



# LEADING CHANGE: SHOW UP AS HUMANS FIRST

## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

**Jimmy Etheredge**, CEO – North America, Accenture  
**Tamron Hall**, Emmy Award-winning Journalist, Executive Producer  
**Corie Barry**, CEO, Best Buy

**Tamron:** You both have been fantastic examples of how you are communicating and demonstrating the importance of work/life balance. I have people on a regular when I am the person being interviewed ask how do you balance that? And I say, there are days I'm in the corner crying, and then there are days I'm saying, oh my gosh, I pull that off. How is that possible?

**Jimmy:** I think this work life balance goes even deeper with this pandemic. I mean, all of us are dealing with a health crisis, an economic crisis, a social crisis, and that makes people not feel safe on many dimensions, plus worrying about their children or their family and friends. I had my leadership team all go through a half-day training on being an ally for mental health. And I think one of the big things that we walked away with was the importance of checking in, of validating what people are feeling, and making sure that you're accepting what they're feeling. And it's OK to say that you're not OK. And I know today a lot of people feel like they want they want to be low maintenance. They don't want to talk about those things. I try to make sure that people know at 7:00 a.m. Monday and Thursday mornings like today, I've got an hour of

yoga, and I'm trying to do things to help me. I've got my scented candles in here and sometimes when I'm having a hard day, I get those guys fired up and I'm like – I'm smelling this today, and it's really calming. And you have to make sure that the people that work for you see that it's important that you're taking care of yourself, and then they feel like they can do it to themselves.

**Corie:** Yeah, the first really important thing I think – and you hit on it is this idea of showing up as a human. It's important for me to start with being a human mom myself. It is highly likely a 14-year-old boy comes wandering through here at some point in the near future. I need to make sure that this this isn't about an organization of robots. This is an organization of humans with lives and experiences and me showing up that way, expecting my leaders to show up that way. And to your point, almost in an exacerbated way because of the way that we're living right now, staring at the dots on our computer. And you really need to go the extra mile to show up as human. You have to lead in a way that shows balance is important to you. You have to take a vacation and then tell people you're taking a vacation. You need to not answer emails at five o'clock on a Sunday. You need to just think about what are the ways in which as a leader you can exhibit that balance is important to you and hold your leaders accountable to balance.



**Tamron:** The New York Times recently published an intimate look at the mental health crisis facing American moms in this pandemic. One quote really stood out and said, “we are holding together with the same tape that we've been using since March. The tape is barely working, but we're still here.” In one breath, I have goosebumps, the others, tears of inspiration to hear someone say that. Jimmy, you've pointed out you've encouraged everyone at Accenture North America to regularly take time. I love this – to pulse check with a colleague that can be in our organization when we see so many physically isolated people. As we talked about, we're juggling everything. We're on Zoom. Work is home. Home is work. It's all blending in. How can we help people build mental resiliency and fight through the fatigue that mothers especially are feeling, but all of us on different levels?

**Jimmy:** Yes, we try to make sure we're with our pulse check, that we're checking in with each other, checking in with everyone. I'll do that sometimes to start calls. But I think it goes back to as well, to being kind to yourself. And I shared this story – I had a call earlier this week with three hundred of our top women leaders – that I got some very good advice. I brought in a psychologist to help me with a leadership team. I had her interview everyone. And then she said, OK, now I need to interview you. And I said, I'm not the problem here like everybody else. I'm here to fix the problem. But she really got me to focus inward and think about myself for a bit. And what she shared with me is, you know, you've got these two voices in your head and one of them is never satisfied. Always thinks you could have done a little better. You could have gotten up earlier this morning. You could have run this afternoon. You could have done a little better on that presentation. And there's another one that's really nice and kind to you. And you don't listen to that one very much. And I got such reaction talking to that group where everyone's like, oh my gosh, I have that same little voice that's that way. And I just I think for a lot of us in corporate roles, the imposter syndrome is alive and well. And people should recognize plenty of

us feel like, oh, my gosh, I can't believe I'm doing what I'm doing, I shouldn't be doing this. And I can tell you as Corie was talking about, too, when I moved to the CEO job, I'm like, oh, my gosh, how did I get here? What about what all about responsible for, what have I got to do? Can I be even successful at this? But you have to be kind to yourself. If you're going to be kind to yourself, that'll enable you to be kind to others.

**Corie:** Yeah, absolutely. And I will reinforce that every one of us has it, though, for anyone out there who feels like you're the only one who's ever felt that way, nope. Every single person at some point has it. And I just love that you want to say that out loud. And I couldn't agree more.

**Tamron:** That imposter syndrome is so real for all of us. Corie, so much of obviously who we are we learn from our parents. And you've been very open about your parents being a tremendous influence on your approach to work and leadership. We'd love for you to share some of the lessons they instilled in you.

**Corie:** I came from really meager background. I am from a small town here in Minnesota. I grew up with my self-employed artist parents. So, you can actually see over my shoulder a painting that was done by my mom before she passed away. And this for me created a really interesting organic upbringing. And there were really three things. I mean, there are a million things we learned from our parents. Let's be clear, and many of us have to psychologist to figure out how that made us, who we are. But for sure, I learned a work ethic from my parents. Self-employed artists – and really any of self-employed small business America – they lived their jobs. They worked all the time. And so, this idea of work isn't always easy, came early to me. And I grew up young believing your work should change the world. It doesn't mean it needs to do it at mass scale. But they believed they were creating art that would last forever and leave an imprint on the earth, and that that was incredibly important to humanity. And I really genuinely early felt like, OK, work needs to change if you're to put that much energy into it, where it needs to change the world. And finally, you need work that fulfills your purpose. My parents knew this was not a job that made



much money. It was very meager, but it was their purpose. It was what they were on this planet to do. And they felt fulfilled because they were doing that. And I really took this kind of organic upbringing and brought it with me into business.

**Tamron:** Thinking about your parents and their creativity and influence on you. It leads to this final question, because the best of who we are, it's when we can help people. I say all the time, if you can only help the people who live in your home or have the same DNA or the same blood, is that a life of purpose? Is that the journey that you want to live? And Jimmy, I'm curious, how do you ensure that you are mentoring and sponsoring people who are different than you? How do you show up as an ally for everyone in the workforce?

**Jimmy:** I think being an ally starts with being curious, you know, having dialog, being around people that don't think like you and don't look like you. And then as you begin to understand issues and for me, that was one of the things that always affected my view. Talking to people that are not like me used to hear their stories, which would really touch me because I know this is real and this is what they deal with every day. My mom probably has had the biggest influence on me for my life, but half my bosses have been women, too, if I look at like the last 10 years. And so, I've always been a long-time ally for women, with LBGTQ. My brother is gay and over the years I've witnessed the way he's been received, what his life experiences are like, and his courage has been inspiring to me. So, I just try to make sure that I'm out there trying to be an ally, that I'm trying to promote others to be curious and lean in. And then I just think if we can demonstrate this kind of commitment to an inclusive workplace, it's going to make everybody feel better about being their authentic selves here.

**Tamron:** This is beautiful. You know, Corie, you never know when you're really participating in a panel what will actually happen. And this has exceeded anything that I thought would take

place. The authenticity, the realness. It's so refreshing. I know those listening help see this. I interview a lot of people all day long for thirty years now. And it is just a pleasure to speak with two amazing people who really have the courage of conviction to say that we can do better.

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