

Episode #223

Everything is up for Grabs

Faris Aranki

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[00:00:00] **Susan:** today I am delighted to welcome Faris Aranki to Life Beyond Leading. Beyond Life, beyond the Numbers. Oh my God, I've forgotten the name of my own podcast this morning, today, whatever. Wow. Let's start again.

[00:00:13] **Faris:** Let's start again. Oh, leave this in. It is good material.

[00:00:17] **Susan:** Okay. Welcome, Faris. Thank you for joining me.

[00:00:21] **Faris:** Thank you Susan, Suze as we call, like to call you to leading beyond the numbers or life beyond the numbers, anything to do with numbers and going beyond.

[00:00:32] **Susan:** Yeah, exactly. Yeah. it does get a little confusing at times, but, I suppose it all falls under the umbrella of beyond the numbers. And one of the things I love about what we are going to get into later today, not that much later, is an equation, but I'm gonna come to that a bit later because.

I'd really like to unpick something that I'm very curious about, which is your background because you've been a teacher, a strategist, and now a founder of your own business, and through all of those different aspects of work, what surprises you the most about people?

[00:01:23] **Faris:** Oh, where do you start with people? what surprises me the most about people is their capacity to, Get stuck in their own self-belief. But the flip side of that is their ability to think beyond themselves once they hit that trough. and what I mean by that is. so many people, which they need to have just a frame of reference that they're right and don't want to be, displaced from that position.

when I was a school teacher, it was the kids who would walk into the classroom going, not necessarily I know this, but you will never teach me. because I used to teach maths, Susan, and there were kids out there and quite a lot of kids, about a quarter, I'd say, of every class I ever taught where they would walk in on day one and go, there is absolutely no chance you can teach me this subject. I'm terrible at it. I hate it. I, and there was like, almost like you had to get through that layer first before they'd even allow you to teach them. And then as I moved into the business world and working more with adults, it's actually people who are



overly confident and say, no, this is the way to do it. This is the way we've always done it. and they weren't even initially, listen to another, option. And so it's that need to defrost them, before you can, pitch something new at them.

[00:02:44] **Susan:** I love that and it echoes something I heard earlier today actually about, Somebody asking someone, what's wrong with me? How do you fix me? and the person's like, there's nothing wrong with you. The only people I ever worry about who come in front of me are the people who are stuck. So I find that quite amazing that's what you mentioned today and the different ways we can be stuck.

How we like as kids coming in, going, you can't teach me maths.

[00:03:13] **Faris:** Yeah.

[00:03:14] **Susan:** And then adults, there's no other way to do this. This is the only way.

[00:03:19] **Faris:** There's two ends of the pendulum, but it's fundamentally comes back to the same thing. A fixed belief system.

[00:03:24] **Susan:** It doesn't it? And when that gets disrupted, everything's up for grabs.

[00:03:31] **Faris:** Yeah. It's, yeah, it's a much, it's a discomfoting place to be, but it is a ultimately, a much more rewarding place to be.

[00:03:40] **Susan:** Now you have, I'm gonna do my best to pronounce this.

[00:03:44] **Faris:** Yes.

[00:03:46] **Susan:** She ato Or she? Ato?

[00:03:49] **Faris:** shiageto

[00:03:50] **Susan:** shiageto. Okay. Explain.

[00:03:54] **Faris:** Okay. So the name of my company is shiageto, which is a Japanese word, and it's the Japanese word for a sharpening stone. So if ever you have had a dull knife or blade or a pair of scissors, you may have used a shiageto to sharpen it. It's like a wet stone. actually in Japanese culture it is the wet stone you use for the sharpest finish, on your finest blades. in Japanese culture, they have six types of wetstone. and the shiageto is the finest finish at the end. so I was looking for a name for my company that sort of gave a good metaphor of what we do, which is we go in and sharpen the teams and their thinking. and



so I was looking for something that, wasn't just calling it a sharpening stone, and I stumbled across this kind of culture and mythology from Japan.

I actually lost about half a day of my life 'cause there's whole websites dedicated to this. and I just feel seemed very apt and a fantastic name for the company.

[00:04:54] **Susan:** I can guess, and I've obviously looked at your website, so have an idea what it's about, but maybe a little bit more what does sharpening look like when you say, I'm gonna sharpen the team?

[00:05:05] **Faris:** Sharpen the team. So if we go back to that permafrost, that sort of defrost everyone, when they, come together as a team could, are not necessarily thinking their best. And I'm not saying on an individual, I'm saying the team doesn't bring its best thinking into every room. The team doesn't bring its best collaboration into every room. The team doesn't bring its best focus into every room.

And even if you can improve each of those degrees by one or 2%, the impact to that team performance is phenomenal. Okay. So instead of them just generating three ideas, that all came from the boss, for example, as often happens in teams with over dominant bosses. How about you unlock three ideas out of every member of that team? Suddenly you've got 10 times the amount of, thinking in that room. How about in people? Instead of when somebody suggests something, everyone politely nods and shrugs their shoulders, but never commits it. You have people actually enthusiastic and asking questions, right? How about instead of stretching themselves across 10 objectives, they just decide to only do three and do them better? so that's the kind of challenge and sharpening that we do in teams. It's stuff that just happens. It's not that anyone intentionally goes, I want to become a duller blade, but through tiredness, through fatigue, through other biases, we don't always bring our a hundred percent sharpness into a room, and it's very hard spot that in yourself. So having an independent in the room to challenge you and bring that out is this service that we provide.

[00:06:31] **Susan:** I'm thinking about people coming in who may consider themselves. You are coming in and this team may consider themselves to be sharp, like they're at their best and you know that they're not because like you say there's always room, isn't there? There is always room. And we get stuck in ways even if we're not stuck.

Stuck, we get comfortable in positions and in pecking orders and whatever. So what resistance do you meet when people, yeah. Okay.

[00:07:04] **Faris:** Loads, loads of resistance. As human beings, we are great at resisting ideas. We are great at resisting somebody else's opinion, and sometimes we should. I remember from my first job, Susan, my first job as a consultant, not my first job as a teacher. one of my bosses gave me this slide that I still use today. And on the title of the slide was 28 Ways



People Say No Without saying No. Okay. And these are common phrases you'll hear, not just in boardrooms, but you'll

[00:07:32] **Susan:** SI

[00:07:32] **Faris:** Yeah. Very British. You'll hear from people around you, oh, that's a fantastic idea. We tried it last year. Okay. Oh, that's great, but it won't work here. Yeah. that's great, but we don't have enough, time, or money to give it a go, right? They're just polite ways, but ultimately all flows back to just providing resistance to another person's idea. Okay.

And I face that every day I walk into rooms. I faced it with those kids who told me they couldn't learn maths. So the great thing is because I learn on those kids who were very challenging, I learn a whole range of techniques to overcome that resistance. And that's what I walk in and just naturally using rooms. And lo and behold, most of them, 99% of them do not involve confronting the person. Because if someone is pushing a you push, it's just two rams butting heads.

so by far simpler is changing the point of the conversation, is, always try and pull them into your world rather than push them across, into your world.

[00:08:30] **Susan:** it's very hard to convince anyone of anything anyway, isn't it?

it is, But everybody, what I always advocate is if you can work out another human being's, WMS and whammies. Have you heard those phrases? It's been a long time, so I'm definitely gonna need a reminder. And I'm not sure I've heard whammies, but I've heard the Ws.

[00:08:51] **Faris:** wms. WMS stands for what's in it for me, and Whammy stands for what's against my interest. The beauty about another person is they will tell you this information. If you create a nice environment and you ask 'em the right questions, they'll leak it out either directly or indirectly.

I want to leave by 5:00 PM Okay, that's a, both a with them and a whim. make sure I leave by 5:00 PM if I'm out of here after 5:00 PM I'm gonna start to get angry. I really love football. I'm really focused on my promotion. So by understanding these, that's the way to get through to them.

So if I roll back to those kids who would resist, the first question I'd say, instead of, why do you not like maths? I say, what do you like? Oh, I love football, sir. I love this TV program. Alright, we're not gonna study maths. When you're in my classroom, you're gonna count corners and how many times that player kicked a ball.



Just turns out that's maths, by the way. every time you talk to me, we're gonna talk in football language because that's what's in it for you. listen for the cues people give you, and you can become infinitely more powerful, more, of an influencer. and so that's what I'm always listening for in rooms.

[00:09:56] **Susan:** Influencer. Yeah, but also I think someone who people respond to and connect with because you are trying to relate on a human to human level as opposed to, I'm the expert coming in to help you here, and I know best.

[00:10:14] **Faris:** Yeah. Yeah, it, and it's so funny, recently, IWI went to deliver a guest lecture at a university, to their, master's students all around strategy. Now it was a three hour lecture and me being me, I made it very interactive.

So we had everyone playing games, doing stuff, all to learn about strategy. By the end of the three hours there worded spread, and there were eight professors who'd come from other lectures to sit and listen and watch. And at the end I had a q and a with the professors. One of them said, it was very interesting how you asked them so many questions.

Instead of them asking you the question, why did you do that? And I, in my head, I said, that's how you engage someone. That's how they feel like they have ownership. That, and not saying I'm the expert necessarily in the room. and I was vastly surprised that these professors were.

Not aware of these sort of, learning techniques and engagement techniques and deep down I was like, oh my God, imagine sitting through a three hour one of their lectures. That sounds incredibly boring to me. But just the basics of human behaviors. we all would get bored sitting, listening to three hours.

So make it fun, make it engaging. There's more likely to retain the information.

[00:11:26] **Susan:** Absolutely. And but I suppose, isn't that what a lecture is? It's somebody speaking at you

[00:11:33] **Faris:** Yeah.

[00:11:34] **Susan:** and so in a way it's not really their fault, is it? again, they've got into a way of doing things and it's about imparting their knowledge and that's the way they see it. and it's really interesting to disrupt that.

And can you imagine how much more innovative people might be if that way of teaching was disrupted? Actually.



[00:11:57] **Faris:** Oh, infinitely. Yeah. Yeah. we need to make teaching of anything, not just in universities, more engaging, more approachable, Otherwise, we are setting the learners up for failure.

[00:12:08] **Susan:** Totally, which then has an impact, doesn't it, on the workplace, because it's very easy then to go into a workplace and let the boss or the team leader dominate. Because that's what you're used to. That's the model you've come through.

[00:12:23] **Faris:** yeah.

[00:12:25] **Susan:** so your formula

[00:12:27] **Faris:** Yes. The

[00:12:28] **Susan:** to earlier, which is iq, multiplied by eq, multiplied by fq.

[00:12:37] **Faris:** yes.

[00:12:38] **Susan:** I'm gonna let you, I think people probably know what they all are. The only one for me that I hadn't come across before was fq.

[00:12:44] **Faris:** Yes. and, yeah.

[00:12:46] **Susan:** Yeah, let's start with

[00:12:47] **Faris:** Let's start with fq. Most people wouldn't have heard of fq. I actually own the trademark, in a couple of geographies on fq. because when I was trying to codify, and I'm just gonna say the full equation, which is success. Equals IQ times. EQ times, fq. Now I'm a former maths teacher, so I love her an equation. It's not a real equation as I should point out.

But basically what I was trying to codify was my 20 years of working with companies on strategy and trying to define what made the, the difference to the successful ones versus the ones that failed to deliver on their strategy.

And invariably I started with, you need a good strategy. Okay. And that was the IQ part. Very easy, and that's where most people start. I really need a good idea, right? I want to lose weight. I need the best idea of how to lose weight, right? Not just the first idea. I need. The best idea. Is it go to the gym? is it go on a diet? Is it take the injection, whatever, right? Those are all ideas, but you pick one, that's your strategy. But I've seen loads of companies with great strategies do absolutely nothing. In fact, I've written hundreds of strategies for companies when I worked in Strat houses and McKinsey and, BCG. And I would write



strategies, I would lead teams writing strategies only to watch the clients never do them. So I was like, there must be something else.

And then that's when I realized, it's the EQ element. You can have a great strategy, but if they're not bought into it, if you can't take others with you on the journey that's have high emotional intelligence, then it doesn't matter how good your piece of paper is. and so then I started looking like at the companies that had good eq, but yet they still weren't always successful and they weren't always living.

And that's when I codified this final element, which was actually the most successful companies have those first two components, but are hyperfocused. They're not out there trying to achieve a hundred things. They're trying to achieve one or two things. They, everyone in the company, from the CEO down to the shop floor knows exactly what their task is and how it flows into their goal. People don't just come to meetings because we've always had this meeting. If this meeting's not contributing to that output, we don't have the meeting. and it's just almost refreshing.

So that's when I started to codify this fq and I needed a word and I needed, at the time I hadn't got those languages of the cues, but I played around with it a bit like shiageto. And I came up with this equation and, lo and behold, I didn't really understand the power of it at the time, but it gave a really simple way to go into a company and say. It's not like you're doing anything wrong, but imagine you're a tripod. In your company this leg is incredibly long, whereas the other two are quite short, and your tripod will never be firm until you stir up. But your natural inclination when you face a problem is to double down on the strength that you have. So if you're a smart person, you'll throw more IQ at it. If you're a super sociable person, you'll throw more social skills at it. If you're a super focused project manager, you'll just beat everyone up to the, but you need all three. That's why the multipliers are,

[00:15:56] **Susan:** And in a room, typically Faris. Obviously everywhere is different. the kind of pro ratta of each of those things? when people come into a room, can they see it? Do people have all three? Are they tunnel visioned with one? Do you know what I mean?

[00:16:20] **Faris:** I, and, individuals have a preference. Yeah. Think you think of all the people you've ever met in your life. They're super technical, smart person. It's high, the, they're really gregarious. And then companies pick up cultures. They have a dominant trend usually set by the highest proportion of those people, but actually it's usually set by the leadership and they hire in their like, and, but so it is very interesting, but if I look at it from our point of view as a firm where we are asked to deliver the most work, 70% of our work is in the EQ domain.

[00:16:49] **Susan:** Really.



[00:16:50] **Faris:** and that may be because of who we attract and to need, but we work with clients who are highly, have great ideas. In fact, they don't need ideas from us. In my old life, I used to be the ideas person. I pride in myself. It turns out these companies have great smart thinkers, but invariably what they're missing is that collaboration, that knitting and it, their team may be strong. Often that's the case, but they're not working across departments. Silos are formed. the CEO has lost touch with the shop floor and so they're no longer inspired by him or, so it is there that we go into battle and there that we have to help them overcome their challenges.

[00:17:34] **Susan:** I'm thinking of that Meatloaf song, two Outta three ain't bad now with the tripod, that's for sure. But in reality, I think of a three-legged stool actually, when you say

[00:17:44] **Faris:** yeah. A ball

[00:17:45] **Susan:** on that yeah. so what do people.

fight against or resist again, there most, because the focus and the intelligence really seem like the pieces we have to have and the rest of it. So how do you demonstrate to people that's the part that's missing? I suppose I, I get the silos and everything, but to

[00:18:12] **Faris:** yeah. Yeah. yeah, I always take the simplest approach, right? the shortest path is a straight line. So what's the simplest approach that we will have? The most meaningful is take something that they care about and show the impact on that. So what do I mean by that?

In a company level, they usually have metrics. If it's important, they're measuring it. Okay. And that's usually why we're brought in Something is underperforming. So let's say it's sales or it's costs, right? And I'll say, I'm gonna do some stuff on you and the company. If that metric does not improve, we stop doing it.

But if it does improve, we keep doing it. the direct feedback loop. and so that usually gets the demonstration and the buy-in.

[00:18:58] **Susan:** And of course I was thinking about your formula as well, because if there's a, I know you said it's not real, but if success is those three by each other, if one of those is zero, then effectively the whole thing is

[00:19:10] **Faris:** Exactly. Exactly. That's why I put in the multiply sign rather than an additive sign because I've seen that where they double down, they've got zero people skills across the firm and they just throw more IQ at it. and then they're surprised. and let's be clear, all of them can be improved in any company,



[00:19:27] **Susan:** Of

[00:19:27] **Faris:** but it's about which leg is wobblies.

[00:19:29] **Susan:** Go there first.

And I think what you said there, throw more IQ at it. is it even another one? Is it TQ or sq, which is like systems and technology. Because I think so much of the time, our focus is on getting that better. Still not recognizing that actually it's the interactions between

[00:19:52] **Faris:** A hundred percent. Yeah. Let me tell you a story that will bring that to life and always makes me smile slash sad. So I was talking to a, and this is a lot of how I do my sales. Yeah. or get into a company. I was having coffee with a former client. And I said, how's things going? And after he said, look, we've got this massive problem with our costs, our warehousing. every year, despite my best of efforts, he was head of supply chain. We, we can't get our number of warehouses down and our costs. And I said, that's really strange. I said, what have you done about it? He said, This consulting firm came along and told us it was 'cause of our forecasting model that we were forecasting how many products we had to make each year wrong, and they offered to rebuild it for us. And that sounded, you know, they showed us these great examples. We paid them several million dollars. They did it. It didn't. Improve anything. Okay. And then a about 18 months later, another consulting firm came along and said, oh, it's clearly a problem in your processes around your business. We can redesign all your processes and that's another couple of million dollars. And he said, didn't make a difference.

I said, explain to me what happens when you're deciding how much product to make. And he said, this team here, over here who are the modelers, they crank the handles on the model and it spits out a number and says we need to make a hundred of this product. Then a representative from that team goes and meets a representative from the sales team and says, our model says you need to make a hundred products. do you agree? And the person in the sales team says a hundred products, but in the back of their head, like goes, oh, if I only sell a hundred products, I don't get my bonus this month. I can sell a thousand products. They say in that meeting, and because they're a more dominant, extroverted person, they convince the more introverted sort of analytical person that the number they should sign off on is a thousand. So they go and produce a thousand products, but the actual moder was right. They only sell a hundred. So 900 now need to be stored in a warehouse, and this is happening month on month across all their product lines.

I said, give me two months. I just need to fix a conversation and I will evaporate a lot of that problem. So in two months we worked with the modeling team to teach them how to have a better conversation, and then we worked with the sales team to teach them how to not take it personally if they were challenged, right? They were both EQ ways of approaching the problem. Within two months, the volume started coming down. As the meetings would



go a lot smoother and the people actually built a rapport of, liking each other. And, but the real solution, the real, asset moment was when they started to able to dismantle warehouses and stop paying for the space,

[00:22:27] **Susan:** Absolutely.

[00:22:28] **Faris:** is really what it was about.

[00:22:30] **Susan:** Yeah. And not having all that excess stock sitting around just, yeah. Wow. and it's really simple.

[00:22:38] **Faris:** Yeah.

[00:22:40] **Susan:** So we have a tendency, I'm gonna say to complicate it, but I think we complicate things very easily. But then we think it's complex and there is a difference between those two.

[00:22:55] **Faris:** Yeah,

[00:22:56] **Susan:** And so are people surprised Faris as at how simple it is in the end?

[00:23:02] **Faris:** they are. They almost think you are cheating them, Like it's your, you like you set up this whole complex thing and then you're like some sort of movie like heist. Yeah, because it goes back to that permafrost I took. they are so rigid in their belief that, and their self belief that they thought of everything.

It couldn't possibly be something so simple because they're really intelligent and they would've spotted it. And they would've done something about it. And then for this mystery band to turn up and say a few words, run a couple of workshops, and suddenly they've, that's a, that's quite a blow to your ego as a leader.

[00:23:34] **Susan:** It is, but it's not of course it is. and. I guess it's the curse of knowledge in one

[00:23:40] **Faris:** the curse of knowledge. Yeah.

[00:23:41] **Susan:** there's also what you, in your, the documentation you shared with me, your, let's say, call it a pitch deck or, yeah. in that you had a quote that I actually have in my book,

[00:23:53] **Faris:** Okay.



[00:23:54] **Susan:** which is, when you're inside the bottle or the

[00:23:57] **Faris:** yeah. Yeah.

[00:23:58] **Susan:** see the label.

[00:23:59] **Faris:** rejoin label. Yeah.

[00:24:00] **Susan:** And that's what it's pointing to as well, which again, earlier is a blind spot because that's what I was hearing when you were speaking earlier, and then you mentioned 180 biases,

[00:24:16] **Faris:** Yes,

[00:24:17] **Susan:** like where do we even start then? Because

[00:24:22] **Faris:** we're all screwed.

[00:24:23] **Susan:** Yeah.

[00:24:27] **Faris:** Let's be clear that, yeah, that, so just for the sake at the latest count, there's probably more, at any second, a human being is impacted by at least 180 biases, right? Things like confirmation bias, where we go looking for an answer that we already believe, halo bias, where we tend to, believe people that we like, and their opinion more and variants of this.

Now, obviously these will all come about as survival mechanisms. Life would be so stressful if we had to recreate ideas and, think through everything. A hundred percent. we wouldn't leave our beds basically. So there is obviously a lot of value, but sometimes they can be counterproductive.

I deploy a range of techniques on myself to try and limit these. but, it, yeah, it is far easier having someone else in the room whose sole job is to look for that.

And my dad finds it bonkers. One of my clients. Pays me specifically to just join board meetings. To give it a clean bill of health to, I just sit at the back of the room and if I spot anything, I've been given the right to just stop the meeting and say, you do realize you're about to do group think. You do realize that he just suggested something based on no data whatsoever, and at least three of you agree. Yeah, and some meetings I might say nothing or only one or two sentences. I still get paid. Other meetings, I will just stop. And step in, and these are very senior, very intelligent people, but because they are self-aware, they see



the value in having an independent person who is not focused on the content, but is focused on their behaviors and how they're making a decision.

[00:26:01] **Susan:** And your dad thinks that's bonkers.

[00:26:03] **Faris:** Yes,

[00:26:04] **Susan:** I love that.

[00:26:05] **Faris:** because I'm not cheap to sit in a room. so he's they're paying you what? To just sit there and nod. I'm like,

[00:26:10] **Susan:** But you're not just sitting there and

[00:26:12] **Faris:** I'm not just sitting there and one.

[00:26:15] **Susan:** And, the other thing I find is precision.

[00:26:20] **Faris:** Yeah.

[00:26:20] **Susan:** I think we're very good at speaking quite broadly about things and circling things. And management consultants speak. I'm sure you've had plenty of that in your day and it doesn't really say a lot.

And I find it interesting that people don't realize how imprecise they can be with their language at times, which leads down to group think like you say, or agreeing to things without really understanding what it means.

[00:26:50] **Faris:** And it just naturally happens, doesn't it? Like I said, if we didn't have those shortcuts, we'd be so much slower. I work with a lot of multicultural teams and something I'll do quite early on with them just to highlight this is I'll say, look, I want you all to get a piece of paper. I'm going to say a sentence, and I want you to write down the number that pops into your head. When I say that sentence, it's gonna be a probability. They all say, okay, yeah, no. And they say, I just say to them simply, it's probably gonna rain tomorrow. Can you now write down your piece of paper, what probability you think it's gonna rain?

And if there's eight people in the room, we will get somebody's written zero and someone's written a hundred. Because that's their cultural, some cultures hear the word probably, and it's a definite no. And some, it's a definite. Yeah. And I say to the leader, have you ever used the word probably in this meeting and expected everyone to be on the same page? Well, now you've got a proof that, two people will be diametrically opposed.



And the leader will say to me, how do I counteract that? I say, first of all, sharpen your language, but more importantly, go and check with everyone. What did you just hear? It doesn't matter what you said, it only matters what they heard. And he said, that sounds like a lot of effort. And I said,

[00:28:00] **Susan:** Wow. Yeah. Okay. that's up to them to work out the,

[00:28:04] **Faris:** yeah.

[00:28:04] **Susan:** but I had that with a group that their leader just wanted everything to be good enough. Just give it to me. Good enough. And that was fascinating as well, because there was no shared understanding of what good enough meant. And. I think it's so easy, and this is where the external person really provides such value to people because we don't see stuff like that when we're in it together and even in an organization, we become more and more enmeshed in our own language because we have acronyms and all of these things that don't exist outside of our organizational bubble,

[00:28:51] **Faris:** Yeah.

[00:28:52] **Susan:** and that further dilutes that streamlining for want of a better word.

[00:29:01] **Faris:** Yeah. Yeah, it does. Yeah. that's what I say, all these little things when added together, no wonder it's amazing that we actually get anything done.

[00:29:11] **Susan:** I agree. I agree. I often wonder how we get stuff done at all, and I often think it's kind of like, um. bumper cars, everybody's basically going around and we're not having this huge mesh up in the middle because we're just somehow managing to, to get through and get around. But there's often a big crash and that's where, yeah, someone like you comes in and helps out.

We talked a little bit about the curse of knowledge, the IQ side. my background is in accounting. We talked about people being analytical and the technical side of people's roles, which often becomes a shield as well.

[00:29:56] **Faris:** Yeah.

[00:29:57] **Susan:** how easy or not so easy perhaps, is it to help people? I won't even say dismantle that shield, but it perhaps notice that they don't need to wear it all the time.

[00:30:12] **Faris:** yeah, it can be challenging if you want to dismantle a shield or get someone to put it down for a while. again, the easiest way is to pull, not to push. In my



discovery. So I would never attack the shield. I'd say, Hey, why not, have this sword as well. All right. And then, two weeks later, why not have this, this additional thing?

And soon, their hands will be so full they go. I'll just put the shield down for a minute because you've given me much better things to use, a wrench and a hammer, and a, I, I don't need this shield at the moment. Oh, okay. But I see that's an interesting development. But yeah, everybody is different.

And, some people, you talk about a growth mind. there's this concept of a growth mindset. Some people are more willing embrace new ideas quicker than others. and others will take a long time to get there. I've always believed it's far easier to push on half or open doors.

yeah, push on half open doors rather than try and, I wouldn't start with the sort of triple locked, toughest accountant in the room.

[00:31:13] **Susan:** Even though they have a heart and soul in there somewhere

[00:31:17] **Faris:** Of course they did. Of course they did. And once you get them on sides, oh, sometimes you wanna get, it's like the old in the, in those, in the old Western movies where he'd, the cowboy would walk into the bar and pick the meanest, toughest looking guy and pick a fight with him just to establish, his, credentials and his hierarchy.

So sometimes you do want the sort of most difficult, accountant in the room. Because if you can win them over, then everyone else goes, wow, look at this guy.

[00:31:41] **Susan:** It's going to be like dominoes. Then they're all just going to fall into place

[00:31:44] **Faris:** yeah.

[00:31:46] **Susan:** and, when they're sharpened. So you've come in and you've sharpened this team. Do the levels of honesty

[00:31:54] **Faris:** yes.

[00:31:55] **Susan:** go up amongst people? I wonder, do they actually get to the heart of what's really going on?

[00:32:01] **Faris:** They can do, but two things Susan. One is, as I explain to every team, I'm not a coach, right? So if they enter a room and they are a total jerk, they will leave the room still a jerk. just, while they're in the room, I will have deployed enough techniques that they can't be a jerk while in the room.



Okay. And that's an important distinction because people often go, I then, I then went and joined another team and it was nowhere near as nice as what you've managed to create in this. And I said, yeah, because I was providing a force field to keep you all in check. And, partly 'cause that's my business model that, you need me always in the room. But, to change your underlying behaviors will take way longer. Way, way longer. You do need therapy. You do need. So there's that.

And then the other factor, is that, go back to that concept of sharpening. Every blade becomes duller over time, if it's not kept maintained. So yes, people can get more honest and stuff, but equally they can go back to their old ways as soon as you, you stop. So what's really interesting is I'll often work with a team for two, three months, and then I'll step away for six, 12 months and I'll come back. And, in some cases it'll be like, I was never there. They'll be back to how they used to perform, particularly if new members have joined or new stresses have come into the team. They def their fault to how they acted before or if people leave. And the that memory of, oh, when Ferris came here, you used to do these things with us that disappears and they're surprised. And they said, that, yeah, we all become a bit duller over time.

[00:33:33] **Susan:** Oh yeah. And also it's easier to do what we always did, back to that again, the neuroplasticity is there. So the day I come in that I don't feel the best, I know it'd be great to do what Faris said, but you know what? Today I'm just gonna take my way.

[00:33:48] **Faris:** Yeah. Yeah.

[00:33:49] **Susan:** And college just goes. I don't think anyone intentionally.

I think that's the thing about work, isn't it? People don't intentionally go in to make their day worse or not do their best. It's just that we pick up familiar habits that feel comfortable and often that shift we make once you're not there with them,

[00:34:08] **Faris:** Yeah.

[00:34:09] **Susan:** takes longer.

[00:34:10] **Faris:** Yeah, exactly. and let's be clear players in our own lives. I dunno about you, but I have no willpower.

[00:34:17] **Susan:** It's overrated.

[00:34:19] **Faris:** it's overrated. far more what keeps me in check is having what I call pre decisions, which are basically rules, right? For myself. It makes it so much easier. Just follow the rules that, will mean you do better things like eat healthily, get, do more exercise



because relying on waking up and going, yeah, I'm gonna do this today. Yeah. is a fool's game.

[00:34:40] **Susan:** And also we can only make so many decisions every day before our whole decision making capacity falls apart. No matter how much we think we can, it's just not there. So there are so many ways we can make our own lives easier like that aren't there? seems to me, and this is just from speaking to you, but it seems to me that you love what you do.

I do. Yes. Yes. I often say to people I would be a fool, not to love what I do, considering I gave up a very lucrative job to move towards and do it, But you also gave up a career in teaching. So was there always love of things, did you love being a teacher? Did you love being a.

[00:35:19] **Faris:** I did. I've loved all stages of my grand, and, I always encourage people to find the joy in what they do. And I know that's not always possible, right? but every stage was very enjoyable. Every stage made sense to me at the time. and it was only when looking back, did I see the golden thread, which.

Morphed into the equation effectively. But, in hindsight, it was staring me in the face that all these things were adding had the commonality of how do you overcome resistance and help people be a, slightly better version of themselves. Doesn't matter if it's teaching maths. When I was a, a maths teacher or when I was a consultant to get them to take the medicine that we said they should do, or what I do now that they changed their behaviors.

it's, it is that common thread and that's what I really enjoy. so yeah, very grateful for each of those stages and, I'm sure there'll still be some stages to come.

[00:36:10] **Susan:** Yes. before we got recording. We were talking about the stage of the world

[00:36:14] **Faris:** we were.

[00:36:17] **Susan:** let's hope for all of us Faris, that there will be still stages to come, we really don't know what the future holds, do we? Everything's up for grabs. I.

[00:36:26] **Faris:** Everything is up for grabs. the good thing is the world doesn't care. it'd seen other versions of this before. mother Earth or whatever you like to call it, guy is probably shrugging her shoulders going, those idiots are up to it again. Alright, but of course that, I'm a bit tongue in cheek.

it is a disconcerting time. that's what makes, what I do, even more vital in my head, right? I say to every leader out there, Hey, the one thing you can control is. Your company is, your



team, is your space, your room, and you don't a leader by this, could be, the guy pumping petrol at, at the BP four.

to paraphrase, a great saying, I heard from a guy called John Amci, who is a, a former BA, player, but now he is a, he is also a leadership coach. He said, look, if you just stretch your arms out form a circle, it's about a two meter radius. If you just look after that space and anyone who comes into it make sure it's a great space for them. If everyone in the world did that instantly, it'd be a better place. So yeah, just control what you can. Make it a better place, and it's a good start.

[00:37:33] **Susan:** I love that and we will end there because that is No, it's a perfect way to end an episode and something for people to take away with them that is simple and be. Beautiful and memorable. Faris, if people would like to know more about you, connect with you, what's the best way of doing that?

[00:37:54] **Faris:** So either come and check out shiageto.com. I'm sure we can put the link, and find out a bit more about the company, but far more interesting or, fun, come and find me on LinkedIn. Drop me a message. I do reply to every message I get. And, I also share some little tips on a daily basis around this.

yeah, it'd be great to have a conversation.

[00:38:14] **Susan:** And if you don't go and find him, he may well just come and find you because that's what he did with me and I'm so glad. So thank you for that, has been really enjoyable for me to have that conversation with you today.

[00:38:28] **Faris:** Thank you very much, Susan.

