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Vocational Rehabilitation  
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Onsite CART Captioning

The Power of You  
11:06 a.m. - 11:49 a.m.

>> All right we're going to get ready to go here, so if everyone can find their seat, we're in the final session. I think you're really going to enjoy this one.

I'm excited to introduce Jonathan Kaufman. He is the president of Jonathan Jcough fan consulting, the initial Jand what he does is provide strategic consulting to educational institutions on how to develop strategies, to add value to those institutions while also improving the quality of life for people with disabilities. He's helped to spear head the graduate program on at the university in New York. He's a fellow at the John F. Kennedy, Jr. Institute for work are's education.

He helped to establish the program in terms of looking at their social skills and employment and career.

This guy's got a lodge bio. You could find him on line. He's done a lot. You about I think the most impressive thing is that Jonathan really believes in the future for people with disabilities and that the time has never been brighter. His ultimate goal is to push people to their full lest potential and to uncover their ability so it's really in line with what we do in our program so thank you for helping us wrap up with a great message

>> You're welcome, actually I want to everyone to give yourself a hand because you plead it. We're almost done and we are here.

I have to admitted when I listen this that introduction, I'm at the bottom rung in my house so this is always great to hear something nice because it isn't often that I get to hear something nice about myself. So I appreciate it.

You know coming here today, I was really thinking about the nature of disability in the 21st cent see. And that for me is the work that I live in and what wasn't said was, I was born with cerebral palsy, so living with a disabilities something I am intimately aware of, but more importantly, one of the questions I had coming here and part of my training is as an an thorough apologize. And an throw say we are the professional strangers, as the professional stranger coming into your world, I had to think about what did I actually want to say, because it's important that when we rethink vocational rehab of the 21st century, we have to think about it in terms of intersectionality and what I mean by that is, there's lots of things going on. The world of work is changing at a drastic pace.

But one of the most important things that can't be under scored is when we think about the value of leadership, and one of the critical pieces that often goes under scored is that I think in terms of the narrative of vocational rehabilitation and how that has to expand is really the power of you.

I think one of the most important things that often goes unnoticed is the value that you play. And the value that you have is changing and evolving. I don't think of you as just vocational rehab professionals. I think of you as innovators. I think of you as people that are motivating others.

To me, that is just as valuable as the work you do day to day. And I think it's important that you sort of reframe your

approach to how you look at your work. Because the nature of your work is changing. And I want you to be able to embrace that.

One of the most important things that I always think about is how we look at the culture of work. And I always go back to read Hoffman, who was the founder or co-founder of LinkedIn. And he talked about this idea that how we work today in the 21st century is very different than it was in the mid century e1950s.

You know, it was sort of a top down approach. Now he believes in what he calls an aligns. An employee, employer relationship. And one of the most critical aspects that all of you have to consider is, when you define your role in terms of going out, and doing -- focusing on your mission, which is helping to employ people with disabilities, you have to think about how we look at the nature of work and how that's evolving. It is no longer a top down approach but an employer employee relationship and you have to cultivate that alliance. That is really critical. That's where your job changes, because you are not just about placing someone in a job.

You are about transitions them and motivating companies to think about how do we look at the potential value of this work force.

I mean one of the most interesting things that happened, particularly in the last, I guess, three to four months, is the business round table. And their definition of a company. It is no longer sort of the mill ton friedman world that a company is designed to provide shareholder value.

A company is much more. And I think what is critical is that you, in terms of your role have to think of yourselves as, well, we are ambassadors. We are part of being a cultural war rior, to change the nature of work, so what do we have to do.

I think today I'm going to leave you with probably more questions than answers. Because I think when we look at the value of what a leader is, that is changing. And it's constantly evolving.

And one of the most important things that I always feel that's left out in the anatomy of leadership, is understanding the importance of self care. We talked about some of it today on the parameters and I -- I do have a lodge bio, and I apologize for that.

And one of the roles that I do play is I am a psycho therapist and executive coach dined that daily. And a lot of the people I see are level executives and people coming into the work force so I see people on all levels.

And one of the missing pieces that people don't understand is that the nature of work is changing. The average person stays in a job 18 months. So one has to think about how do we look at ourselves in terms of defining new roles and thinking about what do we, as VR professionals, need to do not only to prepare the future work force but ourselves and our own organization to develop and cultivate something even more.

So I think the question that I am leave you with always is what are you doing for yourselves? How are you making the

culture in which you work tenable and viable?

And how are you changing yourself in terms of your own strategy of a leader -- of what it means to be a leader.

And it's important to think that your role is evolving all the time. It's never the same. You go to work and it's changing. I want you to always think about the questions, but also, what you possess in terms of your own value system and how you value yourself.

That to me is so important and you -- I have the utmost respect for what you do, but I have to say that there is a constant need for you, every day, to say I am doing something that's enormously valuable.

I know you know it, but sometimes it often has to be reminded, because your role isn't just about working directly with consumers, it's actually about culture change.

And you your role is helping to develop the culture of work in the 21st century. You may not think it and it may not be something that you sort of say to yourself, well I am a cultural warrior, burr, and that from my be vantage point is the role you will play going forward.

I want you to think about this every day. Not only is it the goals that you're supposed to attain is to employ somebody, but it's to change minds and it's to change perceptions, because I think now, as the nature of work is changing, you have to see what -- how can I be creative? How can I evolve every day and say to myself that the role that I have is about doing something more than just person to person, but it has -- a larger footprint and that to me is vital.

So every day, I think it's important that we think about the value of self care, cause I want to know from you, what are you doing every day to foster your own self care so that you can do the job that you're doing better. I mean that is a question I leave to you.

And actually that's a question I'm sort of going to pose to you right now. If anyone has any thoughts, ill I really would love to hear them? What are you doing for you. To make your job easier? What are you doing for your staff and actually, I'm going to ask the question, because I would love to know.

I don't bite, I promise. I'm New Yorker, but I don't bite. I swear.

No, but it is important, do you have a system for yourself to see say that we are taking care of the staff that we have.

Every single day, what is it about us that we are taking care of, that it's part of the narrative of rethinking VR for the 21st century.

Somebody right there, I guess.

>> So I'm Sylvia Perez, director of the OIBTAC, but I was trained as a social worker until I learned this lesson as a social worker, but then I supervise -- I was a executive director of a private agency and I always use this tool.

As a social worker, I learned that every day when you leave work you need to leave work. So having a strategy and teaching your staff, we do hard work. We have people whose situations we can never fix, unfortunately.

And is that can be emotionally draining, so having a

strategy where you yourself and your staff literally leave work at work and go home and live their lives, and come back refreshed.

>> I think that's a good thing and you sort -- I think what's valuable is you're creating a fire wall between your work life and your home life. And that is critically important. And I also want you to think about, when you go out there, how do you individually or collectively define yourselves as leaders?

Because leadership is something that is -- it's he have femoral, you may not know what that actually means, you may have somebody who technically is your boss but I think of all of you in this room as leaders.

You're leading towards the future. You're leading towards something that we don't know what it looks like and part of that is being creative, having the ability to develop or maybe even institutionalize a way of self care.

I think that's so enormously valuable when you're rethinking the future of VR. And particularly the work that you do. It must be draining.

How many of you, just from a sort of show of hands, how many of you are drained at the ends of the day? Okay. I -- all of you, so I want you to think about your care is vital to everything that you do.

And it may be different. Some people may read a book, some people may go to the movies, but what is it that you do and you take your time and value your time so that you can be better for others?

If you're not good for yourself, you can't be better for others. And it's something that you have to incorporate into your lives. And that, I think is the mark of a true leader.

And the other piece of it is your ability to adapt and change. How many of you, if you were to sort of be honest, you know we're all friends here so let's try and be honest for a moment, are good at adapting and change when needed?

Okay. I like hearing that, because that I think is critically important. That is another tool that you sort of have to add to your tool belt. Is the ability to adapt and change.

When we look at the 21st century, we need to look at what are the tools we need to not only be competent, but to be great at what we do. And to also understand that there is -- as we talked about up here before, a generational shift.

And what does that mean for you as a leader in this space. One, it -- I don't think one has to be completely proficient, but have an understanding of how work is changing and what people's needs are. It's always important to do a needs assessment. One for yourself, but also understand where are the intersections.

And the other thing is, you as a communicate tour it's vitally important. How many of you actually speak to the businesses that you work with and have, you know a decent relationship, and understand the business -- the people that you're sort of putting in to work, do you understand the nature of their business and their needs?

Yes. Okay. And are you having constant communication with

them in terms of how their business is growing and evolving?

Okay. So I think that's important in part because as work force culture changes, you not only have to know what the needs are. You also have to know what is the economy of the future, when you're looking at how we continue to ask those questions and involve in what you're doing. It's vital to say to yourselves, I can allow myself to be part of that change, but also to understand where my people are.

It's critical to say, not only that work force is changing, but to understand what people want and what people need, continuously.

And there is an evolution. That's why I'm always, go back to read Hofmanin terms of it's never top down, it's always an alliance, you are creating an alliance with your customer, with potential employers and Moss importantlyly are you're creating an alliance with your colleagues.

That sort of straight line allows you to develop and infrastructure that works both intellectually, emotionally and in the work that you do.

I think as we go along, and we think about the nature in which we live, we want to continue to say, how do we look at the sort work force culture of the 21st century and the technology that we have and the nature in which it's shaping up to look like, because I want you to always question the value of leadership.

Leadership is important in the sense that we always think of ourselves in terms of structure, but I want you to think of yourself in terms of what defines you as a leader. I mean let me ask a question.

Aside from your role, what defines you as a leader? What's the first thing that comes is to your mind? Just off the top of your head.

What?

>> MALE SPEAKER: Vision

>> What else? Change maker, love all of those great things and one of the most important things for all of those is how you begin to cultivate that every single day.

And those words have resonance. They have meaning, but it's important not only how do you it, but how you impart that to your consumer.

Do you see yourselves as a change maker a visionary, a communicator? In terms of thinking about the arc of employment, arc of your customer's career. Are those elements that you've -- those three elements that have been discussed, are though imparted upon -- to your consumers? Is that vision, that ability to communicate and so on, are those imparted? I don't know.

And I ask the question because I like to know from you. Do you feel that those elements are part of your strategy as a change. Yes?

So can someone tell me -- give me an example of how. How have you done it at some point? Just -- any thoughts?

I know -- I know we're getting close to the end. It's okay. And I'm almost losing my voice, but no, it's important for you to think about that. I want you to -- see, my hope is

to leave you with questions.

You know, there's a 12th century philosopher wrote a book called the book of beliefs and opinions. He wrote it 850 years ago, and the things he wrote was the question is more important than the answer. So what I want to leave you with today, if you remember one thing of me is that the question is more important than the answer.

I want you to always question, in terms of what I am doing, how I am doing it. What value do I bring?

Because one of the key things our larger things, what meaning does this have for me? Why do I do what do I?

And I know it's in you because something propelled you to do this. Something propelled you to be a value to others. And part of being values -- part of being valuable to others, you have to see what mark will I leave to the world in which I am in, but what mark will I leave to the consumers that I'm in, but how do I give myself the tools that I need so that I can do the work I love, or choose to.

I can't say -- I can't say that you love it, but I can say the work you choose to.

And these are really important and valuable questions. I'm a firm believer in meaning making. And I think each of you, as leave here today, have to say what is the meaning of why I am doing this and the value that it has, not only to the -- to my consumer now, but to the vision going forward.

And yes, you can't look a hundred years out. I don't think that's really something that we think about, but five to ten years out. And as you develop a culture that focuses on meaning and value, what do you want to impart, as a leader, one who can communicate, one who can see a vision for the future.

And I think as you go back to your staff, that's a critical question. So I think the other thing that I -- I want to add is what is it that you possess that you feel is most important in terms of the work that you do?

What -- each and every one of you have a skill set that is uniquely your own. How do you cultivate that? How do you bring that to the fore front and say, I know I'm in the right place. And I know what I do has true meaning and value. And how do I begin to show that?

I guess, look impartly a therapist, so you know if you were in my office, I would say to you, I want you to begin to think about the process. And the process is so important and when we think about rethinking VR, it's not only the sort of mechanical process of doing the work, but it's your own process.

And doing a self evaluation and understanding who you are and why you do what you do. That, I think, is critical and so important as you go forward.

If you have any questions, I would love to hear them because I would like to open this up to the floor.

Yeah?

>> Thank you. Thank you very much for all that you shared. I find it's interesting timing, because when you finish up a conference like this you have to so much on your mind and you

feel likes you have so much do that the last thing you want to think about is self care right? I mean there's too much and the more committed you are and the more you recognize how important what you do is to people, the less likely you're going to model the very things you're trying to honor in your workplace.

In California we recently established a position entitled the climate advisor, diversity and climate advisor to, one, demonstrate to the staff that we have, that diversity is very important and we value it. As well as the climate, the job joy let's say in the work place. And we have folks that have gone to school for this and made a lifetime commitment for a line of work that we think ours is a lot longer.

And we also sent them -- our director recently used a personal situation to share with our staff how important it is to take care of your mental health and to help remove the stigma about mental health.

He shared that he had just had a stent put into his heart and that he had not acted really quickly when he felt the symptoms, but he was so glad that he did and just that he needed to attend to his physical needs, that everybody needed to really give attention to their mental health needs and that that's no different than attend to go your physical needs

>> Right

>> I think we're putting a lot of emphasis on it, but if you look to our executive team, would you say we always model it? After all this information, what I think I really need is a little bit of a break, but do I feel inclined do that? Not at all. So it's a struggle. Especially when we work in a line of business that is so people centered

>> Right, I think, you know it's finding a sense much happiness, quote/unquote and finding a sense of where mental health becomes a critical part of self care. Because I think that's part of the job, particularly in work that is taxing. Like this, but the value of what you're doing is so meaningful, but it's critically important, I think, always to look at the whole person, and I think all of you have to sort of sit back and think about your own organizations, what do we need to look at so that people are working at their optimal performance. What do we need to think about in terms of how do we go forward to create you know, sort of a culture where one -- may not say be happy, but to be healthy and happy with their work and can feel confident and comfortable going to work and feeling in a -- that they're in a place that embraces them. And their needs.

That I think is enormously valuable. And I sort of can't push that enough because I see it all the time that -- and there is also an inherent fear that people have of even sort of coming out and saying, well I -- there is an issue that I need. And it will benefit everyone, particularly when you look at yourself in terms of leadership.

How do I, as a leader, propel this notion of self care, that is valuable to all of us and not only valuable to our staff, but valuable to the people we work with. Because again, you -- you are working with businesses. You have to



sort of model that for them and show them that, in order to have valued employees, you have to look at the whole system and it is a system's model.

So that -- I mean again, those are really critically important and you guys are at the front line of everything. And the role that you play is vital. You know, for the last 20 some odd years part of my training is as an an thorough apologize and I look at the culture of work. I write about the culture of work, I have a regular column, which wasn't said, in fors which is called mindset matters and one of the things I always look at is the intersection of disability, culture and innovation. That's what I write about.

And the one things I am looking for in terms of trends is understanding healthy work forces. That's the thing that people want to hear about.

You know generation Zand generation -- millennials are all focused -- that's their focus. So as you get students that are coming in, one of the key things you have to remember is number one on their mind is how do I -- not only can I have work, but can I be in a place that I feel comfortable with, will create an environment for me where I can be at my peak and optimal performance, whatever that may be.

And it's important that when you all are really reshaping or helping to reshape the narrative of disability and it's something that is critically important. Is there a question? Yeah?

>> I was just going to respond to, you know your comment. I think you know we're telling our story, so the CSAVR and all the discussions that we've had over the last couple days is about our ability to tell our story, improve image, you know public VR, 100 years, celebrating the 100 years in 2020. So from Alaska as a division director, came on board in January. And I went around and I talked to all the staff, not just once but several times to really engage them.

And you have your veterans and you have people that are just coming into the industry for the first time.

So I tried to personal lies it for me. Many of us are here for a reason. You know I'm here because of my -- my parents. My parents are deaf, so in fact my brother also is in the same field and my sister, as well.

So I try personal lies it with them to tell them my story and for those that are starting to burn out, I really encourage them to really identify why are you here? What's your story and then articulate that, remind yourself of why you're here so you can continue to put in 15, 20, 25 years as a rehabilitation counselor.

So I just share that with you, the story piece for me was really important to articulate that to staff.

>> Yeah. I think -- I think the narrative is vital. It's probably paramount because if you're able to personal lies it, have an understanding of here's the reason why, and this is why -- my meaning for what I do, it gives people the impetus to move forward and to say, yeah, I think I get it. I think this is why I do what I do.

And even if the days when my daughter said I'm not allowed

to curse, but I will, when I feel shitty, you know, it's -- I think that is very important to go back to sort of the personalization of all of it, because most of us do this because they are personally invested.

I think for the most part, there is -- there is a sort of direct correlation and that I think is you know, that sort of rest resonates with people as to why they do it and I think as we move forward in this profession, the suggestion I have are sort of two fold.

One is, again I go back to self care, but also understand the nature of work. And I sort of will leave you with something. I write a lot about the narrative of disability looking at it from a strength based perspective.

I work with for the ton 500 companies and I worked with the U.S. department of labor. Barack Obama was my former professor at the university of Chicago, which wasn't on there either. I worked at the white house from 2008 to 12, and I was a special advisor to the president on disability and diversity. So one of the things we looked at and unfortunately a lot of it's gone -- I won't go into that one.

But one of the things we sort of always looked at what how do we begin to build disability as a strength based model and how do we look at disability and this is a lot of what I write about now, is the idea that the lived experience of disability can be used adds a management tool, in a how do we look at the nature of disability in terms of management strategies, creative thinking, thinking about sort of emotional intelligence on part of with business intelligence, new products and services, whole new marketplaces.

These things are critical. I mean the provost of Mitsuaid to me, 50 to 60 percent of our student body is on the autism spectrum. 60 percent, then I went to Cal tech and Carnegie, so the question is, what are the googles, the Microsofts and other technology companies do if you aren't going to get the best and the brightest, who happen to be on the spectrum. Who need some adaptations. It's a very interesting question because we have a tsunami coming. So disability plays an enormous role in the economic future and economic engine, not only in the united states, but globally. And I think why your role is so important that corporations need you. They need your intelligence. They need your wisdom. They need your value.

So that's why I go back again to what are you doing so that you can be the cultural warrior that you are? And I think from my vantage point I'll sort of bare a torch and walk with you along the way. But I think all of you are on the front lines of what is needed.

I think you have to have relationships with organizations like the business round table. I think you have to be at the table, obviously, government agency, you're there.

But I think there has to be public and private partnerships and looking at people who are -- the sort of third rail for me is entrepreneur. I think people with disability are thinking about entrepreneurship. And the way they create their own opportunities.

And the way technology goes, you can do everything here and you don't need -- and the idea of the nine to five job is going the way of the dodo. So the question of how we work and the nature of work is changing and your role is more vital than ever and I believe in what you can do.

And I believe in the mission that you have and I believe in the vision that you have. But it is important that you see the narrative of -- of VR is incomplete, so the job that you have now is to start completing that narrative and it's ever evolving, so in truth it will never be complete, but how to you sort of develop it and let it grow organically by seeing what's out there.

You know, and I wish you luck. I'll be there for the ride if you need me, but I wish you good luck in what the goals are, because they're love tee, but they're worth it. All right guys. If you have any questions I'm more than happy to answer anything.

Thoughts? Nope?

>> I'm going to be using the term culture -- cultural warrior for sometime but I will always give you credit

>> All right. Thank you. No problem.

I flow we're sort of ending up today, but seriously, if there are any questions I'm -- I'll be here, so and if people are afraid of talking out loud which happens to be the case for many that's okay too.

All right. I appreciate it.

>> Nothing else to add from us, other than just appreciate everybody's attendance and engagement in the whole week and I know there's still some NCSAB things going on, for those ever us being at the CSAVR, thank you, and safe travel for everybody.