

TRANSCRIPT of Microsoft Chief Diversity Officer Jenny Lay-Flurrie and Microsoft US Chief Digital Officer Jacky Wright talking about mentorship, sponsorship, and allyship.

JENNY: So Jacky.

JACKY: Hello, my friend.

JENNY: I'm so happy.

I know we're almost different parts of the states right now with what's going on, but I'm really excited.

I've been looking forward to this, so I'm just going to dig in.

It's all right?

JACKY: Yes, quite right.

JENNY: I had the good fortune of knowing you, working with you, you've been a mentor of mine for many years, but I want you to share a little bit about yourself.

What do you want the audience to know about you.

JACKY: Danger of getting philosophical because that's what Jacky does, but who is Jacky?

Mother, daughter, sister, all of those things.

Family first, health first, really focused on what's important to her.

I think when you think about who I am, for me I come from a really large family.

That has really shaped who I am, the things that I like to do, the things that are most important to me, and then the ability to work with many different people in many different personalities.

If you have a family as large as mine, you have to try and please everyone sometimes, sometimes you just can't and having to navigate that has been really a quite an interesting challenge for me over the years.

I'll probably talk a little bit about how I started out and who I am.

When I think about my life, I didn't start out wanting to be a technologist.

No doubt about it, I didn't.

I decided I wanted to be a political science major.

I wanted to solve world problems, I wanted to do the things that would really change how people are treated, how people feel.

That I knew because it was just innate.

Those are the little analogues about who I am starting out.

JENNY: You may have noticed folks joining the call.

You've got two Brits on here, and we've also got tea.

We've already had a conversation offline about the importance of tea.

But if you were to talk about the people that shaped and formed you, as adults, we are shaped by those experiences and those formative years.

Who were the biggest influences on you growing up, and how do you think they impacted who you are and what you do today?

JACKY: I'll talk a little bit about how I evolved from a political science major to a techie, and the most important was my dad.

My dad was a tall, proud, stoic man who always instilled values in us.

Values such as, probably you've heard me say this before, never look down on anyone unless you're picking them up.

That was really core.

Then Jacky, you can either shine a light or cast a shadow at the individual.

How do you make sure you're always shining that light?

As I thought about my career, I have always thought about my dad because my dad influenced me in that.

My dad could speak to anyone whether you were the queen or whether you were just the average Joe on the street.

He just was able to interact with everyone, and I was always enamored by that ability to just be and speak to anyone.

Early on in my career, I took a role part-time while I was in university as some of us do.

It was a clerical job, but over in the corner was a PC, an IBM PC and I'm dating myself somewhat.

I said, "Let me go over there and let me see what I can learn." Then over there was a dBase 2 and Lotus 1, 2, 3.

I taught myself how to do that, and this was in a bank.

I go around the bank and I'd say, "Hey, can you tell me what you're doing?" They'd say, "I'm doing this," and I say, "Look, I can put this on the computer for you." That started out as, "Well, wait, Jacky, you can actually do something, you can solve problems." I really liked that.

Then they had this big problem, they were in Miami and Panama and they said, "Well, who can we send to focus on this reconciliation?"

Some bright, brilliant person." Said, "Do you remember that little black girl downstairs who's always running around trying to get into people's problems?" They said, "Okay, well, we send you, Jacky." My first business trip, 21 years old, I did took my first business trip and I came back and they said, "Well, you really helped us.

How can we help you?" I said, "I like this technology stuff.

How about you put me in the technology department?" I went into that department and in that department, there was one woman.

This gets back to the second person who influenced me.

She was the only woman in IT.

She took me under her wing and she said, "Jacky, I'm good to tell you-all about how to navigate this man system here.

This is the guy you got to watch out for, this is the one who's a major derailer, this one, he'll be the really good guy." That nurturing as the only woman, somebody who helped me, that courage.

I took that with me throughout my career.

We're still friends today.

She's retired, an older woman, but those two really set the stage for me in terms of forming the formative years of my life.

JENNY: That's an incredible journey.

Going to your LinkedIn page, you can then see it goes from college in Stanford to a number of different roles, including GE to BP, big roles, not small ones, big roles at BP.

Then recently, you actually took a civic leave to work with the UK government, with the HMRC.

The span of what you've done is pretty incredible and inspiring to a lot of us.

If you were to think about your time here at Microsoft, one of the things that I know that's been important and it's coming through in some of your words already, is the importance about inclusion, and an also accessibility, which is where you and I synced as well.

As you reflect, what have been some of the hurdles and challenges that you've had to really face and figure out to make sure that inclusion, accessibility and more is part of what the organizations you're a part of offer?

What are the lessons that we can take from some of those?

JACKY: You're right.

It's been a recurring thing for me.

I often start from a place, that I'm a woman, I'm a woman of color, I'm a technologist, and have been alone in many scenarios.

When I started at GE, they had a Black network, and that network nurtured and took everyone in and it formed allyship, it formed the ability to help you understand how to navigate the landscape, and really feel that you are part of something bigger.

I felt, wow, this was really, really great.

It was a good feel.

It helped me soar because it provided an environment where I could really be myself.

Then when I went to my subsequent role after that at BP, there were no affinity groups.

There wasn't a Black network, and I felt, well, imagine how I was feeling.

How can I create this for folks here?

So I created that network to help people really build that comradery and really focus on how they can together look at things differently and be inclusive.

I moved from there to Microsoft.

Again, a recurring theme for me is about going to do things where I can make a change, and Microsoft provided that platform to do something to change the world.

Me coming to Microsoft, the first early years, I led the Blacks at Microsoft where we focused on, "Hey, what about Africa?"

Why we're not looking at the future of Africa and expanding and thinking about the world more holistically?" Then I got onto a panel with you, and you spoke about how when you first started Microsoft, no one knew that you couldn't hear, and you had to weave your way through until the realization came that, "Wait a second, I've got to really tell someone, you know what?"

I really can't hear." For me, that was so profound.

I was like, "Oh my goodness." There are other aspects that we really need to think about relative to inclusivity, and that's when I reached out to you and I said, "Help me understand what it's like.

What can we do?

How do we make sure things are accessible?" This common thread about how do you make sure everyone can be a part of something greater, what are the barriers to those, and how do we overcome those, has just resonated through everything that I've done.

I brought Year Up to Microsoft, where again, underserved communities, I was on the board and it was like, wow, this is really something, bringing people who've had different experiences in life, and how we bring them to be products of society with skills and the tools to make them really succeed in life.

Then you talked about HMRC.

Taking that civic leave, double lens, again, about what can I do to change a society?

When I got to HMRC, it was quite apparent that we weren't thinking about how we include everyone as citizens in society.

So I created an accessibility team.

So you be proud of me, Jenny.

I created this team focused on accessibility, bridging that digital divide, focusing on digital inclusion for everyone.

How do we make sure the tools are fit for purpose?

How do we make sure that if you're digitally excluded, what are the things we need to think about?

All of those things, for me, is just just a passion.

It's just really nice.

JENNY: It's fascinating that you talked through the themes that come out, because I think what you said about your dad is exactly how you approach; you talk and you're curious and you ask a lot of great questions, and then you bring folks together, to coalesce, to go and tackle stuff.

I do remember getting that reach-out from you after this panel we were on.

I've been at Microsoft 15 years.

I joined in London.

Profoundly deaf, I don't hear, but Belinda is my interpreter, who's signing away for folks on the video.

But my speech is brilliant, so often people don't know.

I think that sense of empowerment, I realized that I reached a point that if I didn't self-identify, if I didn't own my disability, and that's what I needed to be successful, I wouldn't succeed.

Then I found the constructs to do that.

When we met, I was really beginning to figure out, I'd formed the disability ERG, and I'd led that for several years.

I was trying to figure out what to do with that, and you and I sat down and you helped me to think through, and I've become a mentor and friend over the years, but you helped me to think through what strategically to do with this to empower more people and to spread it.

With everything you do, you ask questions that then lead to statements or outcomes.

I think that curiosity is something you always make me think about things that I hadn't necessarily thought of.

I know I'm one person that you've mentored over the years and there have been many.

It's important to you.

It's been so important to me.

I don't know that I would be doing what I'm doing today without your support.

But what does it mean to you to be that mentor, to live into your purpose and to help someone to achieve their purpose, to achieve their goals?

Well, why is it so important to you?

JACKY: You touched on it when I reached out to you and we started this friendship, this mentorship.

The question for me was, what's your passion?

What really excites you?

You remember, you talked about, well, really having Microsoft be the pivotal, accessibility when you think about Microsoft.

You and I had this whole dialogue about, well, you should be the Chief Accessibility Officer.

That should be where we should really focus.

So giving you not just the ability to see it, but the ability to unleash your passion, and then recognize, wait a second.

It is achievable.

Then what are the steps you need to do to be able to do that?

I think it's important as you think about leadership.

It's about creating the environment for someone to be able to soar.

Help them understand what makes them tick.

This intersection between your core values and the passion you have, and then understand the skills or the special unique things you bring to bear to be able to achieve that.

Putting all that together really solidifies what you want to do and what you're about, whether it's personal or professional.

Because, again, those two things converge in a way that people really don't realize.

You may think about professionally, here's where I want to be, but then as you get into it, you think about, wait a second, my core values are what's important to me, and this is really what I want to do, and how can I do that in a way utilizing my professional platform?

I think it really is about creating that perspective and helping guide people and guide individuals through the right decisions.

JENNY: I will say the one thing you have always done is helped me to realize things that I could or should be doing, and realizing that I was putting my own limits on things.

JACKY: That's right.

JENNY: Encouraging me to [inaudible].

You would say things like, "You should be doing this", and I'll be, "No, no, no." That will be very blunt candid conversation of **Jenny**.

I'll be, "Okay, am going to breath and lean into this." It's removing the false ceilings that we can often put in and blasting through some of those.

I know [inaudible] and I did them even more so through my own experience with you.

I prioritize mentorship.

I think it's something that's deeply valuable.

I know there's a lot on the call that do as well.

Finding a good mentor, particularly when you're early in career is really important.

Providing mentorship is equally as important.

What does a good mentor look like to you?

What are the most important traits for folks that are sitting along the core going, I might need to re-up my mentors, I may need to go and seek someone?

What would you suggest to folks to go do and look for?

JACKY: I think it's really important for everyone to understand that each of us can be a mentor.

When we think about who we are, that helps us understand what we're looking for.

There's something about being self-aware.

Look for a mentor who on the surface, they look very self-aware, because self-awareness helps them understand how to interact with an individual.

They know how they perform their interactions, the ramifications, how it lands with someone.

Being self-aware is really important.

Having empathy is really important because that ability to really tap into how that person is feeling, is really important.

I don't want to digress too much, but I'll give you a case in point where I had a discussion with an individual who was really struggling with her career.

At the end of the discussion, she realized she wanted to be a stay at home mom for a while.

That was really important.

But really teasing out and having empathy about what someone wants to do and how they're feeling.

Having that broad thinking, thinking about, well, let's think about the steps we need to take?

What are the systemic things we need to achieve?

What are the barriers and how we're thinking about the barriers?

Then really the ability to coach, provide that agnostic guidance to someone who really needs it.

Today, you may think when you're listening to someone, that's not what I really want.

That person who has to coach you has to think more broadly end to end about the various things you may be thinking through and help you think through them.

That coaching skill is really important.

JENNY: I couldn't agree more.

I think the other question may be is connected to this.

As you're having conversations, as you're meeting with folks and really identify what's the right connection for you.

I know that these folks early in career, mid-career, heck [inaudible] and far into career.

What advice would you have about showing up authentically.

Finding the allies, finding, not just the mentor but the network to help folks succeed?

JACKY: If you start from a place that says everyone needs someone, you will start out by thinking differently.

I naturally think through things and may be hesitant about who I'm reaching out to.

But at the end of the day, people like helping people.

Your ability to be bold and say, "Hey, can you really help me in this regard?

I'm really thinking about this." Take that step.

Having the courage to be able to do that.

Whether you're early in career, mid or late in career.

Understanding what's not good for you.

Because as you think about what an ally is, they may have things that you want to really experience or exchange and they maybe things that just don't even resonate with you.

But being crystal clear about knowing what that is.

I think that's really important for an individual.

Again, it goes back for me to this totally self-aware about who you are, which in some instances gets confounded by the environment you live in, things that are happening at work day to day and you really get confused.

But stepping back and saying, wait a second, what are my core values?

What's really important to me?

Really helps you.

JENNY: Yeah, I think staying true to that and knowing even if you don't feel the the ability to be authentic right off the bat, knowing where to sustain and keep driving and have the effort.

Because things can take time to get to that place of conflict and when to walk away.

Particularly in the disability world, we do find there are sometimes and I'm sure in other parts, there are times where there will be someone who will never understand or appreciate that, yes, I'm deaf, but I'm not impaired.

I am smart, sassy, my ears just don't work.

Your lens on me, I will take effort to change but there are some very small percentage I just can't.

I'm sure you've had that as well.

JACKY: Yeah.

I'll give you an example.

My leadership team in the UK.

I was pushing accessibility.

My team didn't really have a clue about what does that really mean?

I brought in folks from the accessibility ERG, and we had a great meeting, various forms of needs.

They helped this team, immerse them in the experience of not being able to hear, not recognizing that tapping on a table.

Really, it doesn't resonate if you have dyslexia.

Helping them empathize through experience, really changed the nature of that.

In some instances you're right, people may never get it, but immersing someone in an experience does help.

JENNY: Totally.

Let me pivot a little bit in the questioning.

We're speaking to one another on a virtual forum, which is the way that we need to move forward right now as a result of the pandemic that we're living in.

I do think that it's teaching us a lot of different lessons.

As we go through this, I can't tell you.

I think I could write a book it's just from the last seven weeks.

I think it's never been a truer statement that it's important in a career to be flexible and to take that learning as you go through it.

But I got to say it's not easy, right?

It's hard.

Some of the communities that you and I are **passionate** about, in many ways disproportionately impacted here.

The African American community, the disability community they were the horrible sign that said, "Remove the weak", referring to the elder population and disability, which was just awful to see out there.

Thankfully, it's small, but the reality of the situation is that this is a really hard time.

When you think about how we can be inclusive, how we can drive a culture that is empathetic.

Embracing all that we are right now and support those communities, what comes top of mind for you?

JACKY: Fundamentally, I think when faced with challenges such as this one, we have to have a broad perspective.

I think about this as, do we really understand the ramifications on all aspects of society when there's a challenge?

That hinges on our ability to be inclusive.

Because the thought process, you have to think through, what are all the things that may occur for all aspects of society?

If you don't have that inclusivity, you're missing things.

Much like you've just touched on, the ramifications of African Americans in terms of COVID, in elderly with COVID.

So when you think about the challenge, you have to think about the opportunity and the solution in the same way.

How do we start from a place that says when we're creating this environment, how do I make sure whether through tools or having people that I'm including everything?

Look at this new world.

I'm a remote learner.

We, Microsoft, we're doing great in terms of putting out the tools, Teams, relative to remote access and remote learning.

Have we considered what it means for those who have needs that are not the norm?

If we haven't, how do we make sure we take care of that?

We always have to have a broad perspective around how we think things are going.

I think this recovery opportunity sets a new bar.

I think it sets the bar for Microsoft and all companies to think about what are the new ways of working?

How do we become more inclusive in the ways of working?

Oh, by the way, what's our moral compass?

Is it the same as it was before we went into this and if it isn't, how are people thinking about their new moral compass in the new world and how are we helping that?

I think with every challenge, there are opportunities.

I think to your point about inclusivity, having the right mindset, making sure you have broad perspectives really sets you up at the right starting point to then think about the problems that we need to solve.

JENNY: I think that those are such important grounding principles for us to bear in mind as we go through.

This is a learning period.

Just figuring out how we're doing this call right now, Belle and I normally sit very close to one another and have done for the last almost 12 years.

We had to figure out how to do remote interpretation for every meeting and just what was the best practice.

We started to post those on LinkedIn and put articles because what we're going through as individuals, our customers are going through.

JACKY: Absolutely.

JENNY: I think the reality is that most of us are quite nerdy, we're quite good with this stuff.

We're quite proud of our nerdery here as employees.

Customers are definitely fielding a higher bar and need for technology that might not be within their realm of comfort or just might be a different use case.

How we help with the moral compass in mind, I think is incredibly important.

Have there been good things that you've seen?

Great things that your team and other teams have done that you think has correlated with that?

JACKY: I think that the health chat bots that we're putting out there, that exemplifies the ability to really get in there and really help solve problems.

I would ask the question, as we think about automating and really gaining insights, are we creating comprehensive algorithms that are inclusive enough to make sure that we're solving and focusing on the right problems?

We have a great data platform.

Are we ensuring that as we're going out and solving the problems, we're inclusive of everything that we need to think about, which really means having a team that's representative of all aspects of the types of things or experiences that people may have?

I think the ethos of Microsoft is sound.

What will make that difference is, how do people use that in a way that is inclusive and representative of a society?

That for me is fundamentally it.

JENNY: Beautifully put.

If there's any urge that I have to folks, it's to make sure that while we all want to react as quickly as possible, those that check to ensure that what we're doing is inclusive and it's accessible so that everyone can use the content, which is so important to folks right now.

Taking that extra beat just to check on that I think has never been more important to make sure we're empowering everyone out there.

We're going to open it up to questions in just a couple of minutes.

While I'm not following the chat thread, I'm hearing there's quite a few.

So Jacky be warned, there's more [inaudible] But before we do that, as we go back to the beginning and the goal here, which is crafting a career that aligns to your purpose.

You have done that all the way through.

You empowered me to do it.

I joined Microsoft to work on Hotmail and now look what I do.

I've never been more comfortable or authentic or just grounded because I'm in a career that's followed my purpose and really, I followed in your footsteps in so many ways.

What advice would you have to folks out there?

If you want them to hear anything, what message do you want them to take away from this?

JACKY: This pandemic that has occurred has really forced and reset everyone's moral compass in some way, shape, or form.

Even if you think you had it before, it's reset today because of what's happening.

For me, I would ask us as individuals to really think about what really matters.

Just think about it.

Who's going out and buying clothes today right now?

People don't have food to eat.

People don't know where their next paycheck is coming from.

All of these things helps you think about, "Wait a second, what is really important in this world?" So I would ask, as you go back, as we get to whatever that new norm is, set your moral compass on what really matters because if you do that, your core values will come through.

You'll really understand for yourself, wait a second, this is not important.

You'll be authentic because you won't sweat the small stuff and then you'll really, really enjoy what matters to you.

I really ask to focus on understanding your moral compass and focusing on what really matters.

That would be it for me.

JENNY: Wonderful.

JACKY: I think the opportunity and the challenge here is that actually going to someone and say, "Can you sponsor me?" Doesn't necessarily work.

The key here for us at Microsoft is creating an environment where sponsorship is the norm and going in to talent talks discussions about who's sponsoring whom.

For women, I'd say on my front, and I'll use an example as when I worked at GE and I wanted my first CIO job, I went to the CEO of my division and I said, "You've seen me in meetings, etc.

Let me tell you a little bit about my career, here is the barrier I see for this company." I used the example and I said, "The next time there's a role, the CIO role, is there any way that you can just at least put my hat in the ring.

I don't have to get the job, but if you put my hat in the ring, at least there are opportunities there." That's how I got my first CIO role.

My leader called me and said there's a job over in X, I've already called the person, go over there and interview.

For us, I think the ability to have the courage to say, you don't know much about me, but here are the things, and here is some of the barriers I see.

I'd really like you to really look at this and help me.

Two sides of the story, the ability for you to reach out.

But no doubt in my mind, systemically across an organization, create the environment for people to soar.

We need to make sure we do a better job of creating that sponsorship environment for women and under-served others.

Anything you want to add there, Jenny?

JENNY: Yeah, I think you touched on the different layers of this.

If I think about what you did for me, there was no way on earth that I thought that I would ever have a CIO as where I would go in my career.

The job title was terrifying to me, let alone what was entailed in it.

But you as a mentor, and I think this is where you blend into a sponsorship where you looked at me and said, everything you are doing is this, write it down, state the case and go and ask.

You empowered me to have the strength to go and ask the question.

I think the biggest learning which I advocate and share and still have to channel sometimes, you gave me the courage to go and at least ask the question.

Even if the question and the answer I got was not one that I wanted to hear, it was still feedback that I could take forward.

I think the role of sponsors as another layer on top of that is to be able to pick up the phone and say, "Hey, this is some really good talent, go meet, go and have a conversation, might not be right now, might be right in a year, there might be the right job coming up." I think that's also important, but I think if there's any cool thing, it's to have the confidence, have the courage to ask whether it's somebody to make that call or to go and ask the question yourself.

JACKY: Because in a lot of instances people don't know.

I tell people, you could be the best designer in the world but if nobody knows it, that's all you are.

You've got to have the courage to say, "Hey, here's a little bit about me.

Here's what I need from you, here are the barriers." Yes, it may not always work out, but at least people now know and you feel empowered and they feel that they have in action.

JENNY: Got to have both.

JACKY: Believe it or not, I am an introvert, and in the spirit of focusing on what's important, I'm all about what really matters.

What I would ask for an introvert is don't let it get to the point where there's massive consternation because that's what you do.

You sit there analyzing and then working through permutations of what could happen when it may not happen.

So I'd ask you, as an introvert, to think about what's really important.

Filter out the noise that comes in your head about, well, this might go wrong, and focus on what outcome you want to achieve.

It's really about what is your coping mechanism.

You also have to understand what your coping mechanism is and how you get comfortable with that.

That self-awareness is key.

Again, yes, it's not always easy.

I'm not making it sound like it's easy, but understanding what matters to you, recognizing that, don't let it get to a point where you start to feel ill about it.

You can always get a job, but you can't always get your health back.

Focus on what's important to you.

JACKY: This is an interesting one and it's an interesting one for women.

I believe we don't traditionally get the feedback we need.

We may be going along a path thinking we're doing fine or think that, and then we have no clue.

So we have to constantly solicit, constantly ask, and figure out where you can get that feedback from and build that repertoire in your little portfolio because feedback is multifaceted.

It could be feedback from a friend.

It could be feedback from somebody who's just seen you interact once in a meeting.

You have to figure out ways of soliciting it that don't put people on the defensive.

Building a strategy around how you solicit feedback is number 1.

Number 2, yes, you mentioned that you may not get it and you keep trying.

Find all avenues, communicate in many different ways for that feedback, because, again, face-to-face may not work for someone.

If they want to give you feedback where something's not working, they may not feel comfortable.

Solicit, show some vulnerability.

Saying, "You know what, I realized that I really screwed up on this thing here.

What do you think?" Opening that up, that vulnerability helps people come in.

I think you have to think one of the many different ways that you can put yourself out there to solicit the different types of feedback and think about the many different forms that you can get that will shape and help you.

Really difficult.

I really appreciate the question, but yes, it really is about being tenacious and not letting go.

JACKY: There are many tools that help you to understand who you are.

You've got Myers-Briggs, you've got many of them.

My professional and personal way has been to use as many as possible because they're not always right, but they will build a picture for me of who I am.

I also use my personal board of directors because how I operate professionally may be totally different than how I operate personally, and maybe some of my personality traits that I won't operate personally bleed over into.

Whether they're the right ones, for the right times, I don't always know.

I have a personal board of directors which is everything from my daughter, who will tell me, "You really sound like you're losing it, mom." To a friend where I say, "Jenny, how did that come across?

What do you think?" That is a muscle you have to build and it has to be constant.

Now, you're not always going to tell me, but just you're finding these unique ways and deliberate ways of assessing and soliciting so that you can, over time, build yourself a winner.

It is not a slam dunk, it's a journey.

You have to hone the skills, but, over time, you recognize people have a visceral reaction to this thing that I do, and I know that.

So I have to tell people or I have to just ratchet it down a little bit because I know how it lands, and all of those things are how do you build your own personal self-awareness.

Hopefully, that helped.

Jenny, anything you want to add there?

JENNY: I am smiling and nodding.

I stay very grounded, particularly right now.

I've got a bunch of kids.

They're all on their online classes, I hope, at the moment.

They're all struggling to figure out what they're doing in their day.

As teams and as members, we're all struggling, we're all figuring out what we do.

In moments of stress like this one, behaviors that show up for all of us, myself included.

At any time, I think it's really important right now.

I think you've nailed it.

I mean, you've got to show yourself as open, as curious.

You've got to have the bank of people.

My kids do not hesitate to give me feedback.

I would love it if everyone was the same.

I think it's the gift that keeps on giving through this.

I do not have perfection as my line.

As long as I think we're open about that, perfection is such a fallacy.

Particularly right now, if I said the wrong thing, if I gave the wrong intent, let us get that feedback and course-correct and move forward.

I mean, I think we owe it to one another to be kind to each other.

That means sharing and giving a little bit so that we can all collectively move forward.

JACKY: That's a good point there about trying to tap in and understand the unintended consequences of your behavior is the key to being self-aware.

I know what my coping mechanisms are to be able to show up in certain ways, assuming positive intent.

If I don't assume positive intent, I know how my behavior manifests itself.

Don't take things personally.

If I do, I know how my behavior is going to manifest itself.

How you cope, learning your coping mechanism is key, and that builds your self-awareness.

JENNY: Understandably, when you sign language, we're very visual.

So often, I have to disclaim, "If my face squints, screws up, please don't take offense, I'm communicating," but I think we all have our own quirks.

It's reliance on one another to help us move forward.

JACKY: That's a great approach.

I know I'm an agitator.

I know that.

It's just part of who I am because I want to challenge the status quo because that's how we get creativity in different ways of working and thinking, but it doesn't always land.

For me, and again, this is Jacky speaking, understanding what really matters at that time and what battles you on a fight is also key.

I'll use Year Up as an example.

When I was bringing in Year Up, it was, "We don't want this company.

We already have programs here.

We're already bringing service through," etc.

It was just not good enough for me.

I found different ways to agitate because I knew that this line of agitation wasn't working.

I found another way.

I've also had experiences where it just blew up, where it just there was no turning back.

I would say, remain and always focus on how you can challenge the status quo because that's how we become better individuals.

That's how we solve world problems; is curiosity.

I want to quote Satya, but this curiosity is key.

You may not get it right the first time, but go at it, because fundamentally, we all need to be curious and we all need to agitate in some way, shape, or form.

Now, there are personalities that are not conducive to you, and understanding some of that is also key, but I firmly believe that if you lose that, if you lose that ability, that authenticity, you lose yourself a little bit.

Don't feel beaten down, the world is full of challenges.

You can rise through this.

I'd say just stick with it.

I know it can be difficult, trust me, I know the consequences.

Sometimes they don't work out, but focus on you're doing the right thing because you know it matters.

Core values.

JENNY: It's funny.

My family and friends, they tell me now that they always knew I'd end up doing something like this, but I will tell you for the first 15 years of my career, absolutely not.

I worked and volunteered.

I'm deaf myself.

Also my parents were teachers in special needs advisors, so I lived with disability.

My sister's deaf, my dad's deaf.

I volunteered in special schools through high school.

I went on to do respite care.

Then normally flicked into music and IT, which was quite the bizarre shift at the time.

How I got back here, which combines everything that I love, with really a beautiful exercise.

In fact, a previous manager sat me down and said, write everything you love, write everything you hate, which we all have.

Everything that you're passionate about in the middle.

This was when I was supporting and working in customer service.

I had a list of love, and I love strategy, and vision, and driving engineering, and driving consensus, and I hate Excel.

I'm in the middle, was I'm passionate about inclusion, and disability, and seeing a future with technology that's different to what we have today.

Then really that started the cascade, but it was an amazing process to go through.

I encourage anyone and everyone to do it.

To the previous point, how do you agitate?

I am grounded every day to providing a new future for the billion plus around there with disabilities in the world.

If I agitate, it's because I believe it's the right thing to do for my fellow deaf colleagues, for my fellow colleagues who use wheelchairs or have autism, or with mental health right now, being such a hot topic.

That's what I'm grounded to.

I don't care who I send an e-mail to.

It's grounded and it's for a very solid purpose and passion.

It was a journey, but I definitely landed in the right place.

JACKY: When you think about your life and what you're doing, think about your experiences.

What deeply matters to you, deeply rooted in what's important to you, it evolves.

When I was a young mother, what was important to me was, wait a second, we don't have a care act.

There's no daycare on site, and then my passion was all about how do I make sure that I can manage working with my children as well as I can personally.

That was a passion right there, and that was a purpose.

Purpose evolved.

Why is it so hard to get into the upper ranks of an organization?

What can I do to really change the dial here on that?

Hey, wait a second, I'm the only person of color in this organization.

What's going on here?

These experiences along the way build an evolved passion.

Don't look for that one silver bullet.

Think about your life.

Think about your journey, the things that matter to you most, and it will come to you.

I firmly believe that.

JACKY: I think my superpower is to quickly understand what's important to someone.

That empathy for me is a superpower.

It really is.

Jenny.

JENNY: My husband turned around to me last night and said, you do realize that you're a bit of an empath.

I think that empathy for my customers, people out there, is a superpower that whoever has it, because you're able then to channel it into the company and help us move forward.

Whether that comes from having a disability being connected to it, being black, whatever your gorgeousness is, I think being able to bring that in and channel it, use it, drive it, I think empathy is a core construct.