

One Problem, Four Lenses

A conversation with Dr. Robbyn Wacker and Dr. Katrina Rodriguez
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- 00:06** Katrina, it's good to see you. I am great. I am great. No complaints on this end. No complaints. It's always it. And plus, I get to talk to you today. I know, right? We always can just riff and just talk about really anything. We have many topics. So we have topics to talk about. That's right. That's right. Which is great fun. So I'm just glad you're like, yeah, let's do this. Because, you know, we it's I know both you and I have a passion about leadership. And we really are very much trying to do a deep dive in some thinking about what what are the elements of leadership and where we get hung up and and kind of, you know, challenged in spaces and how can we be better. So what a great partner you are. And I feel like we're always trying to understand like, okay, how can we how can we do this better? What are some things that we can how do we lead in ways that really we're able to have folks in our organization be in a place where they enjoy that they get their productive. They're serving their constituents. So I think all of those things for us are ways that we really love to explore and aim to be more effective, more, you know, right.
- 01:24** Yes. And more helpful and be better. Plus, you know, back to the mentoring thing, you know, because people are watching, right, how you're leading. And we also want our teams to feel empowered and that they can be thinking about their leadership and that it's, you know, being curious about how to be a better leader is a great thing. It's really actually a lot of fun. Right. Right. And leadership is complex. So it's it's not a one size fits all this particular I know ways in which we do things. So we really have to think about the complexity, not only of people but also of our organizations and the surrounding environment. So, yeah, I think it's such a broad topic and there are so many ways in which we can, you know, really think about things and really play with ways to make some different impact. Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Which, which is a great segue in what we're going to talk about today. Because I know over the years that we've worked together. We dust off this thing called Bolman and Deal's four frames. Yes, it's a model. So I know we were talking the other day about the great utility of that model. So what we want to do today is introduce it and talk a little bit about in your leadership spaces.
- 02:41** How do you apply it. And, and what's the utility of it, and how can it be helpful. So let me let me for those of you that don't know the frame I'm going to share the screen here, and pull it up, because not everybody knows it. In case you miss that in your class. Right. That's right. All

right. So, of course, this is always the fun part because it's never as easy as it claims to be. There it is. All right, here we go. All right, can you see it. I can. It's great. Awesome. Look at that. The technology works love it. Love it when that happens. Okay, so So if you're not familiar with the four frames. It's pretty, I think it's laid out pretty well and it makes a lot of sense so we'll quick walk walk through them, and then maybe you and I can talk about these frames and how we've applied them and that sort of thing so so up on the first, you know, top quadrant there called structural.

03:58 That's where you really are thinking about the university or the organization you're working with is kind of, I don't know machine like that's why there's a cog up there, but it's meant to, you know, somebody that focuses on roles and rules and guidelines, and you kind of think about the architecture of the place or how things are structured. And so you're really thinking about, well, if I'm going to do this, do we have the right structure, you know, to align with the thing that it is I'm trying to lead and do. And so you're thinking about structure. The next one there on the right is the human resource one where you're thinking about your, the people your employees organization as a family, as it were. You're thinking about what are their needs, how can I help them build their skills. How do we build good relationships, and you're really interested in empowering people. So usually the question as a leader you're it's running on background in your brain. If you're looking at the human resource frame is our people's needs being met. And that, you know, and that's a value and that's, you know, that's a frame you apply the one down the purple one is the political frame. And that's really it's not political with a capital P that you might think about it's really that the organization is really this complex web with power conflicts scarce resources.

05:19 And when you're working in that environment you're building coalitions, and you're the question you're asking okay whose interests are at stake here. And then the fourth the final one there is the symbolic, where you're really thinking about the organization is is presenting like like as it were a theater, and I know that sounds a little weird but you know think about all the rituals and the culture you have in your organization, the stories you tell the meaning making that you build as a leader. And when you do certain things in this frame you're thinking about what message does it send. What's the symbolism around, around this thing that I'm doing. So it's a, it's a great frame. I think it has a lot of utility around some things and so my first question of course Katrina is where are you at. [unclear] Exactly. Well I definitely fall into the human resource frame as my default, you know, seeing, you know, sort of the notion that I loved old school Sesame Street, who are the people in your neighborhood right. So whoever is around me whoever I get to be around those, that's the family that's the neighborhood and so what do they need how to, how, what do they need to be successful. You know what yeah what what is this family need, and how do we both best serve the family so I would say, Robbyn, what about you.

06:43 Well, yeah, here we go. Right. So, yeah, it's, it's always was sort of the same thing it's about the people and empowering people and try to make sure this notion that if you're caring about the people that you're working with the people in the organization that people in the university from students faculty staff, you know your leadership team, you know, what do they need to be successful, and how can I support them in being successful so it's focused

on what do they need. So yeah, it's super easy to go into a meeting and go okay how is everyone. Right. How's everybody feeling about this or is there any like, I'm going to struggle with that. Yeah, that sort of, and I think to, you know, I for me I tied into meaning making the symbolism like to me that feels like symbolically that I am putting people first the story is about who are we first. What is the culture, you know, of our, of our organization from this kind of family lens so if you will, like it's a little bit of a slide into that next one in terms of, for me and what I believe for the people around me is that meaning of doing something Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I mean I think, I think what's what's interesting. And what this model really helped me do is be aware that that's my default.

08:02 Yes. All right. That's what that's sort of my default I'm super comfortable in that space. I don't mind. Of course I think it's a value. They said so how's everybody doing because if people aren't doing well, then it's true that they're not going to be their best at work. Right. Right. Right. So I do, I do think. And there's a lot of a lot of research that's that says that that's that's an important frame. But then the question becomes then which ones are we not so comfortable in. Right. And maybe have an alert like allergic reaction to. Like I can't do that. So how about you. You know, it's so fascinating. I would have to say on some level the political in the set, you know, I feel. Like I can be effective in the political. Sometimes what I don't appreciate about it is the comp that what feels so competitive right that the notion that, you know, people feeling like what am I going to lose in this right. So, or who has the influence who has the power and so sometimes I feel like I have to speak a little loudly or a little more strongly in that space and that's not my natural go to.

09:18 So I feel like I can be effective in it. It's just probably the one that is the least. I don't know. It's just a little more challenging for me. I suppose. Yeah. What about you. Well, yeah, I would. I would agree. And I think I think initially when people say, oh, I'm not political. If you put that frame up and not political because we have such a negative connotation to anything political. Because it seemed underhanded or sneaky or self serving or those kinds of that, you know, like come up with a positive word associated with political. I don't know that you can. It would be hard. Maybe you can. But when you understand that it's talking about coalition building and when you talk about sort of reaching out and trying to figure out how you can work with different groups and build a coalition to get something done. Yes. That feels super logical, right? It feels like that would make a lot of sense in a lot of really tough situations to do that. But it's not a go-to thing because I don't know that we really talk much about that in leadership spaces. About what it means to be political to use Bolman and Deal's terms.

10:37 Exactly. You know, and I think of is over many years and I've utilized this frame for a long time because I just can see it. Like it's the overlay of the work that we're doing and decisions that we're making. And people would say to me, well, I'm not political. I don't play politics. And I'm like, well, I don't want to burst your bubble on that. But you're already in a political environment. Organizations are political. There is power structure there, you know, in terms of who's got power, whether perceived or real. There are only so many resources, you know, even I would say highly resourced organizations. There's still only so much to go around and not everybody gets everything. And maybe for the right reason, too, right? There's other

reasons than just a number of resources. But I think you're in a political frame. And if you choose not to be political, well, I honestly don't think that's possible because you're still going to whatever frame you naturally fall in. You're still going to buy, if you will, for what it is you think you need based on your position or what you're trying to accomplish. And so I sort of enjoyed that conversation, if that sounds maybe not so nice. But it's like, okay, let's talk about playing politics now.

12:01 You know, I think people see how things play out politically in our, you know, in the country and other countries. And so it does get that negative connotation. But to your point, coalition building, how do you get folks around the table from various departments? You know, who are all the stakeholders? And are you working hard to get folks to the table? It's not so much that I'm coalition. Okay, Robbyn and I want to do this. And so we're going to, you know, behind the scenes, try to try to move things around. But it's more like, who's at the table? And can we talk about these pieces? And that's not a negative thing. That's utilizing your, you know, looking at the resources or decision making from a wider breadth, I think, than just a few people who might have all the power. Yeah, yeah, that's exactly right. I mean, when you when you think about it, you have a good idea that you're trying to implement. And when you look from the political frame, it's like, well, who are the key stakeholders that need to be engaged and try to, you know, work with them because they need your support. You need their support to be able to make something happen. And maybe it's, you know, negotiating some elements of it or whatever. But you know, what comes to mind is that I know that you really worked hard when you came to St. Cloud State and rebuilt the mission and the vision and the goals of the Student Affairs Division.

13:27 And so, you know, I'm sure there are elements of political frame because you had to decide what Student Affairs is going to do, right? In that environment that might bump up against what other people thought their roles were or whatever. So maybe it can you think about how you had to build coalitions when you were working on that? Absolutely. And I would even say, you know, really looking at the four frames because we already had a Division of Student Affairs. We didn't call it that prior to this change, but it was essentially, you know, the same units doing the same, you know, support to students, right? Service to students. So really, you know, I think the first piece was looking at the structural. How are we structured right now? How is the work getting done? And, you know, how do we need, who do we need in which types of roles in the organization to accomplish our goals, right? So then I think from the HR, then it's, well, who are the people, right? We have the department level and how that all like think of an org chart is how my brain always thinks. And then, you know, who are the actual people and what are their roles and are folks in roles that make sense for what we're trying to do, which makes sense. Sort of means like, well, does that mean eliminating people? Well, no, maybe you're just kind of rearranging like, you know, roles in the family, I suppose.

14:44 And then the political, you know, to your point, getting folks around the table, not just in the Student Affairs Division, but across campus. You know, we're working with advising, we're working with the registrar's office, where, you know, think of the many faculty, right? So how are faculty engaging with us? Police department, right? As we have various things that we're

trying to navigate. And so I think having all of those folks at the table to talk about what the, maybe what they'd like to see, like what would be ideal? What are the issues that they, in the complexities, you know, over time? And then what would be ideal to sort of set in motion, whether the structural piece, you know, HR piece. So the political, though, can get a little bit dicey in the sense that, okay, we have this coalition of stakeholders, but I still need these positions. And right now it's not filled, and I need you to give me the position because we can't do our work successfully. So then it becomes, are there power brokers in there? Do people have access to me that maybe other people didn't feel they had, or maybe they didn't have, just based on, you know, like, I can't approach her as the Vice President about this. So, you know, but does my, do my senior leaders have that access and based on how much they're willing to sort of support the need?

16:04 And then symbolically, I think for the whole campus, what does it mean to be a Student Affairs Division? Is that different than student development? I can't even think of the whole title now that's there, but, you know, it's the same work, but how are we putting our association values and ways of being in the university forward so people understand what we do? And they're not just the party people who have pizza with students, right? There's a lot more to that. And so how do we help people understand that? And that was really the goal of, you know, putting ourselves forward as a, I'll say, new division, but really renamed and refocused. Refocused. You know, it strikes me, so let's go with this for a second. So you talked about positions. And, you know, positions are hard because everybody, at least from my lens as President and your lens as a VP, people are asking for more resources and certainly more positions, right? Right. So I wonder if the political frame is where you think about talking to your other VP colleagues about why you need the position or talking to, you know, some deans about how this position would help.

17:20 So I'm wondering, I mean, it sounds like that might fall in the political frame because you're trying to get support, right? Absolutely. For what you're trying to do. Right. Which I don't know that we think of right away because we think everybody is sort of ready to box for positions, but building a coalition and trying to get people that would sit around the table when you're talking about budget and say, yeah, you know, Katrina's office could really use this because I can see how that impacts my area. Exactly. And, you know, if I don't have this position, if that is not, it's not in the Student Affairs Division, then, yeah, the impacts are high and our ability to serve students is less. And I think that then goes in the goes on the table for, okay, what does make the most sense understanding that all four frames are there. Eventually, a decision has to be made, but at least you have everything. You're looking at it holistically or systemically because you're considering those frames. And I think that helps as the decision maker and or sitting around, you know, the President's Cabinet, you know, we would sit and chat with you about, okay, here's what we need them as together looking at the budget. Okay, so how are we going to allocate these? Where does it where is the highest need?

18:37 Yeah. Well, you know, I think what the four frames does for me, it pushes me out of my default position. Because as people come to you and say, I just don't know how much more I can do. My plate is so full. That really hits the human resources frame squarely. Correct. You

get this kind of like, yeah, I totally get that. And now you start thinking about the position relative to that frame. But you know, structurally, there's gaps and other kinds of things. So, so to your point, I think, when you when you have to kind of reexamine the issue relative to each frame. Now, of course, you can't separate everything up. But if you're looking at it, if you just let your the one you're most comfortable with drive all of your decisions, it, I think it gives you less I think you're less effective, because you're not considering these other kinds of things. So to your point, you know, if if you say no to a position, and then your other VP colleague gets to then your team's gonna go so symbolically, we don't matter and politically they have more power. So, right. So even even if even if that's the decision, if you're aware of those frames, you can talk to your team about it.

19:59 Right. And you can kind of address those two symbolic and political frames that you knows run in background in their heads. Exactly. And that's, I think, you know, you make such a great point because to understand it right to understand what's going on helps us one talk to our folks about that and like you said to identify. And it does and they may stay sort of dug into their particular, you know, this service is going away and it's so important to students or we're not going to have enough to be able to serve students appropriately. You know, understanding that that's what's going on. I think is powerful and having to really address what's happening for for that unit or for those leaders in that area. And I think it's really important. Otherwise, we kind of stay in this. So let's say it's a structural framework that maybe the decision was based on what's that hierarchy or here are the rules. Here's what we're going to follow. And if we don't stop to think about the meaning making and what the impact is to people who are now maybe taking on the role, you know, they're parsing out those the tasks of that role.

21:16 Then we really leave out a lot of things that people are concerned about. And then that's why I think part of why change is so hard is because you're there's not an acknowledgement. Now, acknowledgement doesn't really do a whole lot if you're not getting the position that you feel is so strongly. I understand that. But I think in terms of the culture of the organization or the more at least I think having some compassion and being able to speak in that other frame at least maybe help some understanding. Otherwise, I think it feels like, well, they don't care about us. We don't matter because they all they care about is the rules and the organizational structure. So yeah, right. Absolutely. And I think, yeah, you make a great point about a couple of things there. I want to I want to follow up on. It's higher ed. And we're often super logical. We roll out the data. We look at, you know, we look at, you know, how many staff for how many students and it's it's super data driven, most of the time. Right. And very logical. Right. So very structure. I think we have a structure frame a lot in higher ed for a number of reasons. It's not good or bad. It just, it just kind of is. Sure. So I think I think to your point is that if you if you just sit in the structure frame and the logic is, well, here's the numbers. Here's what we've got.

22:38 We don't we don't have any new incoming students. So we don't think you need any more about whatever happens here. Structure, structure, structure. But then what you what you don't address is what you just said is that then people there's no people in that discussion and the impact of it. And so I think the frame may be, yeah, we have to make a decision

based on data or structure. But yet, and to that doesn't mean that we can't see people. Right. And what you're talking about is empathy going, look, I know this is really tough. Let's look at your workload. Let's see if there's something else we could do. Now, I always said they don't they may not like the decision. They feel like they were spoken to like they mattered and they understood the decision. Then that felt a lot better than just sort of hearing it from a budget report that you're not getting the positions or and that's it. Right. So I think the I think the frame is cool that way in that, yeah, we might have to make a decision because the context wants us to need. We do. We need to. It can't just be. Who pulls my heartstrings. And there are my names. Right. Right. Right. Right. Right. Right. Because, you know, for me, resources frame that matters. But yet at the same time, you know, you the situation requires that maybe, you know, you're moving in these other frames.

24:03 But it doesn't mean that you can't consider what else, but to your point, you, it doesn't mean that you're not paying attention to the other frames. It just means that for me, it's a you're going to have to move into a political frame to get this done. Right. And and that that's like, oh, that's uncomfortable. I mean, I can't think remember about, you know, the people. Yeah, I can. But sit in the political frame kind of thing. So I like I like where you're going. I think it makes it makes a ton of sense because the four frames allows us to think really comprehensively and see our work more as an ecosystem than one single frame. Right. I love that ecosystem is so that completely makes sense because when you pull on one aspect of the ecosystem, it could pull on something else. Right. And maybe something we hadn't even thought of. So I think by looking at the whole ecosystem, then we can make a determination. Well, is this the right way to go? Because maybe we haven't factored in, you know, some areas. That's right. Can I give you an example of something that? Yeah. Yeah, totally. Yes. So I got. I had the opportunity to pull a group together. This was at the time that the notion of preferred names, you know, some students based on their identities might be wanting to use a name that fit better their gender identity, gender expression.

25:26 And so, you know, from from folks in my area, they're saying, hey, these students are graduating. They want to use, you know, it was called preferred name. Now it's [unclear] current name in use, right? A person wants to use. And so they wanted a graduation to be called by the name that they feel that most identity. Well, the registrar's office, you know, they're the ones responsible for the rules and know it's only what is on your legal documentation that you can be called that a graduation. Because the concern was students are going to put on there some name that's inappropriate or that kind of thing language that doesn't fit. And they didn't want that to be embarrassing for the whole this whole ceremony. Right. It needs to have the regalness and the respect that it deserves. So we pulled together a committee from all across campus, the technical folks dealing with the behind the scenes software to, you know, how we want to regulate what that looks like. So what was fascinating to me was, you know, those who are looking from a structural perspective, well, how are we going to set these rules up to the political? Well, you've got to let students select any name, right? So there's sort of this this different way of looking at it. I don't know if I said that correctly. The symbolic pieces. We've got to let people have the identity that they walk around it in the world. Right.

26:46 That's so important. And so what I loved about that in the particularly in the structural frame, because the registrar had this responsibility. And what they said to me was, well, I'll be willing to let folks use the name that they're using in the ceremony. However, if we get something that's in their mind suspect, not appropriate, then Katrina, you be the one that make that decision because then the onus is on me as the vice president to say this is yes, I will say this name is not appropriate. Right. So [unclear] the registrar, they could keep their rules and structure, but I would take the blame if it was something not appropriate, which you know what? Honestly, that never happened in that. Right. Right. Right. But you build a coalition to try to figure out what what did people want? What was the registrar concerned about? What were the students concerned about? And then you were looking at it from these different frames. Right. And then it and that I would argue makes it successful because if you were just coming off of it's a little bit symbolic and human resources frame from a student perspective, because what do they need? They need their names to match their identity. So that's a that's a human part of it. The symbolic frame too, I would also add is that the university is doing this. Therefore, the university cares about me.

28:12 Correct. So it's a symbolism that denotes from a university perspective, we care about how our students feel and how they want to be presented and students have see that symbolism. Right. Because symbols have messages, right? Symbols can be meaning and messages. Yeah. And that the culture of our organization is one of openness and acceptance and, you know, empowerment. So that has a huge implication, not only for those who want to, you know, have their identity shared in the way in which they believe, but also to the rest of the campus and others, new students coming in or to alumni saying, hey, look at that. That's, you know, they're moving forward in something that we respect and appreciate. Yeah, that's exactly right. You know, the other other thing that let's get right. Here's another example. It's like, we live these things and it's like, oh, yeah, the frames, the frames are working here. Frames are frames are working full time on these things. Exactly. So we were trying to improve the registration percentages. Yeah, because students wait, right? That's a bane of everyone's existence. They wait too long to get registered and so on. But we still had a structure.

29:29 So there's a structure, right? We still have the structure that students had to track down their faculty member and get a pin number. Remember pin number, right? Yes. And so what we really found out is it wasn't because again, we want to blame the student, although they just don't. It wasn't that. It's just students who were working, you know, who had had weird hours of working or classes or whatever. There was significant number that couldn't get to the faculty, not because they were blowing off getting registered, but because our structure of making them go find them was itself a barrier. So we wanted to then eliminate that step so the students could register. So now when you think about the coalition and often this, you have our professional advisors. And as a group, and I would say as a political stakeholder group, and their concerns were kind of human resource related, but also symbolic in that if you eliminate this in my role, what does that mean about who I am? And my importance to this university and to these students because they have they worked many, many years and felt really proud of the work that they did, you know, to have the

students talk with them and then say, yeah, go get the pin from the professor or that sort of thing.

30:54 And then of course faculty are like, wait a second. How do I know the students not going to make a mistake and, you know, and really then end up taking the wrong classes and that's a problem, you know, that and that sort of thing. So, so it was very interesting because you had these coalitions of groups of people that had very different, you know, mindset around just this one thing. Right. Yes, about doing that. And I think what was what was interesting is that the question so we all met as a group with a professional advisors and VP for enrollment management we brought everybody into an auditorium and was fielding questions. And those were the kinds of questions that caught up. But the other thing they wanted to know was the structure part. Right. So they wanted to know that, you know, the symbolic and the human resource, what does this mean to me? But they wanted to know structure like well now how does this going to work and what are the roles and who has the responsibility and how to do that. So if you're just coming at it from, you know, so we could have gotten, let's start with the structure. Here are the steps, here's what we're going to do, hand it, send it out in a memo. You know, here's the steps and skipped over these other frames. Right. So then it would have it would not have been successful, but by, you know, also bringing the coalition of faculty and professional advisors, and even our student government who sorely wanted this right.

32:22 They all came together as a coalition and we figured out what each of them really were interested in what they valued what they wanted to protect, figured that out, implemented the plan. I think we got the registration rate up to like, I don't know, 95% of incoming and new students. So, but it takes those four frames, to your point, you know, about the student name or other examples to really unpack how to make it effective. Yes, because if I just would have gone in and said, you know, our students really need this, it's all about what they need and it's like, it would have gone nowhere. Right. And you would have resistance from all of the constituents, all of those folks in those departments to perhaps not maybe with an intention of, you know, just saying no, we're not doing it, but the reluctance would be so high that it would not, it wouldn't even if you would have, you know, just done a beta test of it, it probably wouldn't have gone well because you didn't have the buy in. Yeah, that's right. That's exactly right. That's exactly right. Yeah, because the buy in and it strikes me too, is that, again, our default sometimes in the academy is the logic behind it.

33:41 Super logic to go look, students are working, they can't find, you know, we've had, you do a survey, you talk to students or whatever and they it's super logical. This is a barrier, we need to take it down, but we don't work on logic all the time. Right. We don't work on logic all the time. It's just that easy, right? Which is great, which is absolutely the, you know, the epiphany we should, we should all embrace because the fact that they needed to sort out what their identity, the professional advisors, what their identities now were and what role they could play and it was still impactful for the students, it meant a lot to them. It meant a lot to them. Of course we have to talk about it. Right. You know what, I really love the point that I heard you make, that it's not just the decision maker who's using the four frames to consider the decision. But what you illuminated was all of the stakeholders also have the frames that

they're looking through at the situation. So it's kind of a both and because you're going to have folks who have a default. Who are, you know, coming together in this process. And then you also have maybe. So if my default maybe is HR, but in that in that space, I'm coming symbolically like, okay, this means a lot to our students. And so if we eliminate this area or we reduce it or don't do something that students are saying they want it want to be done.

35:09 You know, we're going to have all of those perspectives. And so how do we look at the ecosystem again? But I really like the way you were talking about it. It's from all of the folks who are there, not just from the leadership perspective. Is that resonating? Yeah, right. Right. Right. I think and I think as you know, as we think about the, you know, start out saying it's leadership spaces are challenging. Yes, you know, you and sometimes it's it's like, how do I figure out what is the, oh, the sort of the guiding. Yes, principle or frame, given the circumstance because sometimes you can't be human resources related because it won't work because you're not going to get to the end result that you're trying to do. But yet you can't be political all the time or structural all the time because you have to pay attention to right deeper needs that people have. So I think it's a great tool. I do too. I think I think the recognition of it is so helpful in just putting it on the table and then like, okay, let's overlay this on some of the challenges we're trying to move through. So I think I think it's valuable. I feel like I don't know if I, I feel like I could be pretty successful with it over the years and it still pops in my mind.

36:30 You know, there was something going on in our local community and my brain already went to the four frames like they're thinking this way and this is going to impact those folks and they want. So it was it's weird how it's so automatic over something that was not even related. It was just, you know, a community related thing. Well, but you have people dynamics, right? Are dynamics that they're working with people that you can see that play out and the utility of it is to your point is pretty good. Exactly. Exactly. I think it's been valuable. So for you, what are some of the, I don't know, like the, the takeaways from the four frames? Like what would be, I don't know, something that pops in your mind we'll get to edit this part. No, no, that's a great question. That's a great question. We won't edit this out. So, so I think first of all, everything, everything for me about leadership begins with awareness. About who you are, about what drives your thinking, you know, where you come from, what your leadership North Star is or what things, what things, elements comprise your leadership behavior. And so understanding where you land on that frame, kind of your default, is so enlightening.

37:51 It's just so insightful and helps you understand because then you can step outside yourself and say, okay, let's look at this situation. You know, I think I need to do coalition building. I think I need to get with these groups because just simply talking about why people need something is not going to resonate around this topic. Not yet, right? I need to build coalitions. It just gives you an opportunity to end up being more successful on it, right? And I think the other thing is sharing this with your team because you also want your team to be with you on how to think about these issues because you can't be the only one bringing the frame to the table. Because it's necessary that you have your frame and you bring it, but it's not sufficient because imagine a conversation when you're sitting around the table. And I

think we might have done this a time or two. It's like, what's the political frame here, you guys? What is it we have to do? What's the angle here? And then I'd say, all right, what structures are we missing if we're going to implement this no-pin process? What structures do we need to put in place to make it successful?

39:09 So I guess, for me, this leadership and empowering people to use the frame as well also makes it a great opportunity for people to get some things done and be effective and efficient in their work. Yes, I think that just makes so much sense. And I watched you do that very effectively because even if we discuss the four frames as a general application, I think in the moment when we're looking at some tough stuff to be able to then say, okay, let's look at it from this frame, sort of reiterating what this frame is and taking a look at that. I really felt like it spurred conversation in a way that it would have been more, it would have been flat because I think people would have been coming to it, maybe from their one or two primary lenses. But I think this allowed us to really like, okay, putting it that way, let me consider a perspective, right, or voice some ideas from that perspective. So I really think it was helpful in looking around all of the perspectives that we could consider to make a decision or move forward with a plan or whatever that needed to be.

40:26 Well, you know, thank you for that. What I would say, too, the other thing is that when you engage, hopefully, as a very diverse team of leaders around your table, they're going to pay attention to the symbolic frame that maybe you would like to do. The symbolic frame that maybe you wouldn't even be on your radar, right, or the other or the structural thing. So it is – it also acknowledges that people can bring insight that you don't have when you have them apply the frames. Yes, absolutely. So it's super, super powerful. Because even in that particular item you're trying to work through, you know, I might have an idea structurally what this looks like. You know, I'll go back to the name and use. Like, I didn't know what all the behind the scenes were and what systems had to talk to each other. But by understanding structurally what needed to happen with the folks who were responsible for those various software applications, I didn't have to know how to use the application. I needed to hear what goes on in the back that I might say, well, isn't it just easy? Just go ahead and do this. Well, no, that's not the answer. I need to understand what all of those pieces – I need to know that the folks who need to know that stuff are sharing with me maybe what the roadblocks are.

41:47 And then what do we need to do to have a workaround or fix that in a different way? Because there is no way I could know any of that, and nor should I, right? Let me let the experts do their thing, and they help inform me and inform the group as to, okay, what are we going to need to do now? What's the best way for that? Well, you know, our podcast here is really taking – you know, it's ThinkShift, and it's trying to take what we think maybe is very – I mean, Bolman and Deal is very theoretical. They've researched behind it. But what I love about this conversation is it's a great example of something that can be practically applied, this shift into action that you can pick up that frame and we'll put it on the webpage and have it in front of you and actually work to implement it and get better at it. So it's a tool I think fits with our goal of how do you take things that we know around research and the literature on certain things and models and frameworks to make them applicable so that

you can be a better leader. So I think this is a great conversation because it feels like the tool is that thing, right? Of all the things we talk about, that's a thing that you can apply.

43:10 Right. Right. And fairly straightforward, I think, too, to be able to – you know, again, there's complexity in it, but to overlay that on top of the items that are – you know, we're trying to work through, I think is just a – I'm going to say it feels like it can be simple because you have these four things and these are the four questions you ask. But the depth of it is where the richness comes, right, from utilizing it. So I want folks to think about, okay, what are these four frames? And then what's the application of it, right? Even if it's kind of slow walking and into it, if it's something you haven't used before, I think to play with it is valuable. Yeah, absolutely. And to your point, you know, it – one of the things that I think is valuable when you're introduced to something like this is don't try to implement it right away. But to just sit back and watch and have your wheels turn and think about, okay, what frame am I – how do I show up? And then watch the interaction and watch what frames are in play by whom and whatever so that you're starting to kind of, I don't know, be aware of how these frames operate. And then to your point, start thinking about, you know, you've got a situation that's coming up or an initiative that you're trying to launch.

44:32 Sit back and think about, you know, do the mind – do the mind thought thinking of which frame shows up here in this space. I love that. That's good. That's a good way to just observe it first because then you can really get a flavor for – And then think about it. So, well, thanks for hopping on. I really appreciate the conversation. Yeah, no, this is really fun. And of course, it's not a surprise that you and I would kind of come from those same frames initially. And that's okay, right? Because I think, you know, we've had this great working relationship, and I think it makes sense some of the things we can talk about and play with, but also looking at those that maybe aren't as innate. Yeah, absolutely. And you know, on this final note, let me say you guys are – a great point is that people around your leadership table can come from a different frame. Yes, and you want them to, right? And you want them to, right? But I think that it's that once you understand that people have kind of a frame they're more comfortable in, just to know how your colleagues operate so that, you know, Michelle's going to come from a structural frame. Right. Right. Because that's her default, right? She's comfortable in that space and whatever. So it's an awareness and an acceptance of, well, how can I leverage Michelle's comfort in that structural frame to be able to think about what we're doing and want to launch with this piece and not get irritated if somebody's coming from a symbolic or political or the frame that's different from yours, right?

46:08 Yes. Well, and to your point, I think even though you and I have a similar initial orientation, we're good about saying, okay, so from the political frame, how do we need to think about this? Because we knew that that was a bit of a gap for us or not our innate way of looking at it. So I think that was always helpful for us understanding where the gaps are so that we could, okay, from an ecosystem perspective, what is what might be we'd be missing. And I think that's highly valuable, right? Absolutely. Years ago, somebody shared with me, effective leaders know themselves well. So I think that's a piece of it, right? Like all of these aspects is how do I get more insight into myself? And then as I'm working with others, how do I also know where the spaces are? [unclear] gaps. Yes. Yes, absolutely. Good deal. Well,

thanks again. Have a good rest of your day. And we'll do this again. Perfect. Look forward to it. All right. All right. Talk to you later. Bye. Thank you for joining us for the Insight to Action podcast. We hope this episode supported a meaningful shift for you and how you think, lead and navigate complex challenges. So if you found it valuable, please share it with others committed to values aligned leadership and people that love to think about and discuss leadership issues.

47:29 So until next time, keep turning insight into action. And you can find out more about these and other topics at thinkshiftleadership.com. Have a great day.