Work & Life w/Stew Friedman (Ep. 224) - A CEO Discovers His True Voice

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I found this powerful, powerful presence of nature on the Northern Plains. I found this amazing lost indigenous community that had endured so much, yet still carried love and faith and hope and optimism, and that they have preserved against all odds, if you will, a wisdom set that I came to believe that modern humanity really needed and could benefit from. *(16:57-17:35)*

I mean, you think about the model of we're going to honor you exactly as you are, that resonates with pretty much everybody, which is why I love the model and the goal. It's winning for everybody. *(47:02-47:22)*

Stew: Well my guest today, I'm really excited to be speaking with, says that an organization's true value isn't defined by revenue, growth, or profitability. And it may be that he didn't always think that way. He says a company's real mission is to enhance the lives of the people who work there. And that's something we hear a lot of companies espouse that value. Kevin Hancock, I think, has a unique perspective on what that really means and what he's done to change himself and his company to embody and enact that core value.

Kevin Hancock is the CEO of the Hancock Lumber company. No, he did not found it, it was founded six, I think six, possibly seven generations prior, but he's got the name. So that means that's a company that's been handed down generation to generation to generation since the 1840s, if I'm not mistaken. One of the oldest and best-known family businesses in America, and he's a best-selling author and speaker. Today we're going to be speaking about his book, The Seventh Power: One CEO's Journey into the Business of Shared Leadership, and his general business philosophy and how he got to it. Kevin, welcome to Work and Life.

Kevin: Stew, hello. Thank you for having me. I'm quite happy to meet with you.

Stew: Well, I'm thrilled to have you here. Kevin, let me just tell listeners a little bit more about you and your company before we get into our conversation. Hancock Lumber is an eight-time consecutive recipient of the 'Best Places to Work in Maine' award. That's the great state of Maine up on the Northeast corner of the United States, a place that my wife and I had just recently visited for the first time. And man, did we have the greatest time there. What an amazing place.

Kevin himself is a recipient of the 'Ed Muskie access to justice' award, for those of you who don't remember, Ed Muskie, he was a great Senator from the state of Maine. The Habitat for Humanity Spirit of Humanity Award, the Boy Scouts of America Distinguished Citizen Award, and the Timber Processing Magazine Person of the Year. He's also a member of the Maine Indian tribal state commission. Kevin is the founder of The Seventh Power, it's also the name of his book, which is a nonprofit dedicated to advancing economic sovereignty for native communities across America.

Well, Kevin, your story in this wonderful book, The Seventh Power is inspiring, it's instructive. You inherited a family business that has often won your state's best places to work awards. So I imagine life was probably pretty easy for you growing up. I of course don't know the details, but you were

thrown a curveball, diagnosed with a rare disorder that caused you to literally lose your voice, your power of communication. And without a voice, without being able to communicate, it forced you to change how you lead. This is my take on your story so far. What's so inspiring is that you used this change in your life, let's call it a setback, maybe you think of it differently, to help you to understand and deeply appreciate others who might not have voice in the world. And those perhaps less fortunate than you who never had a voice. And you use this transformative experience to enhance your grasp of how to lead, what it means to lead. So if you could please fill us in, give us the short version to get the conversation going on your journey, the initial aftermath of your diagnosis and how that led you to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation out in the Western United States. And then later we can get into your journeys to Eastern Europe, to the Ukraine in particular about a different way to lead a different way to use and share power. What happened?

05:09 **Kevin:** Sure. So as you mentioned our company started doing business in the 1840s, and I'm part of the sixth generation of my family to work there and I'm CEO of the company. My dad, who had run the company, died at quite a young age, and I took over in my early thirties. Kind of as 30-year-olds would think, sure was not going to be that complicated or difficult. And everything went along quite well for a while until around 2007, when the national housing and mortgage markets collapsed. And that was a really difficult time for companies in our industry. At the peak of that collapse in 2010, I quite suddenly began to have trouble speaking. When I went to talk, I felt as if someone had put a seatbelt around my throat and squeezed it. And long story short, speaking, which I've done a lot of in my life and in my role as a CEO was something suddenly that I couldn't really do. And I had to quite quickly come up with a very different approach to leadership.

Stew: Why? What was different with limited powers of speech, which now you've recovered? I assume. I mean, I can hear, everyone listening can hear that you speak slower than most people, and it's slightly stilted. But you're obviously clearly able to articulate your words. But what was it like at first, you actually couldn't use your voice at all?

Kevin: Well it's gotten a lot better. In those early years, Stew, there is no way I could have been on that show. Because I couldn't even have taken the phone call to discuss it, to begin with. So at that time, let me say it this way. When it's hard to talk, you quickly develop strategies for doing less of it. And mine instinctively at work was to answer a question with a question, thereby putting the responsibility for speaking right back on the other person.

Now think about this age-old scene because I was the CEO of the company. So people would come up to me with a question or a problem. Previously, when I had a full voice, I would have given a directive or an instruction, but then suddenly to start protecting my voice, I began simply saying, that is a good question. What do you think we should do about it?

Stew: You didn't use to do that, Kevin?

Kevin: Well some, but not enough. You know, I was very into kind of leading the traditional way and talking, and directing, and instructing. And suddenly I couldn't do that. Now what struck me over time asking this question to hundreds of people, was this, Stew, people already knew what to do. That's what I really learned as a result of asking that question many, many times.

Stew: You didn't really know that before?

08:36 **Kevin:** I didn't know it as powerfully as I came to know it. Most of the time people already knew what to do. They didn't need a top down instruction. What they really needed was the encouragement and the safety to trust their own voice. And that was the beginning of me starting to

think very differently about leadership and the possibility of leadership really being about dispersing power, not collecting it and using the limitations in my own voice to strengthen the voices of others, specifically in that case, everybody within our company.

Stew: You know, it takes a lifetime to learn leadership and some people just never get to that realization that others have a perspective that's worthwhile and that the task is to both let others know what you think. But as importantly, if not more importantly, to give them the encouragement, the support, really the responsibility, as you put it to, to share what they know and to do so without fear of any kind of retribution for speaking truth to power. So it took this radical change in your body you know, your ability to literally speak to really shake you up. You may never have gotten to this idea quite so compellingly and so comprehensively had you not experienced this change, right?

Kevin: Totally. In time I came to see what I originally thought of a disability, Stew, or quite literally still a pain in the neck. I came to see it as a blessing and a gift and an invitation to live and lead in a very different way. And ironically, losing a piece of my voice ended up helping me find what I now feel is an authentic voice.

10:58 **Stew:** That's incredible. I imagine you know, that it took that. I want to remind listeners, this is Work and Life on Business Radio, Sirius XM channel 132. This is Stew Friedman, your host. And my guest today is Kevin Hancock, who's the CEO of Hancock Lumber company in Maine. One of the oldest and best respected American family businesses that has been around for 180 years, something like that. His book is called The Seventh Power: One CEOs Journey into the Business of Shared Leadership.

All right. Tell us about how you got to the Pine Ridge Indian reservation and then I want to ask you about how people around you started to see you differently and what they made of this change in you. So can you tell us what compelled you to visit Pine Ridge?

Kevin: Yeah. So in 2012 the economy had started to stabilize, and I had this growing feeling that I resisted at first, but that I needed to take some time to regain my own strength. I came to see it as the kind of search for my voice. I didn't know how I was going to do that, but I always had a love affair with the American West and particularly American history in the second half of the 19th century, when our nation's manifest destiny ran it to the Plains Indians.

Anyway, in August of 2012, I picked up a copy of National Geographic, the Pine Ridge Indian reservation was the cover story. I read it. I was swept away by what I read in a way I hadn't experienced before reading anything. And the moment I finished, Stew, I said to my wife Alison sitting beside me, "I'm going to go there. I want to see what life is like for the people who live there." So it took an initial trip that turned into, a decade later, I've been there over two dozen times. I've had the honor of taking two Lakota names and swearing in ceremony and started a non-profit and just have lots of lots of friends there. And the tie in is this: initially at Pine Ridge I encountered an entire community that didn't feel fully heard. That felt as if a part of their authentic voice had been swept to the side and marginalized. Which again, got me thinking about leadership and the role leadership has historically played in controlling and directing instead of liberating the voices of others.

13:57 **Stew:** I'm pausing here, Kevin, because you know, I know a little bit about that history and you know, it's so sad to think about the Pine Ridge Indian reservation being the poorest county in America. These are the first people of this continent and what happened in their experience is a great tragedy, of course. So you're going there. What drew you to that land was what exactly? What was it that you turned to Alison and said, "I gotta go there." Why was that?

Kevin: Yeah. What started to happen to me after my voice condition kicked in and I went into more of a listening mode, is simply this. The first voice I started to hear more clearly was my own. And it really started to grow a willingness to not just follow the standard route, expected route for an American 21st century CEO, but to really set myself free to go follow up things that interested me. To the point where I couldn't even explain why I was interested in the Pine Ridge Indian reservation, but I knew in my heart that it was a place I wanted to visit. And so my voice condition really got me listening to my own inner voice in a way that had a really big impact on helping me kind of self-actualize.

Stew: You had to hear yourself in a way that you hadn't before, you were forced to.

Kevin: Correct.

Stew: And so what did you find when you went there for the first time?

Kevin: I found so many things. I found this powerful, powerful presence of nature on the Northern Plains. I found this amazing, long standing, indigenous community that had endured so much, yet still carried love and faith and hope and optimism. And that they have preserved against all odds, if you will, a wisdom set that I came to believe that modern humanity really needed and could benefit from. So I was really overwhelmed with what I was experiencing there on many different levels.

Stew: What was it about the decision-making model in that community, the way people treat each other and hear each other and speak to each other that you found so useful and so inspiring?

Kevin: Right. So prior to the reservation era, their model was one of power disbursement. That power lived within each individual. Each individual was recognized as being sacred and holy connected to the great spirit of all things. And in that culture of dispersed power, that community thrived was vibrant and healthy. That post reservation era, where they really were forced to transition to a 'command and control' structure where power now lived with what they call, 'the great father in Washington, DC,' the President and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In that model of top-down power to the center leadership, their community statistically became the poorest place in America.

Stew: I can imagine that this must have been quite moving for you, distressing. In the second half of the show, I want to bring this back to you as the CEO of a longstanding lumber company, because embracing a sacred approach to living in harmony with the natural world is the hallmark of native peoples on this continent and elsewhere. I've done some speaking in Australia in the last few years pre-pandemic, and one of the things that was really striking to me, no matter where I spoke, whether it was in Sydney or Brisbane, every gathering starts with a reverent acknowledgement, genuine, we're not the first people here. We acknowledge the first peoples, and we honor their memory, and we are on their land. Everything starts with that. I was shocked because it seems like that's something we ought to adopt here in the United States. Is what I'm saying to you, making sense to you, Kevin? Do you know what I'm referring to? And how does my little sojourn to another European dominated country help relate to what you experienced when you first went there and in your many visits since?

Kevin: Yeah, I can totally relate what you just said. I remember the moment, my second trip to Pine Ridge when it dawned on me that genocide happened here. You know, I studied history. I majored in history in college. And even with that background, I somehow convinced myself that genocide was something that only ever happened somewhere else, Nazi Germany or some other prominent example. And to recognize that it happened here was numbing. Just numbing to come to terms with that. And it got me thinking again a lot about leadership, and I self-articulated it this way throughout history. I

think leaders, those who have the most power, have often overreached. They got too far, taken too much.

What struck me about being on the Northern Plains around this community is there was room for everything. There's plenty of room on the Northern Plains, but those who have the most power went too far and took too much. It got me thinking about the opposite of overreaching is the new leader dynamic. And that for me is restraint, which is having the power but not using it.

21:24 **Stew:** And so then how did that encounter with another civilization, let's call it. I mean, there's so much we could get into with the moral degradation that this aspect of our history represents and why we didn't learn it when we were going to school. I didn't learn it when I was going to school in the fifties and sixties. My guess is that you probably didn't either, Kevin, if you were numbed by encountering this history as an adult. This is a huge gap in how we tell the story of our past. Without getting into that for now, although maybe it's a part of your leadership approach at Hancock Lumber and in the other organizations that you're a part of, Boy Scouts. I don't know. But I want to stick with, for now, how did this encounter inform what you decided you wanted to do as the CEO of Hancock Lumber, to do differently?

Kevin: Right. So my time at Pine Ridge, combined with my spasmodic dysmorphia voice experience, to really create the following personal learnings. fFrst, because of my voice condition, I actually knew what it was like to not feel fully heard. Because I then couldn't say what I wanted to say. Then at Pine Ridge I realized there were lots of ways for humans and human communities to lose a piece of their voice in this world. That all got me thinking, Stew, about that answerable question. What's the meaning of a human life? And I pondered whether or not it was to self-actualize. That maybe we're all here just trying to find our own authentic voice. But as I mentioned, throughout history, leaders have often done more to limit the authentic voices of others that free them. And that's when it really hit me that I wanted to use my voice condition at work to create a culture where everybody there felt trusted, respected, valued, heard, and safe. Not because the company would do better, it would do better. But that to me was the outcome of a higher calling. That higher calling was advancing humanity, one human at a time at work, by helping adults come into their own true voice. Honoring them exactly as they are, which is very different from how corporations have traditionally engaged humans at work.

Stew: That is certainly true. And that is the essence of what the seventh power is. Right. You get the title from, well, tell us where that comes from, and then we're going to have to take a short break.

Kevin: Yeah, the Sioux medicine wheel represents the six great external powers: west, north, south, east, sky and earth. At the center of that wheel is the seventh power and that is you. It's me. Its individual human spirit.

Stew: We're going to pick this up after a short break, what does it mean to truly honor the individual human spirit in our society and at work and how the changes, the relationships that we have with each other and our capacity to bring all that we have to offer to our collaborations with others. That, and more when we return. This is a Work and Life on Business Radio. SiriusXM 132. I'll be continuing my conversation with Kevin Hancock about his book, the Seventh Power when we return. Stay with us, we'll be right back. You're listening to Work and Life.

Hey, welcome back to Work and Life. This is Stew Friedman, your host founding director of Wharton's work-life integration project, the Wharton leadership program, and founder of total leadership, a management consulting and training company. We help people and organizations find creative ways to create harmony in their lives and improve their performance as leaders in all the different parts of their lives, their work, home, community, and private selves. My guest today is Kevin Hancock. Who's the CEO of Hancock Lumber Company. And he's the best-selling author of

three books, including most recently The Seventh Power: One CEO's Journey into the Business of Shared Leadership.

So Kevin, we're talking about some of the many things you discovered in aligning with the people of the Pine Ridge Indian reservation. How has this transformation of your own understanding of what it means to share leadership and to listen rather than direct, how has that changed when you started to adopt this? Let me ask first, how did people react in your company? I bet that people reacted very differently depending on who they were and what their interests were. My guess is that there probably were some people who thought I don't think I like this. I don't want to be on point to have responsibility for expressing my ideas. That's not me. That's not what I'm accustomed to. Or, Kevin can't be serious about this, can he? Or, I don't know. What was the reaction?

Kevin: Yeah, I would say there definitely was a strategic pause where the organization tried to determine whether or not this was the flavor of the month or something that really was going to stick. Once they saw I'd gone over the edge permanently in pursuit of shared leadership, everything started to tip pretty quickly. But to your point, it is a big adjustment from the traditional model because when leadership changes, followership also has to be redefined. So everybody's role in the company changes in a model built around dispersed power and shared leadership.

Stew: And so what was that like? What would you say is the most important lesson you learned about changing your approach and giving more voice to the people around you and your organization? And I assume that holds true also for your suppliers, your customers, up and down the supply chain and the delivery process and the others that you interact with in state government. What's the most important lesson you've learned from that experience?

Kevin: Yeah, there were two big ones above all others. First was restraint, patience for process and just because you as the leader are ready to go make a decision, make a move, that does not mean everyone else has had the opportunity to process that topic. So patience was the first element, but it's strategic. What I'm saying is slowing down to include every voice is actually a pathway to the organization speeding up because once you make decisions you've really got the entire community behind it.

Second big learning was the purpose of listening. Simply put, I would describe it this way. Listening in the new model is for understanding, not judgment. It's for understanding, not judgment. The whole point is just to honor everybody's perspective as they authentically hold it. If you can make it safe for people to say what they honestly think, I call that the answers to the test. They will tell you exactly where the opportunities to improve the company lie.

30:10 **Stew:** But you have to encourage that and make it, I mean, some people refer to this as psychological safety. Other people call it simply consensus driven decision-making. It's a concept that's not new to humanity, but it is all too uncommon in many of the organizational settings that we see, that tend more to follow the top-down approach. The people of the Pine Ridge Indian reservation, they will take the time to listen to each other, I gather. And then we look at where they've ended up. So, how do you reconcile the power of shared leadership and the native peoples of this continent and others as having been almost decimated and destroyed by a different model? Looking at that metric alone, you'd think, well top-down is better because it works in the sense of achieving dominance and control. Where am I wrong? I'm playing devil's advocate here, clearly.

Kevin: Yeah, I think about it this way. I think that great people are everywhere. It's really the culture that leadership drives, defines, and imposes that makes the difference. I think historically, Stew, is a big clear example about Germany after World War II. Divided randomly between east and west. West Germany went on to become the economic engine of Europe, if not the world, and east Germany hung

on under machine guns and guard towers until it collapsed under its own weight. But it wasn't Because all the quote unquote, 'best Germans' happened to be on the west side of that line. There was one leadership model that honored the power of the individual, the human spirit, and another was an extreme example, a fanatic extreme example of power to the center. And we see this at Pine Ridge, that when power was dispersed in that community, the Sioux thrived when power was pulled away from the individual they struggled. And I think times have changed. In the 21st century in the Aquarian age, we're really living in the age of power dispersal. That's what humanity is wanting, but leaders and leadership models are trailing that sentiment and I think that's where the discontent at unrest and a lack of meaning at work is that why it's manifesting, we're wanting something different than the models we're living with are providing from a leadership standpoint.

Stew: People have always wanted voice and a kind of trust to be able to express their perspective. And yet it has in so many instances been diminished, suppressed, snuffed out. How do you make it come alive in the day to day at Hancock? Can you give us an example of what this model looks like, that you wouldn't have thought of doing as a 30-year-old?

Kevin: Yeah. Yeah. What I would say is it's surprisingly simple. All we did that drove everything was change the mission. We accept the first mission of this company is going to be the experience of the people that work here. And if you picture a corporate flywheel with all its constituencies on it, the idea is let's put our energy in setting that flywheel in motion at the point of the employee experience. If employees are having an exceptional experience, that's going to manifest as an exceptional customer experience and corporate performance. So the mission matters. Most companies get what they focus on. Mission matters.

And then when we changed the mission, we needed a new metric because if the mission was the employee experience, well, how were we going to measure it and think about it this way, Stew, everyone in business can picture this. We've got a million metrics for measuring how the company is doing. But how many do we have for measuring how the employees are doing? Having a human experience at work? And that's where we got into engagement surveys, third party engagement surveys, which are not uncommon, the difference, Stew, was we elevated that to our most important metric. We said that to our management team, if you feel overwhelmed and can only work on one metric, you focus on this one.

35:56 **Stew:** Wow. Let me remind listeners, this is Work and Life on Business Radio, SiriusXM 132. I'm your host Stew Friedman. And I have the pleasure today of speaking with Kevin Hancock, who is the CEO of Hancock Lumber Company up in Maine. The great state of Maine. We're talking about his powerful book, it's called The Seventh Power. Unleashing, really the voice of people in your organization. And that's certainly one way to do it, is to reward those who are managing others for ensuring that their people are engaged, first and foremost.

What do you tell other executives and CEOs of other companies that you hang out with, whether it's in Maine or elsewhere? How do you advise them when they tell you, "Idon't have time for this, it sounds great, Kevin, but no, my board won't let me. It's going to take too much time. I don't have the patience for it, besides I know best or whatever it is that they might say by way of resistance." How do you advise them?

Kevin: Yeah, what comes to mind is I'm sure that I can prove they're right. Anyone who wants to disprove the validity of that model can carry that thought in their mind. But what I've seen over a decade of working at this approach, the authentic employee engagement is sharing power, is actually a lot easier and simple than hoarding it and collecting it. The old model takes a ton of work and rules and checks to hold it in balance, the new model sustains itself.

And here's one of the other ones that I really like to emphasize with executives who will say to me, you know, everybody has their own voice, doesn't that just mean kind of scattered, confused, chaos, lack of focus. And what we've seen is just the opposite. That when everyone participates in decision-making, discipline, best practices, efficiency, accuracy, process improvement, all go up. Our safety director many years ago summarized at best and I view what he said, people are much more apt to deeply support that which they help to create. So giving others a voice strengthens corporate speed, and agility, and focus, not weakens it.

38:47 **Stew:** Yeah, I call it slowing down to speed up. Just as you did. I mean, it's the same basic concept that most people understand once they sit back and just reflect on it for a minute, as we have been doing here.

Now one of the things that we know about native peoples, including those that you have become friends with, the six powers are powers of nature, right? And there's a kind of communion and a sacredness about the relationship with the natural world that many of us have lost. Now your company cuts trees, right? How does your relationship with the natural world in terms of your business, how does that fit with what you have been learning about how trees are a part of us, and we are a part of them? And then if you read Richard Power's great story, his great novel that's rooted in science, Overstory. You must be familiar with that amazing book, which is about how trees talk to each other. I would love to get your perspective on how you think about the question of what it means for you to do what you do within the lumber business and, and these, these principles of the sacred connection among all living things.

Kevin: Sure. I love that question. It's such an important question, Stew. I'm reminded of the great American philosopher, Joseph Campbell, who said 'life eats life'. That is the order of planet earth. So the Sioux killed Buffalo, cut trees, burnt grasslands, but did so with reverence. The taking of a Buffalo's life was a sacred moment. That Buffalo was a 'four-legged brother', is the phrase that the Sioux use.

Take that forward to the modern day. Humans still have needs. Earth is a closed planet. The only thing that gets in or out is sunlight. So our resources have to come from here. When it comes to housing, the most sustainable resource harvested correctly is our trees. We grow more fiber every year on our land than we harvest. And we could do what we're doing for a thousand years, and the forest would be intact and healthy.

41:35 **Stew:** Well, that's an important model for the rest of us. What is your take on what we need to be thinking about in terms of climate action, more broadly beyond the lumber industry. What are your thoughts on that, briefly? We're going to have to wrap up in just a couple of minutes, and this is a topic for a whole other hour of discussion, but where does Hancock Lumber stand on supporting sustainable growth in our country and globally?

Kevin: Yeah. So in a mindset of shared leadership and distributive power, every individual and every company would take the wellbeing of the whole as a priority. So what I like about our cultural approach within our company is that it really supports the right kind of thinking we need to be leaders at Hancock Lumber in advancing sustainability in every way, that everyone on our team can help us think about and pursue. I thought a lot about how humanity advances or how the earth is protected and really at the end of the day, it happens one person, one human, one company, at a time. And we need to focus on the big list of things that we can do that are right in front of us as a company and they abound. There's lots we can do.

Stew: What's the most top of mind as you think about what you're doing as a company, to make a dent in the sustainability of human life on earth?

Kevin: Yeah. In the spirit of your show, it's really thinking about sustainability including humans and the traditional work experience that is often been draining, energy draining for people who do it, reducing that trend. Let's say that we could make work energy giving. That people would leave their work experience with more energy, more confidence, more self-worth, and a sense of purpose and bring that into their entire life. If work could be a place that fuels the human spirit, that is a foundation that can drive sustainability in countless other ways.

44:14 **Stew:** Of course it can. Now you have a couple of kids, if I'm not mistaken, correct?

Kevin: Yes. Two adult daughters.

Kevin: How are they thinking about all this and their futures? I have to ask them. I get it. What do you think?

Kevin: Yeah. I say all of this resonates with them. I mean, you think about the model of we're going to honor you exactly as you are, that resonates with pretty much everybody, which is why I love the model and the goal. It's winning for everybody. I think about it this way in the 21st century, winning isn't winning, unless everybody's winning. And the work experience needs to be meaningful more than just a paycheck for the people who do it.

45:17 **Stew:** Yep. Nobody wins unless everybody wins. We've heard that from Martin Luther King, Woody Guthrie, Bruce Springsteen, and many other great political philosophers. It's a powerful idea. And you seem to have found a way to realize that idea in the seventh power. We're going to have to come to a close here. Kevin, what's the one thing that you want to make sure our listeners take away from your experience as you've captured it so wonderfully in your book, The Seventh Power?

Kevin: I think about Gandhi's iconic line of simply becoming the change you wish to see in the world. Leadership for me has become an inside job. As the CEO of our company, my primary focus is getting myself right, which I love to jokingly say is pretty much a full-time job, but really, it's about becoming the change. You asked me how I helped create a culture of dispersed power and shared leadership and respect for all voices. My answer would be I put the vast majority of my energy to try to become that myself. And when that happens, it ripples, and it impacts those around us in ways I think we underestimate.

46:50 **Stew:** Truth. Yes, Kevin, you are an inspiration. Your story is incredible. And the wisdom that you've acquired through your experience and especially through this literal loss of your voice, it's really wonderful of you to take the time to share it with us. This notion of changing yourself first and foremost and not realizing the power of doing that, it's really the hardest thing. So I wonder if you could say, in just, you know, 15, 20 seconds, what's the hardest part of doing that for you?

Kevin: Well, once you start down that road it gets super easy, but early on, it's just fear. And it's letting go of that fear that releases one into trust.

47:41 **Stew:** Well, we're going to have to leave it there for now, Kevin. I hope that we have another occasion to meet and talk. It's really been a pleasure. How can people find out more about your books and what you're up to with the Seventh Power?

Kevin: Thank you, Stew. I have a website set up dedicated to all we discussed today, and it's titled simply thebusinessofsharedleadership.com and you can find my books there, reach me there, and find lots of resources related to our conversation today.

Stew: Wonderful. Thank you for letting us know that. And again, thank you for being with us today. I really appreciate it, Kevin.

Kevin: Thank you so much, Stew. It was a great pleasure.