

STEVE SHARP



CREATIVE CONNECTION



EPISODE 90

CREATIVE CONNECTION

Steve Sharp 00:03

The main purpose of leadership is to minimize human threat response in the environment in which security. My third piece of advice is you have to have a mindset, and an obsession with developing capability in your team. You have to create environments that people want to turn up to.

Chris Meredith 00:35

Hello, and welcome to the Common Creative podcast.

Paul Fairweather 00:37

My name is Chris Meredith and my name is Paul Fairweather. And Chris and I are on a mission to unlock the discussion about creativity in life and business through the lens of ideas, stories and visual cognition.

Chris Meredith 00:50

And this week's guest is Steve Sharp, the workplace whisperer. Now that he doesn't bring horses into work, he helps ordinary people in the workplace, become more creative, and work together better, particularly as a team. And we were fascinated to find out how businesses can build a culture where people feel safe to contribute and feel confident to share their ideas and do better things. Paul, what do you got?

Paul Fairweather 01:18

Chris, I found that enlightening and inspiring. Steve had a very successful role at a very young age in banking, as a leader of hundreds of people, five or 600. He said yet, you know, there was something missing for him. And he looked up the ladder and he went, you know, I want to do something different. And so he started the work he does where he calls himself, the culture curator, I think really interesting. And whilst he talks a lot about creativity and connection, you know, he did, he did sort of mention some things that seemed to be at odds with some of the things that stood around creativity. And we asked him to unpack it. And it was great to get that different perspective, because we tend to be a little bit channeled in our thinking about these main things and so it's great to have someone that challenges us. So, if you're listening, stay listening through to the end, where you'll hear about the benefits of stress. That's getting Steve Sharp, a huge welcome to the common creative podcast. Great to see you again.

Steve Sharp 02:22

Thank you. Thank you, Chris. Thank you, Paul. It's great to be here.

Paul Fairweather 02:25

Yeah. Steve, great to meet you. And have you on the podcast

Chris Meredith 02:29

Steve, it says culture creator on a board that's right behind you. I can see. But you're also known as the workplace whisperer. Now, it's not the it's not a job title that many people have. I'd love to hear what it is that you do, tell us through your journey and how you came to become the culture creator slash workplace whisperer?



Steve Sharp 02:50

Sure, sure. So born and raised in the wonderful Brisbane, Queensland I, I grew up a normal, normal child existence, and found my way into the retail banking side, finished school did the usual thing worked, plugging away through your University. And at the time, I was actually working in construction. I was the head Batcher at a concrete manufacturing plant. And I was doing three subjects in my last semester of uni, so I needed time off. So it's kind of do I continue to work and potentially fail? Yeah, I was the subject. I went to my boss there and said, Can I have three, three weeks off? I've just got to finish uni. And then I'll be back. He said no. And so I rang my husband, who was a branch manager at Suncorp. And said, Can you get me a job in four weeks at the bank? And he goes, Yeah, so I started as a teller. In recab, 80s, I really just fell into it. And from there, I managed to claw my way up, claw my way up the ladder in various positions. And what I think is one of the turning points, or one of the proudest moments of my career, is that I won the Young Executive of the Year Award, which was an Australian Financial Review boss Magazine Award in 2012. Because at the time, I was pretty young. So I was an Executive leader in banking and a young one. So I certainly came up against the biases around who's this who's this green guide? running these things

Chris Meredith 04:44

Steve by rights, you should be a banking executive and you're not telling us about what takes you from banking into being the culture creator?

Steve Sharp 04:53

Yes. So my final role was one was running the branch network for a large credit union and I had about five or 600 people about 65 branches. And I got to that point in my career and to be honest, I looked up, and I thought to myself is that the type of work that I want to be doing for the rest of my career. And it certainly wasn't. And I'd gone through a number of experiences in my career where I had, you know, fantastic leaders. But I also had a number of experiences, where I had the privilege of learning from leaders' behavior of what not to do. And so that, that kind of inspired me to have the courage to take the leap out and build a career that I'm doing now, which is helping organizations and people understand workplace environments, and create ones that people actually want to turn up to, and, and give of themselves.

Chris Meredith 05:59

Steve, tell us more about that. Because one of the observations that I've certainly had, I think, almost anybody that's been in the workplace is, it's a strange thing that happens when you go to work, which is that for many people, it's okay to be a complete bastard. Different rules apply at work, and you don't have to treat other people as ordinary human beings. And it's just nuts. But why does that happen in the workplace? Why can't we be normal? Work? What

Steve Sharp 06:29

What can't be normal? I think there's, there's a, there's a myriad of reasons. But one of the reasons that I think from my own personal experience is, is when people get into positions of authority. They misconstrue role or authority, with power. And because we, we humans are tribal in nature. So we're pack animals. And we are hierarchical in nature. And so we've survived on this planet for all these

years. Because of that, we've been able to collaborate and create teams of people and problem solve together. However, given our hierarchical nature, when people get into those positions, they believe that they have to act in a certain way or do certain things, or quite frankly, the authority and responsibility of leadership gets to their head. And they think that their behavior doesn't matter, and that they can treat people the way that they want to treat that route, rather than how they should.

Chris Meredith 07:42

And this thing's gonna face getting better or worse in that respect. How we take the workplace has changed hugely in the last three or four years, the pandemic, working remotely. Are all those things AI coming on the horizon? Yeah, how are things changing at the moment? Are we getting back to being normal? Are we going more into the world of being power hungry? Animals?

Steve Sharp 08:02

Yeah. So I think there's a couple of other ways to look at this. If you look over the last 20 years, and particularly in the last 10, I think, generally, workplaces are getting better, because people are becoming much more aware. There's increased knowledge and understanding around the importance of the workplace environment, and what real leadership is. So I think if you look at, at, at our development of workplaces and leadership capability on a global scale, I think we're getting much better. And, and the stats that Gallup put out recently, so gallops a large global company that specializes in measuring and researching employee engagement. In Australia and New Zealand, we've actually seen an increase of about 6% in people who are loving their workplace. And so what we are seeing, we are seeing an increase. And if you layer on top of that, the energy and effort that organizations are now putting into things like diversity, equity and inclusion, the rise of the concept of psychological safety and people's interest in understanding it and how to develop it and how to curate it. In environments. I think we are getting better. I think what's working against that is, now it's how do we do all of this stuff in a hybrid workplace? So it's much simpler for people to understand how to curate environments where people are in the environment face to face, because you have that level of interaction. You have the informal chats and conversations that you can have virtual. So now I think what people are grappling with is, how do we create human connection, and collaboration and clarity. When I work when I see my work workforce once or twice a week, or in a lot of teams, we get together once every three months. Wow. And I think that's what people are grappling with now.

Paul Fairweather 10:22

So Steve, I want to unpack that a little bit further, in terms of you know, how you do that, because I'm really interested in if you've cracked it, then then you're obviously very much in demand. But I just wanted to, you know, the thing that sort of come about because of this work from home phenomena, you know, seems to be that some of the things that you were talking about, about improving the workplace and has gone too far, you know, like their people go, Well, you know, I've got what, I've got my rights. Yes, you see, you know, and like, and I have to go to work, but I want to go to work. And so it sort of changed the balance, you know, there's obviously positive sides of it. But there's also, you know, you're in the media, there's a lot of negative sides. Have you seen any of that in the workplaces that you're working with? Whether it's hybrid or hybrid, where it's God tipped too far the other way? You know, there's the people, the leader the losing control, because everyone's got, you know, got their own say,

Steve Sharp 11:26

Yeah, well, it's certainly a benefit that organizations must provide for them to be in a game of attracting talent. So if you're an employer, and you don't have a work from home policy, or you don't have something where it says, In this role, you can work X amount of days from home, that I can tell you what your competitor down the road doesn't, they're gonna get the talent pick, because people expect it now. Do I think it's gone too far, I think people's view on this is very definite. And I see it. Over time, I see, you know, leaders say, you know, I've, I've, I've got this new person starting, and they're expecting to work from home, three days a week, when they don't even know the role. They should be in the office five days a week until they know the role, then you've got the employees saying, Well, if I don't get through the three days at home, then I'm going to find a job somewhere else and get people's views tend to be rock solid, working from home works, don't take it away from us, or, you know, working from home four days a week kills productivity, and people need to be in the office and those types of things. To be honest, it might seem like a bit of a gray answer, but I think there is a balance. What I would say though, is any more than three days working from home, I think we'll have a material impact on team collaboration, team problem solving, Team creativity, Team innovation. My sweet spot, and this is my personal view, is three days in the office and two days from home. Yeah. Because I think if you go back to our Genesis, and our DNA, and what drives us as an animal, we are pack animals. We are tribal in nature. We are hierarchical in nature, we have survived on this planet, and we thrive when we feel deep connection to other humans, and we collaborate to solve problems.

Paul Fairweather 13:45

So Chris, I, I'm really interested in that. I think that's a great insight. And certainly when I thought about the creativity and the culture, that just breaks the thing about culture, because one of my clients BDO is there in Brisbane, and they're obviously part of a national group, in Brisbane and Sydney, they are moving offices and going to a larger office. Okay. There's another group that I've been involved with which Oh, I mentioned there, another international firm. They've gone in Brisbane from five fours to one four. Yeah. Because I've said we're just hot desking we've only got desks for 20% of the staff. So what is it about those cultures? You know, that you see that? You know, I haven't looked at those two and what's in it, but what's in those cultures that makes the attraction that BDO can go, we're growing? We're all at the office or the office, you know, that's why they need more space. Yeah. As opposed to, you know, these other people and who knows what'll happen in the end, but is there something good about the culture or somewhere like BDO that has been able to achieve that?

Steve Sharp 14:52

Well, I think the critical issue is when you look back at this is you have to create environments that people want to turn up to? So that you have to create an environment where someone says, Yeah, I could work from home today and do all these types of things. But I'd much prefer to go to the office, because X, Y, Z and it's not typically because you've got beanbags, I can play table tennis, oh, they've got free coffee. It's because, you know, the rest of my team are there. And we're solving this problem. And I want to go grab a coffee with so and so. And I want to go see that client, I want to do this, I want to do that. So I think I That, to me, the magic for organizations to get people back in the office is creating an environment that actually gets them up and on the train or on the bus, or in the car to come into that environment.



Chris Meredith 15:50

So can we get into how you let's imagine there's a company out there, they want people to collaborate better, they want more innovation, agile, or couple that kind of stuff. And the temptation is to jump on your emails from that one. This is what we're going to do Tuesday to Thursday, everyone's got to come here. And of course, there'll be a bit of a riot, because everyone will go, Well, I can't. So we'll have a capthatday,orwhateveritmightbe.Howdoyouachievethatinpractice?Howdoyougetpeopleto say, Yeah, I want to come in and do that without getting into a big steak and hitting people? Yeah, so

Steve Sharp 16:25

So some of the things I've seen are people creating team days, so an entire team or an entire department comes into the office on the same day. And they have social events, or they plan specific brainstorming sessions or collaboration sessions. I've seen one organization or a fairly large department at one of the big four banks called Color Thursday's problem solving day, right, and safe harbor initiatives is that the entire department of this area of the bank comes in. And there's structured meetings and interactions around specified problems that they're trying to solve. And so I think, bringing structure, I think, and this is a really interesting thing about human creativity and human innovation, is sometimes I think people get caught up with, you know, to, to create an environment where people can be creative, they've got to have full autonomy and this level of freedom to to expand their mind and do all these types of things. It's, in fact, the opposite of what we as humans need is clarity and structure, and understanding the boundaries in which we can operate clearly and agree on them. It's only then, can we be free in our thinking, because if we are uncertain, and we are not clear, or we feel like the level of autonomy we got is too small, i.e. we're feeling micromanaged. Or we don't understand the boundaries in which we're operating with too much autonomy. Right, then we go into threat mode. And when the human brain is in threat mode, it's been controlled by its limbic system, which is the primitive brain, which is fight or flight. And so all our brain is focused on in those moments is the threat, which is the threat of not knowing or the threat of feeling micromanaged, which then builds anxiety. And so if we don't have that structure, and that clarity, our threat response can't relax and our prefrontal cortex, problem solving creative, innovative brain can being controlled us

Chris Meredith 18:51

greatly he referenced the way the human brain works. That's Paul and I kind of learning so much about the different parts of the brain and the fact that it isn't accidental or this isn't that it's actual genuine science behind this stuff. And it's up to us as knowledge workers to be experts in getting gift Brain Fit for different kinds of tasks.

Steve Sharp 19:11

Yeah, and I always say that, you know, if you break it up, and what I try and do for my clients and audiences is how do I make this stuff? So practical, so doable and understandable, because it can be concepts of trust and environments and psychological safety, airy fairy big concepts, right? But if we think about leadership, and if we say a leaders role is to curate an environment in which people want to turn up to and choose to give their discretionary effort, discretionary effort, creativity, innovation problems of that a main purpose of leadership is to minimize human threat response in the environment in which security because if people come to work, and the threat response, or their threat brain is

asleep, but because it does them have to be on. So they feel safe, then their prefrontal cortex will be in full control of it. Which means that's where the freedom of creativity and problem solving and innovation. That's where it comes from. So how do you minimize threat response? Is the question.

Chris Meredith 20:20

Let me let me bounce like exactly what I'd love to hear more about is, how do you minimize humans? Because I mean, I'm thinking, you know, we're a business, we got targets to hit me, you've got customer satisfaction, we can't have this kind of weird human theory. How do you do it in practice?

Steve Sharp 20:36

provide people with bean bags and teach the medics.

Chris Meredith 20:40

Charts.Yeah,allofthemposititnotesthatalwayshelps

Steve Sharp 20:43

medicine with herbal tea. So that concept, the concept of psychological safety, is what leaders must understand now and into the future if they are going to be effective. And psychological safety has been around for a while; it started in the 1970s. But it was modernized by a lady by the name of Amy Edmondson who wrote a book called The fearless organization. And she stumbled across it back in the early 2000s. So she was studying the behavior or researching the behavior of Emergency Nurses. Sober, nurses. And what she noticed in one of her observations, which kind of led her down this path was an emergency nurse in surgery, witnessing the surgeon doing something wrong to the person and not saying anything. Yep. Right. And so and the reason she didn't say anything, was in fear of punishment, embarrassment or humiliation from the surgeon. So here we have a hierarchical relationship of the status of surgeon is far above, you know, the lowly nurse. And so therefore, even though there's a human being here, that he or she is doing something wrong so I'm not going to say anything. And so that's where she started to delve into this concept of psychological safety. And psychological safety is the root cause of human engagement in anything, anywhere, anytime, with anyone. So we have to feel a sense of psychological safety in an environment for our brain to calm down and our prefrontal cortex to go bananas in complex problem solving, innovation, collaboration, connection, those types of things. And so at its very cool, if you do not understand what psychological safety is, what we need to feel it, and then how to curate an environment, where the majority of the time people have a sense of psychological safety, because it's not going to be all the time, then, then I don't think you're going to be an effective leader going into the future.

Chris Meredith 23:03

But so let's come back to the cure. Let's imagine you're that surgeon, giving operations surrounded by nurses, other people? What kinds of things could that surgeon do? To make it okay, for the people around to say, actually hang on a second, maybe that's an older, how would a leader enable their team to be safe?

Steve Sharp 23:24



Sure. So number one, and it starts here. And it will end here, if they don't do this correctly, established connections, right? If you're a team, whether you're a team in a contact center, or a team, in an emergency room, that the team that is undertaking that work, has to have a strong connection to each individual in that team. And the key connection here is the leader to each of the team members. And if you think about it, if you don't, if someone called you Paul and asked you a favor and you didn't have a connection with them, what would go through your head?

Paul Fairweather 24:08

What what Yeah,

Steve Sharp 24:10

versus somebody you do you have a strong connection with raisins, as I pull up desperately need and need fiber? The earlier Yeah, absolutely. So that's the number one connection. So the surgeon should be walking into surgery, knowing that there's a high level of trust and connection between he or she the surgeon and every single person in that room playing a different role. Number two is you need to provide clarity. Yeah, uncertainty is kryptonite to the human brain. Because the main job of our brain in all of its complexity and all this stuff, we don't know about it yet. What we do know is Its job is to keep us alive. Right? That's why when we receive stimulus, the first place it goes to is our threat response. And so what it's doing is it's always trying to predict the environment we're walking in To be safe or not, so it can prepare us. And so, clarity is not a set and forget thing. So clarity. You know, in the chaos of life, if you have a team meeting on a Monday morning with your team, and you don't talk to them till Friday, then you're not providing clarity. And you're not making sure that you're on the same page with people. And then the third one is, my third piece of advice is you have to have a mindset and an obsession with developing capability in your team members. And developing capability, is it making sure that they've got, you know, professional development plans? And that's part of it. But in every single interaction, you have to be asking yourself, How do I develop this person's capability, because what we do know for the last probably decade, in the top five reasons people leave jobs is, is lack of career progression, lack of skill development, lack of all those types of things. And so having a mindset around how do I continue to develop the capability of each of my people every single day, is absolutely critical to building loyalty, creating motivation and creating an environment that I want to actually turn up to, because it's creating value for me, Steve,

Paul Fairweather 26:27

I love those three things. But an understanding you sort of clarified it a little bit earlier, when you said that, you know, for creativity, you need clarity, structure, and boundaries. But you also said that, like uncertainty, uncertainty is a kryptonite. I'm going to take you to task. This is what Chris normally does, he normally takes the guest. Last question.

Chris Meredith 26:50

For you right there. Yeah. You know,

Paul Fairweather 26:52

in creativity. You know, we've had a lot of neuroscientists, I think, that basically, you know, to come up with a credit solution, you have to be in uncertainty, that for a period of time. And so and I think this is,

you know, it's a dichotomy, you know, it is a conflicting thing, because, you know, people want clarity, you know, but at the same time, if we want people to be creative, we've got to actually put them into a level of uncertainty, which comes with an anxiety that's part and parcel with stepping into the unknown. So, and you've mentioned creativity quite a few times. How do you think that that fits that thing of the creative process where you have to be anxious?

Steve Sharp 27:32

Yeah. So, when I talk about uncertainty, it's not necessarily about uncertainty of the future, in terms of if I'm, if I'm in, in banking, and the markets are going pear shaped, or I'm in construction and other construction companies are folding? And what are we going to do about it? That's, that's the level of uncertainty. And I think you do need that to really push the thinking of people and really start to come up with creative solutions to, to today's problems, where we don't know the answer, where I'm talking about uncertainty is in the tribal myths of human behavior. And what I mean by that is, is if I'm not clear on the, on the standards and the behaviors, and what's acceptable, and what's not, in my team environment, that I'm going to be, my brain is going to be more worried about that, than me using my prefrontal cortex to solve problems that no one knows the answer to. And so let me give you an example of that. If there aren't clear, clear boundaries and standards around how we operate as a team, and I have a leader, that's my best mate on Monday, quite aggressive and frustrated on Tuesday, a sad, passive aggressive person on Wednesday, and so on and so forth, then, then I'm going to be more concerned about what I'm getting from here, he or she, today than I am about solving the problem that we need to solve, it's going to save the company or make billions of bucks. And so creating certainty and clarity and boundaries around how we operate as a team, what behaviors are acceptable, what behaviors on how we solve problems, how we deal with conflict, how we debate and get diverse views, how we go about all that, if I know all of that, right? And then I see it and understand it. I don't have to worry about it. So I focus on the problem we're trying to solve versus whether Mary's going to embarrass me in this meeting or not, because she did last time, and we haven't resolved that conflict.

Paul Fairweather 29:49

Yeah, that's great. Actually, that makes a lot of sense. And thanks for clarifying that. Actually, I just wanted to share a little tour a few years ago. From a mob in New York called SYPartners. It's called the judo Judo Judo tool. And so what it's like it's like a flower. And there's a, you know, I think at the center, and then a series of lines that go out, and a series of circles outside. And what everyone does is puts themselves in the middle, and then each one of their team members on the outside. And then you look at each one of those lines. And if it's broken, it's a broken line. If it's good, it's single. And if it's great, it's a double line. Yeah. And the job of every person is to make all their lines, at least, at least single, single, if not double down, which I think is what you were talking about. It's about that one to one connection, because we think of teams, as under six soccer teams, you know, where they're all, you know, moving together on the field, but in reality, you know, a proper team spreads out. And it's all about passing to individuals. And so it's that connection. So I love that insight that number one is really strong for me.

Chris Meredith 30:56

Yeah, Effective. Very interesting is that, Steve, you talked. I think it makes perfect sense that if people have connections, if they have a sense of bonding between them, and they trust each other, then it's

okay to experiment. It's okay to problem solve, go. There's a very interesting moment, before we pressed the cord on this exact recording, I think you and Paul were chatting, it turns out, you happen to go to the same school together. And I think it's really interesting that that wasn't planned, it just happened that you came on with a call a bit early in this conversation. And in a way that sort of set the tone for this whole conversation, that accidental piece of bonding made, if we just dived into the recording may be going So Steven, you'll see these, we will be having a very different kind of chat. And so it just endorses that this happens in strange and subtle ways, this idea of connection. And it's not something you can overlook,

Steve Sharp 31:48

you know, and it's a shared experience. And that's what he knows, with all of the programs that I run on, on workplace environments, and team development. One of the most critical aspects is providing, providing people with shared experience inside experiential activities. So when I run a leadership retreat, I put people through a high ropes course, or a ridiculous orienteering thing through the bush, or something, something that's quite challenging that forces people into a team environment and solve problems. And invariably, the thing that they talk about the most of the feedback I get the most from those types of experiences is, is I feel part of a tribe now. And I, we all went, we all did the high ropes course where, you know, we're all crapping out DAX and we encouraged us to get through it. I mean, I had one where the people who were on the retreat didn't really know each other at the beginning. Right, and we're hugging each other and, and making plays to catch up and all those types of things. Because, because they had a really quite an intense and stressful shared experience, which binds people together.

Chris Meredith 33:13

And is that important that that's intense and strange is that I believe exact is a very similar story. In my own experience, we went through quite an adversity together. And we came out as a strong tribe, is that important? In other words, you can't just have a Monday morning weekend. So what did you do on the weekend? Very interesting. Now, let's get down to business. That doesn't count. You actually have to put yourself out there a bit. Is that true?

Steve Sharp 33:36

Yes. Yes, I think leadership is creating opportunities for your people to test themselves in a team environment. And when I look back at all the great experiences that I had throughout my career, my most fondest is where I found myself in a leadership position, in a bit of chaos, or in a bit of crisis, with a problem to solve. And, we did it as a team, which then creates opportunities to celebrate and recognize each other. And all those types of things, which from a neuroscience perspective, creates the shots of dopamine. And our brain loves reward systems. And so if we're, if we're providing environments where there's dopamine shots, constantly, then naturally biologically we're going to be drawn back to that environment because it feels good.

Chris Meredith 34:37

So I think that's really important. The metaphoric figure was the Caliph. The sergeant may have never been in the armed services, by the way, but the sergeant at the one pushing the squad says, you know, we can do this a bit faster. We get to stick together even though there's somebody lagging behind that it

will be some pain on the way but you're going to come out super fit, high performance people as I'm thinking about that for the point of view of a business leader that it await the promise is, I am going to stress you a bit, I am going to push you a bit. But that journey is worse if we just get by if we do, okay, that ain't gonna give you the boat we shot that's not going to build us as a team. Yeah, it's

Steve Sharp 35:19

an it's an interaction, because, you know, leaders can build very psychologically safe environments. And people love them because they don't have to do anything. I love coming to work, Mike, I have the greatest leader, and I love my team and everything. And it's so good because we don't have to do anything. Yeah, that's called comfortable. That's not going to win any race. And so it's about Yeah, as a leader is how do you create an environment where there's high psych safety and high accountability? Yeah, where people are holding each other accountable. Yeah, and there is stress, there is stress. And we, we don't we humans, don't get anything done without stress. Yeah, we have to feel a sense of stress, and it's a bit of a challenge for us to get out of it. And, to do anything, behavior change is so difficult, because, you know, it forces us into stress, but as a leader, one of the signs I have is that your positivity attracts potential. And so and what I mean by that is, I mean, not toxic positivity, not coming into work, skipping every day and saying why you will, maybe you should be so grateful, because the life is beautiful, and not having any anchoring to reality. But productive positivity is, when there is stress, when there is chaos, and people are starting to go into negative emotion, which is a threat response. It's saying, hey, hey, guys, I know it's tough at the moment, empathy. I know, it's tough, it's frustrating the hell out of May, we could sit around for an hour, or 20 minutes and talk about it, and it will still be the same, or it's one o'clock in the afternoon. Why don't we think about the three things that we need to get done between now and 5pm. So we can go home to our families, feeling like we achieved what we needed to achieve in the context of today. Productive positivity.

Paul Fairweather 37:10

Fantastic, Steve, I'm, I'm a little bit stressed. Because we've got, I've got to bring this to a close unfortunately. But you know, we tick those boxes. And I can, I can close this by knowing that we've got seven amazing insights and stories out of you. So just before we do close, is there any sort of final word that you'd like to give our listeners, as, you know, one tip on whatever it might be?

Steve Sharp 37:40

My one tip is to always start at the foundation. And that's, and that's connection, analyze, and assess the connection you have between the people that you need for you for yourself to be successful, whether that's at work or at home. And if and if there's an issue with those connections, then you must act, you have to do something about it. Because even if the issue is small, now, if you do nothing about it, the issue will grow. And so now, foster your connections, nurture your connections, and have that as a priority as a human being in any facet of life.

Chris Meredith 38:21

Steve, you've helped me reframe this whole podcast that we can put ourselves under a bit of pressure for 30 minutes to get insights about creativity and the workplace. We've, I think we've achieved more than the three things that we think brilliant chatting to you. Thank you so much.



Steve Sharp 38:37

Thank you. And I feel privileged to be on the podcast. So thanks for the invite, Chris and Paul, love your work.

Paul Fairweather 38:44

Fantastic. It was great to have you and great to make that connection. Should I say? Well, there you go, Chris. And yeah, looking at my job, I must say that we were at the same school for two years, or 20 years. Sorry, apart. But yes, we did go to the same school for a period of time.

Chris Meredith 39:05

That's great, that kind of is proof that that connection happens if we didn't plan that, but it was so important to establish that little bond and to build a platform for a break conversation. I learned so much when I learned about the benefits of stress. The quote that kept coming through my mind is that idea of the freedom of a tight brief that if you clearly define what you're trying to achieve, then there's a freedom that unlocks creativity. I think that's a really interesting

Paul Fairweather 39:31

yeah, look, I think you had lots of interesting take outs and, and you know, it isn't unfortunate. This was our full episode. But we do like to keep them around half an hour for you the listener. We know some very famous people that have podcasts up to three hours long. And I'm sure that we could have easily gone for three hours with Steve. He had such great insights into his experiences and his thinking about both paid cultures. And you know, we only really touched on this thing About a hybrid of work from home and so there's so much more there to unpack. So, yeah, it was great to make that connection with Steve. If you enjoyed it, please leave us a rating or review. And more importantly, Chris, what's the other thing that listeners can do for us?

Chris Meredith 40:17

Tell your friends, refer a friend, get them to listen to The Common Creative podcast that helps our guests get the message out there. And it helps spread the word about creativity and work through ideas, stories, and visual cognition. So hope you enjoyed that episode. Please join us for next week's episode of The Common Creative podcast.

Paul Fairweather 40:34

See you then. Ciao.



Steve Sharp (Special Guest)



Paul Fairweather - Co-host



Chris Meredith - Co-host



Two Common Creatives

