that is. What we don't want, and we alluded to this before, is the baggage and everything else that might come with it. We don't know what that looks like.

What I think we need to consider and to flip this conversation is to say the things that we aren't or the things that we don't have to do ultimately enable the life that we want to live, right? The problem with not just social media, but the way that we portray ourselves in public, with our families, with our relationships, is that we only talk about what we are, not what we aren't. So, what we aren't is always in the shadows of what we are when I think it's just as powerful, if not more powerful, in determining what a successful and happy, fulfilling life looks like for us.

Kathy Caprino: Oh gosh, I love it, Eric. Can I give a concrete example and see if this is what you're talking about? I love to engage, so I have, what is it now, 785000 LinkedIn followers. They write a lot on my posts. It's not a happy thing if I can't engage with them.

Eric Termuende: Right.

Kathy Caprino: Yet, so many gurus in my world say, "You can't do that and get to the level you want to get to." Well, I'm going to tell you, folks, that's part of how I got to where I am and what I love. If you're taking the time to write on my post, I'm going to do my best to say something to you if it's juicy, but if I compare myself to every piece of advice out there, it would be, "If you're engaging that much, you're not spreading your wings. You're just way off base."

Eric Termuende: Yep, yep.

Kathy Caprino: Can I be brave enough to say, I love that piece of engagement?

Eric Termuende: Yeah, and not everyone does. That's okay. In fact, it's encouraged. The more you understand that you're okay with blazing your own trail and finding brave in your way, the better off not only you'll be but the world around you will be too, because I think again, I'll say it again, we're living in this hyper-comparative, hyper-competitive world where we try and be better than the person beside us and not better than the person that we were yesterday. I think that's the biggest problem, right?

What I've started to realize is that my main goal today is to be a little bit happier and a little bit further along in my path than I was yesterday. I can compare and compete with our mutual friend, Seth Madison. We're not even playing the same game at all. We're in the same space, sure. We could even deliver the exact same words to the exact same keynote presentation and we still have a different audience, right? We're not playing the same game. I'm playing my game and my game only.

I think that as soon as we start to realize this, even if we're fighting for a different position in work, even if we're looking at our relationships, the only thing that we can do, the only thing that we can control is us, right? If this is what we're focused on, if we can be a little bit more introspective and if we can take the time to slow down ... The other thing that I often say is that the fastest way we can speed up human connection is to slow down.

Kathy Caprino: Can you talk about slowing down? Tell us what you feel about that and what you see.

Eric Termuende: The world is moving at an unprecedented rate and the beauty and the terror of that is that we're only moving at a fraction of what we will be in the coming years, right? We're seeing internet traffic triple from now to 2021, right? We're seeing that 90% of the information on the internet today was put there in the past two years. I heard this from IBM's super computer, Watson's lead brain, right, and this is incredible stuff.

We're at a point now where we're checking our phones 85 times a day. We're spending 10 hours a day in front of the screen. The numbers are staggering. In a study of three million people that were driving, 80% of them were on their phones. It is scary on a whole bunch of levels, but first and foremost on a connectivity level with the people around us because I like to think that in a world that has never been so connected, we've never felt more disconnected than we do now, and that includes the connection with our self.

I'm not necessarily the one to go meditate and to go sit in a dark room. I get my flow state and meditative thoughts through exercise. Ultimately, if I were to read all of the blog posts and do everything that you hear people in Vancouver, British Columbia, are doing, I would be meditating every morning.

What I realized is that's not the way that I get to understand myself. I don't discount it. I don't think it's unimportant. I don't think it doesn't work. I just know that if I understand myself better and connect with myself on a deeper level and play my game knowing how important it is for other people too, nobody loses and everyone wins.

Kathy Caprino: Holy cow. I think there's something else, too, about connection. I've done other interviews on this. I think it's really important to say that because we're connected doesn't mean we're actually connecting. They're so different.

Eric Termuende: So different.

Kathy Caprino: I think that conversation feeds us as well, real conversation. When you were saying we're on the screen, people constantly, I'm so blessed that part of my onscreen is talking to people.

Eric Termuende: Sure.

Kathy Caprino: I do feel like we also can't figure everything out on the level of consciousness we're at right now.

Eric Termuende: That's right.

Kathy Caprino: It's connecting with other people and listening with our hearts that shift the consciousness. Don't you think?

Eric Termuende: Well, I mean, there's a big distinction that we need to make between hearing and listening, right? I mean, big, big, big difference. I think two things. One of my friends, Riaz, he just moved from Vancouver to here, one of the things that he told me that stuck with me is that the two things that we need today are empathy and curiosity, and those two words have stuck so deep with me for the last ... I think he told me two years ago.

Whether you're in HR or you're trying to figure out the best practices for your people, whether you're Finding Brave and you're looking to understand yourself and the world around you, whether you're looking at relationships or friendships, if you're empathetic, and I mean that truly, not necessarily just sympathetic, but you're also curious, right, and you pair those two together, there's no problem you can't solve when you take the time to be empathetic and curious, to understand yourself and the world around you, and ultimately solve whatever challenges is put in front of you.

Kathy Caprino: That's beautiful. I think you're probably right. I'll have to think on that. I love it. So, talk to me about ... I write a lot about and help people tap into their passion. I'm so careful, the words I use. It's become so cliché, "Find your passion," or, "Do what you love and the money will follow," which is not true necessarily. We all know that.

Eric Termuende: Right, necessarily.

Kathy Caprino: There are things that have to be done, but can you talk about, should we, in your mind, try and find and follow our passion? Talk to us about that.

Eric Termuende: I mean, as a brief sort of segue into this conversation, I'll take it back to this idea of success, right? Success, I think society paints a broad stroke of what success looks like. The most money, the fanciest car, the best title, the most education, et cetera. Again, it may be true, but not necessarily true.

I come from a small town in Interior British Columbia here in Canada. It's about 24,000 people. They are some of the most successful people I know, a lot of foresters, a lot of people in mining,

a lot of people in construction, a lot of blue collar workers who really value the time to get outside on the weekends, to spend time with their family, to stop work at 5:00. I mean, I'm living downtown in a city now and that rarely happens.

I think that the advice that we get is to go find or go follow your passion, as if it's one thing, right, as if it's one thing that we chase. What I realized when we're doing this is that we're spending so much time chasing happiness that we don't realize happiness along the way. So, if we look at this passion, if I were to ask you what your one passion is, what would you say?

Kathy Caprino: I have so many.

Eric Termuende: That's my point.

Kathy Caprino: My kids, whatever, nature.

Eric Termuende: So do I and so do athletes. Right, and Kobe Bryant had just went on record last year. I think he said, "If basketball's the most successful thing I do in my career, I've failed." It's just things like that, that you kind of go, "Whoa, this all of a sudden puts things into perspective."

Instead of trying to find or follow your one passion, try and find or follow the things that make you feel passionate. If that's the case, then happiness doesn't come from one source that ultimately is the finish line that's moving further and further away from you. It comes from many of the sources that you've already identified to provide you that feeling of being passionate. If that's the case, we switch from chasing happiness to realizing happiness knowing that we're already doing a lot of the things that make us feel passionate.

Again, I think we're led to believe, I'm not going to point fingers at any sort of social media or anything like that, I think it's just the world that we live in today, that we always have to be better, that we have to hustle, that we have to grind, all of these buzzwords that just sort of make me cringe because I see a lot of people that are a heck of a lot happier understanding that they found and realized the things that make them feel passionate and they don't have to chase all of the time.

I'm not advocating against growing or learning or developing or challenging yourself or challenging the others around you. I'm just saying that, going back to Finding Brave, if we're going back to being inspired by these people and not imitating them, if we're going to understand that our success looks different than the people around us, making this conversation come full circle, that perhaps it's not about finding our own passion. Perhaps it's about realizing that we probably have a lot of the things that make us feel passionate and finding happiness and fulfillment through them.

Kathy Caprino: Oh wow. I love it. I would say this. A lot of people in my courses say, "Do you think I should be going for a good job or a calling?" I do chuckle because I just need to say this. To me, a calling and a job are incredibly different. A calling is some of what you're talking about. It can be so compelling, you wrap your entire entity around it much to the detriment of your health, your checkbook, and your relationships. It's not something you go out and get. It's something that will grab hold of you and not let go, often to your own detriment.



Eric Termuende: Sure, yeah.

Kathy Caprino: So, again, you know what I want to do with you? It's like you're giving us 10 things that society tells us we need to do that are wrong. That's what this is.

Eric Termuende: Excuse me while I take notes for my next article.

Kathy Caprino: I'm turning this into a Forbes interview. You're 100% right, but can I just say this and push back on one thing? A lot of women come to me and say, "I'm passionless now because it's been beaten out of me." So, they truly aren't in a state that's capable of doing what you're saying. They've pursued a direction because they thought it was the right thing, and maybe there was some passion in the beginning, but it's all been beaten out of them. So, for some people, even finding anything that brings them that joy or that spark, there's a peeling of the onion we have to do. We in some ways have to go back to who you always were but then lost yourself.

Eric Termuende: That's the trick, though, right? It's still there. We just have to find it again, right?

Kathy Caprino: Anyone who says to me, "I have no interests and no passions," that's a state. That's a state of mind and of heart and soul. That's not who you really are.

Eric Termuende: Well, the thing too, I'll just say really quickly is that it's darkest before dawn, right? I think that we often forget that. In many cases, we like to think that we don't control when the sun rises. In this case, we do, right? If it seems like it's darkest before dawn, I think that we have the opportunity to choose how to turn the clock and to realize, like you said too, to find where we were at, to find what did light us up in the past, and to go and to do some work on that. It's not necessarily easy and it doesn't necessarily happen overnight. That's okay.

I think the one thing that I would say to those people who are there now is that you're not alone. Again, we all like to paint this picture. I call it the postcard effect, the 2% of us that we want the world to see, that postcard snapshot of Maui beaches and things and not necessarily the tropical rainstorm when we visit. That may happen and it may not, but to know or to think that you're alone when passion seems lost or that feeling of being passionate seems lost, two steps back and then we're right back on track again.

Kathy Caprino: So inspiring. I've seen that after breakdown is what allows breakthrough.

Eric Termuende: That's right.

Kathy Caprino: It's not being in denial. It's saying, "Wow, I'm in a crisis moment. I'm in a breakdown, dark. That stinks." Well, it's the realization of that that shifts you.

Eric Termuende: That's right.

Kathy Caprino: I have two critical questions before we end, which I don't want to.

Kathy Caprino: You're young. I don't know your exact age, but I feel like Methuselah after talking to you, but where did you get so smart? I feel like there must've been a dark before the light for you that you would know all of this at such a young age. Am I wrong?

Eric Termuende: I don't really know how to answer that question. I'm 26. I'll put that out there. It comes down to, again, we'll go back to empathy and curiosity, but there's a lot of power right now that I'm putting into choice. Choice, I didn't take it as seriously as I have in the past few years when it comes down to emotions, when it comes down to anger.

I just ran a half Iron Man last month with a couple of friends. It didn't get easy by any means. I just chose to change my relationship with the pain physically and mentally of doing the race. I think it comes down to the fact that we've got between 5 and 10,000 choices a day that we make. If we know our self well enough to intentionally make the choices that we do and switch off of autopilot and into a state of choice that we can create whatever it is that we want to do.

So, for those people who are feeling that sense of loss when it comes to feeling passionate, it comes down to choosing to discover where it was lost, where we can go back to, and where we can move forward. A lot of these choices are really difficult, but we choose to hit the snooze button every morning, too, right? We choose to finally get up and we choose to have a shower and what we put into our body and we choose what meetings we want to take and what calls we do and we choose how we react to things.

If we take a wrong turn onto a one way street, you can freak out and turn around and pretend it never happened or you can choose to be angry about it for the next 30 minutes, right? I think the more intentional we are and understanding we are of the choices that we make, the more power we have in the direction that we're going.

Kathy Caprino: I love it. So, I'm going to push you even more. I'm guessing you don't want to answer this, but I'm going to make you.

Eric Termuende: Okay.

Kathy Caprino: People who usually have this kind of insight are turning a mess into a message. They didn't have a silver spoon in life. Something came hard. Something was hard. Something was traumatic. Is that you at all?

Eric Termuende: I've got a great family. I mean, I don't-

Kathy Caprino: Is there a revelation that made you say, "I don't want to be what everyone else is asking me to be"?

Eric Termuende: Yes and no. Here's the thing, and I'll try not to drag on too long. I know we're running out of time here, but if we were to grow up in the streets of western Detroit and if we were to grow up in the hills of western Vancouver, the lives that we would grow up with are very, very different. I mean, the average home in west Vancouver is \$12 million or something like that. That's not where I came from. I didn't come from west Detroit, either.

What I will say, though, is that there's relativity that I think we need to consider too, right? Something that happens when you grow up in a \$12 million house, when you've got everything that someone who grew up in west Detroit would look at that and say, "Are you kidding me? That's seriously what you're upset about?" So, I think there's so much relativity in the emotions that we feel because pain is relative. Busy is relative. Success is relative.

You talk to someone who's a student who's taking three courses and working part-time. He's incredibly busy, and then you see the executive downtown who's got two kids she's taking care of as a single mother who's doing an incredible job in her organization, running a billion dollar company. She's busy, too. We're both busy. So, the pains that I would've felt or the successes that I had or the love and support that I have is only really relative to me. So, to suggest that I can compare it to anyone else is not fair I don't think.

I spent 80 days in the Yukon and northwest territories with grizzly bears and wolves and wolverines in a one-person tent. We were hiking mountains 10 kilometers a day with an 80-pound backpack and things like that. That taught me to be really okay with myself and the thoughts that I had and to really explore and challenge things when you've got 80 straight days of being by yourself, pretty much. Again, someone who's had a tough upbringing will say, "Really? I would pay everything I've got for that experience."

I think it's really about coming back to understanding where we're at in a world that we'll never properly understand, number one, because there's just too much information, and number two, because it's moving faster than we've ever taken care of controlling, and understanding not where you fit in the world but where you fit with yourself and how you can piece, where ultimately you can build the world around you. I'm just trying to do that.

Kathy Caprino: Oh, I love it. I want to say something from what I heard. I don't think you were saying this outright, but this is something I hear from people I work with. When I look at my childhood, for instance, others thought it was pretty idyllic, and yet I had issues with speaking up, with asserting myself. People who've been through physical and emotional, sexual abuse might say, "Really? You think that's a problem?"

I will tell you, we don't have to justify how bad our pain was or how much we felt trauma to some external measure. If you felt trauma, anyone listening, where you couldn't develop the way you wanted, where you felt suppressed, and I think women feel this in many ways more than men, truthfully, patriarchal society, you don't have to measure it against some external thing that makes you right or wrong. So, trauma is trauma.

Eric Termuende: I appreciate you saying that, too. Yeah.

Kathy Caprino: Yeah. I want people to know that, that we're not judging. If you had a mess in terms of what you thought your life was, we don't want you to blame because blame just keeps you stuck in that victimization, but it's okay that you felt it was a mess.

Eric Termuende: Sure.

Kathy Caprino: I need to let everyone know that. In the last few minutes, Eric, you spend a lot of time working with leaders in organizations. Can you talk about the biggest mistake small startups, small businesses, big businesses are making in terms of this emulating and imitating where they shouldn't even in terms of the leaders they're putting forth as other managers should emulate in the organization? Can you talk about it from an organizational standpoint?

Eric Termuende: My co-founder, Rocky Ozaki with Now Innovations, he said a line that stuck with me just a couple weeks ago. He said, "Innovation isn't necessarily the purchase of a new technology. It's a

shift in mindset," right? I think the biggest shift that we need to make in organizations right now is a mindset shift.

The way that I see it right now is that HR doesn't get enough credit. I think HR is the gatekeeper of the organization. It ultimately gives all of the ammunition and the fuel to essentially make the organization flourish, grow, and develop, right? All the people, all the assets, they're putting the chess players on the board and ultimately playing the game, right? I mean, operations, products, supply, market, all these things are really important, but unless you have the right people on the bus, we'll never get to where we want to go.

The way I see it right now is that human resources is not a proactive exercise, it's a reactive exercise. It's not an investment center, it's a cost center, right? We look at spending money on people, not investing in people. The difference is that when we spend money, we very rarely measure back what we spend, right? When we invest, we usually track over time and see what our returns are, et cetera, et cetera.

When we look at leaders in the organization and we look at just the idea that HR is reactive and not proactive, what I think we need to be doing first and foremost at the very start is to change our job descriptions from skill requirement checklist, right?

You can be this many years in school, this many years of experience, proficient in Excel, a motivated, team-driven player who values integrity, honor, respect, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, right, and you can take 495 of the Fortune 500 companies and hold their job descriptions for an account manager up to the sunlight and read through all of them because they all read exactly the same, right?

You don't see a job description that starts to paint a different picture. I mean, if you're an account manager at Verizon versus Goldman, right, you might be getting 15 emails a day versus 500 emails a day. How do you work best? You might be spending two hours a week in meetings versus seven hours a day in meetings. You might have an open office concept with a dog running around, or you might have cubicles where it's perfectly silent, right?

We're not differentiating our employment opportunities based on the experience. We're too busy talking about empty value statements and not at all talking about the experience and the life that you get to have while you're living in these jobs, right?

What I like to talk about is shifting from employee values, because what is, "We value integrity. We value honor. We value flexibility. We value work life balance?" I mean, work life balance to you I can promise looks a lot different than it looks to me, right? Same with everyone else in whatever city we're in.

If we can start to shift to say, "Okay, here are the types of people and what they stand for and what life they like to live. Here's how we can align them to the people and the environment that we've ultimately created." This is what happens. We create an optimized culture, not a best culture.

Let me put it this way. On the Fortune 100 top places to work, number one is Salesforce, number two is Wegmans, okay? I can promise you that a bunch of people that work at

Wegmans wouldn't want to work at Salesforce and people that work at Salesforce wouldn't want to work at Wegmans.

The trap that companies fall into is to say, "Great, we're on the top best managed companies, best employers, best places to work." Great. First of all, congratulations. These are really tough awards to get, and unless we articulate the experience that got these people and got these organizations on these lists, I think we're doing more harm than good.

If we shift this mindset from being reactive to proactive, from spending to investing, and shifting everything to talk about from values to experience, then what we do is we create, we co-create what this experience is, use our people as our case studies and our stories. We don't hire a big marketing company to come in and do videos. It's the back of an iPhone, say, "Kathy, what's a day in the life look like for you? What time do you wake up? What time do you go to bed? Do you have a family? What do you do on the weekends? Do you get 10 emails a day or 1000 emails a day?"

There's no right answer because a best culture doesn't exist, but we're stuck in this scarcity mindset thinking there aren't enough people that will apply to these jobs so we have to make it so generic that 1500 people will apply to an account manager position, we'll throw out the top 95%, we'll guess on the bottom five, and hopefully we get it right.

Unfortunately, studies would suggest that with 30% engagement globally right now, even lower in the United States, we're not getting it right. Statistically, people are rolling the dice until they do. So, tenure's shorter than it's ever been before. Workplace satisfaction is lower than it's ever been before. Anxiety and depression, loneliness, a lack of sense of belonging are higher than it's ever been before. It's all a mindset shift that needs to happen.

- Kathy Caprino: Holy. So, here's what I'm going to say about that. You tell me. I don't think anybody's brave enough for that yet. Thank God you're giving talks and teaching. Here's what I don't think, because I work with HR people, I see every level, you've got to be brave to say ... You know who comes to mind? Bridgewater. What's his name?
- Eric Termuende: I forgot. I know who you're talking about, though, yeah. Perfect example.
- Kathy Caprino: Ray Dalio.
- Eric Termuende: Ray Dalio. That's right.
- Kathy Caprino: A lot has been said about him and his culture, but one thing you got to say, and I'm not advocating it, but intensely transparent and whatever, but the guy knows how he wants to run the company. He knows who he wants.
- Eric Termuende: That's right.
- Kathy Caprino: By gum, as the founder or co-founder, whatever he is, he can have it the way he wants it and the people that are exactly what he wants thrive, but what I feel is our hyperconnectedness, which means hypertransparent, unfortunately for some people, means you have to be incredibly brave to say, "This is what we want in a person." First of all, HR and leaders have to

know what that is.

Eric Termuende: That's the first step.

Kathy Caprino: I don't think they have any idea.

Eric Termuende: No. They're too busy reacting and not being proactive.

Kathy Caprino: Number two, if you're brave enough to know what you want, you're scared of liability to say it.

Eric Termuende: Sure, yeah.

Kathy Caprino: We want 26-year-old guys who don't have families who can work until 2:00 in the morning. They're never going to say it.

Eric Termuende: It's not even an age conversation or a diversity conversation. It's a lifestyle conversation, right?

Kathy Caprino: I think some of that define that by age, race-

Eric Termuende: Which is the problem, right?

Kathy Caprino: ... and religion, and yeah.

Eric Termuende: Yeah, which is the problem. Studies are showing now that if we group age groups together ... First of all, let me just ask you a very quick question. Between what years was a millennial born?

Kathy Caprino: Jeepers. I don't know.

Eric Termuende: Well, I ask on stages where thousands of people, and I'll never get the same response. For anyone who's listening, open up another tab right now, go on Wikipedia, and say, "Between what years were millennials born?"

Kathy Caprino: I think I could say a millennial is age 22 to 30. Is that right?

Eric Termuende: Maybe. I say between '80 and '95. My point is that we're generalizing and stereotyping groups of people that ultimately don't have aligned values, wants, needs, and expectations. Maybe stages of life, sure, roughly, got it, but we're talking a millennial man who's 35 who's saving for their kid's college fund and my younger brother who's 22 who's paying off his student debt. Don't tell me these people are the same.

Really, if we can align based on experiences, it's not a millennial conversation. It's not a sex conversation. It's not an ethnicity conversation. I think that's when we can truly beat this diversity and inclusion conversation too, because if we can create this sense of belonging via the experience that people are having doing the thing we do more than anything else in a day, even sleep, and that's of course work, and we can align people based on who they are and not what they are, who they are meaning what they value, the life that they want to live, not what they are in terms of their hair color, their shoe size, or their sex. Those things don't determine who we are, right? Those things don't determine what we value.

We could have more in common with the opposite sex of a different race, someone who's half or twice our age, than we do someone who looks and sounds exactly like us sitting beside us and still these two people that are sitting beside each other get grouped together. It's absurd and ultimately is a big problem and why organizations can't find the right talent and keep it.

Kathy Caprino: You are such a visionary. I couldn't agree more, and there's so much work to be done.

Eric Termuende: So much, and that's the fun part.

Kathy Caprino: Thank goodness you're available for people to hire and to speak. Wow. You know we're over, and I don't want to stop, but Eric, where do people learn of you? Where do they hire you? Where do we send them?

Eric Termuende: Yeah, I'm sure you'll have my personal website in the links here too, but it's my first name, last name dot com. I encourage everyone. I'm like Kathy. I like being on LinkedIn and commenting and connecting with those who reach out. My book, *Rethink Work*, we've got it here on Amazon.ca. That's a quick note. I am from Vancouver, so check out the Canadian site. I just encourage you to reach out, to say hello.

I mean, it's these conversations, Kathy, I number one, sincerely appreciate, but number two, that light me up and allow me not just to discover more about you and your experience but myself as well. I think the more we can have these deeper, more vulnerable, trusting conversations, whether it be on a podcast or just with our significant other or people that we care about, I think we can get a lot out of this world that is seemingly difficult and increasingly more so to navigate.

Kathy Caprino: Oh Eric, I just feel so uplifted, hopeful after talking to you. Thank you so much for taking the time.

Eric Termuende: Thanks for contacting me.

Kathy Caprino: Oh, and come back again. Everyone, I hope this infuses you with some bravery to start to see it for what it really is and see you for who you are really are and start doing something about it. That's brave. Let us know. Let us know what you got from this show. We can't wait to hear from you and engage with you. All right everyone, have an awesome week, Eric. Thanks again. Come back soon.

Eric Termuende: Thanks Kathy.

Kathy Caprino: Bye now.

Thanks so much for joining us today, and please don't forget to check out [FindingBrave.org](http://FindingBrave.org) for more programs, resources, and tips. Tune in next time for your weekly dose of *Finding Brave*.