



Healing organizational trauma

Guest: Dr Kathy Hagler

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[00:00:10] Alex Howard

Welcome everyone to this interview where I'm really happy to be talking to Dr Kathy Hagler. Firstly, Kathy, welcome and thank you for joining me.

Dr Kathy Hagler

Thank you, Alex, I'm really glad to be here.

Alex Howard

I was just saying to Kathy before we started recording that this is an interview that I'm really excited to get into because in last year's event and up until the point of prepping the interview for this year's event, we haven't talked about, what I consider one of the really important places that trauma can show up. We're going to talk about trauma, particularly in an organizational context. And given how much time many of us spend in the workplace, I think it's a really important part of this conversation.

Just to give people Kathy's background, Dr Kathy Hagler is a nationally recognized author, coach, speaker and organizational consultant with 40 years of experience. She's the founding partner of K2OHSolutions, an organizational consulting firm that began as the Technology Exchange Center, a non-profit public/private partnership that included continuous research of new theories and techniques which enhanced collaborative learning in business, academia, and non-profit organizations. The business was awarded the Best Non-Profit Award by Coretta Scott King.

A preeminent thought leader in organizational transformation, Kathy's primary interests and passions have been to improve the communication and interactions between work and learning.

Kathy, I'd love to start a little bit with some of how you came to this area. So as someone who's been an organizational consultant for 40 years, how did you become interested in this topic of trauma and grief?

Dr Kathy Hagler

Well, I really appreciate being here, Alex, and I really am interested in telling the story and how it started. In my early years as a little girl, I realized very early on that everything breaks. And I understood that even though I had a lot of wounds, as a child I had spinal meningitis, I had cancer at 6 years old and then my dad passed away when I was very young.

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And so what I saw was these wounds that grabbed me as a little person, and they grabbed me, and in the beginning they really hurt like hell. And as I looked it up, that really is called the inflammation stage. It's when the wound really hurts like hell. And then what I noticed happening is each wound, I started feeling a little bit better, like it was cleaning itself out, like I was coming out of it. And then I would get these scars. And physically, I could have scars. I had a big scar on my arm from my cancer when I was 6 years old. And I used to wear long sleeves because the kids would make fun of my scar.

And then one day I decided that, when it got to be not red anymore, I thought, you know, I'm going to take advantage of this opportunity. And I charged a quarter for people to see it in grade school.

Alex Howard

That's one way of dealing with it.

Dr Kathy Hagler

So what I decided was there were opportunities to scars.

Alex Howard

That's interesting.

Dr Kathy Hagler

So I began thinking about the fact that in some ways, my scars gave me wings. And I thought I could be different, I can be unique and I can be distinctive.

So over the years I continued to have these emotional and physical scars. And I'm an only child and so I really didn't talk about it a lot to people. I'm an only grandchild. And so I'm out there thinking all the time, and I thought, you know, everything breaks, but healing can give you wings, and it can give you opportunities to evolve.

So what occurred to me is there really must be an art to this. There must be something I'm learning as a child, because I love connecting work and learning, that really tells me about this. So even though early on I experienced pain, I knew I was growing and I was evolving.

So our society doesn't talk about this, though, they don't like to talk about pain. Whether it's pain as a child or physical or emotional. So we have a hard time dealing with pain in ourselves because it becomes so much to handle. So what we do a lot of times, we don't deal with it at all. We just play like a proverbial sandbox, and we stick our head inside.

So I decided that I wanted to learn more about that and particularly decided that when I started working with organizations. Because I started seeing, hey, they're just like me. They're like big me's. They have pain, and they have wounds, and they have hurt like hell feelings, and they get conflict, and sometimes they die, but a lot of times they heal and they get prettier and bigger and more majestic.

So I had a very amazing opportunity as I was getting my PhD to travel with Dr W. Edwards Deming who is actually the founder, the father basically, of continuous improvement in quality management.

And he told the story about a mule. So it came back to me when I was thinking about, what am I seeing here between myself and my scars and the organization and their scars?

[00:05:52]

The mule story is there was an old farmer and he had an old mule, and he also had an old well. As fate would have it, the old mule fell in the old well. The farmer went over, shook his head, and he heard him braying down there. And he said, what am I going to do? He said, the mule is all, the well is all, okay, I'm going to go get my neighbors and I'm going to cover him with dirt. So he went over, he got his neighbors and they started throwing in shovels through a door. Well, I don't know if you know him much about mules, but mules are the only animal that cry. They have tears.

Alex Howard

Is that right? Wow.

Dr Kathy Hagler

Yeah. So this mule, I could see him down in there. He was sitting in there and he had these tears coming out, and he was braying all along. And then he thought like I did when I had all my wounds. 'This is really ugly. I don't think I like this at all'. So he had an idea. And the idea was he didn't really have to do that anymore. So as the dirt fell on him, he started shaking it off and stepping onto the pile of dirt. So as they would throw another shovel of dirt, he would shake it off and step up onto the other step. And so slowly, but surely, as he was braying, tears are rolling down his little nose, he stepped out of the well.

Alex Howard

That's a great story.

Dr Kathy Hagler

So what Dr Deming said to us is that as organizations improve, what they have to do is they have to know they can shake it off and step up. And so I thought, okay, well, Dr. Deming is really right about that. But all of his work, and then Dr Drucker, by the way, Peter Drucker was my major advisor in my doctorate program.

Alex Howard

That's pretty amazing.

Dr Kathy Hagler

I had some really good people as my mentors.

Alex Howard

I'm not an expert in organizational theory, but I know both these names well.

[00:07:49] Dr Kathy Hagler

So, they were my mentors, and they were my friends, but they really emphasized the structure of the organization. And as I got into organizations, what I began to notice is that the structure I got, I understood how to deal with that. I mean, if you called me in right now as a consultant, I could come in, I could do a strategic plan, I could help you train your people, I could do process improvement, I could do lean, I could do all of those things, I could connect with the customers, I could get your return on investment, but who could get you a better culture?

So I thought, well, if it's true that you can shake it off and step up, what does that mean for culture? And so what I did was I started thinking about the other thing Dr Deming told me, because he really worked in Japan. In fact, I had the privilege of staying at Dr Deming's home while we traveled together in DC and in New York, he had a place in both places. But he would talk about the fact that General MacArthur called him from Japan and said, 'can you help me rebuild after Hiroshima?'

And so Dr Deming went over there, really understood the Japanese. In fact, the Japanese most famous award is the Deming Award for Quality, and it still is today. But what they told him, what he understood was the concept of wabi-sabi. And wabi-sabi is a Japanese term that simply means imperfection is okay. Everything breaks, but things can heal. So I started saying, well, there's got to be something here that Deming understood because of his focus and his passion about continuous improvement that I need to learn.

So I looked up wabi-sabi and I found the art of kintsugi. So I thought, I was right, it is an art of some kind. So I found a kintsugi vase. And a kintsugi vase is a vase that is basically, it's a Chinese and Japanese. There's all kinds of stories about how the vase broke and the King was all sad because the vase broke and somebody brought it back but he filled it in with gold. And so I thought, wow, that's perfect. Because when I broke, I filled in with gold. And then I thought, because organizations, when they break, I've worked with them and I can see them fill in with gold. So I wanted to learn about kintsugi. So do you want me to tell you about that?

Alex Howard

Yeah. Well, I've got a whole load of questions that are partly off my mind right now, Kathy, but I wanted to let you finish your story. But, yes, let's just contextualize kintsugi. And then I've got a whole bunch of places I want to go.

Dr Kathy Hagler

Okay. So kintsugi basically is a broken vase that really has not very much value, but there's a Japanese kintsugi artist that comes together and takes all those pieces and fills them in with golden lacquer. And then it sells for a whole lot more than it did.

So a really quick story, I decided I can't really understand the art if I don't understand the object of the art, so what it looks like after it's healed. I need to understand the process. So it's going to be hard to believe, but in my little town in Hendersonville, North Carolina, I found a kintsugi artist.

Alex Howard

Wow. Okay.

[00:11:30] Dr Kathy Hagler

Yes.

Alex Howard

Some things are meant to be.

Dr Kathy Hagler

Some things are meant to be. The universe blessed me. And I went to the kintsugi artist, her name is Katie Holmes, and I said, Katie, I'm writing a book about the art of scars and I think that this has a lot of ramifications. And she said, well, I can teach you. So she said, you go down to the Humane Society and you buy an old vase and you bring it back. And I did. We went out on the sidewalk. We put it in a plastic bag, and we dropped it, and it just about broke my heart. I thought, I don't like breaking things. This is not what I want to do. I want to fix things. I'm going to help things.

So we went up to her studio, we laid it out and there were hundreds of pieces. And she said, 'how do you feel?' I said, 'I feel really nervous and scared. There's a lot of fear here because this is really broken'. And she said, 'the brokenness is there, but what we're going to do is we're going to heal it'. And she said, 'I'm going to teach you how to do it'. And so she said, 'let's get started'. And I said, 'oh, I really am glad I'm going to watch you'. And she said, 'no, you're going to do it'. And I said, 'no, you don't understand. I'm not an artist. You're the artist'. And she said, 'but you learn through doing'.

Dr Kathy Hagler

So she took me through the process. And through that process, I wrote *Art of Scars*.

Alex Howard

And just for context, that's also an acronym that you use, let's just break that down.

Dr Kathy Hagler

Yes. So what I said in "Scars" was, S, you have to 'stop' the broken thoughts and feelings. So as I was working with that kintsugi vase there in front of me, I had a tear dropping down my eye because I thought, this is not going to be pretty. I've got to have the tear. It's a good tear. So I'm saying, you've got to stop the broken thoughts and feelings. And she said, 'you can do this'.

And so the C stands for I 'courageously' began to calm my fear. And I really began to remember that fear stands for the fake, what is it? Fear is false evidence appearing real. And I thought, nobody said, I can't do this. I can do this. And so what I did was I had the S for 'stop' the broken thoughts and feelings, C is for 'courageously' calm your fear.

And then A is to 'allow' people to be connected with you so that you can broaden your understanding. And so I asked Katie I said, 'well, can you help me understand this art?'. And she began to help me understand the art through her knowledge and my knowledge. And basically what I learned here is it's not a struggle for survival. It's a snuggle for survival.

[00:14:31] Alex Howard

That's very sweet.

Dr Kathy Hagler

And if you snuggle with someone and you begin to learn from other people, you'll learn how to survive. So then that was my A, 'allow' connectivity.

And then R was I had to 'reinvent' my thinking. I had to come up with a plan, and I had to take the first step. So I literally washed off the pieces like she taught me, I put the glue together, I made the lacquer, all with her direction and together we created my vase.

And so S stands for be 'sure' you share your story. And so when I saw that I made the scar, the acronym for scars, and I said, this is my story for organizations. How do you stop the broken feelings? How do you courageously calm your fears? How do you allow connectivity with all of your people when you have to snuggle for survival as a team. And then how do you reinvent yourself and start the process and you don't go tell your story? So that is the process I took to organizations.

Alex Howard

I've got a lot of questions. I think probably a helpful place to start exploring more of this is that the way you talk about your own experience of childhood trauma was that there was an attitude, there was a mindset that you chose. And you just spoke to that very articulately in the scars model in terms of organizations as well. But in a sense, organizations that have a clear sense of mission or a clear sense of purpose, like they exist for this reason that's bigger than just profit or whatever it may be, that becomes the life force, in a sense. And I think the same is often true for individual healing that there has to be, when we've been through difficult experiences, a reason behind that healing process. How important do you see that as being?

Dr Kathy Hagler

I see they're very important, and that's what I've used in my practices for the last 40 years, is really helping organizations get really clear about where they're headed, get really clear about the work they do, and then help them see where they are now, where they want to go and then create the plan to get there. And I've done that really well. But guess what I missed? I really missed all of this thing about people's fear, and the trauma is in the fear.

Because I learned from Dr Deming and Dr Drucker that I can help them create a plan, and I can help them create a better hiring process or a better manufacturing process or create a better laser. Or I can do all kinds of things, I work with all kinds of organizations, but fear was there.

Alex Howard

Sorry, that fear often also becomes the barrier to seeing the things that are difficult to see. Particularly in terms of organizations, that to really deal with issues in organizations one has to be able to have honest conversation. But when there's that fear, often we don't talk about the things that we most need to talk about.

[00:17:39] Dr Kathy Hagler

And I had a breakthrough. I found two more mentors. So I had Dr Deming and Dr Drucker for the process side of the work, which I call the climate side of an organization, that's where the work gets done. And then I found two more mentors for the culture side of the organization, Dr Rob Cook, with Humans and Logistics International, has the only tool that's available to actually quantitatively measure culture and fear. And Dr Bruce Lipton, who is a physician and wrote the book, *The Biology of Belief*, really clarified for me.

So I attended his classes, and I intended Dr Cook's classes, because I keep learning, I'm never going to give that up. In fact, one of my classes I had overseas in Berlin, so I hope to find one in London. But anyway, Dr Lipton said that the subconscious of a human being is 95% of everything we do. It's where our fears are located. Our conscious mind is 5%, but our subconscious mind drives because it's subconscious mind is created from our first 7 years of existence, and it teaches us. So when we're brushing our teeth or combing our hair or cooking dinner or driving our car we're not thinking, okay, put my foot on the brake. It's all hardwired. So think of subconscious like the software in a computer. The subconscious is 95% of the way we do everything. So guess what? The subconscious is the culture.

Alex Howard

Interesting. And you have to bring that into conscious awareness to be able to work with it.

Dr Kathy Hagler

Yeah. And if you can't, you can't stop those broken feelings because you don't know what they are.

So with Dr Lipton I understood that, hey, this culture is made up of, say you have 60 people in your organization. Well your culture is made up of 60 people's subconscious minds.

Alex Howard

Yes, it is.

Dr Kathy Hagler

And it's all those hardwired things and their fears and their scaredness and their traumas and their deaths and their wounds and all of those things that they've gone through. But it's all in one little kettle called culture.

Alex Howard

Yeah. And it also strikes me as you're talking about the importance of leadership around that culture. And particularly what comes to my mind is, without going to a long backstory here, historically I had three or four different businesses that were quite separate. We've done a big piece of work the last 18 months to bring them all together and to really figure out the organizational culture and the different leadership structures.

And what I found over the years was when I would build something to a point that I'd be off doing something else, when I was absent from those entities, that that culture would start to lose focus and would lose direction. And then I'd come back and I'd rebuild it, and I'd get it back on track. And it's only since I've put really good leaders in each of those businesses that really understand it, have the

respect, have the trust and the loyalty of the teams, that we've been able to really drive forward the changes that we needed to do.

[00:20:55]

And that leadership vacuum or that lack of direction from leadership can actually be, I guess what I want to say is that when that goes, a lot of trauma can happen in organizations because those shadows or those unconscious start coming up and you end up with conflict and dissatisfaction and frustration.

So I'd love to hear you speak a little bit to how the right kind of leadership can be so important in moving forward change and moving forward culture.

Dr Kathy Hagler

So part of what, and this is a lot of what I learned from Dr Drucker at Claremont Graduate School is that the whole idea of leadership is really, he talked about management by objectives. So he really talked about not only having a clear path, but he talked about having people work together as a team on leadership.

So my theory, and I wrote about it in my book, *Art of Scars*, is that I'm creating a new term. My new term is having leaderful teams. And leaderful teams I actually borrowed from a client of mine who's in construction. He owns a construction company in Dallas, Texas. His father was one of the founders of servant leadership. What he called his group was leaderful teams.

And this was 25 years ago, and I got to work with Jack Lowe, and they have been TDIndustries, and they've been on the list of 100 best places to work for 25 years. And it's about Jack, because Jack believes that everyone should be trained as a leader, is that everyone is a leader in their job.

And the first time I met Jack, we had an appointment for me to do long range planning for his company. And I went in, and guess where he was sitting, he was sitting at the receptionist desk. And I said, Jack, I said, 'what are you doing here? Am I late?'. And he said, 'no, but it's my day to do job sharing'. And I said, 'well, where's the receptionist?'. And she said, 'she's in my job'.

So what I learned from Jack, and I learned it so well, is that leaderful training, it's this group team of leaders. There's not one person. There's a team of people that have to guide the leadership group. And they have to understand that culture makes up 95% of what goes on in the organization, because it's hardwired, it's part of your software. And so if the leader and the leader's people understand that this snuggle for survival, that they're all working together, everyone in the company, everybody is working together to create a better company, then that's what leadership is about.

And so servant leadership, someone said the other day, that's an old term. That's an old term but it's a fabulous term because he saw the need to serve his people. And then they saw the need to serve their people and their people saw the need to serve their people. And before you know it, it was just people. And part of his mission in his company is that TDIndustries is there to give everyone a satisfying and wonderful place to work. So it's not just about the external customer, it's about the internal customer.

And so as I followed Jack in my thinking in part of the book is that I think if we could help organizations understand that leaderful teams, that leaderful direction with a vision, a vision of having leaderful teams, and then all these things that I learned from Drucker and Deming, which is, how do

you improve processes? How do you improve hiring? How do you improve training? How do you improve return on investment? Those are reciprocal to the culture.

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So it's just like a human being. If my subconscious, if I can get my subconscious to understand something, let's say I'm afraid of water, for instance, I don't like water. If I can get my subconscious to get rid of that broken feeling and then calm my fear and get to someone that can help me, then I can take it into my conscious mind, and I can change that particular habit or belief.

So my philosophy is that a leader, a leaderful team has the opportunity to change the organization subconsciously in their culture and consciously in their climate.

Alex Howard

That's really interesting. And there's something also about cultivating a climate of holding and support. Tracking it back to individual trauma that one needs to be able to learn to self regulate their nervous system and hold themselves when difficult feelings are coming up. And ideally also have a support team around them that can also hold them in those places.

And one of the things that I've noticed in organizations that when organizations go through their own traumas, be that someone leaves in a very fractious way or an organization grows too fast and it over trades and that causes problems, or a lot of companies because of the pandemic have had terrible impacts in terms of cash flow or whatever it may be, that there needs to be a level of holding and support through those experiences. And I'd be really interested in your perspective around that.

Dr Kathy Hagler

So let me tell you a story. During the pandemic after the restaurants opened, I try to walk to town every day. It's about three and a half miles there and three and a half miles home just to get my exercise in. Get my step in. But I found this wonderful little Irish restaurant, and I went in several times, and then I watched them, and I talked to the people at the bar. I talked to the people that were serving, I talked to the CEO, I talked to the cooks, I talked to all these people and they loved it there.

And I said, okay, let's talk about why. And what I found out was the leader, Matt, actually held space for all the people that were going through the fear in the culture. They were afraid, the false evidence appearing real. Well, it was real, but he paid them. He called them at home every day. He worked through this until he had 100% of the people return.

Alex Howard

Wow.

Dr Kathy Hagler

And now I included that in my book, and we're going to have a book signing there. My book comes out next week. We're going to have a book signing at Flanagan's because I took all their pictures because they were so happy. Throughout this whole thing they weren't afraid, he held space for them, but they held space for him. Because now, as you know, people can't find workers. Well, he's not having a problem.

[00:28:17]

So what I'm telling you is what I've learned, Alex, which has been so interesting to me, is the reciprocity between the structure of the organization and the culture. And if you can learn to ease the fear and calm the fear and bring those ideas into being, which I do now through that assessment process of Human Synergetics, I can say here's what you're afraid of. Let's work on this together. Let's work on this together as a team. So then they have, I can allow for connectivity. That's how I use 'scars'.

So let's work on your fear. For instance, I had a client recently who said, we think we're not going to make it because it was a school, a private school, because so much cheating was going on. So we dealt with cheating. Cheating, of course, you can imagine how that was. That was not easy at all, because it affected the faculty, it affected the parents. This was a high school.

So what we had to do is we had to really unpack the wounds and what was causing the cheating. Why were kids thinking they had to cheat? What were they being motivated by? And so all those reasons that I've been called into organizations with Drucker and Deming's knowledge for the past 40 years, I now know that even though I'm not called in to deal with the subconscious and the culture, I know that if we don't work on that, then the other will never be healed.

Alex Howard

It's interesting, I sometimes say to our students in our practitioner training, that therapeutically part of your job is giving people enough of what they want, that you get the time to do what they need. And it's what you're describing in the sense that you have to fix the presenting problem that people are coming for, but whilst you're doing that, working with the deeper issues that are probably behind it.

Dr Kathy Hagler

Well, a favorite saying I have that I learned from another one of my mentors that taught me about character in Marina del Rey, California, one of his sayings was, "it's what you do now when you don't have to do anything that makes you who you want to be when you can't do anything about it".

Alex Howard

That's cool. I like that.

Dr Kathy Hagler

And so that's how I feel about culture, even though I may be invited in to look at cheating, or I may be invited in because the CEO left, or because two organizations are merging, or because they're going to close down a refinery. Because I've worked in all kinds of organizations because they just threw all the money on the freeway that the company was building. All of that's out there but if we don't deal with the rest of this, then you can't deal with this.

Alex Howard

And it also strikes me that, another way of framing what you're saying is that, everyone is watching all the time. And one of the things that I've learned over the years is taking care of seemingly small issues in a caring and attentive way might seem like, why would you spend time on that relatively small thing that's a real struggle for that person? But you're setting culture and you're teaching

people that that's the values. That how people are feeling and how people are doing is actually more important than the bottom line. But just teaching culture and how I think one does that.

[00:31:35] Dr Kathy Hagler

I think you're teaching culture and you're teaching it in the fact that the culture is the subconscious of all of us, which is 95% of the way we operate. And 95% of the way we operate, there are four words that I want to bring on to you, one is, first the people have these thoughts, you and I have these thoughts. Then these thoughts move to feelings or they move to emotions, but they're still our thoughts and feelings. Well, but think about those thoughts and feelings when they become behaviors. And I say, 'well, why did you say that to me?', or 'how come you did it this way?', or 'that's my job, why are you doing my job?'

So all these thoughts and feelings come out as behaviors in the workforce. So what we want to do is we want people to deal with their thoughts and feelings. We want them to deal with their beliefs so that as we bring those out, because thoughts and feelings then come out of subconscious and they come in as words and actions. And that's what happens. That's how it appears in the workforce. So all these things that you're going to deal with.

So if you can use this tool that I use, it's the assessment tool, to find out what is the collaborative thing you're having trouble with? And, for instance, maybe it's power. In one organization I saw that people felt like they needed power to do their job, but they didn't have any. And so what they were doing is they felt they didn't have a voice at all. So let's deal with that. Let's deal with the collective issue of a person's feelings and thoughts, not just, but you can do that one at a time. And if there are five people in there that are having more trouble than others, you can get it through coaching. But it's dealing with it, it's not, like I said earlier, shoving it under the dirt.

Alex Howard

And I think that's such an important parallel between personal individual trauma and organizational trauma. The fact is that if we don't face it and work with it, it increasingly has more and more power. Small issues in organizations become big issues when they're not dealt with and when there's not a sense of leadership and culture around, this is important enough to give attention to.

Dr Kathy Hagler

That's right, because just think about this. If all of these people were thinking about cheating, but it never really came out because people were afraid. And so they stopped coming to the school. They kept paying the tuition. That's how organizations, they go away or they are so broken and they are so toxic. So when we talk about trauma, organizations can become so toxic. But I still believe that 95% of that can be dealt with at the cultural level. But you gotta understand it because you can't just say, I think we need to deal with culture, let's get some values. It's not that. I mean, it is that, but that's the tip of the iceberg. What do they think? What are their beliefs? And how do they feel? And how do we switch that?

Alex Howard

Kathy, how about people that are watching this, I think it's immediately clear that the relevance, the importance of what you're saying to someone that's in a clear position of leadership because they can quite immediately start to impact and change some of these things. But for someone that works in a company, obviously, if the company is just toxic and it's a terrible environment, they should leave

probably and find a better environment. But for someone that works in an environment which has some of the challenges that we're speaking to, but there's hope and possibility, how can they start to help support that change? How can they start to initiate, perhaps, some of the conversations that might need to happen, or bring some of what they recognize to those that can change the culture?

[00:35:22] Dr Kathy Hagler

So I would recommend, number one, of course, I'd recommend that they read *The Art of Scars*, because what I did was I defined what an organization of character looks like. And I did a step by step process of what they need to do to make climate and culture reciprocal and successful.

So what I try to do is do a handbook and say, if you think about the vision, if you think about leadership, if you think about these things and then how those align with, and how they align with culture. And you can do that by talking to your team about, look at this kintsugi vase. It was broken. It's now worth a lot of money because these broken pieces are filled in with gold.

And so I like to start with organizations saying, just look at a kintsugi vase and tell people that we have a lot of hope. That's why the subtitle of my book is *Healing Culture, Climate and Character*, because it's about healing those things. And it's not hard. There's some very clear steps that you need to take to do it. You just can't shove it under the rug anymore. And that's what we've been doing.

Alex Howard

Yeah, for someone that's watching this that is in a position of leadership, either they're CEO, or they're a director, or they're in C-suite, whatever they may be, obviously recommending your book is a given, we can talk more about how people can order it at the end. What are some of the starting points to begin to change culture?

Dr Kathy Hagler

I think the starting point to begin to change culture is my word 'scars'. First you have to stop the broken spots and feelings. And I would suggest that the first thing they do is that they contact Human Synergistics. They are really the only company in the world, they have branches in Australia and London and the US, that really looks at culture, assesses culture. And once they assess the culture and they find out, where are we broken? Then they can begin to think about, okay, what is our vision? Once they begin to think about what's our vision, and if this is where we're broken, we're never going to get there.

So what can we do to change this? So to me, the first step would be to understand that you really have to intentionally look at culture and that it's not hard, it's not mysterious. People say, oh, that's just one of those soft things, those fufu things. Well, if you think that your people are soft and fu fu...

Alex Howard

If you think your people are soft, you might not have many left after a while.

Dr Kathy Hagler

You may not have many left because it's all about the work.

[00:38:13]

And one little thing I'll tell you is, I used to sit with Dr Deming after his seminars. I went to General Motors and Ford and Kodak and all these places, met all these CEOs, but at the end of the day, he would call people up on this stage and he'd say, 'what can we do to help the people?'. His heart was with the people, and we never have figured it out. And I think this is an answer for what CEOs can do is, pay attention. What's going on in the culture? Assess it, quantitatively, assess it. Look at it. Talk to people, say, 'how can we work on this together?':

And I believe that's the first step that I would take as a person in a leaderful position in an organization. Whether you head up a department, whether you're a non-profit. I work with Big Brothers Big Sisters in the US and that's one of the places I volunteer. And we did the culture assessment, we did 3 years of work with them, we did it again. Amazing differences.

Dr Kathy Hagler

And what's happening is donors are coming to them wanting to give them money. They gave them a building and they said, we love what you're doing, because they saw that it was working. So it really changes productivity. It really changes return on investment. But you have to look at it. You have to stop the broken thoughts and feelings and quit being cautiously and courageously, calm your fear.

Alex Howard

This is fascinating. For people that want to find out more about you and your work, you mentioned your book, you mentioned it's coming out in a few weeks, so that by the time this airs the book will be out. Mention your website and what people can find.

Dr Kathy Hagler

Yes, it's kathyhagler.com and they can find a way to order the book on there. You can get it from Amazon or at the bookstores. And I have lots of case studies. I have a case study of an oil company. I have one of a construction company. I have one of a hospital. I have one of a non-profit. I have one of a monastery in the mountains.

Alex Howard

You do? Wow. Okay.

Dr Kathy Hagler

So what I'm saying is every organization is just an organization. They all have the same parts. And so I would say, regardless of what your work is or whether you have 3 people or 45,000 people, it doesn't matter. So that's how they can get a hold of me. And I would love to talk to people.

Alex Howard

Fantastic. Kathy, thank you so much for your time. I've really enjoyed this conversation.

Dr Kathy Hagler

Thank you.