

Nathalie Nahai 0:07

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

Ross Garner 0:15

And I'm Ross Garner.

Nathalie Nahai 0:16

And this week, we are asking how can organisations define their purpose? What even is purpose? Why is it so important for Gen Y, in particular, somewhere to have us believe? And how do we create the purpose statement? To dig into all of these questions, we are joined now by author, speaker and educator, Adam King. Adam teaches at business schools around the world, he regularly appears in the press, and is the author of next generation leadership. Hi, Adam, how are you doing?

Adam King 0:48

Hi, I'm great. How are you today?

Nathalie Nahai 0:49

Very well, very excited for this conversation. It's a really exciting and interesting topic. So let's start there. Why is purpose so important? And maybe, especially right now?

Adam King 1:00

Yeah. Well, certainly amidst COVID, I think a lot of people have been, let's say, questioning their priorities, and the balance between work, and what do you want to get out of work and, and life. And so we know that even across generations, there is an enhanced demand from our organisations, that they stand for something other than to maximise return to shareholders.

And I'm not saying that isn't a bad thing. I mean, but but that's not the end all and be all. And if are, we know that in these social constructs that we call companies, we have stakeholders, and a huge stakeholder group are our employees. And it isn't enough for us to say that our relationship is transactional.

In other words, you come and we give you your daily bread, what we need is what we need is held to help people understand that what they do here, helps them to make a difference to the world. However, they might define that. And we know that that has huge benefits for retention, attraction of talent, and particularly top talent.

Nathalie Nahai 2:17

So one of the things that comes up time and again, when people talk about purpose and generational changes and shifts and demands, is that the younger cohorts are a lot more exacting and demanding, and what they expect companies to provide them and to provide to the world.

And one of the things I've kept coming up against in the research I've done is people who are perhaps older in their 50s and 60s saying, Well, you know, this isn't fair, you know, in our generation, we cared about things, we just weren't able to express them in the way that these younger generations are. What are your thoughts about these generational differences? And perhaps why it seems so important for Gen Y or millennials? And whether that's a true reading of the situation?

Adam Kingl 2:59

Yeah, well, that's right. To a large extent, we It would be ridiculous for us to qualify the generations by saying the older generations just don't care. Oh, just give me my money? No, of course not. However, you're right. I think part part of it is that Gen Y's are millennials I'm using the term interchangeably are demanding that meaning be part of work, whereas and other generations didn't. However, it's a fair assumption to say that amongst older generations, particularly when they were first entering the workforce, didn't feel that they had permission. To do that, you could argue with Gen Y is don't have permission either. And yet, they've they've but they've just kicked down that door.

Part of it also is that Gen Y is a huge population. So you know, they sort of can't be ignored, they are well over 50% of the global workforce today. And in three short years, there'll be 75% of the global workforce. So this is not a group that you can simply ignore marginalise or just say, it'll all go away soon. And of course, with every passing year, as Gen Y's enter the workforce, baby boomers, which is the other huge generation terms of population is retiring. So the

percent of the workforce composed of millennials is increasing actually at a faster rate than it was even 1015 years ago. So the Gen Y paradigm of meaning is, is what While it's certainly more prominent for them, we certainly can't say that for other people, meaning doesn't matter. I don't want to go that far.

Ross Garner 4:40

It's also I think, context specific, isn't it? Because it's not that there's something fundamentally different about Gen Y versus previous generations, in terms of them as people, it's more that they have a greater choice on where they shop, where they live. The access to information crises that the world is facing are maybe greater and more obvious. And also the can they have more choice on where they work? And so, you know, they can they can vote with their feet. And so that becomes more important.

Adam Kingl 5:19

Yeah. I mean, you just summarised Ross generational theory is brilliant, it's less to do with your birth years, and more to do with the paradigms in which you were raised. Right.

And that creates your your perspective, in terms of of work, and you're right, you know, in terms of people can more easily vote with their feet. I mean, what, you know, when, when I was first applying for jobs, you know, as a graduate, I had to look in the newspaper, I had to, I had to, I had to print out a cover letter and a CV, I had to put it in an envelope, I had a lick a stamp. And, you know, in today, you know, with a click of a button, you even off enough to fill out an application, you can just, you know, send your, your profile via LinkedIn.

And for many companies, that's a sufficient application. And not to mention that it's so easy for headhunters to reach top talent as well. You know, a lot of top talent told me that they get, you know, solicitations from Headhunters, like every week. So it's so easy because you don't ever have to look for a job because the jobs are looking for you. In the digital generate,

Ross Garner 6:23

yeah, I wanted to test this idea of organisations having a purpose because they I confess, when I was sort of doing the research on this, I felt slightly cynical about it. And I was thinking, I understand that a charity has a purpose, or a

health food provider, maybe feels passionate about the idea that works, but but can any organisation have a purpose?

And so I sort of spinning in my chair, and I was thinking, Well, what about Coca Cola, because they make fizzy drinks, I wonder what their purpose is. So I went onto the website and had a look. And they have a nice page about it. It says to refresh the world and make a difference. And then one, this purpose is uniquely us. It's why we exist. And it's needed now. More than ever, and I was thinking, you make fizzy drinks, I don't dispute that Coke is refreshing but needed now more than ever seemed a bit hyperbolic, and but the it continues.

So it goes on. In doing so we must think expansively. It's about how we refresh people in both body and spirit. Okay, it's how we refresh the planet or limit the footprint we leave behind is about how our business system refreshes to communities we serve is about how we underboss, refresh, inspire and develop people who work with us.

And Dammit, I'm convinced if I worked for Coca Cola, yeah, I actually am I would work. But if I wasn't Coca Cola, I would want to know that we were limiting damage developing people working with communities, I actually would love sort of broader thing I was kind of caught up in it.

Nathalie Nahai 8:00

With the languages, it's kind of like, alright, we know that people care about sustainability, accountability, stewardship of the planet limitations of, you know, negative impacts. And so let's shoehorn that in under this refresh. I hate that because it's smacks of just, it's just so easy to do, put it in writing, and just hope that it sticks. I mean, I think what I would rather see is, okay, fizzy drinks, they've got a bad rap.

We're trying to do our best in other areas that we can actually make a difference. So that when you enjoy beverages responsibly, you can know that actually, you're benefiting the plant. Right? A bit of honesty, honesty, I think, has to be at the centre, because if it's not then just, you know, what are your thoughts on that? Adam? are younger generations a bit more cynical of these

sorts of mission statements? Well, they

Adam Kingl 8:46

are in that they demand that they be authentic. So it's insufficient to articulate a nice message. You've got to follow through with your actions. Whether that means you know, whether the perspective through which you're looking at that as as an employee, as a customer, or even as a community in which an organisation is operating.

The it's meant most organisations I would say, 99.9% of organisations now have done a little bit of work on their purpose, perhaps also including things like sustainability, etc. But for too many even today, it's only a well crafted communication campaign. And and that was when I was

Ross Garner 9:27

buying, and I have no idea that's a fair ticker.

Adam Kingl 9:32

That's right. Well, I couldn't say either I honestly couldn't I'm not but so I make I make no criticism of Coca Cola. Do not contact me Coca Cola lawyers, I really don't. Because ultimately what we what we what we need is for companies to follow through and and you know, that accompanies on the right track, if they first do lots of conversations with their wider ecosystem. And then craft their purpose and then say, and here's what we're actually doing about that.

The number one cause for concern is if an organisation articulates their purpose via hiring a communications agency, then you know, it's all about the message and very little about the meaning behind it. So, while we know that purpose matters, the message might help get people in the door, be then employee be at a customer, but unless there's follow through, you know, we know that Gen Y's will find you out quickly and vote with their feet, whether that's as, as a consumer or as an employee.

So we know this, right. I mean, there's a common phrase of greenwashing, particularly related to sustainability, which is like, Well, you talk a good game. But but but do you really, and you make a great point too, about, for example,

any producer of fizzy, fizzy drinks, like, just be honest about, you know, the fizzy drinks that you make the fizzy drinks, that they're popular, right that, that people drink them, and so you provide them. And so it's not a but and what are you doing to help make your community your world better. And it may not be via the fizzy drink itself, it might be the supply chain through which you produce the fizzy drink. It might be the via the communities in which you operate, where you where you make the fizzy drinks, et cetera, et cetera. It might be well, what else is in your product portfolio?

And how are you helping the public pivot to those other things? So there are lots of tactics that help a purpose to be authentic, we I definitely think we shouldn't focus on solely the product itself, in terms of because the product is not the articulation of the purpose.

Nathalie Nahai 11:49

Interesting. So then, if we're talking about purpose statements are the kinds that are actually going to have impact and substance that you're talking about. So not the kind of slap it on from the outside, but actually creating something that's meaningful, what are the elements or categories or ingredients that shouldn't be present in a purpose statement for it to really value?

Adam Kingl 12:12

Well, the value isn't exactly what you just said, It can't just be a compelling sentence. Ultimately, that might be what you use to make sure everyone has that is an aide memoire in terms of why we exist. However, a purpose statement is actually quite a bit more complex than that, because it has to be because it has to provide guidance in lots of different areas.

So the first thing I'd say related to a purpose statement is you have to separate it at least into two major categories. And that is, who are we? And where are we going? The problem with a lot of purpose statements is they try to answer both questions in one sentence. And you can't, right. Who are we? And where are we going are two related but distinct themes? Who are we is related to our heritage, our values, how you might characterise us?

And ultimately, like our spirit, you know, kind of that white? What is that element that people really are attracted to us for? So for Nike, you obviously it's just do it. And that actually does tell you something, it's not just simply, I don't think that's just a cool phrase, it gives you it tells you something about what they expect, of, you know, the people that they're trying to attract, and and there and then the products and service that they offer. Where are we going? is relatively simple, right? Some companies will call that their mission, or sometimes their vision, like in the long term, what do we want to achieve? But even that's insufficient? Yes, you need that. But sometimes companies stopped there. And at that point, it's solely a theoretical exercise.

Like I could say, I'm accompany my vision, from where I'm going is to make the world a better place or to make the world more sustainable. Okay, great. Love that. How. So now, you've got to do that extra work. And this is where we get to authenticity where companies are saying, not only do we have, you know, a good destination, but we're even going to tell you and tell ourselves internally, how we're going to get there. So you see this in, for example, the objectives there, you know, keep their KPIs, you know, their one year objectives, five year objectives, etc. If you can see the KPIs and don't and you can create a link between that long term vision, then you know, that, that they're on to something, you know, then you know, they're they're taking it seriously.

The best way I know where we would is to know if a company is genuinely authentic about where it says it's going is a are its leaders personally incentivized to achieve those things. They like it is a part of their compensation package or their bonus, that they're actually achieving objectives related to that vision, that long term estimation to is everyone in the organisation have some incentive to do it.

Or even if it's not directly in there, you know if they can demonstrate that of their own freewill or entrepreneurship, they've they've they've pursued that to make a difference, does the company reward them in some manner? And three, how do they hold one another account? So if someone doesn't do those things, or if they actually do the opposite of those things, how do they make sure that that never happens again? And how do they say, look, here's what we're doing to ensure that you will not see that ever happen again, whether that's on an

individual basis or, or on an organisational basis.

Ross Garner 15:38

So you, you mentioned earlier on that the problem with purpose statements is that if they don't have follow through, then they're inauthentic is just a comms exercise. Yep. But that, that almost feels like the reverse to me of what you would expect to be happening, which is that you would have a purpose statement would be codified out of the things that you're already doing. So it's not follow through, you're like defining the things that you're already doing.

But I imagine that's really difficult, because in a big organisation, there's all sorts of things going on. And until you have this sort of purpose statement to rally around, it would be difficult to aim to align all those activities. So I guess I'm wondering, is having a comms provider come in and speak to you about your purpose, really that bad, because it it feels like it could be a useful way of codifying what's already happening,

Adam Kingl 16:28

they could be part of the conversation, what I'm concerned about is when they are oh, it's only them, like, it's the communications agency working with the board to craft a cool message, that will be insufficient. And also, if we know that purpose has to touch your ecosystem, the wider you know, the wider stakeholders in which you operate, then they should be part of the conversation.

So in other words, it's a fairly detailed, not short term conversation, before you actually get to crafting your purpose. Yes, it's faster and easier to say, you know, it will be the, like the CEO, and the chairman will work with, you know, this agency, and we'll have a good message in two weeks, watch this space. Okay. And Yvette in a very well might sound compelling. But you have to have that follow through conversation with everyone right before you actually articulated so you know, okay. CFO, how are you? How are you personally incentivized to make sure that, for example, doing right by the environment, is one of your KPIs not just margin or profit, etc? You know, how are you frontline employee?

How, what, what, what's your what's your piece in this puzzle, etc. So, I don't have an issue with communications agencies, I've, I've worked with them for them myself. But organisations have to use them, particularly related to purpose in the right way. And to your point around, you know, when you have the purpose conversation, I think purpose actually also needs to be refreshed regularly, because we know that the world is changing, you know, at a fast rate, we know that organisations often suffer from relevance, or irrelevance syndrome. In other words, they look around and they realise, oh, my gosh, hitting the left, before we knew it, we're less relevant today than we were 10 years ago, or five years ago. So you do have to keep looking at that.

And it's okay, if your purpose articulates what you do now, if you have that, if that's part of your spirit and your character, but if it isn't, if you do some soul searching, and realise, you know, what, actually, all we've been about to date, you know, has been maximising return to shareholders, or whatever it might be, if that's all we've ever been about, then we have to, then we have to start either way is fine. Both require the same activities, to then get to having a purpose that you can live, not just say, the other issue too, is what I'm really serious when I say you've got to talk to just about everyone in the organisation, including, you know, the most junior people, because often purpose like strategy sort of whizzes around the top of the organisation.

But if you ask someone, you know, more junior in the implementation or operations, what's the purpose? What's your purpose? What's the organization's purpose? Sometimes unfortunately, they will stare at you, you know, and well, I, I might, my job is to put this can in this box, what are you talking about? So, so we do so organisations really do have to do quite a lot of labour to get this right.

Ross Garner 19:34

So that's, that's what I was getting at. And I phrased my last question it kind of a convoluted way. But what I was actually thinking was, who's responsible for this? So when you're saying the organisation needs to do this work? Who do you mean, because if it's not the top team and their external consultant then didn't Who is it?

Adam Kingl 19:50

Well, yeah, and frankly, everyone in the organisation should be involved in the articulation because everyone

Ross Garner 19:56

who's responsible, you know, who's the who's leading this, this effort?
Everything's always

Adam Kingl 20:00

with sure, as always the you know, you would argue the CEO is ultimately responsible for not just having a purpose, but ensuring that the organisation has all the incentives processes, that that that the follow through will happen. As always, in most organisations, the top person is the person who's ultimately accountable.

And I would argue, there's probably little that that that a CEO shouldn't be, you know, more accountable for than purpose. You could argue, ultimately, in one sentence, what is a CEOs? Why do you have a CEO? Arguably, you could say the CEOs, really kind of sole responsibility is to manifest the corp the company's purpose. But they can't do it themselves. They chose not to solo it's not a solo sport. Sure.

Nathalie Nahai 20:53

So do you have examples of companies that you've seen that been very inspiring in terms of how they've quantitatively tracked the benefits of their purpose statements in terms of whether it's, you know, customer service, or staff retention? Or an uplift in, you know, conversions or whatever it might be? Well, I'll

Adam Kingl 21:11

tell you, let me share with you actually a really interesting, wider study, because it because it demonstrates that this stuff really does matter, right? Because I don't want anyone listening to go well, that won't work for my company, because an example is just a solo, you know, that?

Well, that's one example. Fine, but, but there's this wonderful book called Firms of Endearment, that's firms FYI, RMS, not Terms of Endearment, which is the movie Firms of Endearment studied public companies. So publicly traded

companies over 10 years, and identified those organisations that had a strong lived sense of purpose and values. And compare them their share price performance over 10 years against the market. And therefore, by definition, their competitive set. And what they realise is that those companies that had that strong sense of purpose and values, their share price outperform the market by a factor of 10.

They were 10x. better performing. So what I also want to make sure that we that we did touch on today is that I don't want anyone listening today to to assume that if a company pursues purpose, it is at the expense of profit. Purpose, and profit is not a zero sum game. They actually work together, they are positively correlated. But for too long, organisations either gave short shrift to purpose, or ignored it entirely, or just sort of gave it or greenwashed it because they thought to pursue it authentically, would be to harm margins, income cetera, the opposite is true. And it's only in the last 20 years that scholars have demonstrated this. So I understand that maybe people had that concern, but it's an illegitimate concern.

Now we have the evidence that tells us that that is the case. I'll give another example. If you look at the largest private pension scheme in the UK, which is the university superannuation scheme, the USSR I'm a part of that because I work for university so so I look at what the funds are in this right and the largest pension fund in the UK and I look up the the funds that are part of the Defined Contribution Scheme. You know, you've got like world equities and UK equities. And they have an ethical equities fund. You would assume 20 years ago, most investors, analysts or even pension holders would say, Well, don't put your money in the ethical equity fund if you if you want to be able to retire anytime soon are but actually, the you know, if you look over, over a over a couple of years, the difference is staggering.

UK equities return I think between 2017 2018 UK equity return fund was like four or 5% global equities was like eight or nine or 10% ethical equities was 15%. And I was that like a good year, I'm saying that like, that's an average, that's average performance, pre COVID. But, you know, that affected everything. That was just a warm blanket that brought everything down, help. But so the

point I'm making, of course, is that we again, it's further evidence writ large, that that purpose can enhance profitability.

So if, if if, you know, dear listener, you're looking at this and thinking, Well, why should I care? Because I'm all about, I'm all about, you know, profitability. I've got I've got very demanding shareholders. That's all the reason you need them. Why why purpose and a strongly articulated and lived sense of purpose and values matters. So no matter how you cut it, it's worth worthwhile for organisations to really spend a significant amount of effort on this.

Ross Garner 24:54

And do you have any counterfactuals that you could share? I guess what will be an organisation Same with a weak purpose statements that maybe haven't performed so well, or have disappeared?

Adam Kingl 25:06

Well, yes, actually, I'll tell you one that disappeared that had a weak purpose statement or more accurately an inauthentic purpose statement. And that's Enron. Oh, dear Enron. We don't ask you. Right. But but if you looked at, you know, they had a tremendous like, purpose and values, and their CEO even said, I remember their CEO said to their employees, if you see if you witness any example of wrongdoing in this organisation, I want you to tell me, personally, and here's my email, blah, blah, blah, blah, right. And then, of course, we know the see what we're doing the primary people responsible for all the malfeasance that the organisation was doing. So that's one. But also but another issue with with

Ross Garner 25:48

you just said that you just had this over, they had a great purpose statement. So I guess it goes back to it's the disconnect between this as the comms exercise versus operationally Yes. It's not being thought through.

Adam Kingl 26:00

Yes, that's Yeah, absolutely. So yeah, they've done some of the work in terms of the messaging, but But beyond that, so there's a classic example of it just being a communications exercise. You're absolutely right. But of course, the other issue behind that, is that how, what we have to remember is, why do we have to

make sure it's authentic, because purpose ultimately, is about governing behaviours.

And if people aren't behaving in a way that advances your purpose, you either get nothing happening, or you get creep, where actually your organisation becomes a, you know, their purpose is something else, some some, you know, hidden purpose. And then Ron is a good example of that, right? They, you would say, well, they're an energy trading company. But actually, what they were about was maximising what what was their purpose, what was their subterfuge purpose, simply maximising the quarterly returns in the forecast that they would send to the analyst community.

And so they would do anything possible to cook the books in order to show that those numbers were constantly going up, that was really all they were about. And yes, there are a lot of people in that organisation that were doing good things. But ultimately, what you saw in their leadership was, was actually a completely separate thing. And that's because again, the purpose was inauthentic. And yet, there are a lot of people, as I say, who I imagine, you know, believed in that purpose. And, and came into work, you know, energised by that purpose, and one for many years was, you know, one of the great companies to work for, it always appeared on those kinds of lists. So their, their leadership, let their let their people down.

I'll tell you another, give me another example of and this is related to refreshing your purpose. And that Zurich, the insurance company, not not the city, so they happen to be based in Zurich for probably why they're called that anyway, Zurich, you know, is a venerable, old, traditional insurance company. And they realised a few years ago, you know, we haven't really looked at our purpose and values for agents, we have it, but we haven't really, you know, what does it mean anymore.

And their CEO did something that a new CEO took over, after a very tumultuous time in the organisation, where the previous CEO resigned, etc, etc. And the new CEO said, you know, what, if this is going to be about the future, why don't I ask the youngest people in my company, to form a little committee to help us

articulate our refreshed purpose and values. I thought that was a fascinating idea. B

because also, of course, when often purpose happens among the board, or among the executive committee. And, and that's, and the conversation only happens at that level, let's be honest, you've got people having their conversation, who are going to leave the organisation, in the next, you know, five years, 10 years at most, right, they are the elders of the company. And so you've got dozens, hundreds 1000s 10s of 1000s of employees who actually have to then follow through on that. And those people who created the articulation of the purpose really don't have to anymore, right, they're just gonna be gone in a few years.

So the CEO is saying, well, let's bring in the people who we hope are really going to make it happen for decades. And, and, you know, kind of astounding, I haven't heard of many other companies that said, we're going to make sure that our you know, our values and purposes led by not completely composed by because as I said, everyone needs to be involved in the conversation but led by a committee have 20 Something employees. But we also know I think that also had another secret advantage and that is well we know purpose really matters, right to our youngest employees, so why not?

Make sure that your people who are driving it are personally passionate about making it happen, rather than people who are just sort of giving it lip service or say well, yet one more thing on my to do list. And I'm not suggesting that that would be someone's attitude simply because of their age. But certainly you have to admit the fact that those people would not be accountable for that purpose over the long term.

Nathalie Nahai 30:23

So then, when we come back to the question of whether purpose statement should be created from the top, or from below, I think that's actually a false dichotomy.

We want everyone involved, and the people who are perhaps going to be the most invested in and likely to steward over the long term, the shaping and embodiment of that purpose. They're the ones that really need to be at the heart of the conversation. Is that kind of,

Adam Kingl 30:46

yeah, completely. I will give another reason why what you said is absolutely true. We know that in any most organisations, the more senior we become, the fewer interactions we have with customers, or clients or consumers, right? So actually, funny enough, the more senior you become, the less clue you have, as to what your market wants from you.

Right, or what your community wants from you, your stakeholders, etc. Right? And so as a result, a lot of organisations become very inward drawn in their perspective and decisions are made. That makes sense internally, but make little sense externally. And if your purpose is ultimately going to be something which is fundamentally needs to be attractive to the marketplace, then, again, that should be driven significantly by the people who are on that front line having those conversations every day,

Nathalie Nahai 31:40

we've covered such interesting ground. All right, let's wrap up. Ross, what will you be taking away from this rich and broad conversation and applying to your life this week?

Ross Garner 31:48

I think it'll be reflecting on the what Adam said about the implementation of this. So there's the purpose. What is that? There's the vision, where do you want to get to? And then that missing bit that I think I hadn't really considered was the how.

So how are we actually going to do that? And I think, How can we talk about the how publicly in a way that we are accountable to that claim and transparent about what we're doing? So that was that's really resonated with me? What about yourself, Natalie?

Nathalie Nahai 32:21

I really liked the point about being authentic in what you're offering the world. So whether the, you know, if we're talking about a fizzy drink manufacturer, for instance, or anything else, for that matter, that the product doesn't have to be the purpose.

So that decoupling product from purpose, and actually looking at the wider impact of the business in the broadest sense. I think that's really helpful because it brings it back into that kind of systemic lens. Adam, what one idea? Would you like listeners to remember from a conversation? Yeah,

Adam Kingl 32:52

well, I guess though, I would go back to my thesis near the beginning, which is don't conflate Who are we with where we're going? And you have to answer both in order to really have a purpose that will work for you. Brilliant.

Nathalie Nahai 33:10

So let's move to our regular feature, which I'm increasingly thinking about when I'm reading things, I'll write that note to myself so I can share my podcast. So one thing I've learned this week, Ross do to go first?

Ross Garner 33:23

Yeah, of course. So I was reading a piece by Alex Trembath, who is the Deputy Director of the breakthrough Institute, Environmental Research Centre in Oakland, California.

And he was arguing that cars are here to stay, the environmental lobby would like to get rid of cars. And there's all sorts of ways of doing that use pedestrianised. city centres have excellent transport links, make it safer for people to walk, cycle routes, and so on.

But he's an environmental guy, and he has a urban lifestyle where you can cycle everywhere he needs to go. He points out that this is a dream of urban professionals. And it's pretty elitist, that that kind of lifestyle is very expensive. And those locations are tend to be filled with well paid knowledge workers.

He's based in America, obviously. So what he's looking at is lower income Americans getting squeezed out into the suburbs where you have to have a car. And so if we're going to tackle the climate crisis and of climate friendly transportation, it can't just be about making these beautiful urban centres, you have to think about the the kind of sprawl and how you cater for the needs of those who can't afford to live in a safe answer on bike to wherever they need to go. That was interesting. And we can put a link to that in the show notes.

Nathalie Nahai 34:38

Very interesting. I want to read that one. So I've just started reading a new book by a woman called Sue Roe which is called 'In Montmartre' and it's about the lives of modernist painters such as Picasso and Matisse in Paris at the turn of the century. So from like 1900 to 1910.

And I learned that the famous Moulin Rouge den of iniquity and fabulous was, was actually built by a Spaniard named Joseph Oller or Jose, they've always there and even poached the dancers with apparently, quote "the best legs" from the elysee in Montmartre, so I was like, well, there we go iconic venue and it wasn't built by a Parisian it was a Spaniard. And we go

Ross Garner 35:18

Do you speak French, Nathalie?

Nathalie Nahai 35:21

I do. I was my first language. I can't speak it particularly well, but I can speak it enough to get by.

Ross Garner 35:26

Very No, not at all. But I was very impressed by your pronunciation of all of that. I have no idea if the translation was correct, but it sounded very French.

Nathalie Nahai 35:34

Like it's better than my Spanish. That's for sure. Adam, how about you? What did you learn this week?

Adam Kingl 35:40

I have been in a long term difficult relationship with my house plants. And I have

finally learned a year whether they're constantly in the state of we're gonna die on you followed by Oh no, everything was great. And we loved. I finally learned that the way to water houseplants is not to try to pour water on them even at regular intervals.

No, what you need to do is use ice cubes. Because ice cubes completely regulate the quantity and then they seep into the soil slowly so that you don't get the water going all the way to the bottom. And, and puddling in the bottom of your pot.

Nathalie Nahai 36:22

So how many ice cubes do you need per pot? On average, if

Adam Kingl 36:25

it's an average size pot, two cubes of ice twice a week. Wow. And my plants are loving me for it.

Ross Garner 36:34

That's actually the most useful thing that anyone's ever said on this podcast. I absolutely drowned my houseplants I'm like, oh, it looks a bit listless. I must not have watered it in a month, I will saturate the soil completely. Leave it for a month.

Nathalie Nahai 36:47

So Adam, aside from that fascinating revelation about how to wash your beloved plants, is there anything else that you want to mention before we wrap up?

Adam Kingl 36:55

Well, a yield if anyone wants to find out more. I've been thinking a lot about purpose and writing about purpose. I have a lot on my website, which is just my name, adamkingl.com.

And, but the other thing I should mention is in my book, Next Generation Leadership, I have a chapter where I actually articulate how to go about crafting a purpose statement. So if anyone would like to sort of read more about how you might do this for your organisation, that's all in the book.

Nathalie Nahai 37:26

Brilliant. I'm going to read that chapter that sounds very, very useful and including for personal purpose statements. If you're a consultant or a keynote speaker, it's completely up to you. So that is it.

Go check out those links and resources and the book. You've been listening to the Future Talent Learning podcast with me Nathalie Nahai and Ross Garner.

Our guest this week was Adam Kingl. Until next time, bye for now.