Recorded Message: The Hennessy Report from Keystone Partners. A free flowing conversation with leaders in the HR community talking about themselves, the industry, and their work. Brought to you in cooperation with NEHRA, the Northeast Human Resources Association.

Dave Hennessy: Welcome to The Hennessy Report, I'm Dave Hennessy. Today we bring you Dena Upton who heads up the people function at Drift and Drift is a leader in the burgeoning industry called conversational marketing and Dena will tell us all about that. In fact her early roots are in programming and in software. So she's a unique person to head up the HR function having done the technical work before leading the people strategy function. In fact, the people that they hire at Drift are the same types of people they market to and Dena shares how they are maintaining their unique culture in their hyper growth mode, and wait to hear about her hidden talent. Next up on the podcast is Tracy Sponenberg, the Chief People Officer of The Granite Group. And now our conversation with Dena Upton.

Dena, welcome to the podcast.

Dena Upton: Thank you. Great to be here.

Dave: Well, we met at the BUILD Greater Boston event where your organization, Drift, is a sponsor and I was a guest of one of our podcast guests, Bob Glazer, the founder and CEO of Acceleration Partners and they're also a sponsor. What a great event that was.

Dena: Oh, it was awesome. We're super excited about our involvement with BUILD partially because we've made a stance to get involved in STEM activity and BUILD goes into the lowest performing Boston public schools and gets those individuals interested in entrepreneurship, starting a business. Our founder, Elias Torres is heavily involved from a mentor perspective and then we've got a lot of Drifters that are volunteering their time.

Dave: Drifters are the name of people that work here, right?

Dena: Yeah, people that work here. That love to get involved in helping those teams formulate their pitch, develop their product strategy, give them some tips on conversational marketing. So, it's an organization that is really important to us and one that we want to maintain the relationship with…

Dave: Very good event. Of course they created like a *Shark Tank*…

Dena: …Oh, they did! Yeah.

Dave: …at the event, and they all made their presentations of great products and businesses that they had started. And I understand the graduation rates and the college acceptance rates for kids that are involved in those programs early are so much higher than the other averages in those communities.

Dena: Well we missed a new BC grad from the BUILD program, we really wanted her to come in and join the marketing team, but she had just accepted another job when we started the conversation. So yes,

they're learning a ton on the job experience and turning that into actionable things into college. It's great.

Dave: Well, speaking of entrepreneurial businesses, this is one, too!

Dena: It is.

Dave: And you have a serial entrepreneur CEO, David Cancel, leading your organization. Why don't you tell us a little bit about Drift and your business?

Dena: So Drift is conversational marketing, so it is marketing automation. We're helping businesses buy from businesses. So the old way of doing business, think about it this way, it would be almost as if you were going into a store, you wanted a pair of shoes, you knew what size you wanted, you walk into the store and they tell you, "David, fill out a form. Tell us what size you want and we'll get back to you in a couple of days." Well, we're changing the way that businesses buy from businesses online, and instead of forms, instead of that broken process in the past, we are connecting buyers to each other. So we do that through chatbots that sit on your company's website and on your pricing page to actually start conversations in real time.

Dave: It's all B2B?

Dena: It's all B2B.

Dave: No B-to-Consumer?

Dena: Some.

Dave: Some, that's like…

Dena: Like we do some work with Peloton, but our main focus is B2B.

Dave: Okay. Can you give us an example of a business situation of two different types of companies and how they interact?

Dena: So if you are a company and you're selling something on the internet, you've got a team of sales development reps that are making calls, they're prospecting customers. So our tool kind of serves as a sales development rep. So anyone that's coming to your site, we know who they are, we know are they clicking on the pricing page, are they looking at your product? So the sales reps of that company can come right into that conversation. Somebody's pre-qualified, they know who they are, they're ready to buy right now and our product allows that to happen in real time. So it's taking a lot of that form-based flow that happened before and bringing it into real time.

Dave: And getting people the things they need exactly when they need it.

Dena: Right.

Dave: And you know when they want it too, that's great. Dena, we usually like to start out the podcast by finding out a little bit about our guests and maybe some early life experience that, as you look back on it now, it set you on this path you're on now.

Dena: So I started as a software engineer, so I started out in coding, I worked for Accenture, did systems integration, so I coded in C ++.

Dave: As a consultant?

Dena: As a consultant and I had an interest in HR, but the partner on the project…

Dave: How did you know you had an interest in HR?

Dena: The people component of it was very fascinating to me.

Dave: Those dynamics were interesting to you.

Dena: I switched over into HR at Accenture professional services organization, but it helped me to be staffed on a project, understand client relationships, understand coding, understand what we do. It made me a much more valuable HR partner. And then I left with one of the partners to go to a startup, got totally involved in sort of startup scene in San Francisco, moved to Boston, in the FinTech space for a long time and then LogMeIn and Drift. So I've always…

Dave: It serves you well having been in the seats of people having that are in technology here, right?

Dena: Well it does, and even…

Dave: …because you understand the mindset and what their challenges might be.

Dena: And I've always been in tech, it's either been sort of high tech, FinTech space and I think having been a software engineer myself sort of helps understand the mentality of what our engineers are going through right now. People will ask, "Oh, will you whiteboard that for me?" Like whiteboard what you're working on, I'm really fascinated. Like I just want to understand how the whole thing fits together and like why do you care? Because I do, I really actually do. Like I love working with engineers. So when we think about sort of launching sort of HR initiatives, it's like breaking that down into a tracer bullet, how do you do that?

Dave: You talk the same language as your people here.

Dena: So it's interesting. Yeah.

Dave: That's really cool. You're a probably unique relationship with staff than other chief people officers because of your background.

Dena: Yeah.

Dave: Yeah.

Dena: Yeah. So…

Dave: Well, let's talk about your organization from a talent perspective. I imagine your buyers that people that use the services themselves, so your employees are people that might be very interested in this type of work from the outside as well. Right?

Dena: Well that what's exciting to me about this company. We're now 330 employees, we have offices in San Francisco and Seattle and just opened in Tampa. Who we are marketing to, so the customers that we're marketing to are the profile of employees that we're marketing to. So we can ride the tailwind of our powerful marketing brand as we're looking to attract candidates to come work at Drift. So some of the things that we do around even conversational marketing, when you think about conversational marketing, when you're recruiting a candidate, you're kind of doing similar things.

Dave: That's true, right.

Dena: So we are funnel activity, things that we're talking about from a business perspective are things that we're talking about in the recruiting funnel and the types of people that we're trying to attract to buy our product are technically savvy individuals that we want to come work at Drift. Think about it, we have like 330 marketers or employee brand marketers that are talking about why they love what they're selling, why they love working at Drift, which will encourage other people to apply.

Dave: Wow, that's interesting. Well, now I think we're talking about the culture of the company a little bit, the kind of people you're attracting. How would you define the culture here?

Dena: It's really important, especially as you're growing rapidly, so we're in hyper growth mode. Two years ago we were 80 employees, last year about 170, now we're 330 so…

Dave: Doubling every year.

Dena: Almost doubling. I think we…

Dave: You can't do that forever.

Dena: No, I think we had trouble doubling too quickly in the early phases of Drift, but now we're, I would say, healthy. We'll probably finish 2020 off close to like 500 employees.

Dave: Wow.

Dena: But we call our Drift leadership principles are important to do early on, so David Cancel and Elias Torres worked on ensuring that we had defined Drift leadership principles. Put the customer at the center of everything you do, a bias for action, treat everyone with respect. So there's actionable things that we do in the recruiting process, they come to life. When you're meeting, we do what we call a card sort. So we have eight leadership principles, so, if you are my manager, every quarter I am card sorting you on things that I think you're doing well as they relate to the Drift leadership principles.

Dave: So you take out like the top three that I'm doing well?

Dena: And I'll say, "David, you're doing really well creating a culture of learning." Like are you really talking about what you learn when you go outside the organization? Are you teaching? Are you communicating? And, "Here's some things that I think that you could do better." We seek feedback, not consensus. Sometimes I've seen that when you make decisions, you're trying to get everybody on board instead of actually taking feedback and then making a decision quickly. So they live and breathe throughout the organization.

Dave: So you see those cards around here all the time?

Dena: You see those cards around, you won't see them on the wall. Partially, because we want to make sure that they're living instead of just slapping them on the wall.

Dave: We've all seen companies where there's things like that on the wall that don't live.

Dena: Yeah, I think that there's a term there, like it's called jumping the shark. It's like when things become irrelevant is when you actually put them on the wall. So I think keeping them alive is really important. And it's what you do, that drives a company's culture. Like we can say that we have a bias for action, but do you see that from the leadership level? Do you see that with the Drifters across the organization? What does that mean? How are they showing that they're doing that?

Dave: How does it show up in the organization?

Dena: Well, I would say like one of the things that's really important to us is seeking feedback, not consensus. And I think you see that in the way that we recruit. Some organizations require a committee to decide who they're going to bring into the organization and we make sure that we have the right people interviewing, but the key decision maker in the organization deciding who's going to come into the organization based on feedback that they're getting in the interview. So it's not a vote, it's not consensus, but it allows us to move quickly in the interview process as we bring new talent into the organization.

Dave: And speaking of fit, if you're looking to have a diverse and inclusive culture and you're always looking for cultural fit, some people say, "Well you just keep on getting more and more people like we already have here. We're not really getting diversity." What do you think about that?

Dena: Well for us, we've had the benefit of two underrepresented minority founders. So the foundation of Drift started with a diverse population from the beginning. So their network is diverse in and of itself. I think when you create values or virtues they're based on actions, so it doesn't matter what color you are, what age you are, it matters how you think and how you decide. And I think also challenging people that are coming into the organization to tap into networks that they naturally wouldn't.

For us. The challenge around diversity, equity, inclusion is making sure that Drift is seen and known to those diverse populations. Do they know who we are? That's why we want to get involved in organizations that focus on STEM.

Dave: Like BUILD.

Dena: With BUILD and with Guppy Tank, which is another great organization...

Dave: Say that again?

Dena: It's called Guppy Tank. We brought in a handful of students from the Boston public schools, they're fifth and sixth graders. It's like a *Shark Tank* piece where they work with our development team and come up with something that they're going to pitch. It was really funny because when the students came in, this is about four months ago, one of the students came up to me and said, "I really want to meet the CEO. I want to meet the person that developed Fortnite." And I said, "Wow, you think that we developed Fortnite here? That's slightly different."

But I think if you start to get involved in activities...

Dave: This is a good rumor we can start in The Hennessy Report...

Dena: Yeah exactly.

Dave: ...they started Fortnite too, not just chatbots.

Dena: I know can you believe it? But when you start to get yourself and you develop those relationships with areas in your community that you normally wouldn't, going outside normal networking channels, I think you get to a wider variety of people. But our biggest channel of recruitment is referrals here, but that means you have to start with a diverse population in order to continue to expand the diverse population, or you have to challenge your employee base to go outside of your network. So, you have to give them channels to do that, organization's involvement in other organizations across Boston and Tampa.

Dave: So you don't just tell them to do it. You find ways to make it happen.

Dena: You help them, you build the channels.

It's a balance between, yes, you want to make sure that you're finding a cultural fit, but you have to make sure that your definition of culture is based on virtues and actionable activities that it doesn't really matter...

Dave: Not, I went to the same school or grew up in the same neighborhood or those things aren't as important.

Dena: Right, because they're not extending outside of your network.

Dave: Right.

Dena: Yeah.

Dave: Good. Congratulations by the way, on all the recognitions you've got by some of the organizations that rate culture, best CEO list, and diversity, I think Comparably is one of the organizations that rated Drift very well on all those areas and...just your reaction?

Dena: Well, I think what's great is I'm Comparably takes insights and data from our current employees, which is an affirmation to us that we're actually doing a good job. We're super excited about being rated in all those areas, but one of the things that's really, really important to us is the diversity component, specifically, because David Cancel and Elias are both diverse. So when our employees are saying, "I feel like I can be my best self at work, I feel included." Having a diverse recruiting pipeline is important, but it's actually, are you retaining diverse talent in the organization? Are they advancing in the organization? Are they moving into different departments? I think that's the metric that's really important. So while it's important to attract them in, you've got to make sure that they feel like they're adding value and want to stay. And I mean everyone at Drift, we want to feel that way.

Dave: Of course.

Dena: But it is great to see our current employees awarding us that.

Dave: Can you give us some sense of how it's working? You've talked about making sure that your diverse Drifters are advancing into senior level management.

Dena: So we've increased our gender diversity across the organization. We're at like 43% with a 7% increase over the year.

Dave: Which is much better than most tech organizations.

Dena: And I would say it spreads across leadership positions. So it's just not in our entry level roles, it's spread throughout the organization. We're doing the same thing, we measure underrepresented minorities, how they're coming into the organization, how they're accelerating throughout the organization. So it helps when you have two underrepresented minorities at the top. But we've also been able to create programs, employee resource groups. We're a small organization and people would think that we're crazy, we have a diversity equity and inclusion program manager on board. She's taking a look...

Dave: Right that's usual for an organization your size.

Dena: For an organization of our size, of 330, we're lucky that we had the headcount support from our CFO, CEO, CTO in that area, and she's able to sort of spearhead some of the employee resource groups. So I think a lot of organizations will do community outreach for PR purposes, and we do it because the people here intrinsically want to help the community that we're part of. And she is able to sort of combine what we're doing from a volunteer corporate social responsibility perspective and lend that self into some of the things that we're doing around recruiting. So yes, we have young sixth graders coming in to take a look at what Drift is, but like in ten years they might think, "That's an organization that I want to work at and I know about you."

Dave: Right, you've already started the relationship.

Dena: Same thing with BUILD. I mean BUILD those students are in ninth and tenth grade. But as I mentioned before, the student who's at BC, would potentially be a candidate to come work on our marketing team. But it's a long tailwind to recruiting, but I think if you're developing those relationships in the communities in which you work and they're solid relationships and our volunteer activity is centered around them. We made a conscious effort to focus in on STEM. There's so much work to be done, but we really wanted to narrow it in that vein.

Dave: Right, it's very connected to your organization.

We had Margaret Spence on the podcast recently, she's an expert in women in leadership, and one of the things she points to, and there was a recent article in the *Boston Globe* about this as well, that there can be a confidence gap between men and women in the workplace and she says we have to close that gap because it's usually not about competency or scale that prevents women from moving further up into the leadership positions. Do have any comments about that?

Dena: Well, I'm sure you've heard this before. I mean you put two job descriptions, you put them in front of a female and you put the same job description in front of the male and if a man has 80%...

Dave: 60%, half.

Dena: 60%, maybe it's half, he will throw his job in there with confidence and say, "I've done this." A female will say, "I need to have 110% of these things before I'm even going to put myself out there." So I think that it relates back to confidence.

Dave: So are you doing anything to address that here at Drift?

Dena: One of our employee resource groups is Women at Drift. She Speaks as an organization that we support and we send a handful of female leaders to that. There's a Leading with Purpose training program that we're sending leaders to, so we are supporting our females throughout the organization and continuing to develop programs to make sure that they're feeling supported. But I think it's a combination of females and men. When you're rolling something out, you just don't want it to just be for the women because you need the male population to support what you're trying to do from a female perspective.

Sales and engineering are the two areas that our population is lower than where we'd like it to be from a gender perspective, but those are the two areas that we're really focusing in on. You know, we've made strides on the engineering side of things, so Melissa Leffler is our VP of Engineering, fabulous. We're continuing to build female leaders within Drift and then ensuring that when we bring people from the outside that we're looking for female engineering leaders there as well.

Dave: I think you're doing great work on that. Margaret Spence focused on mentoring. If there's a lot of male leaders in an organization to have them mentor female leaders, that was one of her strategies that she thinks can help close the gap.

Dena: One of the things that we do too, and I love doing, is that sort of reverse mentor piece. You can tell a lot about your culture from your new employees, so when they come into the organization their first or second week, what did they think about the pace of work? How did they feel like the Drift leadership principles are sort of coming to life in the things that they're doing? We bookend our weeks each week with what we call Monday metrics and Friday show and tell, and it's part of our commitment to transparency. So we show every single board deck, our senior leadership meetings are recorded and shared with the company. So there's nowhere to hide here. Any Drift employee knows our booking number, knows our net retention. So all of that information is shared with the company, part of making sure that they feel like they're an owner. I was working with a female engineer to say like, "When I speak, am I coming across clearly? Is this information interesting to you? Is this something that you want to know?" So I think it's really helpful to connect with those people that are junior in the organization, but then have also a very fresh perspective on Drift.

Dave: Anything that comes to mind that came from these early check-ins. Where you're like, "Oh, we didn't know we were coming across that way as an organization."

Dena: Yes! So one of them was, we like to tell people to go directly to the person if you have an issue. Like go directly to the source, no politics. And while in theory that sounds great, we believe in non-anonymous feedback. But some of the newer members of the organization said, "In theory that sounds

great, but I might have an issue and I'm not sure I want to go up to the CEO and say 'I think you should do something differently.' But I want a mechanism by which I can communicate that."

So, we implemented, it's called "tiny pulse," it's just a quick pulse check that goes out every week. But the nice thing about it is it connects our senior leaders with people in the organization. So we ask a question, how happy are you at work? Do you feel like you're getting the support you need from your manager? We tee up questions every week and then there are responses and our senior leadership team will go in and respond in the tool. I have no idea who the employee is, now they know who I am. And we've gotten some really good feedback we never would have and sometimes their only avenue to rant about you would be go to Glassdoor. So…

Dave: And that's too late. Right?

Dena: Too late. So now we've gotten some really good feedback on work life balance and the way we're communicating and we've made changes as a result of shifting our thinking around that.

Dave: That's really cool. One of the questions we always ask on the podcast is if you could write a letter of career or professional advice to Dena of 30 years old, what would you put in that letter Dena?

Dena: It might be a book. But in my younger life I was so focused on titles or chasing title and now I look back on and I think it's more important to find a really good organization that is in hyper growth mode because you will inevitably have opportunities there. When you think back on it, no one's really going to care if I was a manager or senior manager or director, senior… I cared so much about it at the time, but now it doesn't really matter, it's all about relationships and experience. Was I the first person to go on an international assignment? Was I the first person to set up compensation philosophy at this high growth tech company? So I think it's more important what you do than it is what title you had. When you're in your thirties you're so focused on chasing title than you are about being involved in a company that will provide you opportunities for growth.

Dave: Ah, that's good advice.

And you know, we produce this podcast at Keystone in cooperation with NEHRA, the Northeast Human Resources Association, and we have the NEHRA Emerging HR Professionals question of the podcast asked by our producer Meghan Mandino.

Meghan Mandino: Thank you Dave. Hi Dena.

Dena: Hi.

Meghan: How should emerging HR professionals approach adjusting to a new company culture?

Dena: Sometimes HR professionals forget this and sometimes they have their playbook of things that they always do. I think it's really important to understand the business climate, sort of the total

addressable market, what your business is trying to do? And then implement HR strategy that will accelerate the business. So ensuring that you connect what you're doing from an HR perspective to what the business is trying to achieve. If you're going into a new market, if you're going international, you're going to need to make sure that your HR roadmap reflects that new business move. So I think it's really important to connect what the HR team is trying to do with what the business is trying to do.

Dave: Dena, recently, I think you posted something on LinkedIn about work life balance and how your views have changed about that, what it means to you, and maybe you could expound on that, but also what does it mean work life balance for the Drifters here?

Dena: I'll talk about it from my perspective and then I'll talk a little bit about it here at Drift too. I used to compartmentalize my work a lot, so whatever I did at work I left it there and then I came home and did it. And what I've found is if I blend the two a little bit better, it's actually pretty powerful. And I'm saying that because I have a 13 year old and an 11 year old, and I'll give you a couple of examples. I had to do a kickoff speech a couple of months ago and I went to my husband and said, "I want to practice this with you." And he said, "Well actually I think the age difference between Brody and the Drifters is much smaller." Brody's my 15 year old son, "Is much smaller than mine, so I think he'll be able to give you much more critical feedback." So I guess my point is, and my husband and I, this is important to us, it's helpful for our kids to see both of us working in partnership and that they give me advice. Like a lot of times they're like, "Mom, there's not enough GIFs in that presentation. Like, "Not very interesting. You've got to change this up or change that up." And not compartmentalizing as much and sort of getting ideas from my family really has helped me.

Dave: My son, he's very interested, and he's 14 he's a little younger than your oldest, but he's like, "Dad, why is your podcast not on Spotify?" So now I told Meghan that and she just got it on Spotify too. So…

Dena: Yeah, my son would say the same thing.

Dave: So he'll be able to listen on Spotify. Both of our sons.

Dena: In the spirit of Star Wars, because I did a thing on our Drift leadership circle, it's a different take on how we do president's clubs. So we send 20% of our top performers across the Drift organization, so it's just not heavily focused on sales. And then we do a volunteer activity, we're in Mexico this year.

Dave: Oh, it's not just a sales trip, it's top performers in every function?

Dena: Top performers in every function. So when we were rolling it out, I wanted it to have like a Star Wars theme, but I didn't know how to do that rolling thing. So my son was like, "I'll do it for you." So he created the whole video. So anyways, my children have helped me advance here at Drift or at least be interesting. But your question about work life balance, it's tricky. If you asked anyone at Drift that question about a year and a half ago, I mean the company was much smaller, so a big focus was on team collaboration and we had one person doing one thing instead of five people doing one thing. And a lot of

the connections were done in real time, so they needed to be done in the office. I think now that we've expanded, we're 330 people, we have...

Dave: Multiple offices.

Dena: ...multiple offices, we have multiple people doing different things. There's definitely more flexibility in office time. And we're migrating that too, I think that when David and Elias founded Drift, they wanted it to be an in-office culture. So it was either remote or in office. And so we've invested a lot in our space, so we want to make this a place where people want to come and work. And I think if you are a people manager, we want to make sure that you're in the office and providing coaching and advice to people that are on your team. If you're an individual contributor and you know your KPIs, you know your measurements, you know what you need to do, there's a lot more flexibility because of the nature of your role. So I think it kind of depends on the stage of the company, depends on the team that you're working on, the nature of what you're doing. And do you have defined KPIs that are understood by you and your team? And then that, in itself, lends to more flexibility.

Dave: Right. It is a beautiful space. And by the way, this is the best office, Meghan and I were saying as we were walking in, this particular room is the nicest podcast recording room we've had so far. What are you noticing about Drifters and other people of this work generation? How are their needs changing and how does it impact your work as Chief People Officer?

Dena: Well, I think a big part of it is feedback. So they want to make sure that they understand whatever it is that we're rolling out, whether or not it's compensation or performance reviews or the way we're thinking about benefits...

Dave: They want the information.

Dena: They want to understand, they also want to be able to provide feedback to you. So instead of having something fully baked before we launch, sometimes we get things like 80% there and then we'll test it with a group or we'll launch it to a handful of sort of Drift champions throughout organization to say, "How does this resonate with you? Do you think people are going to really care about this new initiative that we're rolling out?" So they want to have a voice. Conversation happens in real time, so we broke Slack when we put Slack in at Drift. There's so much conversation that's happening, there's so much real-time collaboration is happening. And people vote up on things, so like when something gets posted into our general Slack channel, there's like emoji craziness, like really like this. So you're getting feedback. So I think the difference is 15 years ago you would work so hard to get something just so and buttoned up and then launch it, whereas now it's more iterative. So, you're testing and learning and experimenting and getting...

Dave: Get most of it out there. early

Dena: ...get most of it out of there.

Dave: And then start fixing it and make it better with input.

Dena: Yeah.

Dave: That's good. interesting. What else are you working on from a people strategy point of view?

Dena: Well, I think we talked a little bit about it when we were talking about diversity, equity, and inclusion. I think that's a big driver for us this year. We want to be the new face of corporate diversity by 2025, so we want people to walk into Drift and feel like it replicates the Boston scene, driven, again, by both of our founders being underrepresented minorities themselves. And then teaching others how to do it effectively. So Elias Torres does a lot with the Latino community in Tampa and in Boston. So he is being a mentor to other entrepreneurs that are trying to start their own business. We've had kind of incubator businesses that have been working really closely with us, so there's also an appetite to support people that are starting their own business.

Dave: So you want it to spill outside the walls of Drift?

Dena: We want to make sure that when we think about recruiting in a different way and flipping it on its head, we want to make sure we're sharing that with a wider group of people. So that has been really important to us and part of some of the people strategy that we're trying to implement.

Dave: I don't even know if this will make it to the podcast, but just we interviewed Melanie Foley, she's the head of HR at Liberty Mutual Insurance, and they have a similar philosophy with D&I. They created, I guess, award-winning diversity and inclusion. I think they call it an inclusion training series, and they won some big awards. They're going to share it with the world.

Dena: Oh, that's great.

Dave: So they're going to put it out, it's like a nine part video series where they have real actors doing different situations that might've made somebody feel thought included or not make them feel like they should be working at that organization and just, you know, inappropriateness or things that they could learn from and they're going to share that with the whole world.

Dena: Yeah, that's great.

Dave: So interesting. What's a book that changed your life, Dena?

Dena: I'm a big Ben Horowitz fan and I love *The Hard Thing About Hard Things* that he wrote a handful of years ago, but he's got a new one called, *What You Do Is Who You Are*, and the reason why I love it is, it's not focused on Google and Uber and Netflix, it's focused on a prisoner revolt and it's focused on Genghis Khan. So he takes historical cultural re-transformations and talks about how can you relate some of those things to what is happening in the business world. When you're thinking about it, it's sort of simple, that what you do is actually who you are. And so you can come up with all these slogans on

your beliefs and integrity, but if your leaders don't demonstrate that, if your employees don't demonstrate that, like that is your culture.

Dave: Like what's the practice? What do you?

Dena: What do you do?

Dave: That is it.

Dena: That is it. And it's every little decision you make, it's a decision you don't make that defines it. And it is, does someone sneak out the door at five o'clock because they're worried that they're leaving early? So that that defines your culture. And again, as I talked about earlier, it's what your new hires are saying about you. Like that is your culture.

Dave: What are they noticing? This is different because of why?

Dena: He studies the samurai. Why did they spend so much time getting ready before they go into battle is because the samurai approach life as if they might die tomorrow. So, their interactions with everybody that they talk to is so sacred and they're in the moment…

Dave: Every moment.

Dena: Because in their head they're thinking, "I might die tomorrow." I mean it's drastic, but how can you think about that as you're building relationships inside your organization? So it's a really good book. That's the other one that I love…

Dave: Oh.

Dena: I've got two.

Dave: No we're only allowed one book per guest.

Dena: The other one that I love is a little small, blue book and it's called *The Coaching Habit*. There's like a handful of simple questions that you can ask as you're thinking about coaching people. It might actually work with your 14 year old son because it works with my 15 year old. So it's a great book.

Dave: That's good.

Dena: Handful of secret questions, it's simplifies performance coaching and it boils it down to sort of five questions that can help you in your one-to-ones as you're talking to people and helping them grow.

Dave: Excellent. What's something interesting about you that you're willing to share with all of us that we wouldn't find on your LinkedIn profile?

Dena: This one is a little wonky.

Dave: Oh, we like that.

Dena: I have the ability to smell a fox, so I have a really…

Dave: Smell a fox?

Dena: Yeah. I have a really, really keen sense of smell. I can tell when there's a fox in our neighborhood, which my husband thinks it's crazy. But, yeah, I can smell from great distance.

Dave: But it's proven?

Dena: It's been proven. Yeah. because I can smell a fox and then he comes marching across the road, but it kind of smells a little bit like a skunk, but it's a little mustier and it's not as pungent, it's not as strong.

Dave: Oh, really. That's awesome. Dena, so great to have you on the podcast.

Dena: Thank you. It's great. Great to be here.

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