Marissa Levin (00:02)

Hello everybody and welcome back to Motivational Mondays. I am your host, Marissa Levin, and I am also the Chief Human Resources Officer and Chief Culture Officer of the NSLS. I have had a 35 year entrepreneurial leadership and culture journey, and I am beyond honored to be able to bring this podcast to you as its host. If you've missed some of our last episodes,

you may not be aware that we're changing the format of Motivational Mondays. Our goal is still to share inspiring leadership stories and connect you with incredible authors and experts that have paved the way for all of us regarding culture, leadership, and community building. And we want to continue offering you actionable tips, but we condensed the length of the podcast so that you can get what you need and get on with your day.

At the end of the show, we would love your thoughts, so stick around for a quick survey. So let's jump right into this episode. Today, we have two incredible authors who have teamed up to produce a groundbreaking book on the building of purposeful communities. We have David Homan and Noah Askin, and they are the co-authors of Orchestrating Connection, How to Build Purposeful Community in a Tribal World.

David is the founder and CEO of Orchestrated Connecting, a global community of connectors, as well as Orchestrated Opportunities and SOAR Connect. He's known around the world for his groundbreaking ideas in building purposeful community and in corporate culture. Noah is an organizational sociologist at UC Irvine's Paul Maraj School of Business, where he directs the Leadership Development Institute. He's recognized on the Thinkers 50 radar list

and he is an award-winning teacher and researcher whose work on leadership and culture and creativity has been recognized around the world. Together, they team up to explore how intentional purpose-driven community can transform us on both an organizational and a personal level. Their work highlights the shared values, rituals, and culture that help people feel a sense of belonging while also dialing into their purpose.

So let's dive straight into this episode where David and Noah get to the heart of what is in their book, Orchestrating Connection, How to Build Purposeful Community in a Tribal World.

Noah Askin (02:33)

This is a story we talk about in the book, obviously the power of connecting and connection. And it started in the pandemic. I was living in France. I had two very young children ⁓ when the pandemic hit and basically realized I was not going to get a whole lot of actual work done, but didn't want to feel like I had nothing to contribute to society. And as a professor, we host office hours.

And I thought, you know, I should host open office hours to anybody where everybody's on Zoom or Teams or whatever at this point in 2020. And this can be some small way of connecting with people and helping them out in the midst of the pandemic. And that was just something I posted on LinkedIn, shared with my network. And next thing I knew, I was doing this for like an hour to an hour and a half every Friday and had dozens and now five years later, hundreds of conversations.

And one of the people who noted this was a former MBA student of mine ⁓ named Jamil Winn. And Jamil knew David and saw kind of what I was doing around connecting, around generosity, around trying to help others and was like, ⁓ you should meet this guy, David Holman. ⁓ I think your visions and values around connecting are aligned. And so he made the introduction and David and I connected and started talking about

David's community about the orchestrated connecting community and what he had built and the ethos and practices behind it. And I was like, that's really interesting. Do you have any background in the social science behind what you're doing? And he said, not really. was like, cause there's a lot to support the way you've gone about building your community and the way you look at connecting with others. And you know, that was four and half, five years ago, something like that. And that sort of led to the creation of the book and maybe David, you want to pick it up, pick it up there. ⁓

David Holman (04:19)

I would say Noah probably has the greater expertise in the definition of this than I do. when I'm about specifically speaking to all the listeners here, if you think that you have to achieve success to find connection with somebody, that's actually not the case. You have to build connection with somebody so that when you achieve success, the relationship stays. And there's a difference in how you build it. And so when looking at what your community is, what your network

everyone around you is an opportunity for where you can choose to spend your time or not. And the more you understand that you are advancing yourself and therefore the opportunities for you, for your family, for what comes in your life, the more you'll be out of that predicament of, don't know anyone, how do I get started? More than this understanding that everyone around you has that shared experience of making that investment with you. And it is just invariably the case

that many of the people that individuals meet while going to school end up becoming their closest friend, their confidants. In some cases, it could be somebody you met you had an imprint on and 20 years later you get a call from them because you were valuable to them. And then that's the opportunity you never knew building a relationship could then turn into. But it does, but only if you're not after something that is transactional or temporary.

Noah Askin (05:46)

Yeah, I think just to add to that, so I teach undergrads, I teach a whole course on networks and connecting, I teach a class on leadership, and I think, you know, part of what I view my role in those classes is lowering the bar for what college students feel like they need to be able to bring to the table in order to be able to enter a network or community and recognize, first of all, they all bring something unique to the table, their story, their background.

⁓ whatever it is that got them to where they are, right? Being at a top business school here, like they clearly have something to bring to the table and it's starting to unpack that and identify what that is in themselves first to kind of own their own story. And then it's also recognizing that like their experience, right? A lot of people in the workforce these days out in the world are trying to understand what to make of this generation. What do they want? What are their drivers? What are their motivations?

And because when you're in it, you don't have any concept of like, I bring this unique perspective to the table as somebody who is about to graduate college and has a different set of wants and desires and maybe interests and purpose that motivate me. And that's something that I can share right out of the gates. So there already are things that college students and beyond can bring to the table from that perspective. But it's also, to David's point, like recognizing that just establishing those relationships now

and understanding that people get that you're not necessarily going to bring every amazing introduction to the table when you're 22 years old, but that you are, you know, there's, are potential, right? And in addition to what you, your story, you are offering the fact that down the line, people get that they're investing in relationships that will eventually come to have lots more meaning.

David Holman (07:33)

Yeah, so two different points to make with that, because the people who are unsure how to activate themselves and the people whose social dynamics mean they have to learn more of how to be out there. Either one is erased when you have purpose and you understand your value, regardless of how people respond to you. And so it's not about the circumstance, right? Do you contact people cold? Do you go to conferences? Do you try to bring people together?

It's the fact that you need to work to state your intentions. You need to see if other people can champion you as you champion them. And then the environments in which you do that are utility of being much more content with taking that risk to go out there, to take that purpose and to not, you might care, right? I care that anytime somebody says my events aren't great, they don't like my network, but I get it less and less because I spend my time.

embodying the two principles that Noah and I believe are key to that type of interaction, which is to be inherently curious of other people. And then talking about the brand, a brand presents half the story of what connection is, the half the story we believe that is as authentic and more necessary as the vulnerable side to it. And when you can embrace both without the fear of that rejection, because you'll get it anyway,

You have a different recipe of what it means to put yourself out there, whether you're an introvert, an extrovert, socially anxious, or you think you're the life of the party, but you've never offered substance till now, and therefore you haven't had depth till you pause to go. I might be that all star ex or that master convener, but really, my mom's been sick. I don't tell anyone about it. But I'm going to tell you now. And then you say to me, well, actually, my parents are getting old too.

And suddenly, it's not just about the impression or the brand. You suddenly have depth, which you cannot buy. You cannot orchestrate. You just have to connect with intent just for that moment, for that interaction.

Marissa Levin (09:44)

That's it for Motivational Mondays. I hope you enjoyed learning from David and Noah on what it means to create an intentional purpose community and you're feeling just as inspired as I am. I hope you're ready to take on the week with fresh energy and purpose. As we build out this new chapter of the podcast, it is very important to us that we get your feedback on what works and what doesn't work.

Let us know the type of content that you want, the type of guests you want to hear from. Let us know what matters most to you. So we've put together a super short survey that you can complete and the link is in the bottom of the description. Or you can visit nsls.org backslash mm dash survey and that will take it to you as well. Thanks so much for listening and being a part of the NSLS community. I am Marissa Levin.

and I will see you soon.