



## **Inspiring Leadership - Can you inspire Auckland? You can.**

### **Full event transcript**

- Good evening, everybody. Welcome, I'm sure some of you'll keep joining. So we'll just get started while we wait for everybody to arrive. Tēnā koutou katoa, kia kotou. Ko Michelle toku ingoa And I'm so privileged to be facilitating the conversation this evening. As we have a korero around inspiring leadership with some incredibly inspiring people. Auckland conversations, provide an opportunity to inspire and to stimulate your thinking about the challenges that we face here in Auckland. And it's one of those special years, 'cause it's local elections year. And so Aucklanders like myself and yourself are going to be looking for a team of diverse and bold decision makers who are going to help to steer Tamaki Makaurau forward. So, to shape decisions for Auckland, we're going to need a range of perspectives to represent what I love about Auckland, which is our super diverse region. And you may not know this, but anybody can stand in the elections. You literally only need to be a New Zealand citizen, aged over 18 and on the New Zealand Electoral Roll. So if you hit all of those three, keep watching, 'cause hopefully tonight we might inspire you to be the person who stands, but we'll come back to that in a second. Tonight we are going to be joined by a panel of incredibly inspirational leaders who are going to bring a range of expertise and varied backgrounds. Together, we're going to explore what leadership means to them. Hopefully help you think about what leadership means to you and talk about the importance of diversity in decision making and why it's vital that maybe even you should stand up and lead.

Now, before we get started, there are a few housekeeping things I'm just going to touch on. A little bit of Zoom etiquette too. So this session is being recorded. That's for those who couldn't make it to the end to be able to watch later. All members of this audience will have your cameras and your microphones disabled, sorry. But don't worry, we will let you communicate with us. That's through the Q&A chat function. So if you take a look at the bottom of your Zoom screen there, you'll see the little chat box that's where you can ask your questions to any of the panellist throughout the night. We're pretty tight on time. So if we can't get to your question, I'm very sorry, but we will try and get to as many as possible. If in that Q&A chat, you are asking a question to somebody specific, please just let me know the name of that person and we'll try and direct that. Otherwise I'll try and ask everybody your question. And please stay friendly, we're here to have a friendly and thought provoking discussion

pretty much anything that might be, you know, a little bit off colour, we're not going to push through. We get to play with the rules here. So we're going to play nice with each other. If you do see something or hear something that you want to spread and we do want more people to be part of this conversation, then use our hashtags. We have AKL conversation as a hashtag. We have hashtag voteAuckland all one word and hashtag AKLelection. So start having those Twitter conversations. Let everybody know that you're in here, share the love 'cause actually I think we're going to cover some really incredible things today. And we always try ensure that Auckland conversation events are inclusive and accessible. So not only is this session being recorded and an on-demand viewing of the event, we're also going to provide a full transcript on the Auckland conversations website over the next few days.

Okay. But you're not here to hear me. You're here to hear our inspiring leaders. So let me tell you who we have on our panel tonight and then they will introduce themselves. So joining the discussion we have Bharat Mahajan. Bharat is the Programme Director for Integrated Primary Mental Health & Addiction Services. And he was also crowned Mr. Gay New Zealand in 2021, 2022. So very recent, we'll come back to that. I'm also introducing Robert Hollis. Robert is a passionately driven Marathi entrepreneur and ex-professional snowboarder. Who was ranked number one in New Zealand. He spent his time sort of crossing the borders between San Francisco and Arturo. He's in San Fran today, but now the borders are open, he's been hopping back and forth quite a lot more. And finally we have Brianna Fruean. She's an activist and environmental advocate for Samoa and was awarded The 2022 Global Citizen Prize. Very diverse people, lots of diverse topics. So we'll come to them in a second. Now, why are we here as part of Auckland conversations? Well, if you've been to any of these events before, you know, it's to start stimulating discussion about what we want for our amazing city. And in October 22, it's local election time. They're going to be taking place throughout all councils around the country and eligible Auckland voters we're going to re-elect a mayor, which is very exciting. We're going to re-elect councillors and local board members that will really help to shape decisions for Tamaki Makaurau. So you may have seen the mayoral races started. There's some interesting conversations happening there, but also we're going to be looking for inspiring candidates to vote for some of those other positions. So the question is, are you going to be part of this change? Are you going to stand? And today, is this inspirational conversation, maybe the push that you need to step forward and think about what leadership means to you, whether you want to stand for election or just want to stand up for something you really believe in. An upcoming challenge for Auckland's decision makers is going to be deciding on how to grow this amazing city that we live in, especially because we've had obviously



some impacts due to COVID 19. So have a think about what you would do to make a difference. You know, there's things that annoy you, that you walk past, what is it that you would want to change for our city? You actually could be part of making that positive change here. We're going to have a conversation with these inspirational leaders and the research is really clear. I'm a researcher and we know that diversity at the leadership table creates better outcomes for everyone. So let's have a little chat about what leadership means to our panellists. The way it's going to work is I'm just going to intro our panellists and then we're going to have a little bit of a korero. And then we'll go to your questions. So remember in your chat button, feel free to write the questions. We'll get to as many of those as we can. So let's get started. First of all, I'm going to ask you to introduce yourself, Brianna, you are on the top of my screen, so I'm going to start with you if that's okay. Can you just let everybody know what you do and what you're passionate about?

- Thank you so much, Michelle. Kia ora, everyone. My name is Brianna. I do climate change work. And so I have been doing this work for 12 years now. So I started as a little kid who started an environmental group. And so it was really like one of those, exactly that actually those moments where I saw something that I wanted to change and it was just in my primary school and I thought, "I want to do something." So me and like my friends and we were all 11 years old at the time just started a group. And that's how I got into climate work. And I still do climate work till this day with an amazing group called the Pacific Climate Warriors that are a youth-led organisation that does climate resilience work in the Pacific Islands. But we also have groups in the Pacific diaspora in Australia and New Zealand and America. So, it's so nice to be with you all tonight.

- Amazing. Thank you, Briana. Robert, let's go to you.

- Kia ora everybody. Robert Hollis, my family's from Turanga east coast Gisborne. Grew up in small town called Waipiro Bay. We had 26 people in it, which was pretty massive and then grew up on a farm in Dargaville till I was four. Fiji till I was eight. And then I don't know Christchurch. I was living in Auckland for the last 10, 12 years, which was super cool. Had a couple of companies, which I built and exited. One of them was a video production content creative agency, which I exited to Saatchi & Saatchi about four years ago and then built out New Zealand's largest network of entrepreneurial shared workspaces in Auckland. We had 10 different locations around and it was pretty awesome to able to help support a bunch of the tech startups scene. And then get on the board of NZ Tech, Hi-Tech Awards, judging with



Michelle and the crew. And then I do a little radio show to do with Today FM got a little TV show thing I've doing with the PGA TOUR. Bunch of investments and advisory and all sorts of cool stuff. And I have this overarching belief of New Zealand wins when New Zealanders win. So I'm very passionate about kind of help more other Kiwis do well and do better. 'Cause I failed high school. Couldn't get into university, have no degrees, pretty much no qualifications. And I'm an HR nightmare. So that's pretty much how I roll. So I really appreciate the time... For rolling the dice for bringing me in here with such an amazing panellist. I really appreciate it--

- You were also a casual snowboarder? Just casual, right?

- Yeah, casual previous life before I put on the COVID kgs. Got bald, fat and old. But yes, I was a professional snowboarder, so I got to travel the world and I ended up getting a silver medal at the world final. So previous life was professional snowboarder. And then before that as well, I played basketball and soccer for New Zealand also. So definitely into the sport and then transition to business. And now I've got two daughters, three and four and I been doing the present dad thing. That's been very, very awesome. So I'm enjoying life right now and it's been awesome to get back to New Zealand too. But I'm currently in Silicon Valley, San Francisco.

- Perfect. Thank you. And Bharat, tell us a little bit about you.

- Thank you. Excuse my voice, I'm just, as I said before, recovering from sickness. Kia ora, ko Bharat toku ingoa. So my name is Bharat and I'm a nurse by trade. So trained in health and then decided to do my nursing. Did a little bit of general nursing, found it too boring and found my passion in mental health nursing and then kind of specialised in mental health. Then I thought to myself, "I want to do more "with just not being a nurse." So got into leadership. I guess that was my personal challenge. 'Cause every time I would like kind of apply for roles in leadership as a nurse lead or anything, people would always say that, "Oh, you have to be "at least 50 before you can, you know, "become a leader in nursing world, in the health world." And so I made a personal point that I'm going to break that kind of you know, and make it happen and show that things can happen. So yeah, got into leadership and I'm currently living in Tauranga Moana in Beautiful Bay of Plenty. And I'm kind of responsible for rolling out the Integrated Primary Mental Health Programme. Which in short means that you can go to your GP. And if you are, you know, feeling either depressed or anxious or just things are not right in your life, you could just see a health improvement practitioner. Who's a trained mental health profession and will talk to you. And it's not



just for mental health. We all know mental and physical health it's part, hand in hand. So yeah, I'm responsible for doing that. I'm also quite... I take part in a lot of activism in regards to LGBTQ community being a very loud out and proud gay man. Yeah, so I've done some work in the LGBTQ community as well and just really grateful to be on the panel today.

- Amazing. Thank you so much. As you can see, we have panellists who literally stand up for what they believe in every single day. We're going to come back to that. So the question I first have for every member of the panel, I'll give it to you first, is what does leadership mean to you? And while you're prepping for that, I just want to say hi Zori from senior's advisory panel, who's popped a little hello in the chat. That's exactly how you use it. Hi Zori, thanks for and popping that into the chat. So Brianna, I'll start with you. Leadership, it means something different for everybody. What does it mean to you?

- Thank you. I think leadership to me means many things. 'Cause I feel like I see leadership in politicians and people who are like at the very top. And I think that's like the first image in your mind when you think like leadership. But I also see leadership within like the small communities that I work in. Like I see leadership within like my friend group of four. And I think for me like good leadership is someone who's also a good friend. And I actually think about that a lot of like leaders that I see on TV and I wonder to myself, if we went to high school together, would I want to be friends with them? And the questions I ask if I want to be friends with someone is, do I feel safe with them and do I trust them? And all my friends, I can say, hold those values. I trust my good friends and I feel safe with them. And so when I think about leadership, I think of those two things. And when I think of myself as a voter, even as a consumer, 'cause we follow leadership with how we spend our money. And I think those are the two things that are most important to me when I think of leadership, is feeling safe with someone or in a space and having trust in that space or with that someone. And I think that those are my initial thoughts, Michelle, on leadership.

- Trusted, I love that word. I'm writing the word trust down. Robert, what about you?

- I just was kind of tailing off what Brianna's saying there, which I thought was actually quite good, but she brought up the thing around, you know, in the friends and I think of this three things of when I look to others, either I want to work with, or those I look up to, I just, I have the same three questions I ask and it's the same three, regardless who it is. And it says, do I like you? Do I trust you? And will you execute?



That's it. 'Cause if you can... If you're likeable and trusted and you can execute, that's essentially all you need regardless, right. And sometimes, especially in politics, whenever people may not like someone, but they know that they can be trusted and will execute, they'll still go with them. But the worst is when they are likeable, but then can't be trusted and they don't execute. So just those kind of three things out there. And then the macro above that is, when I was 11 years old, my dad had a double brain haemorrhage. And so I was kind of made a house at 11 I don't know we were on benefit and whatever. And my mom said this line to me. She said, you know, "If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything." And I was 11, its like 25 years ago, over 25 years ago and I've always remembered it. And each time I've either looked at others or whatever the same question I'll say is, what do they stand for? What do they stand for? What do they believe in? Will they actually like put the line in their sand and be brave enough to have those sort of chats? So mine's kind of, you know, three questions in one statement. Do I like you? Do I trust you? Do you execute? And then if you don't stand for something you'll fall for anything. So then the question just becomes, well, what do you actually stand for? And those would be kind of the two that I... Not like little mantras, but it crosses over regardless if you're talking about 10 grand, 10 million, 100 million, it's the same thing, right. You need your job to get done. You want to work with people you want to, whatever. And then prior to Brianna's point about the friendship thing. That question I always ask myself around people that I know is, could I call you at three in the morning on a Tuesday night and ask to sleep on your couch and not feel bad for asking. Because to be able to have that type of phone call with a type of relationship with someone to Brianna's point, you need to have a pretty good level of trust and friendship and care. So those are kind of the four little things which popped up in my head. So, thanks Brianna for answering half of it for me. So I'll take that. So thank you.

- Thank you, you too. And I see there's a theme, both of you mentioned starting your leadership journey at the age of 11. So, Bharat you had mentioned the fact that leadership to you, you had seen as somebody who was older. We're going to, I dunno if you've got an 11 year old story or not, but tell us what leadership means to you.

- Absolutely. Leadership for me, I guess it didn't start until very late in my life. I guess for me personally, my parents immigrated to New Zealand and growing up in a town called Rotorua. They A to begin with, there weren't a lot of I guess Indians around, cause I'm an ethnic. I'm Indian, I'm bi ethnic mix. I'm also a little bit of Middle Eastern, but mum will kill me for saying this, but hey, we'll just go with Indian, right. And so, yeah, I guess growing up, you know, just in a normal kind of family with Indian culture, always finding it hard to fit in. I think that was the biggest issue for me was



from a very young age. I didn't kind of fit in into the, I guess the Western world. Going to school I think I was probably very few, again Indian kids going to school. And then again, within the Indian community, I guess as I grew up, I became a little bit more Western for my parents liking. And so then I was struggling to fit in the Indian community because you know, things that you don't do. Like I eat beef and I don't kind of follow the rituals and all the... And I was kind of labelled as being the rebellious child and you know, nothing's going to happen to him and you know, he's never going to make anything out of his life cause he doesn't follow the traditions and all that kind of stuff. So yeah, my journey started very kind of late. I also moved out of home at 14, again, being the rebellious child in me, I was told to, you know, live by the rules and I said, "I'm not going to do that." So packed my stuff, not thinking more of it. I thought somebody will come and drive and pick me up. Nobody did. Fortunately I moved into my stepsister's house, kind of did that for a while. Picked up a few jobs, like I would babysit for her and get some pocket money. Obviously my school fee and everything was paid by my parents. But yeah, luckily I never kind of went back home. At 16 I got a scholarship and yeah. And I guess you can say in a way the leadership journey kind of started at 16 in high school becoming the head boy of my school was I think the first kind of taste to the leadership. And also was a reality check for me to understand that you don't need to have a particular portfolio to fit into a leadership style or anything. And then yeah, got into nursing and then kind of completely forgot about leadership. And again, it would all come back into terms of like fitting in, going out, doing shopping, having the best, you know, shoes and clothes. I was then living in Auckland. And yeah, but then I guess struggling with my identity I have not been the most confident kind of child on the block either. And so it took a while to kind of understand myself. So I would say for me the biggest thing, what leadership for me is being authentic. I think I was struggling quite a lot and until I understood who I truly am. And as you said, Rob, what you truly believe in, what you stand for that kind of led the path. And it took a while for me to understand, but in retrospect, I guess my leadership style has always been, bend the rules. Be rebellious, do the things that nobody has ever done before. Ask the questions and just go for it.

- I love it. Thank you so much. And remember you are welcome to go to the Q&A button. If you want to ask questions to any of our panellists, as we dive into their stories. And Bharat, I mean, one of the things I'm so grateful for is this panel is incredibly diverse. We're diverse around the social stereotypes of our job. We're diverse around ethnicity. I think many of us, so I am half Asian and half Western and many of us have struggled to make sure that we impress our parents ethnically and do the things, but also try to live our own life. And so I think that's one of the great



things about Auckland is that we are so incredibly diverse, but I don't think we're always seeing that representation up there in some of the leadership roles. And I do feel like sometimes that decisions are made that maybe wouldn't be made if we had more diverse role models. So Robert, I'm going to start with you, 'cause you harp on about this all the time. What is your opinion about leadership and diversity and what do you do or try to do to try and help increase it?

- I do harp on about it Michelle, cause it's... I'll actually bring you into this. We're at CES, I've told so many people this story, we're at CES a couple years ago, we're having dinner and this is, CES is the world's largest consumer electronics trade show with about 180,000 people in Las Vegas with the future of technology and everything. We're at dinner and you looked at me and said, "Do you see what I see?" And I'm like, "What?" And it was 95% mail. And you said with along the lines of, what do our future products and services look like if 95% of all the design has been made with one skew? And I started to think about actually the falter on effect of how having a diverse range of thinking in people in the room actually matters. The danger that I feel and have felt, especially being, you know, young and Māori in tech and entrepreneurial and all the rest of it is, this tick the box mentality for what a lot of people feel they need to address. Whether it be Melvis female, or it be Māori Pacific, or it be LGBTQ, whatever it is, these things are in a way that a lot of bad leaders are treating these important things like campaigns, not realising that they're consistent, they're part of culture and they're here forever so embrace what's different. And I get extremely fired up as you can tell, because I feel that we're losing so much great opportunity in commerce and community by proactively not really engaging with the wider range of amazing people that we know. And like I know amazing woman, young bucks, old bucks, a whole bunch of crew. And I still don't feel... I feel we're slowly getting better, but I swear to God, if I see one more manhole, I'm about to lose my shit. Like it's so stuffed, right? There's so many great, amazing humans that are younger and older and all sorts of backgrounds. And I will not accept any more time where they can survey. It's the diversity of thought, but everyone looks the same. They've kind of done the same thing. It just doesn't cut it. And cause it's just not the truth, right. And I think great decisions ahead, especially when you look, talk about leadership, when it's a wider skew of actually been on take as many different optics as possible, like I call it lenses like, 'cause I'm coming from I guess a media background. The more lenses you can actually see, the more you can actually get a grasp of. And perspective is such a huge thing that we actually miss out on a lot of opportunity on. So through that one single thing, I actually think decisions will be better because there'll be more scope around the understanding of the different options of what could be done. And I get passionate about speaking up for it



because it's just not happening at the speed of what we know it should. And I think we're kind of getting sick of the same copy paste conversations without actually embracing the awesomeness that's around us. So vent over. So I appreciate that Michelle.

- We have a little translate button there. If you haven't heard the word manhole before... A manhole is a panel that doesn't have any gender diversity on it. Brianna, I'm going to move over to you. You have literally dedicated your life to climate change and here in Auckland, you know, we're talking a lot about, should we have more bike lanes? Should we offer free public transport? Or should we just be catering for people in their cars? 'cause that's what Kiwis tend to do. Can you talk a little bit about what you think leadership means around climate and what you are seeing and what you would love to see in Auckland?

- Yeah, I mean when thinking about climate change leadership, good leadership is essential. If we can imagine our world as a house. So we all live in like one house as a family, our house is on fire. And so we need leaders who know where the fire escapees are, who know where the fire extinguishers are and who knows how to get every single person out of their room and out onto the lawn safely. And you know, I think we've spoken about qualities we need to see in leadership already tonight, around trust people who can execute the job and diverse people who know the way that different types of people in that house operate, right? Because that's important if there's people in the house who are hard of hearing and who need fine language to be able to exit the house, we need a leader that can communicate that. We need leaders who know how to lead us out of this crisis. And so when thinking about climate change, the only way out is great leadership. And hopefully that's what we can find here in Auckland. And that's what we need here in Auckland. And you know, when we're talking about this conversation around the bike lanes and transport, it comes down to Talanoa, to conversation, what do Aucklanders need and what is feasible for everyday families and making sure that we have leaders coming into our community, making sure that everyone is involved in this conversation and not just people who are middle class and who can afford an electric vehicle. But people who actually take the bus, people who actually pitch into their friends' gas money to be able to get to school because they can't afford to top up their Hop card every so often and public transport's already expensive. So, you know, these conversations need to be had. And I hope that more people put up their hands and this is why it's oh, amazing to have conversations like this and have people step up, young people. We need more young people. This is our crisis. We need to be able to take the how now and step into leadership so we can start facilitating these conversations.



- Lovely. Thank you so much. Bharat I'm going to move to you. Now, you've already talked a lot about how you fit all of your life into sort of the ages of 14 to 18. But you've also talked about stepping up to leadership at a really young age because you felt like things needed to change. Do you have a proudest moment that you have where you have been able to influence change? And can you tell us a little bit about that?

- Sure. I guess they are quite a few, but I guess my personal proudest moment would be winning the title of Mr. Gay, New Zealand, 2021. Purely because of one reason, A it was not a beauty pageant. I wouldn't have won and I would've never entered because we've got, you know, this idea of like these pageants and stuff. So before I obviously researched quite a bit in terms of before entering the competition. And the more I learned about it, the more it was around leadership was biggest component of was one of the biggest attributes in terms of your assist on five areas. One is leadership, one is community integration. The other one is public speaking. And I think the fourth one is the change and the influence you've made in the LGBTQ community. And then the fifth is your knowledge base in terms of LGBTQ community. So none of the criteria were, you have to look pretty, you have to be set in size, you have to have abs, 'cause I don't, I love my food. And yeah, so winning that I guess was the biggest achievement for me. 'cause growing up, in Rotorua I never saw a representation of, I guess my colour or my make that I would look up to and say, "Right, if this person can do it, so can I." Sometimes you are your biggest enemy when especially you come from a minority I guess. And within that minority, I also then became the black sheep of my family. 'Cause again, being gay is frowned upon in Indian culture. So then I was a minority within a minority. And even within the gay community, there are different, you know, I guess stages. Like some people are straight acting. Some people are quite famous. Some people are girly and again within the community, I'm not the most, you know, manly guy you would walk in the room and I'll be, "Hey girl." I'll call people, "Hey sis." So again, that was something that I tried to suppress for the longest time. And I would sit like a man. I would talk like a man. And yeah, so I guess standing on that stage, winning that sash and looking in the crowd, 'cause it was a big out, so it was quite a big crowd and seeing some of the faces crying and some of who were my friends, I guess more than the title, it was the standing on the stage and just being proud of that. I have given somebody a hope that if I can be here, you definitely can be here.

- Huge. And that authentic representation is so important. And I think when we talk about leadership, it is about having people who represent us that we can see in



positions of power and positions of influence in the hope that maybe we could follow in their footsteps. So thank you, for doing that. Okay, I'm going to do one more question to you, Robert, and then we're going to go to questions from the audience and that is, and I know you harp on about this too, 'cause you and I are friends. Tall poppy syndrome. Tell me a little bit about this. 'Cause one of the challenges we've got is when people are in leadership roles, perhaps they get cut down a little bit. Tell me what you think about it and how you think we can overcome it.

- It's, I mean I'm only 37, but what I'm old enough to realise is that this tall poppy syndrome was here before I was here. And so when you've got something that's generational, it's not just to flip the script and at your age it just turns off, right? You need to think about what are these little breadcrumbs that have been put into people's heads over decades that have made them think, "Oh maybe I'm not good enough." Or this or that. And you know the same person who's good at something in New Zealand, if they're in the States, they have a confidence with it. But in New Zealand it's shame, right? And Peter Beek's a great example in New Zealand. It's, "Oh my gosh, is this crazy outlaw doing "this amazing thing. "This guy's such a freak and this is crazy." You convert that into an American conversation. He's just someone that's... He's an entrepreneur doing space tech, right? He's one of us. He's just... And since this he's a mindset shift. Where I get really, I guess, fearful around it or I get harped on is all of these people now that want to try and do something that don't 'cause they're too fearful of what others think or the expectations or whatever. One day they will be 70, one day they're going to look around and go, "Man, I wish I was brave enough "to have the balls and try and actually "go and do that thing." And they wake up old with regret and they can't get that back, you know. And so I think of it like basketball, not soccer, where in basketball, you can have 100, the score can be like second over time, 130-128. But you just keep shooting and shooting and trying and trying and going and going. Opposed to soccer you could just play the whole game, get to the end it could be like zero all. So I think just mentally going on offence for it changes the mindset of like, yes, you're going to fail. Yes, you're going to do it down and not potentially do their best. But I think one of the biggest disappointments for our nation is the lack of commercialization or just execution of amazing ideas that great Kiwis have had, but have never had the bravery to actually go and try, just try it. Because that you come to the states and I've been fortunate enough to travel to America for, you know, over 20 years now. The mindset around trying is totally different. And I think there's a mind shift that needs to happen in terms of the average Kiwi that wants more to know that it's okay to go and try and do that thing to be brave enough to give it a flip and crack. And the simple question to ask yourself, and this is the way I've like figured it down to figure it out if this is around you or not



is just figure out the top 20 people around you in your circle and give them a plus one or a minus one. You're a little fire. Do they put water on your fire and try to put out and say you can't do it? Or do they put gasoline on the fire? And they're supporting you to like, "Go on, you can do this, "you got it, bro. "You got it." And you should do that for 20 people. And you'll see, pretty instantly, if you've got a circle that's actually believing in you or the circle that's not backing you. So, which is why I get very, I guess, very kind of passionate about it too. 'Cause as Bharat was saying, you know, like when you're one of the first ones there in the outlier, well you're the first one in the flipping door. It's your responsibility to kick that thing open for everyone else that looks like you, rolls like you, talks like you, act like you that's never been there before. And I think that weight comes a responsibility. And I just think there's so much amazingness that we've already done that no one knows about. And I think Arturo has a really big issue with our own success and it's really holding us back and I just don't really accept it. So anytime someone's amazing at something, I just push 'em to go hard and try and push push more because I don't want them to be 70 to look back and then have that regret that they weren't brave enough to try and actually give it a crack. Vent complete, but I feel very strongly about it.

- That's good. And, you know, I think, you know, we're all in positions where, you know, people may have said things to us that were negative about things that we were doing. And I think it's really important to sit back and go, "Do I value that person? "And do I value their opinion?" 'Cause if you believe everything everybody says to you, you'll probably just be in a corner crying all the time. But you get, like you said, you look at those 20 people around you and go, "Is that person putting out my fire? "And if not..." And I think it's a really strong lesson to learn around valuing, you know, listening to people's thoughts, but going, "Do I value that "and do we share the same values?" So--

- It's that thing Michelle of, I was just going to say, if they don't have scars, put them on silent. Like if they haven't been in the flipping ring, they don't count. If they're not trying it themselves, they may be driven out of jealousy and resentment. The fact that you're doing something that they couldn't have done themselves and their own insecurities are putting themselves on you, right. So if they don't have their own scars stuff 'em, put 'em on silent, onto the next. Sorry I tend, we're getting a bit aggressive, but it's the truth.

- Okay. We're going to go to some Q&A, from those who are watching at home or at work or wherever you are remotely. And this is a great question. So you are all here



because you are leaders in your own right. And the question comes in that says, "how do you see the ideal relationship "between the leader and the led?" And so not everybody wants to lead and that's okay, that's great having our diverse population. So as leaders yourself, how do you see the relationship between you as a leader or other leaders and those that they are leading? Does anybody want to take this one? I can hear your brain ticking there Robert.

- You know my thinking face. 'Cause I like that question. 'Cause I asked the question of, "How strong "is their magnet?" Right? Like how strong... Without them saying anything when they... Like, I was lucky enough, I saw Sir Willie Apiata, walked into the room that I was at, the room changed, like the energy of 200 people changed. 'Cause one dude didn't say anything and he just walked in. So when you are talking about the sheep or the shepherd or whatever is how strong is their magnet that holds that manner and presence with what they represent without them having to say a word. And pro overarching that would be, is there bullet proof clarity on the intent of what you know, that they have, that you will follow that magnet to the death because you trust that leader. So I guess I'm always in these like questions I'll ask, but I really like that question that came through because it's like, yeah, like, how strong is their magnet? You know. And yeah, that's actually really good I'm going to use that somewhere. 'Cause it's actually pretty good. I really like that. But you know what I mean? Like you see a weapon come in and you just feel that energy. It's like, I'm going to the death with this dude, with this chick, I'm down, let's boogy, you know? And I love that. So it gets me excited when I see that type of bravery regardless what we're in.

- And with that bravery, I think we go back to the scars because I think one of the great things I love about leaders is those who are willing to go, "I didn't get this one right." Sometimes we get it wrong and it's something I think we don't see as much in politics or in councils because there is a risk aversion there, but the ability to go, "Hey, we bet on this. "And a few things didn't work and this is what we learned." And so I'd love to see more of that authenticity around failure and acceptance of going, "We did all we could, we made our predictions, "we thought it was going to work, but it didn't. "But I still want to lead us on this journey. "And this is a little detour we're going to make." Does anybody else want to have a little go at this question? Otherwise I'll move on to the next one. Yeah Brianna.

- Yeah, I think just to go off of what Rob was sharing, but you know, there's this quote and it's famous in politics that basically the idea is that a politician's job is to get into



like the leadership role. And then the public's job is to make sure that he's still doing, or she's still doing her job. Like we get there and you need to remind us why we are here. Like keep us accountable to keep doing the work. And I feel like that is the reality of a lot of relationships that the public have with leaders. And I really don't like it. Like I don't, I think that's not a good place for us to be in where it's our job to hold our politicians accountable and to constantly be questioning them. What are you doing to hold our leaders accountable? You know. And I think it goes back to what Rob was saying too, it's like a magnet. Like if we're not getting a strong magnet that this person is doing the right thing and we trust them, we're constantly having to question them. And I think sometimes that gives our leaders like a state of comfort, like, well, I can try out this thing, try out that thing and you know, if I'm doing something wrong, someone will call out on it where knowing we need leaders at this point to just do the right thing or just hopefully continuously do what the things that make us feel like we can follow them. And so I think that would be a good relationship for me that I could see followers with leaders is to have more trust and to not constantly feel like we need to be keeping an eye on these leaders. 'Cause we don't trust what they're doing.

- Yeah. Bharat do you want to go on this one? Otherwise I'll move on the next.

- We'll move on to the next.

- We'll move on to the next, okay. Well look, I'm going to combine two questions that have come in from people watching at home and they both have a similar theme. One of them says, "Love this korero would love to hear "your thoughts on how our elected representatives "can better connect with and support our most marginalised "communities who are often underrepresented in votes." I'm going to combine that with this, which is, "How do leaders tap into the wisdom and experience "of the public. "So as to lead more effectively?" So this question is around how, if we are leading and how do we make sure our leaders are actually connecting with their communities. And we've talked about coming from different places and having different backgrounds. And so how do you think, or how would you like to be connected to by your councillors? But also how are you yourself connecting to the communities that you are working with to make sure that you are hearing a diverse range of voices. Who wants to take that one?

- I can probably just start with a little bit of what I know in terms of connecting. And I guess the most important thing for me personally, in order to, and we've spoken quite



a lot about, you know, what is important for leadership and the magnet that Rob and Brianna said before. It, I guess for me, it comes out to relatability. If somebody and that trust that Rob was talking about before, even before you connect with the communities, I think there needs to be some sort of relatability and that trust. Either that is done through the previous work that you've done or what you stand for, all that kind of stuff. But I think it's really important that we don't have tokenism. That is something that I see a lot in my kind of industry we're working and we have diversity and inclusion and then you have the table at the seat and it's just a seat and a tick box. Oh yeah, we've got the LGBTQ, we've got the brown person, we've got the Māori representation and they just sit there and we just nod heads and we say, "Yes." And it's all done. And if you do open your mouth, then you're the troublemaker or you've got an attitude problem or you think everybody's racist and everybody's homophobic. So I guess it really... If do give somebody a seat at the table, make sure it's meaningful and that they have a voice and it's not... And if they do open their mouth, listen and take it on board and have a chat, have a korero. Don't just shut the idea down by saying, "Oh, you know, the person is just difficult. "Or I also hear a lot... "Oh, your trauma is talking." In terms of, "Oh you just being bullied?" And you know, so there's all sorts of things where people would. And these are at a leadership table, where I'm saying, you know, "Don't just say this, add this "to the blah, blah, blah, whatever." So definitely I would say if there is a seat at the table, make sure it's meaningful. Otherwise there is no point.

- Amazing goodness gracious. I feel like I need your life story in a book. But we'll come back to that. Robert.

- So I'm just trying to still get past, "I feel like your trauma is talking." It's like, geez, what type of tables are these man? They need to shake it up. Now, probably back on the relatability, I strongly feel there's something, there's an... I always like these ideas of like ninja moves, right. When there's this kind of like a creative way that you can navigate different words. And the one that I go to is like, how do you mix from this, and I use it for myself, as how do you mix from the streets to the C-Suite, you know. Like how can you literally roll up to a whole bunch of billion dollar telcos and VCs or whatever, and have an adult conversation. And then come down to the streets and have just as much care and empathy for, you know, 15 year old running from door to door who wants to, you know, try and figure out how to get into building or whatever it may be. As soon as you've got a touch point where you are prior to your point, like relatable, but then accessible as well. When you can split that gap, that's like the best. 'Cause I remember, you know, growing up in, I don't know, Christchurch we're on the benefit, I just remember feeling, we didn't like people from Merivale and Riccarton



on the west side of Christchurch 'cause they were rich. And because we were poor, we hated the rich people. It didn't matter what they said, right. It was just like a thing. But and that's without getting to meet them or know them, whatever. And there's always such a danger when you pocket a bubble of inaccessibility through exclusivity, positioned by someone that has some type of power, whatever, that, it doesn't matter what you say because they can't connect with you. They're not listening you know. And it doesn't matter, you know, like I've snowboarded for years. I don't care how someone did it. If a skier comes up to me, trying to tell me how to do a snowboard trick, I'm like, "Shut your face, you ski. "I don't care what you're saying. "Cause you don't speak my language." But these same worlds of languages, right. Like same in the financial world or the community world or the social world or whatever it is. And I think when you can have the relatability to your point, but then accessibility where genuinely someone doesn't feel threatened to be able to roll up and say, "What's up?" That's such a superpower. Because as soon as people feel comfortable enough to talk to you, half the battle's done because they're at least, if they're to talk to you, that means they're going to listen. Opposed to just a one way traffic from someone that you can't relate to. Who's, you know, potentially just rolling some pocket square in an ivory tower. They telling you that you can do it, but they've never known what it's like to eat flipping noodles and like mountain juices for two weeks 'cause you can't afford it. And then you're having to bike with the chilly little pedal on that's half broken, but you can't afford it. You know, it's like sometimes unless you've been in the gutter, they won't listen, you know. And so to the point about the marginalised communities, if you're not accessible or they don't feel you have genuine empathy or care, people tune out. I still do it today. If someone tries to start to talk about stuff and they're in a different world, I'm like, "I appreciate it bro. "Good chat, but yeah, nah." So relatability and accessibility from the streets to the C-Suite that's how I think about it.

- And I think so I'm going to challenge you a little bit on that, Rob, because I think you can only have the background that you've had. So your life perspective is only going to be your journey. And so I would've taken your skier and gone "Well, do you know what values we share "is our love of the snow. "So you might not understand my journey as a snowboarder "and I sure don't get you as a skier. "But we're all here for the same reason, "which is that we love the outdoors and we love the snow." And I think it's easy to go, "Well, you haven't been through this." But nobody's been on your journey just like nobody's been on my journey. And I think sometimes it's... You can be empathetic and listen, even though you've never been on that journey and learn about skiing. I'm a snowboarder, so I-



- I agree. I guess specifics, if you don't have the empathy for that situation 100%, but you know, I get it. I agree.

- Brianna.

- Yes. Could you repeat the question one more time, Michelle? I was so like into the answers, I was like thinking of snowboarding.

- That's a problem, hey, it's that time of year. We were talking about how do you effectively engage with marginalised or communities that you are trying to lead, especially those who might be minorities in your communities?

- Yeah. I think just going off of what Rob was saying around accessibility. I think in order, and it's been said so much tonight, in order to really relate to marginalised communities, you need to understand the nuances. And the people who can understand the nuances the best is the people from those communities. And this is a thing that I think a lot of people in leadership are scared to do. But if you feel like you can't talk and you'll be able to sense this, you can't talk to a community and truly get like real raw answers. It's because like Rob said, they've tuned out. They don't want to talk to you. And that should be an indicator you need to step back and let someone else take that position of leadership. I think that's another really important thing about good leadership is knowing when to step up and knowing when to step back. I think for too long, we have leaders who hold on to power because they think I really want to do this good thing. And you know, it's in my heart and I'm trying to do this good thing and I will stay here forever to do this good thing. When the reality is sometimes you are not the right person to do that good thing. And there needs to be a more diverse person in that position. And so, you know, we need to reevaluate. When is it time for us to stand up and take space. And when is it time for us to pass the mic and share that space and recognise that there's someone better to come and reach out to these communities and make that link between leadership and grassroots.

- Hmm. Powerful stuff. I love it. Thank you. Look, there's a question that's just come in that actually ties through to this. And it's interesting cause when I asked you all about your leadership journey, you all gave me very different examples of what you thought leadership meant to you. I was privileged enough to win a leadership award a while back. And I got interviewed by a journalist and they said, "When did you know



that you were a leader?" And I looked around and I was like, "Oh no, I'm not." And they said, "You just won an award. "You better figure this out. "Cause I need to write something down." And it made me think about, you know, in my mind leadership had always been those people up there wherever they are, right? Those older people in politics or head of companies, or I've never seen myself as a leader... I'd never used that word with myself. And the question that we have from somebody who's watching says, "For me, I see a lot of leadership "goes unrecognised and people who aren't in classic "leadership roles," those stereotypical ones that we hold up high, "Often don't know the positive effect "that they have on their cause or with their community. "How do you help to make sure that these unsung leaders "know that they have the backing to make the next step?" And I'm pretty sure all of you have probably felt on your own at some point wondering what you're doing. And so does anybody have any advice for how we take, I mean, so many of these amazing leaders that we see locally doing incredible things that just aren't recognised. How do we help share what they do? How do we help promote them? How do we help support them? And how do we help change that stereotypical view of what leadership actually is?

- Maybe I'll make a start. I think for me, one of the ways, cause there there's many ways that we can give our unsung heroes flowers. But one of the ways that I've been thinking is to do it when they're young, you know, our little cousins, our kids, our nieces and nephews running around the house. When you see them do something like one of them will start picking up the toys first and lead the way in cleaning up, give them their flowers then. That was a really good job. I'm really proud of you for starting that. When our little ones or our young cousins have ideas and want to execute something like take the time to listen to them and say, "That's a really good idea. "How do you think you're going to do this? "I really support this idea. "And I think that you have the ability "to lead this project you want to do." And the reason why I say that is because I'm not like an extraordinary person that like was given superpowers to be a leader. My superpower is my community, it is my family. It was like me having an odd thought. And my dad and my mom being like, "I believe in you, "I think you can lead that." And I think that's what we need to do with our young ones, especially our young Pacifican and Māori and and minority children who often don't see themselves in classic leadership roles. And you know, the saying that, it's hard to be something you can't see. I think a lot of our marginalised kids feel that way. How do you be something when I've never seen a Pacific Islander in this role? I've never seen a Māori prime minister within my time. So if we can't provide a world that our kids can see themselves as leaders, we need to tell them they can be. Because I never saw it when I was young, but my parents told me that I could be a part a the



future where I made that possible. And so I think that that's how we start, bringing up these unsung heroes is doing it in our own lives and making sure we're doing it when they're young.

- Mm, great. Language so important. Rob.

- I think we may have a conflict of interest there 'cause Brianna sounds like she's about to go into politics. Geez that was a good little good little spiller, I flipping like that one. My brain actually went to there's a book by Seth Godin called "Linchpin." And "Linchpin" is basically about the weapons that exist in these different organisations and stuff that were actually the glue that held them together. And funny enough, usually these linchpins were never... They were kind of the heart leaders of the team, like say Golden State Warriors, for example. Steph carries the famous one that shoots all the threes, but Draymond Green is the heart and soul is the linchpin within that thing the core like leader of it. So my first thing went to, I guess, identifying the linchpins and I think prior to Briana's point as well, being able to generationally shift the breadcrumbs to make their mindset, knowing that what they can go, they can do. And I guess I'm starting to learn this more and more now, 'cause I've got two daughters, three and four and prior to your point about picking up this or that. Yeah. It's changing them. I feel it's not rewiring them. It's wiring them in a way that they feel that all these things are possible and everything's good. They can all go try and go, so there's never that belief. 'Cause for me, when I was 15, after my... I was failing in high school, on welfare. My dad passed away when I was 15, unfortunately and my careers advisor put the ceiling on me said, "Hey, congratulations Robert, "when you finish high school, you could work "at a warehouse packing boxes." And I'm just like, I got no issue with that. It's what you got to do to break bread. My issue was that was the ceiling they put on me when you're 15 years old, surrounded by gangs or drugs and bullshit. Living in Aranui on welfare. You failing in high school, not getting to university and you're sitting there going, "Well stuff this." And that's that sort of ceiling opposed to and... But weirdly enough leaders or... Said prior, same to your Michelle point, I wouldn't call myself a leader at all. I just do my own thing. But I turned that negativity into fuel. So I use that as fuel and it was just a mindset shift, that I had to do. And prior to the bigger point of it is just being aware of that circle of, you know, Big Sean, he's a rapper, he's got the saying, he's like, "I've got people that are in my circle, "but not in my corner." Right? There's people who are around me, but they don't have my back. The people around me they're putting water on it not fire. So I think the self-awareness piece comes too. But to answer the question would be finding the linchpins, giving them the flowers and then not rewiring them, wiring them from when they're young to believe that all that stuff is possible. 'Cause I don't want



any mental limitations on what my kids can or can't do regardless what that is. And that's just that won't be an issue in my household. I hope so anyway.

- Bharat any unsung heroes that you have wanted to celebrate or seen or wished that they knew they were unsung heroes?

- Yeah, I would say two of my best friends. They're both family. And one of them is a nurse and we both started our kind of careers together. And I call her my family and you know, she's Tongan, I think she might be on the chat. So, hey Latu. But I guess with her, I guess I was the biggest push for her in order to... 'Cause we started her careers together. We both were 18 or 21 when we first graduated. And it was kind of embedded into us that you have to be 50 or 55 before you can become a charge nurse or a service manager in health. And by the time you become a director, you are probably retired by then. And you should just, you know, do your five years. Once I kind of led that path for myself and because I... She didn't see what I saw in her. 'Cause we were quite similar and all the stuff that I would kinds do, I'll always go back and be like, "Hey, you can do this." And she'd be like, "What are you talking about? "You're so driven, you're a leader." Again, all those words that she saw in me and I kind of saw in her. As unsung leader today, when you know, she got her contract, I think six months ago as a charge nurse. So again, paving that path for another young charge nurse in the country. In Hauraki, I guess, you know, things that she did that I encourage her to do was she's from Māngere and you know, the whole family's super important and all that kind of stuff. And I guess the thing that we both learn from each other, A, nothing comes free in life. There are things, a price that you have to pay for stuff. And sometimes it's at a sacrifice of doing things. And yeah, but the unsung part of that is, if you don't have anybody in your circle, either family or friends or at work, cut those friends, if they don't appreciate, or if you've done something nice it goes unnoticed. At work I have quit my jobs where I have thought, "I'm not valued, I'm out." Doesn't look good on CV, but hey, it kind of paid off. So yeah, I would say every opportunity that you get to appreciate someone or build them up or you see something that they don't see in themselves, if you don't do it, that's a massive opportunity missed there. 'Cause they will be the future tomorrow and probably will become a better leader than the others that are out there.

- So important. And so if you are sitting at home, watching thinking, "Man, that person that I know is amaze balls." Go give them a call or send them some flowers, virtual or real and yeah give them that love, 'cause sometimes people don't even realise that they are showing leadership. They're just getting on and trying to fix the



things that they see around them. And it's so important. Okay. So we talked a little bit, well I talked a little bit about risk diversion in politics and failure. And so I'm going to going to have you open some wounds. This is a question from the audience and it says, "What's the one mistake you've made in your career." I will add, "Or life that you wish you could go back "and fix?" And you might not be the type of person who wants to go back and fix stuff. You might be a no regrets person, but let's talk about something that you've reflected on and perhaps you would've done differently. You get to be as honest as you wish on this one. It's a pretty vulnerable question. But I do think, you know, one of the authentic leadership traits is actually sharing that you're human and that you're not infallible and that sometimes things just don't go the way you expected. So would anybody like to share their one thing that they would at least like to go back and reflect on if not fix.

- I've got plenty. So I'll just pick one. The biggest learning for me, I guess, was trying to become something that I'm not. Purely because either it came from the cultural upbringing or trying to fit in the parents' expectations and then the community expectation. The Western world kind of expectation. So yeah, I would say if I could go back and change one thing, cause I did waste my time quite a lot in that kind of phase. I would definitely do... I would change trying to become something so that I could fit in and look cool and sound cool and have lots of friends and you know, have that kind of life. I would definitely go back and change. 'Cause let me tell you that did not add any value to my life. I wasted a lot of time trying to become something or stand for the things that I didn't believe in, but because it was cool and I wanted to fit in, I would just be like, "Yeah, let's do it. "Or I totally agree with this." Or, but at the core of me, I was like, "Mm, this doesn't fit right with me." Or I would always have that, feeling like I shouldn't be doing this. Yeah. So I would go back and change that I don't know fire to just trying to fit in when I didn't believe in those things.

- I love it. And just so you know, you are the coolest now, so. Rob. You want to reflect on anything in particular?

- Yeah. I got asked a great question a while back and mine actually went around time. So I have a... I think differently about numbers. So when I was, so my biggest regret was, when I was 30 I didn't want to be retired as such, but I wanted to have options was what I called it. And I think I could have got to where I was at 30, by the time I was 27. But I had too much arrogance and ego in my early twenties thinking I could do everything myself without anyone's help. Stuff everyone, I'm the man. Stuff you, I'm going to do everything cause I'm awesome. But what I lost was time, right? And



so I realised that by losing that time. So I have this formula, which I work in my life and it's called a life regretage percentage. And my life regretage percentage is a formula where at 30 years old, I lost three years, 'cause I had too much arrogance and ego in my early twenties thinking I could have done it myself that I lost 3%. So I had a life regretage percentage of 10% at 30 years old. But I said, you know, I'd rather be 30 years old with a life regret percentage of 10% than be 60 have done something I hated for 30 years, which would be half my life. So now I'm at 60 years old with a life regretage percentage of 50%. And now I'm kind of stuffed, cause being like Māori Pacific with this diabetes and this blood pressure that ain't no joke. So like I'm pretty much tapped out, right? So I think about time differently, but that's literally how so when I have decisions that I make, the question I ask myself, is will this increase or decrease my life regretage percentage? Like by choosing to do this thing and allocate my time, will this make me feel wake up at 70 with less regret or more regret. When I'm in, you know, that nursing home with flipping robots changing my diapers or whatever it is I'm going to be flipping doing in the future when AI takes over everything. You know, but I think about these things. So how I'd do it is I'd definitely be thinking down those lines of that. So that's how I think about, I guess, regret.

- I love it. When I first met my husband and he moved in with me, I used to have a pile of monopoly money on the kitchen counter. And every day I would move one of the monopoly cash pieces to the other side of the kitchen. And he's like, "What are you doing?" I said, "Oh, well I've just spent a day of my life. "I'm just considering whether or not I spent it wisely." And so for me it was a real physical thing that he was like, "You're nuts." But I like to sit back and reflect and go, "Was today how I wanted to spend my time. "And if not, how do I get to change tomorrow "to spend it more wisely?"

- Well, Ray Avery changes... He counts his days down of when he is going to die. He thinks the average life expectancy for him is like 80 or 90 or whatever. And he counts, like when the day I met him, he said, "Oh, I've only got like 5,000 days left." And I'm like "What?" He reversed engineer his time. So each day he gets more aware of how temporary relevant his life is in the bigger scheme of things. But having these questions again, you know, use monopoly money, I use regret percentage, he's using days and dollars and whatever. So it's an interesting deep question for a political debate, but I'm happy we went there.

- Brianna, anything you want to go back and reflect on?



- Yeah, I think, it's funny, it actually ties a little bit to both of your answers of time and then also around identity. But I wish when I was young... If I could go back in time and give advice to my younger self, it would be not to waste time looking so far away for inspiration. So when I was young and I felt like I wanted to be this activist, I used to Google Emma Watson speeches. So she is like Hermione from "Harry Potter." And like, I just wanted to be her. And so like I consumed so much of her speeches and her content and her life and tried to be so similar to her when she was so different from me. She was living in England. I was living on in a small island in the Pacific. So I grew up in Samoa and I wish that when I was younger, I actually just looked around me for inspiration cause that's where I get inspiration now. Like my elders, my aunties, my like old teachers, like I go back on Facebook and I like go and see all these people that I just live next door to in Samoa and see some of the things they write on, like these like deep, emotional Facebook posts. And I'm like, "Wow, you have so much knowledge." And there's a really jarring quote that one of my aunties actually shared with me, is that every time an elder dies a library burns.

- Hmm.

- And it's this idea that our elders hold so much knowledge and I had such close access to this knowledge growing up around them. And that if I could go back in time and change anything is I wouldn't look so far out for what I needed to enrich my life. It was right there in front of me. And I didn't know that those elders around me were running out of time themselves. To this day, I can check what Emma Watson's up to. I can't see what a lot of the elders that I grew up around up to now because they're no longer with us. And so I think, yeah, it's tied around time, but also identity and just valuing who I was as a young Samoan woman more when I was younger.

- Mm. Okay. Well, this question from the audience has I think been stimulated by your AI nappy changes over there, Rob. So it says, "In the next decade and beyond, "there's going to be lots of change both in our world "and here in Arturo that are going to be difficult "unpleasant for lots of people, both old and young. "Do you have any ideas as to how you and maybe "other leaders might help people "to handle these disruptions?" This is a space I work in a lot, obviously I'm in the tech sector and trying to make sure that the digital divide doesn't get any more larger than it already is. And try to help people understand that digital and technology are a big part of our future. But Brianna, we're looking at, you know, things changing with our climate and the world that we live in is going to be disrupted around. You know, we're already seeing



in agriculture. We're also also seeing in housing that climate changes are affecting that. But in the medical, I mean, there's a huge stuff happening right now in nursing. When you look at, you know, we're losing our DHBs and now we're... Everything's changing over there. And Rob you're in the tech space with me. I mean, you see it all the time. So this is a really big question. But do you have any ideas as to how you and other leaders might help people to handle these upcoming disruptions?

- Yeah, I think I'll take this one. So there's a question here, Michelle. It says, "Do you have any idea as to how you, "or maybe other leaders might help handle these disruptions "cause of your expertise in the space? "I think you could probably add more value "than us at this point."

- Well look, I'll get it started. The things that I do is I try and remember that everybody's on a journey and their journey starts from where they're at. And that your journey is about going to one place ahead of where you are and not assuming the knowledge. So the challenge we've got around digital devices right now is we assume even on the Zoom call that you know how to use Zoom. Now, the pandemic has taught a lot of people that, but it's innate for some of us and it's a real challenge for others. And so I think making sure that we have programmes that help people to, number one, figure out where they are and move them just one step, rather than just assume that we are going to keep going onwards from where everybody should be. But we know nobody is actually at. So the work that we do just sits and listens and goes, "Where are you? "Okay, how do we take you one step further "than where you are today?" 'Cause everybody's on their own journey.

- Do you think, I know this isn't about, I know this is actually about you Michelle though, but do you think from all the conversations you've had with everyone that's struggling with this specifically is the answer first the mindset shift of what these leaders need to have. They need to think about these disruptive things that are coming. Is the first thing, the mindset that needs to shift? Is that's the overarching hook that which you've seen?

- Look, I see with a lot of the leaders that they're already there. And so they're making decisions cause they've already gone on that journey and they're there. Look at banking. Banking's a great example. If you try and do anything in a physical bank right now, it's almost impossible. I try to get cash from the bank and they said, "Oh no, you need to order that a week in advance." I'm like, "Okay, you used to be able to get money "from these places." But now everything is done online. And yet I look at



my grandparents who, you know, they had a challenge where they were hacked into their bank. They don't trust the online system. They don't understand it anymore. And now any transaction is a stress because there's no option for them. And so I sometimes wonder if we're making big decisions too quickly just because the leaders have already made it there. But we haven't thought about how do we make sure that there's a filtered option for those who aren't there yet, but help them on that journey to get there. You know, if my grandparents could go on a course to help them learn about how to use their bank online, I'm sure they'd be much better off than they are. So I think there's a journey process that perhaps... And it goes back to those communities that maybe we aren't engaging with. But yeah, I think sometimes the leaders making decisions are from backgrounds where this has become easy, cause they've been on a journey together and not realising that others haven't had that journey yet.

- Well, if they jump into that point to go down that path instantly everyone else who doesn't understand it, they put their hand brakes on out of fight or flight and they don't, you know. Can you imagine trying to explain NFTs or Web3 or crypto to someone who's scared about an online bank? It's like, "Geez, let's just park the bus." Yeah, I would go into two things. The first one I'd say, well probably just the main one is actually the mindset of offence or defence. You know, if you're not curious to try and see and learn whatever instantly you just hand break up and everything was just fearful, even though it makes sense because it's not what you know, it's not what you're comfortable with. And, that's why I ask about the mindset was, if they're already mentally there, then it becomes about as a leader, how they bring everyone along for that journey. Because sometimes when everyone else is stuck in their own little bubble, how do you get everyone to rise up and actually see bigger with a different lens. That's why I guess I asked that because half the time, you know, usually like I've known CEOs who they'll come in and basically they're main game plan is like package this thing up and we're going to go public in three years or whatever it is. No one else beneath them understands what that even means, but then how to get the entire ship aligned to one single purpose when only one person knows actually what's potentially going to happen. That becomes, I think it's... That's why I think COVID's been amazing for the fact that it's been able to expose amazing leaders and expose horrendous humans who shouldn't be in power at all. So that's probably my 2 cents on it.

- Yeah, very much so. But also, I mean I work in the tech education space, you know, 15 to 25% of our families in South Auckland don't have any internet connection at all. So the work I've been doing has showed that during COVID we lost so many of our



students who just were not able to connect to the solution that was put in because technology sadly is a divider right now. So I think we've still got some big conversations to have around that. Anybody else want to talk about, how do we help lead through disruption? It's a big one, I know. And Rob and I can just rant all day, but we're not going to otherwise I'll move onto how to hack your life. Okay, here we go. I like this. Rob, this is right in your alley, cause I know you have your checklist of things that you do for hacking your life. Here is the question. It goes, "What's one small thing or habit "that you do every single day that you think makes "you a better or a stronger leader." So somebody is wanting to know, is there a hack that you do that we can all copy or learn from that helps you to be the great leader that you are and Rob, you can't say, "Drink whiskey."

- I think consistency. Because when you're regardless of consistent and flat the entire time, everyone knows exactly what the expectations are. Hey, you look like Rob, dress like, act like, talk like everything. And if you over communicate, but they know your intent is right. They'll give you so much more leeway that your magnet does a lot of the work for you. So I probably say that, but it's weird when you say like leader, I think I probably to yourself and maybe others on the call too. It's like, I don't think good leaders call themselves leaders. Like actually I've never heard ever, someone that's a weapon go, "Oh man, I'm such "a dope leader this week." It's like, "Shut up, come on," Like, "Piss off." But simultaneously I think it's just that navigating both of those worlds is pretty tricky. So that's probably my 2 cents on it.

- Consistency. Brianna, do you have a life hack that you use? Something that you do every day?

- Yeah. It's like a weekly by daily type thing, but I'm a journalist. I quite like like writing things down and before I always used to write like what I want to do in this day or what my goals for the week or what I want to execute in the week. And then sometimes I wouldn't meet them. And then by the end of the week, I'll be like, "Oh, well this, like my colleague, didn't this? "And then this fell through and this..." And like all these things out of my control fell through. And then a mentor of mine told me to reshape that. And instead write down, not only the three things you want to do in the day or three things you want to do in the week. Write how you can make that happen. Not like how anyone else, don't put the responsibility on the people around you, but put the responsibility on you and write how you can mitigate issues when they come up. And it's just like that little change in like language and in framing, it's just for my own mindset, like has made me feel a little bit more in control of my day to day life



and not feel like, I have so many things to do. And the ball is in like everyone else's quote and not mine. And so that's been a little life hack of mine that I've been getting into.

- Very good. Bharat do you have a life hack you want to share with us.

- Probably it's a life hack that was copy pasted from Mama Oprah. But I guess when I heard it, it was like, "What is she talking about?" I probably was, I don't know, at 18 when I heard the podcast or I think it was interview. Growing up, I guess one of the biggest things that I do with myself, A, I reflect a lot. Luckily working in mental health, I have developed enough of a skill that I can do it all in my mind. And it was very helpful. But the biggest thing I ask myself, "How is my cup?" And cup is a metaphor for, you call it happiness. You call it, how full of yourself you are. Is your social cup full? Is your financial cup full. So I keep myself in check by asking myself, "How full is your cup?" And if the cup is not. The goal is to have your cup, runneth over. So you can pour into other people's cups, I guess the word leadership and as good leaders, not that we are, but people who are, and if we were, you are giving so much out from your cup into others and it's a constant kind of thing. It doesn't stop. Once I finish work at five, I come home with my partner. We go out for dinner, friends would call, I think it's a 24/7 kind of job. So that's my hack of making sure that my cup is absolutely runneth over. So if it's getting empty in the kind of department where I need somebody to pick me up and tell me how, you know, good I'm doing, or you know, just keep going or light that fire under my ass then I have a certain people that I would be like, "Okay, I need the fire "lit under my ass. "I'm going to call Latu." I need a friend who can tell me to just chill and Rome wasn't built in a world. I'll call this friend from Auckland. If I want a reality check, I will sit with my fiance and he'll give me the only check that is reality. So yeah, so I've got people that I would be like, "Okay, cup is kind of getting empty. "So I need to refill it."

- I'll have one more jump Michelle on that is being extremely particular about words you use with what it's subconsciously does to your head. So I never use the word if, I always use the word, when. So if we get this sale, then we can do whatever. It's like, "No, when we get that deal, then we do this." When we do this thing, then that thing happens. And the other one of like, "Oh, we can't do that. I always say, "Yet." So anything that's negative, I always say, "I'm just a radical optimist, right?" So regardless of what it is, yet. Because then it just makes my brain go there. And I never use the word, if, ever, because if puts a mental little block of, I haven't achieved this thing and we may not. And so it puts your brain in defence, not offence. And I



just go on full offence with it. So, that's probably... And I think that changes the energy around the way you operate. And that magnet gets stronger when you are operating in that way. 'Cause others can feel that energy too. 'Cause it's like, there's no... It's a bit, just a bit more, I guess, radically optimistic, but also be aware of what you say, changes, how your brain thinks. And then that creates actions and that creates energy and so on and so forth.

- Okay. Those are all the hacks. Everybody hope you wrote them down. Now there are so many questions. Thank you for asking them all. We don't have time to get through them all. I'm going to make time for one more before we wrap and it goes back to, well, how do we empower others as well as ourselves? And the question goes, "What is your message to people who have amazing ideas, "but are hesitant to throw their hat in the ring? "How do we convince people to just give it a crack?" Is quote, unquote, the question. So what do we do? You... It's hard, right? It's easy to have an idea. It's hard to actually execute that idea. It's hard to have that confidence. Maybe you need the financing. Maybe you need the people. So do you have any advice? And while you're thinking on that, I just want to say, thank you to all of the amazing, beautiful comments that are coming through. I'm so glad that you're enjoying this as much as we are. We could do this all day. In fact, Rob, you should probably just turn it into your radio show for the next year. There's so much content here. But back to the original question, how do we convince people to throw their hat in the ring?

- I've got a thought. Is the question I always think, is questions all right. The question I ask is, if you're not happy with what you see or you think it can be done better. And if you feel you have a skill set to do that thing, then when you're 70 years old, looking back at the moment you have right now, would you have an increase or decrease of life regretage percentage by not giving it a crack. And the majority of the time, it will be increased because they will just need that bit of an internal kick. But it's that thing of knowing, you know, who's in your circle, who's in your corner. You know, if you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything. So actually being like, "Cool, what do I stand for? "And do I want to stand for this?" And if you do, be fully upfront about it, like totally, this is what I believe. This is why. And what's great, I think is that I've noticed anyway is when you can have a disagreement with someone. But if you can have a conversation, at least you can listen to the other side, which we already talked about before. So, it would be, you know, don't get old with regret, give it a crack, right? Go on off it. Stuff the rest of it. And you've got way better stories, if it goes to shit anyway right? If it goes to custard, you've got way better stories than like, "Oh, I should have, could have, would have." You'd become like that old washed up never was being rugby player. Who's like, "Oh, I could have played with Richard McCaw, but



my knee blew out. It's like, "Dude, you didn't try. "Just park it in the side mate." You got no scars, put it on silent, next.

- Love it. Anybody else? How do we convince people to put their hat in the ring?

- I would say just to remember that a lot of people who you look up to that like you think have got it all right. A lot of them are bluffing. I've met so many people where like, "You are my hero." You know, exactly like everything about the world. I meet them. They have no idea what they're doing for lunch. Like, they they're like, "I don't really have "much of a plan." I feel like there's like this, like mystic fog over like great leaders. And like powerful people that they have it all sorted out and us as like regular people, like we are just like nowhere near them. A lot of the times, like we just need to believe in ourselves to just put our like toe in the water. Like just get there, test it out. And yeah, like Rob said, so that you don't have regrets, you know, I really encourage people to just try it, if anything, just try it and you'll have a cool story if it doesn't work out. And if it works out, you got yourself to a place where, you know, you were able to believe in yourself and pushed yourself forward. And I really encourage people who are on like the sidelines and seeing like that happen in their friend's minds or their family members' mind, push them. Like you can do it. A lot of the times we just need that one person to be like, "Book the flight, book the meeting, do it." And then in our minds we're like, "Okay, what the heck? "Let's do it."

- Yeah. Bharat final words.

- Yeah, I would say personally for me, I thought this idea of leadership or, you know, people that I looked up to having financial means to get the things that they want or for the lack of better of a word coming from a privileged life. What I really would like to see people, to say to people is that if you already hit the rock bottom, you've got nothing to lose. So might as well just kind of go for it. A lot of debates with me and my partner will have at home. They're not very interesting dinner conversations, but we will talk about things like, you know, regret versus taking risks and safe risks. And how much do you kind of invest all the kind of stuff. If you, I guess if you really want to go for something, don't have a plan B or a C or a D. 'Cause then again, as Rob, you said before, the language that you use, you're kind of convincing yourself that, "Oh, if it doesn't work." There should be no if, just go for it. And in the world, the most dangerous people in the world are who have got nothing to lose. So again, I would say, you know, and if I can do it coming from a very non, you know, a family that you, nobody has kind of done the things that I've done, or I think anybody can do it. We



don't have superpowers. At a stage, which was like, enough is enough and we're just going to do it. So I think I was born out of frustration. 'Cause I was sick of living the life and listening to people and I was always complaining. So then you take responsibility and you become the change.

- Yeah. Get to make change. Those are great words for us to end on. And with that, sadly, we are out of time for our panel. I really want to thank Robert, Bharat and Brianna for an enriching, inspiring and enlightening panel session today. Thank you for sharing all of your thoughts. And also Brianna for labelling us all as regular people. No matter who you are, what your leadership state is, everybody's just a regular person. Surround yourself with good people, be consistent and stand up for what you believe in and make a life filled with stories. That's what I took from today. Please carry on the conversation on social media, we have our hashtags. We can keep this conversation going later, but for now I would like to introduce our video by Mayor Phil Goff. Who's going to end our session tonight. Nga mihi nui.

- Kia ora tatau, and thanks very much to the panel. And for all of you who were participating in the conversation tonight. This year, for the first time in 40 years, I'm not running for elected office, but I know that there are things that I'm going to miss about carrying out the role of mayor. And before that a long time as a parliamentarian and as a minister. I don't think there's anything more satisfying than being able to go out and represent your community and to make a difference for the better for your community. It's fantastic when you can achieve things that you know are going to be good for the future. For me, it's been things like working on how we can deal with climate change, making sure that we can stop the waste that's been running into our Harbour for a century by bringing in the infrastructure to ensure that our harbours and our beaches and our streams are clean. It's about being part of an inclusive community. For example, giving the living wage to our council staff. And it's about building the infrastructure, so that we can be a world class city. The job of an elected representative can be really challenging and demanding. And it can take up as much of your life as you're prepared to give to it. It can sometimes be a bit bruising as well, but most of all, it gives you a chance to give something back to the community that has given so much to us. Gives you the chance to work alongside some really amazing people to make a difference for the future. And that's what I've really enjoyed about it. We want our council and we want our local boards to be truly representative of our community. We want a mixture of ages, of ethnicities, of gender, of some people with experience and some people that are looking at these new challenges with fresh eyes. And if we do that, we strengthen our democracy and we strengthen our ability as members of our community to make a difference and to



participate in our community life. So look, don't be put off if you're not experienced, give it a go. You'll learn from the experience of... I still learn every day from what I do as an elected representative. And look, if you don't run or you're not quite ready yet, please do make sure that you find out about the candidates that you'll be voting for. Find out what they stand for, what they want to do. Make sure that you, your family and your friends get out and cast your vote and help make Auckland a better place for all of us. No reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tatou katoa.



1063 Ferry Rd, Woolston,  
Christchurch



0800 222 600  
© Takirua Tandem Media 2021



info@tandemstudios.co.nz  
www.takiruatandemmedia.co.nz