

# Building Great Leadership: Using Change as an Opportunity

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, learn, opportunity, mindset, industry, pandemic, business, customers, situation, thought, change, step, year, sat, college, problem, season, life, leaders, fixed mindset

## SPEAKERS

Mike Derryberry, Halie Morris

### H Halie Morris 00:40

Hello, everyone, and welcome back to the business of cleaning. My name is Hayley. And this is our last episode of our April mini season. So getting ready for season three and all the content that we have lined up for you. We're going to bring Mike on for one last episode on leadership. And we've had a special episode, we've given you a really great dive into what makes a great leader. But there's one last thing that we need to touch on and something that is so I don't want to say relevant because it's always been relevant. But maybe it's so much more at the forefront of our mind. And that is our ability to lead during change. And so really, Mike, I'm gonna go ahead and let you jump in, because I think you'll be able to talk best on it.

### M Mike Derryberry 01:24

Well, yeah, I mean, obviously, it's pretty obvious. Changes something that I mean, a year ago, we're all going. Yeah, it was good, you know. And we probably were kind of complacent. Many of us were probably complacent. Because everything was going well. I mean, I can tell you right now, man 2019, for us was a banner year. I mean, it's the best year we've ever had. I mean, we were killing it. And we, in December of 2019, we sat down and we had a strategy meeting and we started looking towards the next 12 months, and we started breaking up into quarters and was like, oh, man, we have this plan. Man, we're

on a we're on an up up into the right, everything is good, we're gonna grow. And then you know, late February, early March, and all hell broke loose, and the world turned upside down. And then you're sitting there going, Okay, so all those plans and all that planning and all that strategizing, we did just went out the window, because it has no application, what we're doing right now. So then what do you got to do in the middle of all that. And the thing it's interesting to me is, I don't think that the principles that we learned, or we should have learned during this last year, are less applicable at any other time. I just think they got highlighted. I think that they got really put on the front burner and everything and, you know, kind of magnified and everybody went, Oh my gosh, we need to think about pivoting and that's a key word we've heard we hear people talking about got a pivot, you got to pivot. Well, yeah, you do. But you've got to do it strategically. And we were in a situation where, you know, in the janitorial industry, everybody says, Well, you know, it's a, it's kind of the janitorial industry is kind of recession proof. Yeah, well, I got news for you, it ain't a pandemic proof. And we all learned that this year, right? Maybe in the recession, you know, you go from five days a week to three days a week or something like that, at least in our industry. We had about 40% of our customers literally shutter within a week. that quick. I mean, you know, you make your head spin when you think about the financial repercussions of that. So we had to really quickly, you know, cut Okay, what are we going to do? Well, the realization was we had already been doing some things have already been positioning ourselves. And ironically enough, we had already started the process of bringing on board, some equipment, some different things that would allow us to do a lot of disinfection and that sort of thing. That for us was a pivot, that was something that we can put all of our attention into that for right now. And we can still continue to push forward on getting new business, but we need to look at some other kinds of things as well. And so we started looking at different marketing, we started looking at different you know, different tools, different different, different processes, different needs that our customers have, what what was it that was different? What was it that they needed, you know, what were they going to be facing when they came out of this? You know what, we're going to be some some big challenges that we could meet. And, you know, we spent some time, you know, really doing a lot of conversation and a lot of discussion about what is it that we can do as a company, to serve our, our customers? And I'll be honest, the reality of that was so, so impactful. Because when we would go to the customer and say, Look, I know you're having a, you're having difficult times, how can we help you? What can we do to help you? You know, our focus is on helping you get through this, because we tried to communicate to our, to our customers listen. Without you, we don't have a business. So you are critically important to us. What can we do to help you increase your business? What can we do to help you continue to have business? What can we do to help you? And when we took that mindset, all of a sudden, there were some other ideas that started coming in, oh, well, we can do this, because this customer said they needed this and this customer. And I'll be honest with you, we're doing things

now. Because of what happened, not in spite of it. And I say that, because in the middle of that we we were observant and that we saw that there was some needs that various different customers have, but we saw, I can apply that same idea to a different industry. You know, we we service, probably 1315 different industries, I mean, key major industries, with all the buildings that we do. Well, guess what? Every one of these buildings, every one of these industries, is unique in their own way, but they also have some commonalities. And what happens is, sometimes I think you you get so wrapped into the same routine, that you don't see this, I guess what's the word I'm looking there's, there's not a solution for this, you know, Category A, you've learned something out of Category B, that now can be applied over here and solve another problem that they may not even realize that they had. But when they get it solved, they go, Oh, my gosh, this has made a huge amount of difference for us. And so we were able to do a number of those kinds of things and add products and add, you know, services, and approach our customers in ways that we had previously only used in a particular industry. But we saw we could we could apply that in a different industry as well. Because we had conversations and cars and discussions with customers and finding out where they were and what their needs were. we adjusted, you know, to those kinds of things, we we basically looked at what was going on and made adjustments rather than steadfastness. And we're just going to plow through them. We're going to hunker down and we're going to make this work. No, you've got to be flexible, you've got to think as well. I say that I have an axiom. People say think outside the box. And I'm going okay, I heard this guy, he was an inventor. And he said, you know that the greatest inventions are because the because someone has decided to throw away the box. So it wasn't that they thought outside the box. He says you think outside the box, you're still relating to the box, throw the box completely away and start fresh. And I thought that is brilliant. So we've tried to do that in a lot of different ways. It's just okay, if we didn't have a box, what would we do? How would we approach this. And that has really helped us create new services and provide different ways of, of serving our customers and different ways of relating. My whole point here is when you're in a leadership position, and your industry or your your business is in a much more of a microcosm, your particular business runs into crisis, or there's major change. Most people look at it like, Oh, this is a bad thing. Change is bad change is a problem. No, it isn't. It's an opportunity. It's it's forcing you to look at the situation differently. Okay. I can't do it the way I've been doing it, is there another way I can do it? I mean, one of the things that I challenge our team to think about all the time is ask a lots and lots of questions. I mean, what what are they doing in other industries, other industries to solve this particular kind of a problem? What are you know what other products are out there? Do we even know what the products or what the cost is? What if we couldn't do this anymore? How would we how would we solve that problem? What problem isn't being solved by the rest of the industry then we could solve You start looking for this as an opportunity rather than as a problem. Unfortunately, what I see is people look at it and go, it's a problem. I don't know

what we're gonna do, Oh, my gosh, the sky is falling, you know, Chicken Little, right? No, it's look at it as an opportunity change is always an opportunity to find a new solution, a different way of doing something, a different approach. And when you take that approach, and when you take that mindset, it's amazing the kinds of things that open up to you.

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Halie Morris 10:39

It is extremely true. And you can tell immediately, the person, the people who embrace change, versus the people who are afraid of change, especially at the beginning, a year ago, march of 2020, you could tell what we saw happen. And I talked about this on the other podcast I work on, I had actually a director of a sales college woman, and she works with both students, and she works with professionals in the community, she sets up all these events, and just stuff like that. And she made a very true observation. Some people are so scared of change, and can, you know, really just throwing out the box when they need to, and actually instigating change and being actionable, that when a situation like this happened, a lot of people literally did nothing. Like the businesses would just stop doing what they were doing students and individuals would just stop doing what they were doing, and only do exactly what they had to and they weren't getting by, like those were the students that started to fail. Those were the businesses, that we're starting to see five drops of productivity and profits. And they were like, what are we going to, you know, they really had to hit full panic, because suddenly, they weren't even able to sustain themselves, you know? So, you saw very quickly, those who didn't have the right mindset, we're calling back the mindset, again, those who didn't have didn't have that right mindset froze, and they did nothing. And then those who were like, Okay, well, that kind of sucks. But what am I going to do? Like, what can I do next, we're like, they hit the ground running. And it was funny, because she happened to have a pandemic plan in place for some of their things. And she's like, I never got that I'd get to use this. But here we go. And that was I thought it was getting a little dry. That was an opportunity for some students to step out and start doing new things. Some of those students who jumped on it right away, some of those who business professionals, they got the hang of these remote conferences and events right off the bat. And were able to just keep going, and those were people still bringing in interns, you know, people who were in training, education, and time, that was a crisis. And like, our company kept bringing, I literally the day we went remote, we had somebody were like, I know you were supposed to start today in office, but if you don't mind, Come get your stuff. We're going to show you what it does, if I send you home with it, and we were remote the same day she walked in. So we literally it was cool, because we have really great leaders here, who said, Okay, this is an opportunity to put our software to the test. You know, we always say you can take it with you wherever you go, because it's browser based. Let's go and we had everybody out the office, probably a couple hours

before lunch, working from home, right after that. So like, you know, we had our best year ever it last year, we're looking at keeping that trend up this year. But like, you saw businesses do that it wasn't just ours. It wasn't just a couple individuals who started attending events. There were so many people across the board that said, Oh my gosh, we're doing good. And, you know, they were trying not to shout it because our people weren't but like, there was a difference in mindset, if you looked at the leaders of those organizations versus the leaders of the ones that were struggling. And it was very true, because some people what they've done this entire thing, especially when everybody was at home may not have been anything that they were doing before but they were doing something and they were doing something well.

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Mike Derryberry 14:22

no, I you know, I I say this, I mean a large networking group comm worldwide, and the company, you know, flipped on like within a week, you know, everything went to went to zoom because you couldn't meet, we're not allowed to have big, big gatherings and stuff. And in the middle of all that I had the opportunities to speak to a group of business leaders and, you know, we're in this networking event. And I said to them, I said, you know, it's really interesting. Jim Collins wrote a book called Good to Great. And in that book, he talks about General William Stockdale. And there's something called the Stockdale paradox. And I said, here's the thing. Here's what Stockdale said. He said he, and for those of you don't know, General Stockdale was the highest ranking longest held prisoner of war during the Vietnam War. And he came out of it, and thrived for years afterwards. And many of his men did too. And so Collins was interviewing me and asking me, how did that happen? And he said, because we, we had two things, we were completely optimistic that we would prevail, and that we would succeed, and that we would come through this and that we would be better because of us. And this would be a defining moment in our lives. But we also understood the situation and we had a harsh, hard look at the reality that we were in. And we did not sugarcoat it. And we, we did not, you know, dismiss it, right, we faced it. But we faced it with optimism and determination, that this would be that that great moment in our lives. And I think that so many people just didn't want, you know, they, they kept, it's going to be over, it's gonna be over, it's gonna be over? Well, you know, here we are 13 months later, and guess what, it's not over. So you have to just look at a situation, whatever that situation, it could be a pandemic, or it could be an industry change. It could be a, you know, some kind of a legal, you know, some laws pasture, you know, there's a change in the tax laws, or there's changing, you name it, it could be anything that's going to impact your business. Okay. So, are you going to sit there and just let it hit you in the face over and over and over again? Or are you going to figure out a way to do something different? Are you going to be able to pivot? Are you going to be able to change? Are you going to be able to see a different way of doing the same thing?

That that's the question. And it's, it gets to the point where I agree with you there there are, there are these two camps. And again, you're right, it goes back to mindset, right to fixed or growth mindset. If you have a fixed mindset, you basically say, oh, it is what it is, I have to accept it. a growth mindset says, I see what it is, but I don't have to accept it. And I can go on and I can do other things. And I can figure out a different way. You know, it's funny, I was, I was in the gym this morning. And I was wearing a face mask. And I, you know, doing all the work, and I've had people say to me, how do you work out with a mask on? And I was thinking about this morning, I was thinking, you know, it's really interesting, I'm to the point now, where I'm so used to having the mask on, when I'm when I'm, when I'm working out, I'm not sure how I'm gonna react when I can take it off. You know, I mean, you just kind of you just, you just change the way you're thinking and you just continue on, right? It's a slight little dinky thing, but, but it's it, you know, it's a change, right? It's the same thing in your business, though, you're going to find, oh, I had, I can't do it this way anymore. I've got to do it this way. Okay. So you make the shift, right? I mean, you just you just do it a different way. Or you come at it from a different direction or you you stop using one kind of marketing and use a different or you you know, you use a different product or you find a different solution to a different problem, rather than the original problem. You can't do the original anymore. keyfile is fine. Second, another problem that we can solve, right? I mean, it's it's just being willing to keep moving and keep pushing forward and not allowing the obstacles to basically incapacitate you in just to create create complete stoppage. And like you said, there were people that just I saw this myself, I saw people just, they just hung it up in a little ball corner and just you know, sat there and just rocked back and went Oh, it's gonna be horrible. And I also saw that people saying, Oh my gosh, I look at all these opportunities. Look at all these things I can do now I do things. I mean zoom is made. In my in my world. I have saved so much time. I'm telling you, I have I don't have travel time anymore. It's wonderful. I get so much more accomplished in my day, because I get actually get an extra two hours every day. Awesome, right? I mean, and so it's, you've got to look at things differently based upon whatever the circumstances are, is a pandemic in a check, they're gonna end? Well, I think it's probably going to abate, I don't think it was ever going to go completely away. I don't think we're ever going to see that it's not going to be here. But you know, there will be some things that will go back to normal, but there'll be things that won't. Well, you can dig your heels in, say, well on that, because we can't get everything back to be 100% the way it was in the beginning. Well, okay, a lot of the stuff I saw in the beginning wasn't all that great. In retrospect, I look back and I go, Man, I'm glad this happened. Because it forced me to do this. And it forced me into this thinking, and I had to think about that. Like I said, I think that a lot of us were getting, you know, life was good, man, you know, life was moving in was growing. And then and then it wasn't right. And so I think we got a little complacent, to be honest with you.

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Halie Morris 21:12

I think so too. It was and I feel like we've mentioned this before, at least I have been able to be comfortable being uncomfortable, is so important. And those people who just can't stay on to put themselves in an uncomfortable situation to embrace the unknown. And, you know, continuously grow are the ones that they froze, because there was nothing known about what was going on in March. I mean, half the time, there's still nothing known about where we're going to be with these vaccines. And, you know, they just came out with the stuff about, oh, all these Johnson Johnson vaccines were working, so they're not gonna have any new ones going out for like the foreseeable future. And this is happening, this happening. And it's like, if you look at it, while this is happening, you know, if you look at it with that mentality, of course, like, what are you gonna, you're thinking, What am I going to do, I'm, I can't do anything, so you're just not going to do anything. And, but if you're used to putting yourself in uncomfortable situations, so that you are able to kind of face your own emotions, like, that's huge, like being able to face your own uncertainty, and understand and get passed out face quickly, so that you can get on to understanding the situation you're in and making a decision on what to do to move forward. You see a huge difference in those type of people from the people who just can't, you know, they can't step on stage, if they've got stage fright. They can't go network if they have people, right, they, you know, they box themselves in and their content to set in their corner and rock. I, it has been so crazy. I'm so glad that my last couple years of college, I stepped into an academic fraternity, and I'm a huge introvert at heart, step into an academic fraternity. Every chance I got, I got up and spoke in front of somebody. I actually did a speaker's competition my last couple semesters, and all this stuff that like freaked me out. I mean, I almost passed out my very first presentation of college because I was so freaked out. I presented so many times throughout my college career, especially in the last like three and a half years that it was ridiculous. It's To be honest, some people like do you want to present? I'm like, I have nothing to say. But yes, I do. Do I sweat like crazy? Am I terrified? Yes, I am. But I will do it. And sometimes I just got in that stop, say no thing. Like, try something new and learn because then when the pandemic and I was like, Oh my gosh, I can't stand remote classes. We're not coming back. That's all I got. It was scary. Because I had not failed a lot in college. But it's mostly been remote classes that I have failed. And biology but that's different.

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Mike Derryberry 24:07

Yeah. I think I think the thing about you know, about change. You're right. I mean, I think that change scares people. But then the so the question you have to ask yourself is, why is it scaring people? Right? What is it about change that scares people? And I think, yeah, I'm not a psychologist, and I'm not an anthropologist, and I don't study all this stuff. But in the books that I've read, in my own personal experience, I think a couple of the things that I



think that that are really scary for people about change is that it's that unknown. It's, I need to be in control of my world, right? It's that whole idea that I need to be in control. And if I'm not in control, then I don't know what I'm going to do. Right and so it's a fear of being out of it. Control. It's, it's that fear of I will look bad. If I'm not if I'm in control, then I can control the outcome, right? But if I'm not in control, then I really don't have any control of the outcome. I don't know what it's going to mean, for me, I don't know how I'm going to look, I don't know if I'm going to be looked at as being somebody who, you know, is a failure or whatever, right? And I think, again, it gets back to this, this mindset. You know, we talk in our team all the time, we don't fail. We never fail. Now, I my axiom, we say fail in it. But what we all understand is we're learning. And the idea is failure helps me learn. I mean, think about it. One of the woman's if I would say, what's the biggest lesson you ever learned? I'm betting that the majority of people will equate that great lesson to a negative situation, to a situation that that went wrong. I mean, I look back at some of my, my biggest lesson. So it's because I made a huge mistake. I made some big, big screw up, right? What I learned some things out of that, and I'm never doing that again. But when you think about the real positive highs, yeah, you think favorably about those great highs. But then what did you learn? Hmm, don't really remember what I learned. We didn't learn anything from the successes. Two successes are great. But typically, we don't learn stuff from success. And but by the way, success tends to lie to you anyway. Because you get you get to believe that you're all that and that everything is great, and that you have nothing more that you need to learn and we're all good, we're going to be settling in, which is a lie in and of itself. And that's where success comes in. And success basically lies to you. You think you're really special? When you just got lucky? Or Yeah, you hit it right this time. But what about next time, you know, and that kind of thing. But when you have a negative experience? I mean, you're all over that. I mean, you're picking that thing apart, you're dissecting it, you're down to the molecules, man, you're trying to figure out exactly. What was the problem? Never gonna do that again, right? I mean, that's where most of us are. What happens when change comes along? Is, ironically, we're afraid of that, because we're afraid we're going to make a mistake. We're afraid of the mistakes. Well, guess what, you shouldn't be afraid of the mistakes, the mistakes are the things that are going to teach you something that's the mistake, so that the things that are going to help you grow and become better. So when hardship comes in, or changes come in, look at that as an opportunity to I get to learn some stuff, I get to learn things I get to I get to be a better person when I come out the other side of this, yeah, it's going to be hard. And yes, it's going to be difficult. And yes, I'm going to have to work at it. But on the other side of that, I'm going to be a better person because of it. Well, that's probably the difference between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset. a fixed mindset sees it as something that's going to hurt them. a growth mindset sees it as something that's going to help them it's going to make them better, right? If that's if I can leave anybody with any kind of final thought, and I don't know whether we're done or not, but in if it if any thought I could leave with people



is don't be afraid of stepping out and pushing the limits and expanding the boundaries. Don't be afraid of that. That's when you're going to grow, that's when you're going to become better. That's when you're going to learn things. I mean, it's I, I have friends and I have family who are banned, they're really reticent to step out. They don't want to any I don't want to rock the boat. I know, man, you know, and I go over there and get on the edge of the boat start doing this up and down. They get all freaked out. You know what I'm gonna No, no, no. It's a good thing you need to learn whatever we're gonna teach you, you know, and it's unfortunate, unfortunately, I think a lot of people just are afraid of the perceived pain, maybe, you know, or the difficulty. And they think, well, if I'm really good at something life should be simple in life should be easy. No. Pick any great achiever in life. Pick anybody that you admire, and then go and study their life. Typically, they went through hell for years before they had success, but all we know is that stage moment, right? They we saw them up there on stage. And they're the greatest ever, right? Yeah, but we didn't see what happened behind the curtain. We didn't see what happened for years and years and years and years of all the work and the struggle and the failures and the, you know, getting it back up again, and taking on another challenge and falling down. We didn't see any of that. All we see is that front stage moment, right. And I really hope people don't allow themselves to be stifled by changes, whether it's in their business, whether it's in their industry, whether it's in the country, whether its political, whether its economic, whatever it might be. Don't allow yourself to retreat and pull back. take that as a signal, it's an opportunity to do something new to do something different to be more than you were before, the only way you're going to expand into become more is by challenging yourself pushing yourself. So take that opportunity and step out.

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Halie Morris 31:28

I think that I can't say it better. I was just laughing when you were talking about friends and family who don't want to rock the boat don't want to get splashed a little bit. And I was thinking, who I have somebody in my family who would go right up. And she checked the heck out of that boat just to do it. And she'd be like, you wanted to do what you want to do. Oh, well, you have to shake. You know, I think you said that you jump out and shake the boat. I was like, Man, you were my grandma right there. You always I every you know, it's those people who were like, and she was like this high school college. Now, if I were talking about something, and I talked about something I want to do, which is like, Oh, well, why aren't you doing it?

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Mike Derryberry 32:09

Yeah, challenge you, right?

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Halie Morris 32:11

And then I'm like, Oh, well, and then you make excuses, or you freeze because you're like, Whoa, I don't actually have any, why am I not doing it. And it's that complacency that sometimes even now, like even when you feel like you're grinding, you're doing things and you know, you really are embracing change. There's still areas where you're not like, and I find myself that somewhere like work and school, those are the places I put myself out there, when it came to my whole life, I put myself in that little box and I was content to sit there, you still have it. Sometimes it's so hard, it's hard to shake the you know, shake your own vote and to get to get out of that mindset. But you have to choose to do it. And you just have to make yourself uncomfortable and push beyond that.

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Mike Derryberry 32:58

Yeah, that's exactly right. I mean, I don't think that and you know, I don't think that it's realistic to believe that we're going to all we're all going to be, you know, perfect in this, you know that in every opportunity. And I'm gonna see it every opportunity and every negative thing and I'm, no matter where I am, in every area of my life, I'm going to know. And there are areas of our lives where we do tend to be more of a fixed mindset versus a growth mindset. But the objective is to be aware of it, to be aware of when I'm you know, not taking the opportunity, not not embracing the opportunity, and I'm shrinking back in fear of this, this change, or this, this thing, it's coming at me. But by being aware of it, we can whittle away at it and we can get, we can get closer and closer to that ideal of being in every area of my life, it doesn't really matter, I'm going to challenge it, because I'm like you, I mean, I've got areas where I'm still working on it, you know, I'm still, I'm still practicing, by the way, it's not an it's not an a, it's a it's a tool, it's it's you know, it's a, it's a practice that you have to continue to work at. You know, it's a skill that you just have to keep working at it. And the best place to start is now you know, start with wherever you are now start now. Pick something doesn't matter what it is pick something and say, Yeah, I got this thing coming at me. Let's find a way around it. Let's, let's find another way. Let's find a way to do that and there's a roadblock, okay. You're gonna let that stop you or just find another way around it. I think it was, I think it was Daniel Pink in it in his book, drive and he says, He says it's like this. You know, you're We're going down this trail, you're going down this, this pathway. And there's this huge brick wall in your way. He says you have some choices. You can either stop, you can climb over the wall, you can go around the wall, you can go under the wall. Right? There are options. But so many people come to the wrong goal just can't go any farther. You know, there's lots of ways around, you just got to take one. And I think that's what I guess I would say is that it's not that that's not the only answer. Okay, the one direction you were going, Okay, that one got blocked. But there are probably three or four other options, and ways to get around that, that you have not yet pursued. Pick one, give that one a shot.

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Halie Morris 35:48

Exactly. I think this is the perfect place to wrap up this episode and our mini season, we have reached the end of our April mini season. And Mike, I just want to say how grateful I am that you joined us for the season, and that you really did help us bring together these ideas and bring your own expertise straight to the forefront of the conversation. So that's so important, always. And we need these conversations going we need people actively practicing things with good leaders, we can turn them into great leaders and keep going forward and makes really great companies. And just really great. You know, just our communities can grow from that. So absolutely. Yeah. Thank you, thank

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Mike Derryberry 36:35

you for having me on. I, I very much enjoyed this, as I told you offline two weeks ago or something, I think I said, Gee, I really appreciate this. Because, you know, I, I've learned some things from you as well. I mean, you've you've shared some thoughts and you know, something on that was a thought I hadn't thought of, and I you know, I gotta pick something up new from you as well. And this has been enjoyable for me and gave me the opportunity to, to fulfill my own personal purpose in life. And so it's, it's great. I appreciate it. Thank you very much.

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Halie Morris 37:09

Thank you. I'm really glad to hear that I could have this kind of impact and so could our show because this is it's my life. But you know, it makes me take great pride. And I hope this is the same impact that we can leave with our listeners. So I appreciate it. All right. All right. And thank you everyone for who turned tuning in for this mini season. If you haven't watched the other episodes, you should probably go and do that because they're really good. And we will see you next week with season three of the business of cleaning