

TRANSCRIPT OF PODCAST

WORK WITH PURPOSE
EPISODE #37

DOMINIC PRICE

Work Futurist
Atlassian

Hosted by MEGAN APONTE-PAYNE and ISABELLE FRANKLIN, IPAA Future Leaders Committee Members

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ISABELLE FRANKLIN: Hello everyone, and welcome to Work with Purpose, a podcast series run by the Institute of Public Administration Australia in partnership with contentgroup and with the support of the Australian Public Service Commission. I'd like to begin today's podcast by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we're meeting across today, both the Ngunnawal people and the Gadigal of the Eora nation. I'd like to pay my respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging, and acknowledge the ongoing contribution they make to the life of both of these places and the broader region. IPAA is a professional body, focused on the promotion of excellence and professionalism in public administration. We are a non-profit, no-partisan organisation that works in partnership with the public sector, private sector, academia, and other institutions to provide a platform for discussion and debate about improving and striving for excellence in Public Administration Australia.

ISABELLE FRANKLIN: The Work with Purpose podcast series was launched in early April last year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The series has provided an insight into how the Australian Public Service has responded to the pandemic with leaders from across the APS joining the program. My name is Isabelle Franklin and I work at the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

I'm joined by Megan Aponte-Payne who works at the Australian Trade and Investment Commission. We are both on IPAA's Future Leaders Committee. Now, today we have a very special guest joining us. I'd like to welcome Dominic Price who works at Atlassian. Atlassian is an Australian software company that develops products for software developers and project managers, and Dom works as their resident work futurist. This means that Dom is Atlassian's in-house doctor who designs collaborative patterns which are easily adaptable for any purpose. Dom is joining us virtually today from Sydney. We're so happy to welcome you to the podcast, Dom.

DOMINIC PRICE: Awesome. Thanks for having me. Looking forward to the conversation today.

ISABELLE FRANKLIN: Now I'd like to hand over to wonderful Megan who will kick off by asking Dom a couple of questions.

MEGAN APONTE-PAYNE: Thanks so much, Isabelle. So, Dom, 2020 wasn't good for any of us, but I hear it was particularly tough for you. How so?

DOMINIC PRICE: Yeah, I mean, there's a few parts to that question. One is whenever I reflect on 2020, I think if one had a different experience, there was some commentary at some stage that we're all in the same boat, and actually, I differentiate it. I think we're all in the same storm and we're all in very different boats. I think some people who've been in luxury yachts floating around and they actually have had a great year. Certainly, some people in the stock market have had an amazing year. And then others, I think have genuinely struggled. And I think inadvertently what we've created is a system that it's more than two-tier. It's an infinite number of tiers. And hopefully, one of the things we've got out of this is a level of compassion.

- DOMINIC PRICE: For me, personally, 2020 was a year that... It's an odd one. It's a year that I didn't want to move on from because of what happened in it. I didn't want to into 2021 because I hadn't dealt with 2020 yet. There was sort of two major milestones for me outside of the pandemic in 2021. My own surprise diagnosis with bowel cancer, a semi-surprise, I have a family history. So, I went and got tested every year, but certainly not something I was expecting at the age of 42 to get the call going, "Oh, by the way." And I was like, "Oh, that's the thing that happens to other people, right?" And sort of fast track through a surgery there that was in a typical blokey fashion, I decided to ignore all the consults, go for the surgery, and only when I woke up in hospital, worked out what actually happened, I was like, "Oh, you've cut giant holes in me. Of course, that makes sense. I should have read the leaflet you gave me."
- DOMINIC PRICE: And so, that was one sort of giant milestone of sort of understanding my own mortality and life stage and sort of this view I think we all have at some stage that we're completely indispensable and then you're like, "Oh, I'm actually quite fragile and breakable." But also we're all anti-fragile, like how we've come back stronger, and I think I, in a weird way, have come back from that stronger.
- DOMINIC PRICE: The second experience with my sister, who's also my best friend, Trudy, got diagnosed six or so years ago with breast cancer. And in the middle of the pandemic, I was in a situation where post-surgery, not only was my doctor not wanting me to travel but the government weren't going to allow me to travel because we closed the borders. So, I was very fortunate that I managed to get one of the compassionate exemptions and get back to the UK and spend a couple of weeks with my sister. Sadly, she passed away in May last year, and that in itself was a strange moment. The fact that I was able to get back and spend the time with her which I didn't think I would do, having that very precious time in that final moments with a loved one, but then the weirdness of coming back to Australia and spending 14 days in quarantine.
- DOMINIC PRICE: And again, a two-tone experience. In part, a horrible experience to be by yourself for two weeks, in others, a great forcing function to go, "Well, I can't do anything. I can't go anywhere. I can't distract myself with myriad of things. I can't even open a window. So, I might as well just use the time to reflect and think and kind of recenter. What do I want from life? I've had two experiences that I wasn't expecting. I can either use them. I can either let them bury me, or I can use them as a foundation to build upon and try and get bigger, better, bolder, stronger from it." And I chose the latter.
- DOMINIC PRICE: So, it wasn't a terrible year. I mean, I had my own illness and I lost my sister, and those two things were really bad, but I think we actually run the risk of letting things like that paint a picture of our entirety versus going, "Well, she was in my life for 42 years and she was an amazing person. That's great. That's better than nothing." And so, how can we continue to live life? Otherwise, we might as well just stop and give up.

MEGAN APONTE-PAYNE: Mm. It's so interesting that for you, you actually frame last year less around COVID and around other things that happened in your life. And I think it's quite interesting and I'm in Canberra, but I imagine particularly for our friends in Melbourne last year, the amount of time that you talk about must've been just amplified for them. And you hear stories about mental health issues really coming to the fore and people just being left with their own thoughts. What do you think it was in your case that enabled you to be stuck with your own thoughts but somehow turn them into focusing on the positive things that you'd had in your life rather than dwelling on the tough things?

DOMINIC PRICE: Yeah, I honestly don't know and I think that's okay. It's weird. I can't pinpoint a certain feature or capability I've got. I'm no superhero. I don't have a cape. I think all that happened was a moment of just going, "I'm at a fork in the road." And I think it's the same thing with the pandemic. I've got plenty of friends who bad things have happened to them, whether it be COVID related or other, and they've gone, "Okay, that's happened. I'm going to spend an amount of time mourning, stressing, getting annoyed with the world, getting really angry and getting wound up, and then I'm going to ring-fence that time, and then I'm going to spend the rest of the time going, 'Well, what can I do?'" Right? Because there's something about finding the things that are within your influence or control and doing something with them.

DOMINIC PRICE: And I think for me, I don't know whether this is my English upbringing or what but I think there's always people way worse off. And so, I'm like, "Yeah, it's not ideal. Last year was pretty terrible in some parts. And this is terrible in some and good in others." You're like, "Okay, so that's life." Right? There's no perpetual motion of days where everything's absolutely awesome, otherwise, we wouldn't be bothered getting on with it. And so, I think it's how we deal with those low moments, and again, even with not just Melbourne, but the rest of the world.

DOMINIC PRICE: Yeah, for me, I've been battling recently with a whole lot of guilt as Australia starts to open up more. And every Sunday evening, it's FaceTime back home to the family in the UK. And they're like, "We haven't left the house." And I'm like, "Well, I've been to the beach, and a concert, and a rugby game, and saw my mates in the pub, and here's all the things I've done." And it's not a lack of empathy. It's sharing the truth of what I've been doing, which is what they want to know. But I think we've got to have an appreciation that everyone is again even still now experiencing this very differently.

DOMINIC PRICE: But I still think the focal point of going, "What can I do?" is going to be infinitely more valuable to us than woe is me. Not that we shouldn't have that moment of something bad's happened and I feel terrible for it, but going, "That in itself isn't a thought that's going to get you anywhere so how can we..." And it's the same in life and in work. Right? I think that transposes across to the work situation where you're like, "Oh, I didn't get a promotion. I want to sit and sulk for a year." Or I could get some feedback as to why I didn't get it, find the things that I can do, and start to experiment and explore. It's the same amount of energy, sulking or action.

It's just one of them moves you forward and the other one moves you further backwards.

MEGAN APONTE-PAYNE: Exactly. In fact, the one I think almost justifies to the people who didn't promote you why you weren't ready to be promoted.

DOMINIC PRICE: There you go. The irony, right, when someone says to you, "We're not going to promote you," and you have a tantrum, and they're like, "The reason being you're quite immature sometimes." I'll stop banging the table then.

MEGAN APONTE-PAYNE: Exactly. I wanted to pick up on that thought about work, and in particular, I wanted to talk a bit about presenteeism, and productivity, and working from home, and how working from home has brought those ideas to the fore where I think before COVID, the idea that we could be anywhere but the office and actually be productive was insane. But now, I think we've all accepted that it's perfectly possible.

DOMINIC PRICE: I wish that was true. I honestly did. I love your optimism. I do. It's infectious. And I think if we could have more people in power with that mindset, the world would be infinitely better. But the reality is, and it's a sad reality, is that certainly in many ranks in many organisations, the narrative I'm hearing right now is we need to get people back. And not for any other reason, let's be honest, than lack of trust. Right? And it's probably important that we separate styles of work. Right? There are knowledge workers across the world, over a billion knowledge workers, in Australia a large percentage of the workforce is in that knowledge worker space, and that's people who are using their brain. They don't physically need to be at a desk to perform a task. And there is also a huge amount of our population and workforce in Australia that aren't knowledge workers. Right? They're practical workers and they do need... There's some physical aspect of their role, and they do need to be in a certain environment to perform that role, and I think that's important, even if you look at it at an organisational level.

DOMINIC PRICE: I was doing some work recently with the Head of HR for Woolies. And she was explaining, she's like, "Some of our workforce are knowledge workers and a whole load aren't." And so, if we're talking about flexibility and presenteeism, right, for someone running a store, that's very important. For someone in head office, less so. How do we do that in an equitable way? If we want to introduce flexibility, how do we do that so it's fair? And I think that's a great conversation for us to have as a workforce. How do we do that for different people?

DOMINIC PRICE: I think there's a few things that I'd love to challenge there. For me, presenteeism is something that if we call it what it is which is a lack of trust, it has been apparent in the workforce for a long time. It's been due an overhaul, just like nine to five, Monday to Friday has been due an overhaul for knowledge workers, but we've struggled with it mainly because of things like productivity. Right?

DOMINIC PRICE: There's this idea, and we have to remind ourselves, a lot of people forget, productivity is a measure of output over time. Quite conveniently in the last year, people have missed the time bit. And they're like, "Oh, you did more outputs. Well done you." And you're like, "Yeah, but they didn't commute and they worked their commute time." And the leader's like, "I don't care. I mean, they produce more widgets. So, I'm over the moon. And I sent them a mental health app so they'll be fine. They'll be all right." And you're like, "I think you're missing the point." And so, the conversation needs to evolve to going, "Well, productivity's probably the wrong measure for knowledge workers." So, it's around effectiveness. It's around impacts. It's what are the outcomes we're trying to achieve. I was having a conversation the other week with an author and he explained, he's like, "It's not how many words I write. It's how good the book is."

MEGAN APONTE-PAYNE: Yeah.

DOMINIC PRICE: Right? And it's obvious, but you look at most organisations, and the thing they're measuring is productivity, is how many words did you write. And you're like, "But what if the words were crap?" And they're like, "It doesn't matter. Write more words. What can we do to help you write more words?" And I think we need to evolve that conversation. Again, it's been due an overhaul for a while but we need to really put the pressure on there.

DOMINIC PRICE: I think the scariest thing right now is actually more around diversity and inclusion. Our push for presenteeism removes flexibility in the workforce which means that we can hire diverse people. They're not going to feel a sense of inclusion. They're not going to do the best work of their life because we're forcing a timeframe on them that is not flexible and that nine to five, Monday to Friday precludes certain people from work. People that have an amazing mind, an amazing heart, amazing emotion, and intelligence are being precluded from the workforce. Why? For no sane reason. And so, I think if we first look at diversity inclusion and we have the honest conversation, we've probably gone back 15 years. There was a stat, the US in December lost a net of 140,000 jobs from the labour market, in the US in December, 100% women.

MEGAN APONTE-PAYNE: Yeah.

DOMINIC PRICE: 100%. And you're like, "Whoa." It's such a bad stat. If it was 90%, I'm sure there'd be more headlines, but at a hundred, it's so bad. Do I give up because it's so bad? And then one in four women in the workforce in the US are thinking of leaving because of care responsibilities or they earn less than their husbands who is doing the same job as them, but 83 cents to the dollar and you start talking about stuff.

DOMINIC PRICE: And so, I think this is an amazing opportunity right now for us to learn from the experiment. First of all, we have to accept the experiment was just that. It was an experiment. It had weird constraints. It had weird situation, weird environment, but there's a whole lot of stuff we can learn, but we need to do that on purpose. It won't happen by accident. Bad things happen by accident. We need to do it on purpose and understand

what kind of environment do we want to build because if we've gone back 10, 15 years in diversity inclusion, we can accelerate that. We can get that back through meaningful, remote, and distributed work, right, by giving access in the labour markets to people that can't work Monday to Friday, nine to five, or can't physically work in an office, and actually go, "That's amazing," but we have to do it on purpose. And right now, I'm seeing the token conversation. Across the board, I'm not convinced I'm seeing the follow-through.

MEGAN APONTE-PAYNE: The statistic you gave on women really hits home for me because I'm a working mother myself and I turned down what was potentially a dream job because they couldn't give me a laptop. And my argument to them was if I have a laptop and I have to pick up a sick child who needs to be taken home to sleep, I can log on from home and I can work the rest of the afternoon. The alternative is I take sick leave and I don't progress the work. So, surely, it's a win-win to help me to help you. It's just incredible that I think there's been a real... It's been a really kind of hodgepodge of some organisations moving towards that and embracing it, and some being left in the dark ages.

MEGAN APONTE-PAYNE: I wanted to pick you up on your point about measuring productivity. And I think one of the tricky things there is metrics. Hours are quantifiable. Outputs are quantifiable. How do you measure the quality of a book as opposed to the... Look at lawyers, for example, who work per minutes. Have you've got any ideas about how we can start to shift how we measure things like that?

DOMINIC PRICE: Yeah, I mean, there's some amazing work out there. I'm a massive fan, there's a guy called Barry O'Reilly. He's a bit of a minx on the Negroni's but he's a wonderful author and wrote a book called 'Unlearning'. And it's all about the transformation businesses and people are going through and in there, he covers a lot of what are the measures of success. And it's a popular topic. There's a whole lot of other authors out there, and I spoke about it as well, the idea of outcomes over outputs. You're right. Outputs are easy. Immediate gratification. It happened this week. How busy was I? Right?

DOMINIC PRICE: But there are the weeks, right, when you get home and you've got your kid, and your partner, and parents, and friends, and the cactus, and the dog, and they're like, "How's your week?" And you're like, "Busy, busy, busy, busy." I'm in a forum, busy, in a committee, busy, and a this..." And they're like, "Really? It sounds soulless." And then there's other weeks when you get home, and you're like, "I nailed it. I was effective. I had impact. I did stuff." You got paid the exact same those two weeks. But in one of them, you were a fun person to be around. Right? And so, it's like well, what's the difference? And the difference is when we just think over a slightly different time horizon. So, that's step one. So, don't just think about the task. Think about when the task has the impact or effect. And then the second part and this is the hardest bit is who were you trying to affect. Right?

DOMINIC PRICE:

So, if you think about writing a book, it's not how many words did I write, it's how many people read this and took an action. Right? How did I create a behaviour change? And admittedly, it's harder to measure, but when you actually find ways... We talk about goals, signals, and measures. What's my goal? I want people to change their behaviour. What's my signal? Feedback, questions from people, insights, engagement. Cool. What's my measure? I don't know. I'll work it out later. And so, I actually do them in that sequence on purpose. We borrowed it from Google. But goal, signals, measures is a sequence. You've got to know your goal. You've got to know the signals, like how do I know that I'm trending in the right direction. But the measures, sometimes they're hard to figure out. And often, the most obvious ones, the ones that are right in front of you are the worst. And so, often for some of our more speculative work and I do this on myself, I'm like, "I know what signal I'm looking for, but maybe I'll come back to measures later on."

MEGAN APONTE-PAYNE:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Fair call. Look, I'm loving everything you're saying, and I totally agree. I mean, I think about public speaking and we tend to all be really nervous about making mistakes, but really, it's actually not about us. It's about the listener and what they receive. And as soon as we focus on that, we are okay. In terms of everything you're saying, I agree. My question is, and I think this is something both Isabelle and I experience as fairly young people in the organisations we work in and we're not in formal positions of power or authority, how can we go about changing attitudes within our workplaces?

DOMINIC PRICE:

Yeah, I love that question. My caveat here, in my days in Deloitte, I did a bit of work in government. I think I had hair before then, and then it all disappeared. I found it very, very stressful. So, I take my hat off to you. There's a level of patience and calmness required in your environment that I do not have as a feature. It's not a bug. It is a feature. It's just the way I am. I blame my parents for it.

DOMINIC PRICE:

The reality is, is that step one is to acknowledge that we're all role models. And this is certainly for senior leaders I work with both across public and private sector. This is one of those really simple things that sounds very profound, and it's not that profound. So, the stats show that on any given day, you're a role model to about 20 people. Right? Your partner, your kids, your family, your colleagues. A whole lot of people look at you and go, "Damn, she's really successful. She's got it." And they copy your behaviour. The thing is, they never tell you when they're doing that. Right? It happens very subtly. And that is good that they don't tell you because if they told you it would be creepy. If someone in the coffee shop walked up to you and went, "I love the way you run a meeting, and so I'm role modelling your behaviours right now," you'd call HR or the police. Right?

DOMINIC PRICE:

What it means though is they don't know if you're exhibiting a positive behaviour or a negative one. You're in a foul mood today, and you're grumpy and banging the table. They go, "Well, Megan banged the table, and she seems really successful. Maybe I'll try that." Right? And so, the idea is, is that if you want to affect change on others, you have to go first.

DOMINIC PRICE:

Now, that seems quite controversial because a lot of leadership books, and I've read way too many because I used to travel around the world a lot and I'd use them to fall asleep to, is you read leadership books and they don't tell you about starting with yourself. They tell you about how to empower others, how to motivate others. It's almost like as a leader, you get this little bag of magic dust, and you're supposed to see a team that's in turmoil, and you sprinkle your little magic dust, and they're like, "Oh, I am motivated now. Thank you for inspiring me." That never happens. It's never going to happen. You have to motivate yourself. You have to find your own purpose, your own passion, and then you role model.

DOMINIC PRICE:

I've been using a couple of examples recently with senior leaders, leaders of all shapes and sizes to say leadership isn't a title. I know in many organisations and industries it is. On the whole though, it's not. Leadership is you deciding that you're a leader. You're leading something. You're leading a project. You don't change your title for that, but you're leading a project, or you've got some people that you're working with, you're leading a team. And so, it's this thing where most people that are upset by this, they will always... I get this a lot, certainly, in the US, they'll go, "The problem is management." And I'm like, "What level are you in?" They explain. I'm like, "Are you management?" "Oh no, no, no, no, no, no. Management fear the people." Right? And you're like, "You're one of them." So, therefore, be the change you seek. Now, admittedly, some environments, that's easier than others. What I say to a lot of people is find something that you can try for free.

DOMINIC PRICE:

We ran this exercise about seven years ago at Atlassian called The Team Health Monitor. Right? How do you get your team together to assess the health of the team, all you need is a working thumb. Right? Thumb up, we're good. Thumb sideways, we're not so good. Thumb down, we're a bit sick. And as a team, we do this on Zoom, or we do it online, and we do it in person, whatever, and we vote. And then we pick one area and we focus on it to improve on. Right? And people go, "Ah, that's amazing." It's free. But that's always as a team going, "What's not working? What do we improve?" It takes the pressure off you as a leader going, "I've got an opinion that things aren't great, and I want to improve them." Like, "Oh, here she goes again. Off on her high horse. Probably promotion round." Right? We've all worked with the leaders that do the peacock. They wait for the performance review season, and suddenly, it's all about change and you're like, "No, just be authentic and be yourself."

DOMINIC PRICE:

But I think role modelling is a superpower we all have in our artillery. And I think we massively underuse it which is if you want to see change, go first. And if you then get the outcome, share the story. And so, I saw it actually in the US in a public service office in California, tried the health monitor, run it with her team, had a great success. One of her colleagues heard about it, got FOMO, got fear of missing out, said, "Look, how's it work?" She ran one for them. They'd run a few. They went up to the leaders and said, "We've run 10 of these. Here's the aggregate of what we're struggling with. Don't worry, we've already solved a few of the things because we're empowered and we've already solved them. However, we need your help on this other stuff." Right? There was never a giant 18-

month rollout plan. There wasn't a project manager who ran it. It was just do it organically and do it within the context of the work you're doing. It builds way more momentum.

MEGAN APONTE-PAYNE: Yeah, totally. I really like that. I really like talking about incremental change and leading by example. And you've talked a bit about flexibility and a bit about kind of finding your happiness and doing work that I think you really enjoy because when you enjoy it, you do it well, you influence others. I know you've got a personal moral inventory that you also use to kind of try and measure some of these things. Would you mind taking us through that?

DOMINIC PRICE: Yeah. So, this actually was born out of my time in isolation and quarantine when I got so bored of the lack of TV, and I just couldn't watch any more Netflix, I was like, "I have to do something." And in trying to gravitate myself out of this kind of semi-morbid state of my own illness and my sister passing, I was like, "How do we make sense of life? How do we make sense of our own happiness?" And I borrowed it from actually from something called the quadruple bottom lines. It's out of the world of finance. And the world of finance created this to say, "If we only ever publish financial statements off profit, then that's all we will care about, and actually, we know we care about other things." And so, the idea of the personal moral inventory is to say, "As a human, how am I going to score myself on four areas?"

DOMINIC PRICE: One is productivity and profits, the work aspect. And you can only score yourself minus one, naught, or one. Right? There's no two, three, or four. One's the highest you get. And you pick what a one means to you. So, you're like, "Cool, productivity and profit. What am I?" Second one is people, around how I impact both my own sort of mental, physical health, but how I impact others around me, my family, friends, community. It's all about humanity. Right? And the third one is planning. Right? What is my carbon footprint? How am I actually impacting the environment around me? So, if you're a company, but this isn't for companies, this is for people. When thinking about it in a company aspect, you can be making a shedload of cash, but if you're killing the planet at the same time, that's not a good trade-off. I'd rather you made less profit and save the planet. And you're like, "Oh, cool. Now, I understand." And then the fourth area is purpose, and it's kind of purpose with a small p. It's not the superhero, I want to save the planet, yeah, I need to remedy the world of food or like water shortage. It's going, "What's my purpose as a mum? What's my purpose as a parent, as a partner, as a daughter, as a member of society, of work, and how do I find my purpose and the impact I want to have?"

DOMINIC PRICE: And essentially, you score yourself on those four things, and the areas where you're a minus one or zero, you're like, "Cool. What do I want to do about that?" Now, what happens is, and this has happened after I shared this late last year, the number of people that ping me and said, "I've just done the personal moral inventory. I was a one on productivity and profit, and every goal I've got for 2021 was about productivity and profit. But my deficit is in people or planet or purpose. I need to rejig. I need to rebalance." And it's funny because these are highly intelligent people I'm

dealing with. Right? So, it's not stupidity and I don't think it's ignorance. It's just we get carried away with day-to-day. And occasionally, you got to stop and go, "If I was to take an inventory right now, how would I score myself?" Not how would someone else score me. How would I score myself? And what are the things, the corrective action I want to take because we know we've got limited time in the world, and we all want to leave this place with some graceful sort of departure and having had some impact. What is that impact?

DOMINIC PRICE:

And it's very rare you hear someone on their deathbed going, "I wish I'd worked a bit more. You know what I really wish? I wish I was more productive." No one says that. Right? They wish for like they'd spent more time with family or friends, or they'd left a legacy around the planet or to live with something with purpose. And you're like, "Well, if that's what you wish for on your deathbed, just front-load it." Right? Don't wait until you're knocking on the door to do it. You can do that now by just taking stock of where you're at.

DOMINIC PRICE:

And again, it's the same adage as before. It's what are the things you can do or can influence? What are the things you can take action on? So, for me, planet, I can't save the planet single-handedly. But since I did my last sort of personal moral inventory, I only eat meat maximum two days a week. I used to be probably six or seven. I've gone down to maximum two and I'm recycling a huge amount. What, reduce, reuse, recycle. I mean, I've cut down on flying, not from choice but my carbon footprint's improved. And I'm doing a lot more stuff around investing in companies like Seabin that are trying to improve the ocean. So, I'm like, "There you go." Now, that's not going to put me as a one or anything higher, but it helped improve where I was at. And then once I've taken some action, I reassess, and you find that they almost go out of filter. Right?

DOMINIC PRICE:

I had a lady that I did the exercise with a few weeks ago, and she's like, "I'm like a shining light one on purpose." And she's like, "I used to be a minus one." And she's like, "But I'm probably now a minus one on people because I've dragged my family up to Byron and I'm living this wonderful hedonistic lifestyle, and my family hate me." So, she went from a corporate role, full pendulum swing to hedonist yogi in Byron, but didn't take the family on the experience and the journey. And so, she's like, "Oh, I understand now. I can have this and my family, but I need to rebalance." And you're like, "Yeah, there you go." It's just about find where you're at. Find your own inventory and then find the action to take to improve.

MEGAN APONTE-PAYNE:

So, I imagine when you're rebalancing... I imagine a lot of people listening are probably a one for productivity and maybe zeros or in deficits on the other three. And I think COVID's probably allowed some people to try and increase those other ones. And I think sometimes it's time, having more time to do a hobby or to help plant trees or volunteer or whatever it is. And so, I feel like you might be able to identify how to increase those ones, but what if your productivity... You're having trouble in work because I imagine one of the easy ways to do it would be to reduce your hours, go part-time. How do you do that when you've got a workplace that's not open or not used to this idea, or doesn't actually care about

those other three pillars because they are only interested in the one that affects them?

DOMINIC PRICE:

Yeah. I mean, we did a return on action report, I think late last year or early last year, actually, around the sentiment of employees and what they expect from their workplace, and it's changed. Right? It's changed an awful lot. They want companies to have purpose, to have values, to care about the planet. And so, I just fear for companies that are creating environments where that isn't the case because they're going to hire mercenaries that are just there for the money. There's going to be no growth. There's going to be no outperformance. There's going to be no consistent delivery. You're not going to have to delighted customers and consumers. And so, it feels like a really short-term bet, to be honest. But the ones that do invest in it authentically, and I use the word authentically on purpose. It's very easy to push out a corporate social responsibility report and go, "We care about the planet," and then do nothing about it.

DOMINIC PRICE:

You want to see the ones that actually follow through authentically. But I think, first of all, you've got to realise employees have a choice. So, employees have a choice. We were at quite, even at pandemic times, quite low unemployment rates. And so, people will move. Right? They will move with their feet. They're not going to tell you out loud that they're frustrated with your working style or similarly like if you've got micromanagers. Right? It wasn't that long ago that I was hearing lots of stories, people were being micromanagers. They've now been reduced because people have moved on and companies have gone, "Hey, Bob, your people keep leaving and keep on telling us that you're micromanaging them. We need to talk about this." And it's not an old person thing or a young person thing. It's about the willingness to unlearn and grow and develop, and we all have that capability. We have it from a very young age, all the way through life. It's a mindset.

DOMINIC PRICE:

I want to pick up on something interesting you said before though, which is the notion of time. Right? We all have the same amount of time. It's 24 hours in a day. It's equally distributed. What we do have a decision to make on is our priorities. And I think a lot of people get the two confused. It's like, "I've not got the time to exercise." Well, none of us have if you fill your time with other stuff, but how can you find the balance? And there's some silly little hacks. Right? I did a hack probably just about a year ago. I was starting to get really frustrated, eight hours a day on Zoom. So, I flick at least one meeting a day to a phone call. I put my headphones in and I walk and talk. Now, again, I'm fortunate. I work with people that allow that, but that gives me one hour of vitamin D. Stroll around the block and actually, the medium of talking to someone on a phone it's just refreshing for my eyes and my brain, right, versus staring at a screen for eight hours a day.

DOMINIC PRICE:

So, there's lots of little things we can do. I think the reality is find somewhere where you can have impact, where you can be the best version of yourself. This isn't just selfish, like find somewhere where you feel comfortable. I actually need business leaders to wake up to something. And I know some people who will listen to this will love stats. Right? Diverse enterprises outperform their competitors 2.3 times on cash flow per employee. Right? And they outperform their peers 25% if they have gender diversity, and by 36% if they have race and ethnicity diversity. Right? And they get 19% more revenue from innovation.

MEGAN APONTE-PAYNE:

Wow.

DOMINIC PRICE:

So, it's like, okay, "Here's diverse inclusive teams, and the payback, here's the ROI." And they go, "Cool, okay." Stop hiring people like you. And it's just odd. I don't know how much more evidence we need to say that diversity inclusion's a good thing, and then we go, "Oh, well, it is but as long as everyone works the same way." And you're like, "Well, that's not inclusion, that's exclusion. That's working your way not a way." So, I think we just need a bit of a wake-up call. Part of the danger in Australia if I'm deadly honest, we've had 27 years of amazing economic success, and we've maybe got a little bit complacent and lazy. We think that digging things out of the ground and printing money and tourism will survive us forever without going, "How do we invest in the education system and the current workforce to make sure we've got the right skills for future generations, for future roles?" You just have to look at World Economic Forum and their future skills report. We are sadly lacking in the skills we need to build robust and resilient industries, right, the future-proofing industries.

DOMINIC PRICE:

We're well capable of doing it, and I think we've got great a foundation to it. But again, we've got to do it on purpose, not by accident. So, even if you look at re-skilling... I've been looking a lot at microlearning. Right? How you can learn it in the context of the role not going doing... If you're like me, a 43-year-old middle-aged white guy, and we get a hard time, it's not easy being 43-year-old middle-aged white guy, is how do you go about doing microlearning. I'm not going to go to night school. I'm not going to go and do another degree. But I'm still capable of learning. Now, to do that, I have to, first of all, choose to do it. I have to find the thing to unlearn, the old habit ritual to forget, and then I have to go and learn something new, and then go and apply it, and accept that the first time I do it, I'm probably going to be rubbish at it. So, you need to park your ego at the door. If we do that as people and as an economy, we will create an amazing economy and future industries and sort of a country that thrives in another 27 years. But I think the danger is we look at the past as evidence of what might happen in the future. And I just don't think in modern times that's real.

MEGAN APONTE-PAYNE: Yeah, totally. And I think you're right. COVID is providing a really good opportunity for us to all re-examine our own priorities, both personally and as a society. Look, Dom, that's been absolutely fascinating and inspiring. I was wondering if you have any final parting thoughts for our listeners who are thinking about how to reprioritize their lives or how to push for taking on more leadership-type roles or influence within their workplaces.

DOMINIC PRICE: Yeah, it's a good question, actually. My provocation would be find the thing that you can do that you're not going to get fired for, and there's a lot of things on that list. Right? Find the thing that you can do and the thing that's probably stopping you from doing it is your own ego. And I mean that in the nicest possible way. It's the fear of getting it wrong. But if no one else is going to try it, you'll be fine. Just sod it. But if you're not going to get fired, then it's worth trying. If you're not going to kill anyone or get fired, those two criteria, and then just try it. Right? Be quite vulnerable and authentic with it and try it. And take a few people along. Tap a peer on the shoulder and go, "Hey, I'm going to try this thing."

DOMINIC PRICE: And I want to give people some pragmatic examples. We published our internal playbook. I wrote the way that Atlassian scaled, the way all of our teams work. We published it about seven or eight years ago. It's called the Atlassian Team Playbook. It's online. It's free. You don't have to pay for it. You don't need a credit card or anything. And it's got a whole lot of exercises you can do with your team. The health monitor I mentioned before, how you can reflect on a project and drive improvement, how you can reprioritize the team, all these really simple workshopy exercises, and pick one of those and just do it. Right? I've given you the template. There's the website there with all the instructions. There's a video guide. And so, just find the thing that you can go and try. Even if it doesn't work, you'll learn something. You learn something about yourself, about your colleagues, about your organisation.

DOMINIC PRICE: And so, all I want your listeners to sign up for is every week I should learn something new. Right? If you do that, if you put yourself out there and learn something new, and again, I didn't say succeed because if you're really experimenting and exploring, half the things will fail and you'll go, "It's okay. No one died and I didn't get fired. But the good news is I learned something. Here's the thing that I learned." And then you share that. Right? And you create this kind of learning cycle. I think if we can improve our learning velocity as a society, we will create an infinitely better future than the past we've experienced, and I think it's on us to create that future.

ISABELLE FRANKLIN: Thank you so much for your time here with us today, Dom. It's been absolutely fantastic to hear your thoughts on these issues. And in particular, I've really enjoyed hearing your thoughts on how we move away from tokenistic conversations about diversity and inclusion into creating real motivation and a real push for positive change in this space, about role modelling to encourage that behaviour, and about reprioritizing to ensure we're ticking off on those four Ps as part of our own personal moral inventories, and to front-load it rather than regretting

not having done it on your deathbed. We really appreciate you being a part of today's podcast. So, thank you so much.

ISABELLE FRANKLIN:

Thanks again to IPAA, contentgroup, and to the Australian Public Service Commission for your ongoing support. This program would not happen without the teams across these organisations. So, thank you so much to you all. And finally, thank you to our wonderful audience for listening in to today's discussion. I hope you got something out of it. I know I certainly have. That's all we have time for now. But with the Work with Purpose podcast, we're back at the same time next week.

VOICEOVER:

Work with Purpose is a production of contentgroup in partnership with the Institute of Public Administration Australia, and with the support of the Australian Public Service Commission.