

FINDING BRAVE

with Kathy Caprino

Transcript

Finding Brave Episode #28

The Epidemic of Loneliness In the Workplace and How To Cure It, with Mike Stallard

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.

Kathy Caprino: Hello everybody, Kathy Caprino here, and welcome to another episode of *Finding Brave*. What a joy this is to record, I gotta say. What just a gift to be able to talk to people like my guest today, and everybody who's come on the show, I'm just feeling overwhelmingly joyful about it. Today, we are gonna be talking about not joy, but we're gonna be talking about loneliness and how loneliness has become an epidemic, and what's contributing to that, and our expert today has so much and powerful information and tips and strategies.

Kathy Caprino: I'm gonna introduce him in a second, but I do want to offer a quick *Finding Brave* tip to start us off because we're talking about loneliness and the opposite connection, I want to throw something out that I think might sound a little contrarian, but I found that it's been helpful in my life, and here it is. I think all of us have relationships in our lives, hopefully we do, that nurture us and bolster us and support us, but many of us, as I'm hearing in my courses and from clients, we have the other kind of relationships that do not support us and drain us and don't nurture us. So what I'm gonna ask you to think about as we talk today, what is the nature of your connections and if there are any that you feel this is no longer working for me that you find brave and do something about that, just take a micro step to do it.

Kathy Caprino: I just recently spoke to Peter Bregman, which you're gonna hear on this podcast about emotional courage, sometimes the bravest, most courageous thing is to let someone go from your life, so that's gonna be ... We're gonna be talking all about connection today, but I want you to remember that not every connection we have is of the same caliber and value and you're perfectly within your rights to put up a boundary and say I've had enough. That's my tip today.

Kathy Caprino: Alright, now to welcoming my amazing guest, Michael Stallard. Michael, thank you for being here, I'm gonna call you Mike, that's okay, right?

Mike Stallard: That's perfect, Kathy. It's great to be with you. Thanks so much for having me.

Kathy Caprino: I'm so delighted and honored that you can take time to be with us, Mike. So let me tell you all about Mike. Michael Stallard is a keynote speaker and expert on how effective leaders boost human connection in workplace cultures to improve the health and performance of individuals and organizations. He is president of the Connection Culture Group, a leadership training firm. Michael is the author of two amazing books, *Connection Culture*, and *Fired Up or Burnt Out*. His clients have included Costco, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, NASA, and Turner Construction Company. In fact, Texas Christian University, I just learned this, founded the TCU Center for Connection Culture based on Michael's work. Thank you for joining, Mike. Here we go. We're talking about something that's really on your radar right now. You're writing about it, you're training about it, you're speaking about it, so let's just jump right in. There's an epidemic right now, isn't there? Of, well, you call it the stress connection gap, and loneliness is in there. Tell us all about it. What's going on here?

Mike Stallard: Well, Kathy, what you see happening in society, let me just start out with a quick story because part of my awareness of this came out of my own experience. There was a period where I was working on Wall Street, and I was so immersed in my work that it was a particularly difficult merger I was working on trying to get the cultures to work together. It was consuming all of my time, but also when I was home, it consumed my mind time, and I wasn't present. It really crowded out time for my friends, for my family, for my faith, and it was a tough, tough year.

Mike Stallard: I decided I was going to work on this for about a year and if it didn't get better, then I needed to do something different because I also saw over the course of the year that I wasn't performing at the top of my game. I just wasn't sleeping as well, I needed more caffeine and exercise and carbohydrates to get through the day, and more alcohol at night to slow down, and I didn't get a good night's sleep. I just felt over the course of the year, my life and my performance were spiraling down. So I ended up leaving Wall Street and took some time off to heal.

Mike Stallard: What I realized is that I had been lonely, and I didn't come to this full realization until I was doing the research on organizational cultures, and I started seeing the importance of relationships, that we're hardwired for relationships. It was shortly after I left Wall Street and decided to start an organization that focused on corporate culture, that my wife, Katie, was diagnosed with breast cancer and advanced ovarian cancer.

Kathy Caprino: Wow.

Mike Stallard: That took us to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Let me just describe our first visit there because that in itself was eye opening. We were walking toward the entrance and a doorman named Nick Medley, he locked his eyes on Katie and greeted her like a returning friend. Now as you and I know, we both live close to New York City, people don't tend to make eye contact in the city, but here is this guy intentionally reaching out and connecting with people he recognized were patients because they were wearing wigs. We entered in the reception area, the receptionist was calling everyone honey, also very unusual in Manhattan, as we both know, and the security people, the administration, the administrative people were helpful and friendly. We met our oncologist, she spent an hour with us, Martee Hensley is her name, she was upbeat and optimistic. She told Katie that don't look at the statistics because you're not a statistic, and people do survive this disease.

Mike Stallard: Now I did look at the statistics, and I came to realize that given Katie's advanced ovarian cancer and breast cancer, her chances of survival were less than 10%.

Kathy Caprino: Gosh.

Mike Stallard: And our children were just 12 and 10 at the time, our daughters, and it just took me to a place as we were walking towards Sloan Kettering that day, I expected to find a culture of death and dying, but what I discovered was there was a lot of joy and energy and enthusiasm there, and it was the most best culture I think I had seen in any organization, and that just caught me by surprise given what they deal in, is that hospital that's totally focused on cancer. It got me interested, and it made me realize that there's this sense of connection there that was driven by their mission to provide the best cancer care anywhere there. The fact that they value people, each other, their patients, their patient's family members and caregivers, and that people had a voice in that culture.

Mike Stallard: I won't go into too much detail about Sloan Kettering, but they had a culture where people were connected. I found that most cultures on Wall Street, people were isolated and competed, and it wasn't really a strong sense of free decorum, and I think in earlier years when there were partnerships, you found more of that. But today, there's been a big change of most Wall Street firms are public corporations, many are run from, by people who came out of the trading cultures. They're just more competitive, more transactional, and less relational.

Mike Stallard: Anyway, I ended up writing a book with some colleagues and we founded a company called, at that time, E Pluribus Partners, which is based on America's motto: out of many, one. During that time when Katie was going through treatment, we had this tremendous support from family and friends. It just made me more optimistic that Katie could get through this. This year we celebrated Katie's 14th year she's been cancer free from ovarian cancer, so our daughters are grown women now.

Kathy Caprino: Wow.

Mike Stallard: It was really a life changing experience, but it made me realize I'm hardwired to connect,

as we all are. When we don't have that connection in our lives we dysfunction, and that's what is happening today.

Kathy Caprino: Wow. I just wanted to say, well first of all, that is so moving. I wanted to say to everyone, you know, Mike, from the minute I met you, which is what, maybe 5 years ago, you have this way and I'm sharing this because it does stand out. You don't just meet, you don't just e-meet, you don't just send an email. You are so present and so generous. I think in so many ways we have fallen out of what it is to actually connect soul to soul. I don't want weird people out, but heart to heart. We just, I think we're ... You're going to talk all about this, the stress connection you have.

Kathy Caprino: I think in many ways, especially in young people, how we're raised on screen, on the internet. We've almost forgotten what it is to ... Like you said, you even remember how Nick locked eyes with Katie. That's how rare it is that someone locks eyes with us. Tell me all about it here. You noticed that with Sloan Kettering, what are you seeing in the organizations that you train in? You work with organizations that want to build a connection. Is that right? They hire you in to help build a connection culture. Is that correct?

Mike Stallard: Yes, and that's what we've been very intentional. We look for leaders who have two qualities. Number one, they care about people, and number two, they care about results because their work is serving people in some way. For example, the US Navy, they are there to protect us. They are serving a cause greater than self. Vern Clark is a leader I've written about. He was the chief of the Navy from 2000 to 2005. Admiral Clark and his wife Connie, they love sailors and their families. Admiral Clark, when he was there, really changed the culture of the Navy that led to a boost in first term enlistment from under 20% to almost 70% within 18 months.

Kathy Caprino: Wow.

Mike Stallard: It was an amazing turn around in the Navy's culture. Or I think of TCU, Texas Christian University, Dr. Basini, who is the chancellor there. He just so clearly loves students, faculty, and staff and he's such an uber connector. His background is sociology of education so he understands that we need connection to thrive. He's very intentional about investing up front in the freshman experience to help students connect and find their support group because he knows they'll be more likely to thrive. Not only as students, but also as people. Less likely to develop addiction, much less likely to be a risk to suicide and four year graduation rates are much higher. So we look for leaders who share those two qualities. They care about people and they care about results because their work is serving people in some way.

Kathy Caprino: Wow. Now you were telling me the other day about the loneliness research. Can you ... I was just so floored I told twenty people, can you tell us about that and how that fits in here as well?

Mike Stallard: Sure. You have this mix of stress and loneliness. We do ... Let me just comment on stress first. 80% of Americans say they are afflicted by stress, so I think most of us see that these are stressful times in some way. We are just overwhelmed with a lot of information, we

have high expectations career wise. In the 90s Gallup found that Americans' self-identity shifted from being focused on family and community to be focused on career and the status of people's employers and their job title. That's a big change historically.

Kathy Caprino: Gosh.

Mike Stallard: It just made us more vulnerable to loneliness with that stress, when we don't have that connection that helps make us more resilient. We're much more vulnerable to our bodies shifting to a state of stress response, which we can come back to in terms of the effects of that. Let me just share some information on the loneliness epidemic.

Kathy Caprino: Please.

Mike Stallard: Sigma, the insurance company, just surveyed 20,000 American adults. They released this within the last month. They found that ... they used a survey called the UCLA Loneliness Scale. They found that the average score for the 20,000 adults was over the number that indicated individuals were lonely. So more than half of Americans on the average, based on a mean average, are lonely. When we are lonely there's other research that has come out just in the last couple years that show two things. Number one, when individuals have higher social connection, greater social connection in their lives they have a 50% chance less, less risk of early death.

Kathy Caprino: Oh my gosh.

Mike Stallard: Secondly, if they are lonely, based on the results of that UCLA Loneliness Scale, their risk of early death in life, based on this population that was surveyed, their risk of early death in life is equivalent to the same risk as someone who smokes 15 cigarettes a day. And that risk is a higher risk than the risk of being obese. So researchers like Julianne Holt-Lunstad, Vivek Murthy the former US Surgeon General are saying that we have a public health crisis that loneliness is killing us. You see it in the data. Americans under 50 now have the lowest lifespan versus peers in other countries in the world. The wealthy countries, 17 wealthy countries that are benchmarked. The data really shows us that we have a problem. We have high stress and low connection and that combination is lethal.

Kathy Caprino: Oh, wow! It's so chilling. It's so chilling and as you speak I can just see so many myriad of factors that are coalescing. Like in and of itself to be a career minded person, which I am and so many others who are our listeners. That's not necessarily a recipe for stress, but the change in culture, the change in being hyper connected. You know in my day, I'm older, I'd be able to go home at six and not have to look at an email. There wasn't really email going on or our phones. There is so much leading to us being hyper connected, never able to turn off, inundated with pretty troubling news. It's just all a recipe for being incredibly stressed and not knowing what to do with it and not having the connection to mitigate it, right? Am I getting that right, Mike?

Mike Stallard: Yeah, it is and I think ... One way I think of it, if you had a piece of paper, you could almost draw this out, I think it helps to think our lives in a sense are like a house. You think the foundation of the house has to be connection. Connection to meaning, connection to people, and when we do that's a solid foundation to build our lives on. If we build our lives

strictly around chasing money, power, and status, it's a shaky foundation because we are hardwired to connect as human beings. That's what helps make us more resilient to deal with life's storms.

Mike Stallard: Let me just mention a few. One is trauma. A lot of people experience trauma in their lives which actually does damage to a switch that leads to part of the brain called periaqueductal gray and it's connection that heals that. Loneliness and social isolation itself is lethal. Even if there's no stress, loneliness and social isolation are devastating. Especially devastating if we have stress on top of it. We have overwhelming expectations, maybe in our work, maybe from if you're just graduating from college or going into college, maybe your parents have expectations that are overwhelming to you. Heredity also can affect our perception of threats and stress we feel. And then we have things like just life, sickness, divorce, work demands I mentioned earlier, economic stress. We are seeing the research people are feeling stressed about the political situation and the future of America.

Kathy Caprino: Right.

Mike Stallard: All these things together create that sense of threat. Threat can trigger in our bodies stress response and it can become chronic where we get stuck in the state of stress response. And certain bodily systems don't get the blood, glucose, and oxygen they need to perform well. It tends to be just a few systems. Part of the brain where we, it's called the hippocampus, where our short-term memory, our declarative memory resides, so we may get forgetful of names or facts we knew in the past, our digestive system is shutting down so we are more vulnerable to, gets less resources. The reproductive system shuts down, so under those conditions it's often difficult for women to become pregnant because, in a sense their body is saying we don't want to conceive and put a baby in this stressful world.

Kathy Caprino: It's like a hostile environment. Right?

Mike Stallard: Yeah. In a sense the body it operates to some degree based on perception of threats in the outer environment and it adapts based on that. Finally, our immune system is shutting down, so we're more vulnerable to sickness and disease. Now this can all sound pretty overwhelming.

Kathy Caprino: Yeah.

Mike Stallard: I understand. There's a flip side to this which is there's Matthew Lieberman, who's a neuroscientist at UCLA, I love what he says. He says, when you set the connection human connection, when you have those types of supportive relationships, you come to the conclusion that connection is a super power that makes us healthier, happier, smarter, and more productive and it expands our, it extends our life expectancy, we get more joy in life. Being intentional about getting connection into our lives is really is not just a want, it's a need to really thrive in life.

Kathy Caprino: I love it. I'm going to go off script here, Mike, and ask you a few of the questions here that have come up for me. You were telling me earlier that when Katie was ill and undergoing treatment you had many friends, but one friend would just come over for dinner with his

daughters and he was just there for you, you know it was so obvious what that meant to you. That just brings tears to my eyes. Can you do something for me, it may be hard, but given the tip I gave earlier not every connection is a healthy connection, what is, how would you define a life confirming connection? What is it? What should we be looking for in the people that we're connecting with? What is it?

Mike Stallard: I think it comes down, Kathy, to a couple things. One, and the one I think is the most important is do we have some similar values about respect, do we have similar interests, maybe similar experiences, part of the same community. You know what's interesting is the research shows the deepest connections are the importance to our resilience, but the other connections, being in a community where others know your name, you know I love, after all this research it was life changing for me, so I mean my family kind of makes fun of me that I know most of the cashiers' names at our grocery store.

Kathy Caprino: Yeah.

Mike Stallard: I know it's kind of heart breaking to me when we go to restaurants, I think of the Kneaded Bread in Portchester, Fernando the manager, you know Fernando. When you're out in the community and you feel like you see people that you know all the time and you can say hi, it's such a good thing to have and cultivating that in our lives with our family members, with our friends. There are deeper connections and more casual connections but they all have a positive effect on us.

Kathy Caprino: I love it. It brings to mind, people who know me know I love to sing, and I'm in this wonderful community group the Wilton Singers, fifty people, I've been in it I think thirteen years, but I want to say about it is something Brene Brown has said. She talks about what church does for her, that she is across the aisle, putting out her hand, shaking the hand of someone she may not think the same way with. They don't see the world the way she does.

Kathy Caprino: I do think that's important, being in a community that is diverse, not just trying to find people that are exactly the same as us, but also, like in this singing group, there are people from 83 to 23, you know whatever four or how many generations that is. Some are Republican and some are not. We talk about everything. The truth is we see each other every week and we love each other. I think any one of us might take a bullet for another. I think it can be that kind of connection as well. That maybe they don't look and sound and think the way you think, but you love them and they're there for you. Right, Mike?

Mike Stallard: You do. And when you serve each other and help each other, one of the things the research clearly shows, you can tell, I'm thinking of my own experiences, but I'm also looking at the research—

Kathy Caprino: Love the research.

Mike Stallard: Yeah, I love the research too. John Cacioppo who is an expert on loneliness at the University of Chicago, passed away earlier this year. His research found that connection is a two-way street, which is to say that you can't just be a part of a community and just receive, you also have to give to develop that sense of belonging. It's when you give and

receive, you serve others, you love others, you are loved, you are served, especially during difficult seasons in life. You develop a sense of belonging that has a profound effect on your nervous system and body.

Mike Stallard: That one of the reasons we're seeing such high levels of anxiety and depression today is that when you don't have those supportive relationships you're much more likely to be in that stress response. It just triggers the sympathetic nervous system, which kind of revs up our nervous system, which makes us feel anxious. So you see Americans even though we're about 5% of the world's population we consume half the world's drugs for mood disorder. It's a problem in our culture that we don't have those connections that really stabilize our nervous system.

Kathy Caprino: Wow. And you had mentioned to me that not every group is as connected as other groups, right? The stress connection gap is different for people of color, women, the LGBTQ community. Can you talk about that a little?

Mike Stallard: Yeah, you really have to look community by community but a couple things to note. Number one, people who, there was a study done in conjunction with Harvard where they looked at the number of people that reported to leaders and what they found was the more people you have reporting to you, the lower your stress was on two measures. Both your self-reported, they would complete a stress survey, and self-reported stress figures were lower for people who had more people they were responsible for leading, which is counter to what most leaders think. And there are measures of cortisol in the saliva, salivary cortisol was higher for people who had fewer individuals reporting to them. It's counterproductive. The more power you have, the less stress. We also see with CEOs for example, half the CEOs report that they're lonely. It's that combination of the more connection you have, you build that strong life, that strong foundation that makes you resilient to cope with stress, and if you have less you're going to be more vulnerable to the stressors we talked about earlier.

Kathy Caprino: Wow. What do we do, Mike? How do we boost connection to make a difference here to feel more connected and deal with our stress in more productive ways? What do we do?

Mike Stallard: Let me just mention five things. Thanks for sharing my LinkedIn article today by the way.

Kathy Caprino: It was fantastic. We'll link to it below the podcast, it was so good.

Mike Stallard: Thank you, Kathy. In that article there is a link to download a 28-page document that we started developing with the NASA Johnson Space Center. We're doing consulting work there, we're working with the engineering section. We had people come up to us and say we really need some specific language to use to connect in certain instances. This is a tool, it's a free tool that's available to your readers and you can download it there. Let me just mention a few things you'll find in there. It's 100 mix of attitudes, language, and behavior that connects. Let me just mention five that I think are especially important.

Mike Stallard: Number one, is an attitude that, the connection is a super power, it really does make us, as I said, healthier, happier, smarter, more productive in our work. So to see connection as a super power and to cultivate the courage to connect with people. If you're an introvert

or you have some social anxiety issues, it takes work to intentionally connect. That's number one is developing that attitude.

Mike Stallard: Number two, is never worry alone. I credit this to Ed Hallowell, who's written some, he wrote a great book called *Connect* about his personal story and why connection, which he calls vitamin C, is so important. Never worry alone. We're more likely to make poor decisions, ruminate, and to do damage to ourselves if we worry alone. When we process the difficult things we're going through in our life with someone else, it actually shifts the brain activity to the frontal lobe of the brain where we're more likely to make rational decisions rather than rash decisions. It quiets the amygdala so the anxiety we're experiencing will be shut down to some degree if we process with other people. Never worry alone.

Mike Stallard: Number three, I saw this quote, it was in a book about U2. I'm actually going to see U2 tonight.

Kathy Caprino: Oh my goodness.

Mike Stallard: At Madison Square Garden, so this is especially relevant. Katie and I.

Kathy Caprino: What a blast.

Mike Stallard: Yeah. I've written about them. They have a great story that's about connection. Bono once said, "People who have strong families tend to be strong people." I think there's a lot of truth in that. I would look at it this way, people who have a strong group of family members, friends that gives them the secure attachments as we talk about in psychology. It really helps us take risks in life. It makes us more resilient and capable of taking those risks without having nervous breakdown—

Kathy Caprino: Yeah.

Mike Stallard: Or damaging our body from stress response—

Kathy Caprino: Can I add something to that, Mike?

Mike Stallard: Yeah, go right ahead.

Kathy Caprino: You know I work with a lot of people who would be listening and saying I don't have that. My family has hurt me. I just want to say to anyone who thinks that, family isn't just blood, is it? I mean some of my friends are my family as well as my family. Don't think that just because your biological connections didn't do that for you, it's a lost cause. Go and find people who are your family. You know. Would you agree with that, Mike?

Mike Stallard: I absolutely agree with that. Here's one thing I would encourage people to think about. You need to have some people in your life who you can share your highs and your lows each week. Really take the time to do that. Just say here are things that I, like for us yesterday we heard from our agent who does our keynote speeches that we're in discussion to do something for the Mayo Clinics.

Kathy Caprino: Wow. Wow. Wow. Wow.

Mike Stallard: We're really excited about that because they are the number one hospital in the country. And they've been doing research on position burnout that we're concerned about. This will be a great chance to get to know them and share our work with them. Just having people you can process your highs and lows each week. Sit down for a cup of coffee, tea, glass of wine to take the time to do that. It really settles your nervous system. It helps you make more rational decisions.

Mike Stallard: The next thing is practice micro connections, I call it, which is when you're at the grocery store, you're at a restaurant, make eye contact with the people who serve you. Smile, get to know their names. Ask them about their interests outside of work. Just show some interest. These are really easy things to do, but you know what, they benefit from that and you benefit from that. It truly goes both ways.

Mike Stallard: The last thing I want to mention, and thank you for giving me so much time to share these—

Kathy Caprino: Love them.

Mike Stallard: I take this from Frances Hesselbein, and I'm going to send her this because her Twitter handle is @toserveistolive and what we see is if we do serve other people it connects us. If you don't, maybe you don't have a lot of family now and you are alone, but what you can do, and you'll be surprised at the amount of joy you experience, is go out in the community and find social sector organizations you can help. When you serve it is life giving. You do connect with other people. I would encourage people to put those five practices in place and it will enhance connection in your life most certainly.

Kathy Caprino: Oh, that's just beautiful. I have to say, my kids, they're grown, and we go out to the AT&T store or whatever, I end up talking to the guy who is selling me something and I end up knowing about his mother and where he ... and the kids are like, good grief mom, do you have to talk to everybody? They joke, they say it lovingly. I love those micro connections. Otherwise we're just racing around getting a new phone and buying our groceries. I love that tip. It's so good.

Mike Stallard: Kathy, you're a great role model for your kids because they pay attention to that. I've seen that with our kids, they're both good about connecting with people and I think they pick that up from Katie and me.

Kathy Caprino: Oh, that's beautiful. All right, I'm aware of our time but there's one more thing I want to ask you about. You're dealing with leaders here, the former head of the Navy, right? Wow. If you had a thousand leaders listening to this podcast, wouldn't that be something? What's the one thing or two, it's hard to say one, that you want them to know about how to build a culture of connection? What do they need to do differently?

Mike Stallard: Well, number one, is it's important. Managers are so busy today. They don't have time to devote to anything that is unclear to them and that doesn't clearly affect results. It's important to, number one, make it a case that connection is a super power. Not only for

individuals, but also for organizations because it boosts employee engagement, strategic alignment, quality of decision making, or innovation etc. That's number one.

Mike Stallard: Then to put an assessment in place. Whether it's simply an engagement survey or a culture survey that helps them see that in those subcultures that those managers are responsible for leading, do the people feel connected or isolated because they're being controlled or they feel that people are indifferent to them. When you have that feedback, it helps you, we deceive ourselves easily over these factors. A lot of managers think they've created a culture where people feel connected but they don't. It really is doing them a service for their long term career as well as for the work of the organization to get them some honest feedback for what kind of culture they've cultivated. Then you can help them with, start to put individual practices in place. And help them develop the ability to connect and create a connection culture.

Kathy Caprino: So, Mike, if they did this engagement survey, which maybe your organization can help with, right, maybe? And they found, oh my goodness, and I've read this so many times. We thought we were nurturing connection and alliance and collaboration and holy cow we're not, it's horrible. Could they have you in and you would assist in their culture building? Because I think most people truthfully don't know how to do it. Wouldn't you agree?

Mike Stallard: Yeah, you can do a couple things. You can bring our organization in, you can bring other organizations that do this. I would also consider this, a valuable thing about the survey, and I've seen other clients do this, for example we did a survey for 4,000 people in 15 languages for one organization. I was so proud of the CEO, he took one of the best leaders in the organization, pulled him out of leading a country and made him vice-chairman of the organization responsible for going out and mentoring the leaders who were struggling. Often times you can identify who the good leaders are, the connectors, and put them in a position where they can mentor and coach and help others become better leaders.

Kathy Caprino: Beautiful, beautiful. Because I think we do believe what we see. We know what we can see, otherwise it can be a little amorphous. About I don't know what to do differently, I'm doing my best. I love that idea. Anything else you want to leave us with, Mike? Anything we should know? Where should people learn more and hire you? And hire you to speak, where do they go?

Mike Stallard: I would send them first to my personal blog and it has links to our corporate site. There are a lot of free resources on michaelleestallard.com.

Kathy Caprino: Great and that's going to be linked too below. Wonderful. Any last words about how to build more connections starting today?

Mike Stallard: I would also encourage people to look for the people around them who are struggling because one of the things we've seen in all the research is when you're lonely it often manifests self-defeating behaviors that are anti-social. If you look at all these people who are striking out in acts of mass violence or suicide, they're almost always lonelier or always lonely. But the problem is they can't always reconnect on their own and it takes those of us who are intentional looking out to really give them a helping hand and help them connect with others. I would look for people in your environment, maybe in the workplace

or isolating themselves, maybe they're concerned about mergers or economic difficulties, reach out to them, connect with them, and help them connect with others. It can really be lifesaving and it'll help improve the performance of your organization.

Kathy Caprino: Those are beautiful tips. I can't thank you enough. I just wanted hug you up because you live this, you live and breathe it. You don't just talk about it, you don't just talk about the research. I think, it seems to me you're passionate about the research because it's a way of scientifically validating what you know to be true from your own life. Which is connection from the heart and service from the heart changes our lives, doesn't it? Oh, I love it.

Mike Stallard: Exactly.

Kathy Caprino: Thank you for being here.

Mike Stallard: Great to be with you. Thanks so much.

Kathy Caprino: Come again soon, Mike. I hope. I hope everyone here and I want to end by saying it takes bravery to do many of these things. Many of us are afraid we're going to get rejected if we reach out to someone, or we're shy and introverted and it's just really hard. But I think what we're both saying is this is a time for a dose of finding brave and finding it in yourself to connect in a deeper way and I think you'll be thrilled with the results. Okay, everyone, hope you found this helpful. Have a wonderful week and we'll see you next time. Bye, thanks Mike, Bye.

Kathy Caprino: Thanks so much for joining us today and please don't forget to check out findingbrave.org for more programs, resources, and tips. Tune in next time for your weekly dose of *Finding Brave*.