

Mental health: checking in and changing the conversation

Michelle Williams, Grammy Award Winning singer-songwriter, actress, mental health advocate

Christie Smith, global lead of Talent & Organization/Human Potential, Accenture

Hosts:

Emmanuel Acho, FS1 Sports Analyst, former NFL Linebacker, and The New York Times Bestselling Author & Host, *Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man*

Jimmy Etheredge, CEO – Accenture, North America

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00:00	Michelle Williams: Once I got diagnosed in my thirties, when we traced symptoms back till about the seventh grade. In the seventh grade, I didn't have language for it. I maybe knew of pneumonia and cancer, but I didn't know of depression. I didn't have language for it. And then I said, "Well, maybe I can escape how I'm feeling by just going to school, being successful," and success did not cure that feeling.
00:26	Christie Smith: Programs and initiatives are great, but nothing beats telling your own personal story. When leaders can share the experiences that they've had openly and with greater vulnerability, we know that employees feel a more sense of connection and belonging, and again, the harmony becomes real in a company.
00:54	Jimmy Etheredge: It wasn't that long ago that people didn't talk about mental health. And if you spoke up at work or in the community about your struggles, you might be considered weak or even soft, and it could be career ending, but we are starting to see a shift and some organizations are offering more mental health support programs and they're providing virtual therapy options. I am so glad to see more and more discussions about how to improve psychological safety for workers. And I think it really comes down to creating a culture of compassion. And that's on all of us. I'm Jimmy Etheredge, Accenture CEO for North America.
01:40	Emmanuel Acho: And I'm Emmanuel Acho, athlete, author, and broadcaster, and Jimmy, you are so, so very right. It's not one person's job to help turn a workplace culture into a more cognitive culture in regards to mental health. But it is in fact, all of our jobs to make sure people feel safe and included talking about mental health. This is a conversation that I have so desperately been wanting to have for a while, because this is a conversation about saving lives. But Jimmy, before we get to our guests, I have a question for you, my friend, what role does a CEO or a leader play in supporting mental health?

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02:47	<p>Jimmy Etheredge: I think it's very clear that this is a top priority for any CEO, mental health and the culture in the workplace. And I think there's three really important things that the leaders need to do. It starts with setting the example, something they've got to do to model the behavior. And that means the leaders got to be willing to talk about mental health, talk about themselves, share their mental health challenges, be vulnerable. I think the second thing is to encourage the people in the organization to show grace and space towards each other so that when someone asks for help to make sure that you're ready to support them. And then of course finally making sure that programs are available, whether that's virtual therapy, whether that's ability for people to take a day off for mental health, creating the programs and the culture that will support things. And as you know, Emmanuel, a lot of times we do talk about moving from optics to outcomes, but you got to measure what you want to change.</p>
03:52	<p>Jimmy Etheredge: And I think that's one of the things right now, there's not really KPIs that are standard for companies to use when it comes to mental health. You can't go ask what's this company's employee-based mental health versus another. But you know, here at Accenture, we are developing tools to better understand people's mental state and then what their needs are to help those managers and leaders know what's going on and be accountable for making those changes, that benefit their people. Emmanuel, you and I talk about this and you just said it here in the opening that you're really looking forward to it. Why is this topic of mental health? Why is it matter so much to you personally?</p>
04:33	<p>Emmanuel Acho: Well, because I realize that the physical body is useless without the control of the mind. And until we get to a better place of understanding in our society, just how vital our mental health is then we cannot collectively progress as a society. I believe in that you can't fix a problem that you don't know exists, and we are starting to understand that there is a mental health crisis. We're starting to understand that a problem exists and in order to fix it, we must both acknowledge it then we must understand it, and then we must attack it with wisdom and with discernment.</p>
05:10	<p>Emmanuel Acho: So I am eager Jimmy to attack this conversation. Well, I want to bring in our first guest. You may know her as Michelle Williams from the legendary group Destiny's Child or from her time on Broadway as a singer, a song writer and author. Her latest book, Checking In, it debuted last year, How Getting Real About Depression Saved My Life and Can Save Yours. Michelle Williams reveals her struggles with depression and how she made it through to the other side. Now she's on a mission to improve not only her mental health, but also help improve yours. Michelle, obviously, you know so very well how important mental health is. So I want to start with you and start with how are you doing?</p>

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05:58	<p>Michelle Williams: Aw, thank you so much for asking. I'm doing wonderful, and that is not the fake answer. I really feel good today.</p>
06:08	<p>Emmanuel Acho: Now you say it's not the fake answer. Why do you think we're so prone to leaning into, people asking, "How are you doing?" And we naturally retort with just a pre-recorded in our mind. "Oh, I'm doing great," even though we're not.</p>
06:21	<p>Michelle Williams: Well, possibly because you feel like I don't want to be the Debbie downer. I don't want to be a burden to anybody. But let's pivot because I asked somebody the other day, "How they were doing," and they said, "I'm not okay." And I wasn't ready. I was like, "Oh, you being for real." So it's also making sure we are ready on the opposite end for that person to be truthful too. Because I was in shock because like you said, we are used to the person saying, "Oh I'm good." So when you start high pitching, you're probably lying.</p>
06:57	<p>Jimmy Etheredge: Well I think like you said, Michelle, when we ask the question now we have to ask it like we mean it. You've said that depression has been with you since childhood and although you weren't diagnosed until your thirties, why do you think it took so long for you to find the right support?</p>
07:14	<p>Michelle Williams: Once I got diagnosed in my thirties, when we traced symptoms back till about the seventh grade. In the seventh grade, I didn't have language for it. I maybe knew of pneumonia, cancer, but I didn't know of depression. Plus I just thought it was growing pains or maybe I'm going through puberty and I'm like, "God, if this is puberty, please put me on the express HOV lane to get through this. This is not desirable." And then I said, "Well, maybe I can escape how I'm feeling by just going to school, being successful, and success did not cure that feeling." You know.</p>
07:53	<p>Emmanuel Acho: Michelle speaking of success, do you think there was a parallel between your mental health struggles, if you will, and the fame and the fortune and the notoriety that came with your illustrious career and that has come with it?</p>
08:09	<p>Michelle Williams: Was there a parallel? I can't say that I felt that there was a parallel between my struggles and success because I can't say that on stage I was depressed. I was actually having the time of my life to the point that my two singing sisters whom we know Beyonce and Kelly Rowland were unaware.</p>
08:34	<p>Emmanuel Acho: That's powerful. Real quick. If I could follow up, do you think that being on stage may have masked the hurt, may have masked the reality, may have masked the pain?</p>
08:50	<p>Michelle Williams: Is this a therapy session? Because that's a good question. It</p>

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	<p>pinged me from my esophagus to the top of my navel, like, oh my gosh, did it mask it? I will say yes it did. Because the only place I didn't want to go and be alone was in my hotel room at night when the lights were off. But as long as I felt like I was pouring out and that what I was pouring out was being received and feeling like, "Okay, I'm making impact." I tried to stay grateful because I'm like, "Listen, there are people who are saying we're saving their lives. There are kids saying your song helped me not to take my life."</p>
09:38	<p>Jimmy Etheredge: Wow. Michelle, I mean, you've written a book called Checking In about your experience with depression and you host a podcast that's called Checking In focused on mental health. What is the phrase checking in? What does that mean to you?</p>
09:54	<p>Michelle Williams: There are three pillars to checking in for me. It means to check in with yourself, how are you doing? How are you really doing? Check in with others. Check in and see how other people are doing, and then let someone know how you're doing, I guess, your accountability partner or person, and then check in with God. Those were the three things that I was not doing consistently for a number of reasons. And I don't care how successful you're going. I don't care the momentum that you have going on right now that has to be a part of your daily routine forever.</p>
10:32	<p>Jimmy Etheredge: Well, I'm interested in your view on this Michelle, in the corporate world, there's two challenges that we tend to have around checking in. One when it comes to checking in on ourselves. Back to when you were talking about, "Hey, when I first realized seventh grade that, that was depression, your first reaction is I'm just going to power through this." So sometimes I think the challenge is when you're checking in being kind to yourself with that. And then the second is when it comes to checking in on others or having someone check in on you is in a work environment, are you okay being vulnerable? For many years at work you didn't talk about stuff like this. You didn't talk about mental health. It was seen as a weakness or a problem. What advice do you have for people that are afraid to share with others how they're feeling?</p>
11:24	<p>Michelle Williams: You almost have to when you're talking with someone else, can you kind of discern if they're a safe person. One of my favorite books is called Safe People by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend. Are they safe enough or are they going to use this against me? Because especially in the corporate world, you might feel like somebody is waiting on you to fail. Someone is waiting on you to get weak because they might be a little envious of the position that you hold or you might feel like I'll be a liability to the company if I express that something is wrong with me. Feeling like you'll be incapable of being able to do a job when you probably just need a break, you're probably burnt out. And that is a human response to being simply overwhelmed in so many ways, mentally, spiritually, emotionally overwhelmed, physically</p>

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12:21	<p>overwhelmed. Sometimes you just need to take a step back and there's nothing weak about that at all.</p> <p>Jimmy Etheredge: Well, but we try to do it at work, and one of the things we talk about is if I don't feel well, if I got a bad cold or sore throat, I don't think as much about, "Hey, I'm not going to be able to make it into work today." But as you said, Michelle, if I'm feeling overwhelmed, if I'm stressed out, it just feels much harder to say, "Hey, I'm not going to be in today because I just need some time to unplug." So I think that's one of the things we got to figure out how to continue to make it not feel like it's a bad thing to do that.</p>
12:50	<p>Michelle Williams: It's amazing on what a day of a reset can do for you because that day of a reset can make the difference between life and death. You needed that reset because if not those dark voices in your head was going to tell you to do something else when sometimes you needed rest.</p>
13:12	<p>Emmanuel Acho: I love that. Talking about a reset, talking about saying yes to yourself. Oftentimes saying yes to yourself means you are saying no to someone else. How have you had to increase your ability to say no? And what has been the internal struggle between saying no, realizing that, that no might really infuriate some people, but that no is for the benefit of Michelle Williams.</p>
13:44	<p>Michelle Williams: I feel like God has given me a new ministry and that is the ministry of no. And I think I told you before Emmanuel, people do get in their feelings when you say no for the first time, because I've heard a saying that says, "The first time I said, no, it's like I never said yes." And people get infuriated even of boundaries that you might make. A good friend, a person that really loves you they might be in their feelings at first, but they'll begin to make the adjustment. You won't even have to really ask them. They'll make the adjustment if they really want to be in your life. Saying, no, it's kind of hard if someone asks you to come to an event, but you know you're exhausted. And there are many times I've said yes to doing things, and I felt like it was a betrayal of me. Knowing too, that same person that I've said yes to has said no to me in other ways too. So why do I feel so obligated to always give somebody a yes. All the time.</p>
14:54	<p>Emmanuel Acho: Not only have you had to come to terms with saying yes to yourself and saying no to other people, you've also had to come to terms with seeking help, with getting help. I believe it was 2018 where you made the brave, bold and courageous decision to check yourself in to a facility in order to get the help you needed. Can you just speak about how difficult that was and what you learned in that experience?</p>
15:24	<p>Michelle Williams: In July of 2018, I remember I was in the middle of even filming an amazing sitcom that's been a beloved favorite of people, and I just remember saying, "I'm not okay. I am not okay." And then to say the other three</p>

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	<p>words, woo, "I need help," that was difficult to say, "I need help." But I eased myself into my vehicle and I drove myself to a treatment facility, no clothes, just my purse, I had on a hat. The only thing I regret is I didn't stop to get my lip waxed ladies only y'all can understand that. Oh gosh. But I just remember feeling like I don't care who in here knows who I am and sure enough, somebody found out and it was leaked eventually to TMZ. But at that point I was like, this is, as it relates to my life, I want my life.</p>
16:33	<p>Michelle Williams: I actually love my life and I got to get the help that I need to live a great quality of life. So the embarrassment and shame and humiliation didn't last long, especially when others found out and was going to tell it well, they did tell it. And that's the other thing about people in high profile jobs in the corporate world, you also have to wonder, well, what happens if someone finds out and I'm stuttering here because this is real life. This is real time. I don't have a made up answer. I'm just thinking of what I was feeling emotionally at that time. And then what I was feeling for other people who say, "See, this is why I don't get help because Michelle Williams can't even go and get treatment without it being leaked." But the small sliver of you has to say, "I don't care."</p>
17:26	<p>Emmanuel Acho: Yeah. Thank you, Michelle. Your courage then and your courage even now in talking about it is always very refreshing.</p>
17:34	<p>Jimmy Etheredge: It's time for us to bring in our next guest Christie Smith. Christie is the Global Lead of Talent and Organization and Human Potential at Accenture. So a good friend and colleague and Christie, let's start by talking about some of the ways that companies are prioritizing mental health, the programs, the mindset changes that are needed. Is it about being happy at work now?</p>
18:00	<p>Christie Smith: Thanks Jimmy. This is my kind of conversation. Being a trained psychologist and coming into being a consultant for 35 years, you are my people now. This a great conversation. Let me just reflect in answering that question some of what I have heard. I think that the conversation has been so powerful to really illustrate the impact on our sense of wellbeing, our sense of self, and our sense of safety in the world. Period. I loved Michelle what you talked about is when you were on stage and when you were fully in your craft, that was probably the safest place and the happiest place you were, right. You were in control there. In the corporate world, for decades upon decades upon decades, what we have been trained to do is check our humanity at the door because as soon as we walk into our offices or into our workplaces, it is about the work, not necessarily about us.</p>
19:04	<p>Christie Smith: And that's been something that's been trained for generations on generations. And so we're conditioned to know that when we come in, we are covering some aspect of ourselves and Emmanuel you called it masking, but it's really this sense of I'm just here to do my job. I can't talk about the fact</p>

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19:35	<p>that I'm feeling anxiety, I'm depressed. I have a drinking problem, whatever it is I have to come in and just cover.</p> <p>Christie Smith: And so what the pandemic has done is to really kind of uncover humanity because no one, no matter if you were at the top of the house in a corporation, or you were at the entry level of the house in a corporation, no one was saved from the impact of this pandemic. And so what began to happen was an openness to talk about the physical ramifications of the disease of COVID, but then the opening them up of, "Oh my God, how is this impacting our people?" So leaders today that I talked to are still talking about the impacts of COVID, but now focused in turning their attention onto what must I do as an employer to take care of my talent overall. And so things like benefits that are in place, openness in cultures that are in place, new ways of working their people feel safe coming into work or working at home. All of these things have really come to fruition only, in the last two and a half years and out of that taboo status, if you will.</p>
20:47	<p>Emmanuel Acho: How do you think corporations then can both serve their bottom line, but simultaneously serve their employees? Because at times those two things contradict each other, how can companies and businesses best do both?</p>
21:05	<p>Christie Smith: Yeah, I think it's a great question. What we know is that when both are in harmony, all is taken care of. If we are taking care of our employees, the bottom line will take care of itself. It's how brands are distinguished in terms of being great places to work. All of those companies that are great places to work are caring for their people and for their talent. And because they're a great place to work, the shareholder value goes up, the brand name goes up. All of those things.</p>
21:38	<p>Christie Smith: Now I think you raise a very realistic point, which is, when you're a 100,000, 200,000, 300,000 size company, you cannot make everyone happy. But what companies must do is because they are the place where employees, and they're just getting aware of this, where employees spend more time at work than they do with their families. How crazy is that? So the organization itself must be the societal caregiver, if you will, of its employees and provide all of those foundational programs and initiatives, like I said, benefits, ways of working and all of that. But programs and initiatives are great, but nothing beats telling your own personal story. I mean, Michelle is a phenomenal example of this. When leaders can share the experiences that they've had openly and with greater vulnerability, we know that employees feel a more sense of connection and belonging, and again, the harmony becomes real in a company.</p>
22:55	<p>Jimmy Etheredge: Well, Christie, as you know, I think one of the things I'm very proud of at Accenture with, of course our number six ranking here in the U.S. on</p>

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	<p>that great place to work. But it's the focus around making sure people feel seen and they feel safe. But I know a particular challenge as you know you and I spend a lot of time with clients around implementing technology is that technology doesn't provide the break. And Michelle mentioned the example of sometimes you need a day to unplug. Everybody I know the first thing they do when they wake up in the morning is look at their phone, and the last thing they do before they go to bed at night is look at the phone, and the whole rest of the day they are connected. How do companies help their employees not feel the pressure, and that a lot of that could be internal, but that pressure that I need to be connected all the time, and therefore I can't really unplug and do some of the things I need to do to take care of my mental health.</p>
23:57	<p>Christie Smith: Yeah. I think companies have to be very forthcoming about expectations. I mean, the reason we got to go underneath the covers a little bit on that, the reason people are picking up their phone first thing in the morning is many people that I talk to do it, I do it myself is because there's an anxiety level that an email came in overnight or the client needs something and I've got to get on my phone and go solve the issue and I haven't even had my first cup of coffee. And that condition goes on, and on, and on, and on.</p>
24:27	<p>Christie Smith: What the beautiful thing that's happening now in companies is that leaders are being much more intentional about setting the expectations and setting the example of saying, "When I go on vacation, I am not going to be in communication with anyone." I sent out a post a week ago, Friday, that said, "I'm going on vacation. I'm not going to, nobody bother me." Basically what, I said it nicer than that. The amount of emails that I got back from people saying, "God, it's so nice to see leaders set that standard." And I don't think it's a technology issue, Jimmy. I think it's an expectation issue and that expectation is linked to my value to my company and if my company sees me go 24-7, and I'm on it all the time, I will get greater rewards and that's just false.</p>
25:22	<p>Emmanuel Acho: Christie, let me get your thoughts on this dialogue shift. For example, right now we view asking for help is weakness. I vividly remember how Michelle said those three words more to some degree, very terrifying, "I need help." In your mind, how can we change the narrative around that phrase, to where asking for help isn't seen necessarily as weakness, but rather as strength?</p>
25:52	<p>Christie Smith: I think that what companies are doing now and are trying to design more connectivity between their leaders or managers or employees together to be a safe place. And for me to be able to say, "I need help" to someone requires that someone has made, or that both of us have made an investment in one another to get to know one another, to have a relationship, right? We don't go screaming and yelling, "I need help" without some sense that when I ask for help, the hand will be there. And so I think that there has been this pivot in recent history to really want to extend oneself to another, in a</p>

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26:47	<p>corporate setting and to stay connected.</p> <p>Christie Smith: There's been much more emphasis on connection. Technology does help us to do that ironically, but connection to be in conversation. We did a CEO study last year where we asked 600 CEOs said, "What in your mind do you need to be focused on coming out of this pandemic?" And the majority of CEOs said, "Transparency, empathy, and building trust in their organizations." And that is the requirement today. And when we do that, and we emphasize the relationships with one another, not just clients or customers, but with one another, we then provide that, we create that safe space. And cultures are being defined with the term safe space rather than ping pong tables and espresso machines, and that's an really important shift that I think many companies have made.</p>
27:57	<p>Jimmy Etheredge: But I think, Christie, it goes back to when you talk about those points around empathy and building trust for leaders and in particular for leaders in corporations, they have to really authentically show that, they have to be vulnerable a little bit as well I think. Because, I know when I talk to a lot of leaders about it, I will want to know that they're comfortable asking for help because number one, I'm in a job where taking risk is part of it. And if you're taking risk, you're going to fail sometimes, and if you fail, sometimes I want to know, when you struggled, did you ask for help?</p>
28:35	<p>Christie Smith: Yeah. And I think that can be as simple as when a group of people asks you a question or one of your employees asks you a question, say, "I don't know, let's go find the answer together." How powerful it is to just say, "I actually don't know that, let's go find the answer." I will go back to the example Michelle's given all of us, which is in sharing your story. I remember working for a client where we rolled out literally a video campaign of senior executives sharing their stories because every employee thought, "Well, senior executives, you guys all make a lot of money. It's all green lights for you. You've never had a problem with anything." And what we were able to capture in this video of these senior executives are the struggles that they actually have had.</p>
29:29	<p>Christie Smith: One guy was the CEO of a business. He was the only one in his family, big family who went to college, the only one who has had that level of success. And so when he went and interacted with his brothers and sisters and parents, he couldn't talk about his success. Another was a woman who couldn't get pregnant and how difficult it was to go through the whole fertility issue and testing and all of that while not being able to talk about it at work and fundamentally getting to the point where she couldn't have children. So when leaders can talk about it, isn't all green lights for us. We don't have all the answers, but we are invested in one another. That's what our employees are looking for from us, and our clients, say this all the time.</p>
30:24	<p>Emmanuel Acho: Yeah. That's brilliant. Well, we have an artist, an athlete, and</p>

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30:49	<p>two phenomenal company leaders, all being very real, transparent, vulnerable about mental health. So now the question is what helps the most, when you are actually in the midst of mental health crisis? Michelle, I'll let you go first.</p> <p>Michelle Williams: A safe place, a safe space. I think more of us have a safe space more than we think. There are people there who will help you or guide you to resources so that you can get the help that you do need. Everybody's not out here to make fun of you or to dismiss you. There will be some, yes, but there are a couple that will say, "Wow, thank you for telling me." Also there's that other person that's probably saying, "I didn't want to get in your business, but I kind of felt that something was going on with you, but I just didn't want to intrude." You got that crowd of people too. I'll never forget, someone told me, they asked me during Coachella in 2018, "Was I suffering then?" And I said, "Yes." And they said, "That they could tell." And I was like, "Well, why didn't you say anything?" So you got two groups of people, that you... Have a safe place, but then those who feel like I better, I don't want to say anything because it's not my business.</p>
31:54	<p>Emmanuel Acho: Yeah. If I can chime in on that as well, I would say even creating a safe space for yourself, that's what helps me. So often I try to just be tough enough mentally, physically, emotionally, but within the last year, just realizing, you know what, it's okay to not be okay. It's okay to cry. It's okay to go on a long walk and just let the tears flow. It's okay to seek vulnerability. And after seeking that safe space within myself, I can notice healing begin to form. So yeah, that's really, what's worked for me. Jimmy?</p>
32:30	<p>Jimmy Etheredge: I think one of the first things that was big for me was just being self-aware, and so just noticing more when I am getting dis-regulated, and then thinking about how to get back. And I swear for the last month or so my current thing, which is really helping me a lot is when something happens that stresses me out or aggravates me or whatever, I will say to myself, or sometimes out loud, "If this is the worst thing that happens to me today, it's probably going to be a pretty good day." And just for me, sometimes the context of not letting little things trigger me, that in the big scheme of things are not that important. So for me, a lot of it just keeps coming back to knowing more about myself and how to recognize kind of when I'm triggered by things and how to then calm that situation down then enables me to not have so many really bad days. Christie, what about you?</p>
33:29	<p>Christie Smith: I love what you just said, Jimmy. I think for so many years, for me, I compartmentalized a lot of things. I was in the towers in 9/11 and I never talked about, I was at work the next day, and I compartmentalized that for a good 10 years, 11 years, never talked about it at all. But in that 10 and 11 years, the amount of anxiety I felt in coming to New York City was horrible for me, all these things.</p>

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34:01	<p>Christie Smith: And I got to a point where it was untenable and it just came out. I was actually talking to a bunch of veterans, and for some reason I'm looking at these kids and I'm thinking, "Thank you," because they were all at the time kids of people who were around at 9/11. And so what that taught me was own it, just own your emotions. I really like what Michelle said at the beginning as those three pillars, I have to do that on a daily basis. And I have to be very honest when I'm feeling it, and sometimes I will say it to somebody who I might not know that well, but I might just say, "You know what? I am out of sorts." So I think that sense of ownership and accountability to myself is what helps me the most.</p>
34:52	<p>Emmanuel Acho: Christie, Michelle, I just want to say thank you all so very much for the authenticity, the vulnerability, the wisdom, and the storytelling. This conversation will bless, help and change the lives of so very many. Once again, Christie Smith, the Global Lead of Talent and Organization/Human Potential at Accenture and Michelle Williams, Grammy award winner, singer, songwriter, and starred in a new movie Wrath, which I checked out and it was phenomenal by the way.</p>
35:23	<p>Michelle Williams: Thank you.</p>
35:23	<p>Emmanuel Acho: So Christie, Michelle. Thank y'all.</p>
35:24	<p>Michelle Williams: Thank you.</p>
35:24	<p>Christie Smith: Thank you.</p>
35:27	<p>Michelle Williams: Thanks Jimmy. Thank y'all so much.</p>
35:29	<p>Jimmy Etheredge: Thank you. Thanks Michelle and Christie.</p>
35:40	<p>Emmanuel Acho: Jimmy, another incredible conversation. What are you going to take back to the office with you? What are you going to do differently now?</p>
35:49	<p>Jimmy Etheredge: Well, Emmanuel, it's going to start with the ministry of no. I really loved what Michelle shared about that because this is still something I work on. I don't say no as many times as I should. It really struck me when she talked about, when other people see you saying no and you have the courage to say no, it's going to help them have the courage to say no. So next week when I've got my North America leadership team together, we're going to talk about the ministry of no. Now I'm curious Emmanuel to hear from you, what's changed from your perspective after hearing Christie and Michelle?</p>
36:26	<p>Emmanuel Acho: Now, Jimmy, I got to stop down for a second though because you said that what Accenture is number six is best places to work.</p>

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36:33	Jimmy Etheredge: Yes, indeed.
36:33	Emmanuel Acho: Yeah. That's what I thought I heard. Just make sure you don't have that ministry of saying no when I come asking for a job.
36:40	Emmanuel Acho: Just make sure–
36:40	Jimmy Etheredge: No problem.
36:41	Emmanuel Acho: Make sure you don't have that ministry. As for what stuck with me. So many brilliant things. I think the willingness and the vulnerability to share a story. I think that's the most powerful for me is both in Christie's acknowledging of Michelle and in Michelle's full courage in not only realizing that she needed help, but being vulnerable and courageous enough to seek it and drive herself to a facility where she could get that help even if it meant people would find out. I think having enough self love that your self love it trumps the fear of other people's perception of you. That your self care it trumps the worry that you might have about what people might think. That courage is greater than that fear. And so I think what I'll take from this conversation is the need to speak out and the need to love ourselves in spite of our own fears and our own doubts. Jimmy, we heard about the importance of empathetic leadership. How do you practice empathy as a CEO?
37:54	Jimmy Etheredge: I do my best to meet people where they are, and I think anyone that knows me knows that I don't mind being vulnerable with others. And in fact, I tell leaders at Accenture when they ask, "How am I able to build relationships so quickly, but deep relationships with clients." And I tell them, "Usually vulnerability is a part of it. If I share something with you that you and I both know as me being a little bit vulnerable, it begins to create some trust very quickly between people." And as I said a little bit earlier, "I think this is one of the most important priorities for CEOs." And it came up in our conversation with Aly Raisman too, and she shared how hard it can be to remember the importance of taking care of yourself in the busy times.
38:46	Jimmy Etheredge: And that's one of the things that I thought about as well when you were sharing this, just how counterintuitive it is. That being kind to yourself is hard, and having the courage to simply ask for help is hard. It's like my whole life in business has been wired for me not to be kind to myself and expect the unachievable and to not ask for help because it is a sign of weakness. So part of my practice is really just me learning how to do some of these same self care items that I think everyone else does. You can tell me you're good at saying, no, I know how busy you are and the 10,000 things you have going on, and how overscheduled you are. How do you balance ambition with self care?
39:36	Emmanuel Acho: I don't. Full transparency and authenticity as we wrap up,

Time	Script
40:06	<p>truth, be told, I don't. I believe it was Oprah who said, "You can have it all, but you can't have it all at once." And right now I am trying to, from an occupational standpoint, from an ambition standpoint, have it all. And so I'm currently navigating as we speak how to both balance my ambition, but also balance my self care.</p> <p>Emmanuel Acho: I recently went on a podcast and my friend Lewis Howes asked me, "Rate your level of happiness, 1 through 10, prior to uncomfortable conversations, changing your life. And I told him, "Roughly an eight," and he said, "Rate it now, after all the success, and the Emmy's, and the bestselling books." And I told him, "Probably a six and a half," and he was appalled. He was like, "Wait. So you're much more successful, wealthy and well known now, but you're not as happy." And it was a very jaw-dropping moment because I then realized, "Man, I have won with ambition, but I still need to make sure I win, Jimmy, with self love." So, thank you for that question, and as I will continue on this journey, I hope that our listeners continue to journey with us. This was a phenomenal episode of Change Conversations. Once again, I'm Emmanuel Acho.</p>
41:02	<p>Jimmy Etheredge: And I'm Jimmy Etheredge. You need to remember to subscribe on Apple, Google podcasts, Spotify, Audible, or wherever you get your podcasts.</p>
26:21	<p><i>Credits</i></p> <p><i>Thanks for listening to Change Conversations with Jimmy Etheredge and Emmanuel Acho.</i></p> <p><i>This podcast is supported by Accenture and produced by Laura Regehr and Alexis Green at Antica Productions.</i></p> <p><i>Stuart Coxe is Executive Producer. Nina Beveridge is Head of Production.</i></p> <p><i>Mixing and Sound Design by Reza Dahya.</i></p> <p><i>Join us for our next conversation. Let's make equality for all a movement, not a moment.</i></p>