



S2:E11 – Cornelia Lucey | Positive Leadership

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Beth Stallwood: [00:00:00] Welcome to the Work Joy Jam Podcast in this episode, I am joined by Cornelia Lucey and Cornelia and I met on a course a few yeahs ago. And we've been in touch ever since. And Cornelia is a positive psychologist and she works in the field of leadership and development. And I thought it'd be really interesting to take a question here around positive psychology around leadership and how we can link that to joy and to have a really great conversation about what are some of the features we find in leaders who are doing a really great job. What are some of those characteristics? What are they taking with them? How are they thinking? How are they acting? What are they doing? And we all know how critical great leadership is in organizations, but it also isn't necessarily an easy thing to do. Anyone who is in a leadership position right now, be that through actual title or the role that you perform within your role.

[00:01:28] It is a tough gig leading people. And I think it's really interesting to take the point from positive psychology about what are the things here that all those features and how might we spend some time thinking about them and developing them. So I really hope you enjoy this conversation.

[00:01:48] Hello, and welcome to the work joy jam. On this episode, I am joined by the fabulous Cornelia Lucey and Cornelia, and I have known each other for a little while, and I'm really excited to talk to her about her perspective on at work joy. And I think you're all going to love it too. So rather than me introduce you Cornelia, can I get you to introduce yourself and tell us kind of your backstory and how you got to where you are?

[00:02:18] **Cornelia Lucey:** [00:02:18] Yeahs definitely. Thanks so much for having me on today. I'm excited to be with you. So as you know, a bit about me and my background, I am a business owner. I'm a psychologist, I'm a leadership consultant and I'm a coach. So I miss that kind of mix of different hats that I wear and the work that I do today and I guess I sort of a little bit back story about how I got to where I am now and what I'm doing now. I always start. I think what, talking to people about my family background, which has been a massive influence on me. You'll probably gasp when I tell you this, I don't know if I told you this before Beth, but I am one of 37 first cousins just on my mom's side alone. So I come from this absolutely huge family. And then my dad has absolutely loads of aunts, uncles, and cousins as well. So both my parents are Irish and they immigrated to London back in their seventies and I grew up in a real kind of heart of east end of London. With this massive Irish family traveling back and forth between England and Ireland, and then growing up in the stands, surrounded by people from all over the world.

So really lucky, incredible opportunity to grow up in that environment, just surrounded by people who are like really single-minded about making better lives for themselves and those of imagination, creativity, and just really got me fascinated in culture and people. And you know, just having so many hundred relatives, cousins, family members, watching everyone kind of grow and age in their own way and developing their own way.

[00:04:02] It's just always really fascinating to me. And which is probably why my first career, I actually was a successful newspaper journalist. I was really interested in interviewing people doing what you're doing today, but for a newspaper agency in Ireland and got to interview really fascinating people like the late Amy Winehouse and talk with prime ministers from everywhere in the world. Travel with the Irish prime minister to China and do sort of all sorts of interesting experiences as a journalist. And in that field I eventually got appointed as an education correspondent and so it was going in and out of schools, universities, working with politicians who specialize in education and became really interested in how we learn and how we develop even further.

[00:04:52] And I kind of had a bit of a curveball or when I decided actually to know what I'm going to go and teach in a school, I want to know what that looks like. And I decided to you the leadership development program Teach First. And I worked in one of England's most struggling schools and alongside working in one of England's most struggling schools and in fact Ofstead described it as one of the worst schools in the country, which is always really helpful to try trying to, to grow a bit better.

I was also doing a lot of leadership development training myself and went into kind of middle leadership in schools and just really like this ongoing fascination for like people's stories, how people learn, how people develop and working with a really big array of different types of leaders. And I suppose I'm quite interested in mechanism processes.

[00:05:48] And then I went and trained as a management consultant and had a focus on leadership development and worked with two kind of, uh, one international education charity, one UK based education charity, and got to kind of travel around the world and lived in the middle east for a while. , went to south America, did lots of interesting projects and all through, I guess, these different experiences became really interested in the theory and the practice and the application and just the real world, how leaders behaved and developed and how they brought the best out of others. And then also, I guess I was noticing how people were not always bringing the best out of others and the things I noticed in all the different array of workplaces and that I was working in was the fact that wellbeing, resilience, how well people were able to bring themselves to work and do a really good job and enjoy the work they were doing was so hugely effected by the leaders around them. And by the way, that people were supported through a kind of pro-social environment, all the way people were actually really hindered, in an environment that wasn't bringing the best out of others.

[00:07:02] So I guess I had kind of anecdotal evidence and then leadership theory and understanding around, we know what we thought in leadership brought the best out of people. I'd done a master's in leadership at UCLA London, but actually I needed to dig a bit deeper because it wasn't just, I guess that the theories and the learning the practice.

[00:07:27] But I wanted to understand a little bit more about what's going on in this kind of computer in our head, like what was going on in people's brains. And for them to behave the ways that they were behaving kind of positively or not so positively. And also what do we know about human behavior in terms of what brought the best out of individuals and what brought the best out of teams and organizations?

[00:07:48] So about five years ago, now I trained as a psychologist to kind of add that string to my bow and it's been really incredible refining ideas pulling together, what I know from leadership development and from psychology and particularly looking at things like positive psychology - functioning and individuals like what's the science behind that? What do we know? Where's the evidence-based. And I apply that in my work now. And I specifically do a lot of work with leaders and teams and organizations to develop individuals and their performance, their leadership performance, but also teams.

[00:08:28] And also just thinking about the organization as a whole, and it's a really lovely blend of doing work that involves research. So do a lot of research and writing a book at the moment to try and draw some of that research together and the practice of development work. And it's just a real, it's real work joy to do what I do because I really see you know, what are all the ingredients that help leaders, teams, their communities to align, and how do we kind of embed those in the way that we work and develop those and the clients I've worked with have just really, I guess, throwing themselves into that, wanting to explore that. And you know, if we really want a world that's you know, sustainable, equitable, inspiring for everybody. Then I really think, you know, how we develop raw positive leadership practices for ourselves and for others. And the organizations that we work with is just going to be really, really critical and I think, you know, the pandemic and experiences that we've had over the last year or so have kind of really reinforced that for me. And, you know, I know my podcast today is it's about work joy and I really get huge amount of work joy in seeing that and seeing people alive and seeing, I guess, the evidence making a real difference in workplaces. So I guess that's a whistle stop. Totally of my, of my background and my story best feel free to kind of pick away and ask me any questions.

Beth Stallwood: [00:09:53] I've got so many questions to ask you about my out and highlighting them and sharing this. So thank you so much for sharing your story. And I love the combination of both kind of the life story and the work story. Because for me, when we talk about work, joy work is not separate from life is part of life.

[00:10:09] And I think that when we think about them as blended together, the more we'll be able to do. Get more joy from work and more joy from life and be able to have that awesome successful blend and people often talk to me about work-life balance and they talk to me and I'm like, Hmm, I'm not sure what balance is actually really the way that we want to go.

[00:10:27] Because sometimes in life work is going to take some priorities. Sometimes life is going to take some parts. We were already saved for balance. We might get actually really out of sync with what we need, but if we talk about the blending, those things together, And having really good boundaries and all that stuff, then we can make that stuff happen.

[00:10:42] But that is a whole other conversation. And I have so many questions for you. So the first one I'm going to say is one of 37 first cousins on one side of your family, right. I have six cousins and I

struggled to keep up with them. The 37 is a big, big family. Love that. And I'm loving kind of how you grew up in the big word.

[00:11:04] I write down with talking about your whole career and what you've done in your life. I wrote down this in big bold letters and then highlighted it. I find like you have a real sense of curiosity around things. Maybe that did spark from having so many people in your life and being surrounded by such interesting people, almost like you find something.

[00:11:24] And then you're like, Ooh, I want to dig a bit deeper. I want to find out more. I want to study that. I want to understand it more. Does that sound like I kind of nailed that there?

[00:11:34] **Cornelia Lucey:** [00:11:34] Definitely. I think I feel really blessed to have had the, you know, the range of family and the range of upbringing that I've had and it's. I think the it's always be like a virtuous cycle in a sense that I've been exposed to so many different people, places, environments, throughout my life, , which has also then fed into that curiosity. So I think it's a kind of, it's a virtuous circle and, and also just I suppose you know, also, as you can imagine, it was such a huge family.

[00:12:06] We'd have incredible positive emotive experiences. We have a lot of joy in our, in our family. We also have a lot of tragedy in our family as well. So, you know, you can't avoid that it's is a part of life. So I've seen, I guess, the light and dark side of life in a personal level in family relationships situations.

[00:12:26] And I think I've always been open to understanding that and being empathetic and then compassionate. About that in the work environment. And just also mainly recognizing the essential need to, as you just said there, Beth, you know be aware of those things in that they don't transcend or compartmentalize into work and personal life. And they go that they're much bigger. They do transcend and we need to, you know, as leaders working in organizations to really bring the best out of ourselves and others, we've got to really own that. Be honest about that and, and put that forward. And you know, all of the research that I've done has shown being curious about that for ourselves, for others and being open about that is it's actually a win, win situation for, for leaders and for, , uh, for everyone else around a leader, in a team and an organization, because that curiosity that care that, that, , compassion and understanding that we're all living lives and these lives are, you know, melting pots of different experiences will actually help us do our best work and to really enjoy the work that we're doing, if we're really honest and open about those things and authentic about those things.

[00:13:41] **Beth Stallwood:** It's really interesting there because you're talking about like joy and tragedy and understanding the melting pulse of life that I love that as a description is one of the things I always talk about in work joy is it is definitely not about being.

[00:13:55] Happy 24/7 and ignoring the stuff that isn't right. And it's not about, it's about actually understanding that there will be light and dark. It's about understanding that you can do more to build some light, but also that there's going to be stuff that happens both in work and life. There will be tragedy.

[00:14:11] There will be sadness, there will be damn right frustrating stuff. It just annoys you. There will be all of those things. How do we capture and cultivate and focus on some of the more joyful things to help us through some of these situations to help us work with other people. So I really love what you're talking about that.

[00:14:35] **Cornelia Lucey:** Can I jump in on that because yeahs, it's like, how can we capture, you know, some of the joy, the positive emotion or the experience into that? I think.

[00:14:44] **Beth Stallwood:** [00:14:44] The negative emotions, the darker emotions, they're more, you know, the, the harder things we experience, it can actually, you know, really leaning into those, experiencing those, accepting those can make a whole lot of really good stuff happen in our brains. , and you know, I know that you will totally agree with us. I think people are being kind of banding and talking about, you know, toxic positivity and just thinking purely positively about things. And, you know, we do know from the research that actually the darker experiences, the more challenging moments.

[00:15:25] Those gritty times and experiences can be like really pivotal learning moments if we kind of lean into them and explore them. And just, again, kind of going back to that curiosity point, just be interested in those. And you know, whether it's a kind of tension in your relationship at work or a tension in a relationship at home, just, you know, what is going on here, rather than he's done this, or he has done that, or she has done this actually. What is it that I'm bringing into this conversation? What is the other person bring into the conversation and what what's going on here? How do we need to do this in a way that, that works for both of us? So, yeah, really interesting reflection

[00:16:07] **Beth Stallwood:** [00:16:07] And I think, I think when I say we don't, I don't want to get into the zone of toxic positivity, cause it's not the right place to be. And it is about finding some balance there. And you know, that idea that often these moments, whether it's like I to sadness or tragedy or frustration that telling you something and telling you that make you feel ready to move on, it might be telling you that you need to have a conversation with your partner.

[00:16:29] It's telling you that you might be ready to. Actually dig a bit deeper into some of the emotions and understand where they come from. So it's about taking it, understanding it, and then working with it. Isn't it. It's not about ignoring it or brushing over it because that's where things actually I think start to go wrong even more is when we don't take those things.

[00:16:48] **Cornelia Lucey:** [00:16:48] And I talk a lot in my work about limberness and that kind of cognitive and emotional limberness. To take that balanced, you know, that more balanced approach with things to kind of explore those, those frustrating points. We need to kind of lean into a different part of our brain at different points and be, feel resourced in order to be able to do that.

[00:17:17] **Beth Stallwood:** [00:17:17] Thank you for picking up on that. Okay. So I've got some questions for you based on some of the things you said. And I imagine that each of these questions could probably be like a five day podcast, not a short podcast. So you want them to go when I ask this question, you're going to say, that that's way more insightful. Not that we can possibly talk about today, but you said it, therefore, I'm going to pick up on it. One of the questions that you said, you know, things you were interested in with kind of really understanding what are the ingredients that help leaders.

[00:17:52] And this is why I'm going to ask you this question. So from your experience, from your research, I know you're writing a book right now around this area of leadership. I'm going to say, what are those ingredients? And I'm going to say with a caveat of, we can't talk about all of them right now, but what have you noticed are kind of like the top things that leaders can be thinking about here to help them in this world.

[00:18:14] **Cornelia Lucey:** [00:18:14] Totally. Yeah, no really good question. And I like kind of slimming that down. Cause as you said, we could spend a long time and days talking about it, but I think there's in the research and what I'm noticing I guess is there's some really juicy behaviors coming through around what leaders do that create more optimum functioning in themselves.

[00:18:36] And more optimum functioning in the people, in their teams and organizations. And there's like some things that are coming through. I think. One of the caveats of this is recognizing that, you know, we are all imperfect, perfect human beings, so positive leaders, and that's a term that I use to describe leaders that bring the best out of themselves and those around them. They don't do these things 24 7. They're not always perfect. They don't kind of, you know, live by the book on everything that they do, but they have a kind of tendency for certain ways of behaving. And I think that tendency is, you know, being really abundant and the way I think being really strengths focused in the way that they think about themselves and about others, they're not kind of rigid in the way that they, perceive or analyze or think about things.

[00:19:34] They're very willing to kind of thing. Broadly about things so going back to that kind of limber point and be ready, kind of cognitively limber, , and being really emotionally limbo as well. So like willing to kind of lean into some of the emotions, accepting emotions, and also accept the emotions of people around them and recognize that, you know, going back to your point there, Beth, that emotions are signals of information, that data, , and you know, because the person in front of me is absolutely losing their mind and getting worried or stressed out about something. You know, I'm not as a positive leader, I'm not reacting to the stress, but I'm actually holding that for a moment. And I'm being curious about what is it that's going on for this person that is making them really stressed at the moment and generally perceiving people as always with a good intention. So that kind of unconditional positive regard, this person's coming to me because they genuinely got concerned about something. Okay. They're not presenting that concern to me in the best way. But, you know, there's a lot going on for this person, or I'm assuming there's a lot of that going on for this person.

[00:20:41] And I'm assuming that this person has good intention. And so I'm going to work with the information that they're bringing to me and not react to that kind of, uh, you know, more animalistic part of my brain where I could clearly just get really annoyed with this person in front of me. So they've got that kind of flexibility in the way that they think, but I'm also like for that hope.

[00:21:01] So I've done a lot of research into hope and hopes, a really interesting one because you know, we see like optimism and we see how, , you know, quite often we think they're the same thing. Whereas actually, they're, they're really different. They're really different concepts. We measured them in different ways.

[00:21:16] They manifest in different ways and positively to some tend to be really hopeful in a sense that they are you know, there's two aspects to hope, there's agency and pathways. And this

idea that when we have hope, we believe in ourselves and what we're doing, and we also are highly structured in creating pathways to, move forward with that hope. So we've got, we've got a plan. We're not just optimistically thinking positively or thinking things are all going to turn out. Okay. Positive Leaders tend to think. You know, I, I believe that in the best of myself and those around me to, to, for this to go well, and I'm also going to plan out the pathway in which we move forward with this.

[00:22:01] And also maybe I won't be naming any names, but in terms of how people have dealt with the pandemic, you can see where there's been wild optimism. So people just thinking, oh, do you know what it's, it's all going to be absolutely fine, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. And then there's been people who've been hopeful.

[00:22:17] So they've been people who have not only believed in things kind of working out well and having the agency and faith in themselves and those around them, but actually making sure that there's a plan and a pathway forward so I guess that's the kind of third area that I've noticed. The fourth area that I'm noticing is around.

[00:22:36] Having a real sense of purpose and knowing exactly the direction that you're going then as a leader, like having real clear sense of, you know, who am I, what my values were going to stand for? What is the purpose and what I'm doing in this meeting in this minute and this hour and this day, and you know, how do I make sure that perhaps it's really clear for myself, others for our team and how do we keep tapping back into that reevaluating checking back in on that.

And then the next area that, that feels really important is, you know, sustainability and health, , holistic kind of attitude, holistic behavior. So decision-making and thinking, not just to kind of what what's good for me in this moment and what's going to help me out, but this will be good here, how has this decision going to affect the well-being of my team? How is this decision going to affect the sustainability of what we're doing as, as a company and organization, and just having a really layeahred and holistic approach to being healthy for ourselves, for those, for those around us, and then the other thing, I guess I'm, I'm most in love that's coming through in the research that we're seeing a lot that gets backed up, you know, and it won't come as a surprise is, you know, having, uh, like seeing that relationships and relational connection with others is so critical to how we go about our work and just being really aware of these connections that we make with individuals, with teams, , and you know, doing those connections really purposefully drawing on those, like seeing the way. As been underpinned by this very clear relational fabric not just being about the task at hand, not just being about the technical expertise and what we do, but the much broader picture and how we connect with others and how that connection enables us to do the best thinking how that connection enables us to see what we do as really meaningful and I think all of these behaviors, they all compliment and interact with one another, in lots of different ways. There's so much more that's come through the last kind of 20 yeahars, particularly with the growth of, uh, positive psychology, which shows us what it is that genuinely creates that's more functioning, not just kind of at an anecdotal level, but what we see through the research does, and, you know, I guess I see my mission and my purposes as spreading that, that information a bit more so that we do things in a way that's a bit more savvy that that that's more, more purposeful in a way that brings more work joy.

[00:25:18] , And so very excited to kind of sharing that more. But as you, as you know, Beth, I could talk about this for hours I probably have done but there's, there's a lot to it.

[00:25:30] **Beth Stallwood:** [00:25:30] Yeahah there is. And I'm loving it. So I was sitting there writing some notes and there's a few things I just wanted to kind of reflect on them and pull out a bit more and say the themes that I'm hearing through all of those different aspects of things like thinking broadly and having that kind of real breadth of understanding whether that's around.

[00:25:48] Kind of the wellbeing side of things, whether that's around the purpose, but there's that actual kind of really thinking about stuff and knowing who you are, knowing what you're about, knowing what the purpose of the organization is about and connecting with it. So not getting stuck in, stuck in the weeds of stuff, but kind of taking that bigger picture, longer term view, which I think is really interesting.

[00:26:10] I wrote down something about being psychologically yoga like there you go. You can take that one.

[00:26:23] I, I heard a lot when you were talking there about this, like not being rigid, being able to understand what's going on, that kind of cognitively limber. And I was thinking kind of in my brain, limber always goes to something yoga-y. And I was thinking how there is something there about how do we allow our brains to do that.

[00:26:39] And then this is another question which we might get onto in a minute. I'll come back to it. But so many people. In leadership positions in the way the world has worked and the traditional way have got that because they have become a very deep expert in something and then have progressed through that expertise.

[00:26:59] And they're kind of brilliance technically on one thing yeah, what we're talking about here in terms of leadership of the future and where we can get excellent leadership from is actually a broader deeper understanding of the bigger picture and not one technical capability. And I think that's, this is not new information to people listening to this podcast, but it is something there about how do we continue to challenge ourselves with leadership about it not being about being good at one thing, but being able to be flexible and adaptable and understand and see, and appreciate all of the cogs that make up this massive wheel.

[00:27:36] **Cornelia Lucey:** [00:27:36] Yeah, it's really, it's really interesting. I mean, and I'm just, I suppose, I'm going to challenge a little bit on that, Beth, that, that people have got to where they are for technical expertise reasons. I think, I think definitely to a certain extent, I also think there were other factors you know, from, you know, social mobility points, people's backgrounds, people's, , wealth to a certain extent that kind of gets people into certain positions. You know, gender, getting people into certain positions, , being from a certain background type, et cetera, getting people into certain positions and then of course there's some technical expertise, but I, you know, And that's not always the case either because there are, I guess, accidentally lots of leaders who have that beautiful combination and, you know, you and I have, I've worked with them and know that those people, , but, I think kind of going to your point about leadership of the future in that meeting to be more flexible and.

[00:28:41] Yeah, I think it makes me think about, you know, needing more diversity in our workforce, you know, for the first, in the first instance, , you know, gender diversity, ethnic diversity, and just getting, you know, going back to my childhood experience of growing up. I'm in the east end of London, surrounded by people, you know, all shapes and sizes, all sorts of backgrounds, doing really interesting things with incredible creativity, curiosity drive, , and making sure that though, you know, everybody is getting an opportunity to work in all types of organizations.

[00:29:16] So it's making me think about diversity, first and foremost, and needing to achieve that and all sorts of levels. You know, I think we talk a lot about. At the moment about racial diversity, but I think, you know, one of the areas that we're maybe not talking enough on is also kind of social diversity as well.

[00:29:33] And, and again, that's another kind of tangent I could, I could go off on. But yeah. You know, being able to, to be flexible, you know, I think it's recognizing that we have to, like, we have to do this moving forward. I think the pandemic has brought a lot of lessons home and to people. I think we've seen that the companies and the organizations that have offered a bit more flexibility to the employees have got that flexibility back in bucket loads.

The leaders that are compassionate, who are mindful about their employees, who, you know, have conversations about these, uh, the challenges that people might be facing that is a, you know, creating a much more return, for those organizations and those that are being, you know, a lot more rigid, I guess, in the, in the way that they're approaching things.

[00:30:24] I think it's, it's really different. You know, given the responsibilities that they leaders have on their shoulders and everything that leaders are tasked with doing is a really hard thing to do. But I think we, you know, we need to. Being really encouraging and culturally demanding of greater self-awareness and other awareness and that needs to be something cause that we recruit for that notice that we develop, that we appoint people in positions of authority when they are being really self-professed, really self aware and conscious of, of everything that's going on around them. So anyway, my head is kind of sparking with lots of different tangent points.

[00:31:09] So I'm probably not totally addressing the question, Beth, but I know it's a really good point.

[00:31:14] **Beth Stallwood:** [00:31:14] And I think, you know, I am totally on board with the idea that we need all shapes and sizes, not just around gender or ethnicity, but around how people think and how people come to the world and how people, you know, what social background they come from and you are right.

[00:31:34] Then there are many needs out there that come from a specific type of leader and. There might be some needs to change that as the world goes forward. So totally get it. I am going to move on to my next point because otherwise we won't get through it. I think it's a really great one and we could definitely again, do a whole other day on the subject of how diversity will help improve leadership.

[00:31:54] , that'd be so many interesting things to do. Maybe we'll do another one. Like I'm loving what you're talking about there, about the difference between kind of blind optimism and hope. And

one of the things in our definition of work joy is that when you feel work joy, it is a hopeful place. It's where you can see opportunities.

[00:32:14] It's where you can have some energy to put the work in which you're talking about. Like what's the pathway, what's the plan. It's not just going, everything's going to be fine. I'm happy. Everything's fine. It is about hope. And I think I haven't heard lots of people and organizations talking about hope and I think hope is a really great thing.

[00:32:36] So I'm hopeful that we can get more hope out there in the world and understand that if you can have hope, you can make things happen. And it's not to say the optimism is bad thing, but sometimes if it's not realistic, that's not so helpful. And the other things you talked about there, just to take a couple of them around this idea of sense of purpose, it's come upon so many.

[00:33:00] Yeah, yeah. On the subject really difficult because they're like, well, I don't really understand my purpose and it is about that. Self-awareness and maybe digging a bit deeper and. Connecting your own personal purpose, the purpose of the organization, and being able to find some alignment there. And one thing I find is when there are people who are experiencing kind of what would I call it? A chronic lack of work joy when you take deep play it's often because they're personal values really believe in their purpose is directly misaligned with their organization..

[00:33:36] **Cornelia Lucey:** [00:33:36] Yeah, definitely. Definitely a key factor that comes up again and again, yeah, I mean, I do, I have to admit, like I do find it hugely fascinating when I am working with a group of leaders who are doing incredibly well and I ask, you know, I ask that group of leaders, you know, what are your personal values? And I, you know, again, and again, I asked that question, Beth, and I'm astounded by the number of people that don't raise their hand or can't share.

[00:34:09] And that for me is I, then I get naturally a little bit worried because I know that if we don't understand our own personal values, that's going to cause all sorts of interesting, overwhelm being pull being pulled for pillar to post, when challenges come our way. And when you know the world that we live in knowing I'm going to use personally really is a massive anchor psychologically and yeah, it's, it's, it's a really, you know, chronic lack of, of, of them starting that, which therefore then ends up leading to lack of joy. And I, I think not knowing kind of one's own strengths, finding values and how the money is aligned to the organization. How am I values aligned to the work that I do is a real missed opportunity for people.

[00:34:57] And I, you know, if there's one thing I'd like to achieve in my lifetime, getting more people to understand their own personal values. And I think the leaders, the leaders that demonstrate the positive leadership behaviors are really aware of those fun use and it kind of sort them out not always necessarily crystal clearly.

[00:35:16] But they're kind of more aware of those and then more able to align the work that they do, the organization and the way their team works and how that all fits together. Well, and I think the other thing is with, , that sense of purpose, it's kind of coupled with our values is being aware of, of, of our strengths and what we're really good at and recognizing, you know, going back to the point of, you know, diversity and diversity, the way we think, you know, diversity and the strengths that we have, like, we all have different unique strengths, which are the things that engage us when

we work, the things that give us a lot of energy in the way that we work. And I think if people understand more about what our own strengths are as a human being, then there's lots of different ways that we can, we can do that and assess that now we can use that to kind of, again, align, not just our purpose to the work that we do, but also the type of work that we do. So understanding more about ourselves and the team that we work in. We can distribute more of the workload so that people are doing their things, that they really get passionate and energized by that, that drive them, which again, can heighten this, the sense of purpose, or I think, you know, it's a lot about values alignment, and it's a lot about working to your strengths and yeah, totally agree with you there, Beth.

[00:36:33] And I think these are things that, you know, if considered by organizations can make such an incredible difference. I just see it day in, day out, which is, which is really lovely. , and you know, working with an organization recently across the senior leadership team and the middle leadership team, and introducing this understanding has been incredibly valuable to the organization that managed to kind of whether some really critical moments and over the last year, so it just makes such a difference and I feel like I want to go onto another tangent of another topic, but I, I should go back to you

[00:37:07] **Beth Stallwood:** [00:37:07] I mean, as you know, like I'm a massive proponent of all the values and the importance of the three organizations and individuals and leaders and everybody, one thing I was just really reflecting on now, while you were talking about it, I think sometimes when you talk about values and organizations, sometimes they're seen as kind of like slightly, a cheesy thing to be talking about or slightly fluffy.

[00:37:33] And I love the way you described them. There it's like the real anchor for your leadership and they're a real anchor psychologically to help you do things well, and I'd love us to help people understand that values aren't cheesy and that they're not all fluffy. And then they actually have real strength behind them and can really help you do stuff. Some of the organizations I work with on developing values and understanding what they're all about and helping you kind of describe them. It can help an organization achieve amazing things. It can help leaders really understand and be the best that they can be as often as they can be.

[00:38:07] Understanding that everyone is imperfect in these things. The thing I was really reflecting on is the fact that we need to also people who are kind of values led that we need to check in on our own values, because I think as you change and grow as a person, and as you develop these strengths and new skills, and as you understand the world in different ways, sometimes these values change, but we haven't checked in on them.

[00:38:34] **Cornelia Lucey:** [00:38:34] Yeah. Yeah. I mean, it's, it's, it's really interesting because I mean, the, the science would say contrarily that our values don't really change significantly over time. So once we get to a certain point in our adulthood, they're not going to change too much. However, I think. What you're saying is really important is that kind of checking back in, because maybe the review of them has changed based on the given circumstance that you're at right now, maybe that some have come more to the fore based on the situation that you're in now, maybe something is more important to you now.

[00:39:09] And in particular value, you know, for example, when people go through major transitions and growing their family and changing and career changing role, that kind of thing, there's definitely that, that change. Completely agree with you, Beth, that we need to do that constant check-in and realignment is so important.

[00:39:27] And, you know, going back to kind of the difference it makes for people's leadership. I also think it has the potential to save people's mental health, like entirely. If people understand that and into their values, it's much easier for us to undergo some of the stresses and challenges that we go through.

Yeah, there was just, just room strength behind them. And that's your point about being seen as cheesy and fluffy? I think where that kind of comes about is often, often this kind of lack of integrity between what may be an organization or a team or a leader says, or their values versus the way they behave in accordance with those values.

So your point about checking back in on them, like, are we living them or are we breathing them or using them. Over time and using them to help shape our systems and our processes and what we do and how we behave. It's going to be so important for them not to be empty words, and you know, having kind of words up on a, on a rule when you walk around in an office, it doesn't tell me if those values exist, what tells me is when I'm having conversations, when I'm interviewing individuals in a firm and organization, and I can actually see those values coming to life.

[00:40:36] And so I think, you know, we, we people we are bright human beings, human beings are sassy. They're snazzy. They can work stuff out instinctively. And so an employee will instinctively and a leader will instinctively know when a value is just not, there's not integrity behind it. We sniff it out we're animals at the end of the day.

[00:40:56] And so I think that's where the kind of cheesy fluffy chain has come from is where it's been done badly and where they're not, where there isn't a real understanding behind the depth of, you know, as you've described Beth, the depth of what values can bring us and just having, I guess, even a little bit about what values really are. And I think, you know, I I'm sure we know that and have experienced in being true. Development in different organizations and have seen where values are not, not very well, they are taught badly they are instigated it in a bad way that can really switch us off and demotivate us so we didn't have to be done in the right way.

[00:41:40] It has to be treated with you know, integrity has to be treated with a weightiness around it and also I think there's something about, you know, going to work and organization being told that these are your values and these are the values of the organization. Like, you know, you have to, and I know that lots of organizations have brilliant recruitment processes where they look at this, but you have to really buy into those values.

[00:42:06] You have to understand those values. In part of the induction, understand where they're coming from. And I think again, understand your own personal values and how do are personal values linked to the values of this organization and do they not link? And what does that say? And what does that mean about how much purpose. You are going to get in this environment, so again, something that we could spend days talking about.

[00:42:33] **Beth Stallwood:** What I am going to do now because, uh, to make sure that people don't switch off because we've been talking for four hours, so I'm going to move us on our quick fire questions. We could talk about it, but we could talk about it for days and days, two days. And thank you for sharing your insight so far. And it'd be lovely to talk about some of these things more in the future right here is the quickfire questions. Are you ready? Sure. This is a personal one. So for you personally, thing is always guaranteed to bring you a little bit of work joy.

[00:43:08] **Cornelia Lucey:** [00:43:08] It's doing anything at all that is working to my strengths and values. So I don't think that's related to leadership empathy when I'm coaching, when I'm listening to people, what people are saying, what they're bringing any opportunities to be enthusiastic or build relationships. So going back to the point that we've made already, and I think values related for me, or strengths related brings me so much work joy and life joy.

[00:43:33] **Beth Stallwood:** [00:43:33] Great. Thank you so much. Second question. Are you currently reading? Yeah. So,

[00:43:40] **Cornelia Lucey:** [00:43:40] , I'm company rereading, cause it's just a great read, a collection of essays called how to be positive leader. And it's ever since by two absolute phenomenal American women who were like gurus of possible organizations called Jane Dutton and Gretchen Spicer two amazing women. Who've been really campaigning for a lot of the stuff that we've been talking about today in the very long careers. And so it's a great read, really good selection.

[00:44:06] **Beth Stallwood:** [00:44:06]. What's the best or most useful bit of advice that somebody has given you in your life and your career that you always find yourself coming back to or passing on.

[00:44:24] **Cornelia Lucey:** [00:44:24] Yeah. So I know that you knew you were going to ask you this one. I kept on coming back to something that my grandmother has always said, actually, which is your education is the one thing that can never be taken away from you and I find this really interesting, like basically three instills that kind of constant learning mentality because everything, we learn, everything, we, we kind of take on board, we carry with us and through life and there's a whole kind of backstory to why she used to talk about that, you know, from living in a country that was under kind of occupation and how that, how that experience was for her. Like having her home taken away from her and all those different things. But knowing that the things that she learned were in her head and no one could ever take them away from her really gave her a strong sense of, of meaning.. So my second one was, this is like a bit of a cliché, but I think it's a cliché we must acknowledge, which is always put your own oxygen mask on first and I work with a lot of leaders trying to do everything can, and I think for everyone around them doing an amazing job, but not necessarily looking after themselves.

[00:45:40] And it's just so important for the sustainability of those incredibly gifted leaders to do that. So definitely always put your own oxygen mask on first.

Beth Stallwood: It might be a cliché. It might be a bit cheesy, but it's an important one. I don't mind I'll allow it for them. Okay. Thank you. Thank you about advice.

[00:46:00] What is one single practical advice that you could give our listeners that they could go and do? Today tomorrow the next day, every day, something maybe that would help them to build some water.

[00:46:13] **Cornelia Lucey:** [00:46:13] Yeah. So I'm thinking it's going back to what we discussed without sounding like a broken record. Just go and assess your own values, work out what they are, holding place, put them in your chest, put them on your wall and work those out.

[00:46:25] There's lots of really great ways that you can do that and just work out your own strengths as well. What are your strengths and what do they look like? That's what they are and hold those two incredibly important parts of who you are, your values and your strengths really close to you. And I think they will resource, you know, end and helps you out in so many different ways.

[00:46:46] And certainly something that's really helped me over the years.

[00:46:48] **Beth Stallwood:** [00:46:48]. Thank you so much. And my final question for you is where can our audience find out more about you and your work?

[00:47:00] **Cornelia Lucey:** [00:47:00] I'm on LinkedIn. So Beth and I are both on LinkedIn. So you can find me under Cornelia Lucy, my newly launched website, which is www.cornelialucey.com if people want to pick up or carry on this conversation, I'd love to hear more.

[00:47:21] **Beth Stallwood:** [00:47:21] Just so that people know the book you're writing, when might we see it on our shelves?

[00:47:31] **Cornelia Lucey:** [00:47:31] It will be a long time coming, so it won't be out until next year.

[00:47:34] So maybe we can pick back up and talk about this again

[00:47:38] **Beth Stallwood:** [00:47:38] next year. Fantastic. So one to look out for in the coming. Yeah. Thank you so much for Cornelia for being with us today. We could have talked for hours on end. Maybe we'll do another one on another subject to another point in time, but thank you so much.

[00:47:55] **Cornelia Lucey:** [00:47:55] Thank you. Have a great day and enjoy bringing lots of work joy to everyone that you're continuing to work with.

[00:48:01] **Beth Stallwood:** [00:48:01] Oh, I shall

[00:48:06] thank you for listening to my conversation with Cornelia. There's a lot of great stuff in that from her research, from her practical work with leaders. And there are a few things that I really pulled out. In fact, there were three for me that I'm really considering taking away and considering in more detail, the first one is this idea.

[00:48:27] Optimism and hope. And that sense of the future can and will be backed up, but not just blindly thinking that without taking any action, it's about people who can think like that and find the way towards it, find the way to action to leave people with that. And I really liked the word hope. I think hopefulness is a wonderful thing.

[00:48:48] I think it helps us to keep things in perspective. I think as a leader, It really helps other people to be able to get through difficult times challenging situations. And I love the idea of thinking of hopefulness and optimism as a real leadership trait. I also love the second one that really came set up for me as this.

[00:49:11] Again, we've heard on many of the podcasts, this sense of purpose that people have understanding where you're heading, why we're doing it. Just what we're doing, being driven by that biggest thing, whatever that bigger thing is. And I think in some places that's harder to do than others, but it's not impossible.

[00:49:30] And if you've never thought about that, either as an individual or as a team or as an organization, it's definitely something worth having a discussion, some thinking time, some discovery on the area and the. And you'd have had lots of people on this podcast. If you listened to any episodes, talk about values and it's so important, isn't it, to really get them to understand them for yourself, to align them with what's going on in your organization, to check on them, to see if those priorities have changed for you, because different things are happening for you in your life.

[00:50:03] And it's so important, isn't it? To just really understand yourself in that way. So those three things, optimism sense of purpose and values. And if you are. Leading or wants to be a leader. Maybe it's something to go and discover and think a bit more about in those areas, how you can show them how you can demonstrate them, how you can lead them in your organization.

[00:50:24] So huge. Thank you to Cornelia for joining me on this podcast. If you want to find more about Cornelia, we'll put all the details in the show notes so you can link through to her. And if you want to find more about create work joy, do you come and follow us on our social platforms. We are on LinkedIn Twitter, Facebook and Instagram at create work joy. We also have our website www.createworkjoy.com. I was doing the social ones there, and on there you can find out more about the Work Joy Way, which is my 16 week signature coaching program, helping you to create and cultivate more joy in your working life.

[00:51:06] And also about our growing community, the club work joy of people who are trying to do that and working together and being inspired to make that happen. Thank you very much for listening today. I do hope you enjoyed it. Maybe go and have a listen to another. Thank you.