

## Something Extra EP 029 – Carla D Bailey

**Lisa Nichols:** I am thrilled to have Carla D Bailey on the show today. Carla is a senior leader of learning and organizational development at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

I'm just so excited today, I think you and I, we met recently, we were both on a speaker panel at ON but there was an instantaneous connection, with the two of us. We are cut from the same cloth. I've got to have Carla on the podcast and I'm so excited just to have you here today and just for your wisdom to go out to our listeners, and so thank you so much for making the time.

**Carla D Bailey:** Well with that, First of all, I would say You're welcome and say Thank you, I feel very honored and privileged to be here today to spend time with you and as well as with your listeners and to share.

**Nichols:** We've got a lot of things to talk about, so I just want to jump in. Can you talk to us a little bit about your growing up?

**Bailey:** Yeah, so a pretty standard childhood. I am from a family of three siblings. I'm the youngest and the only daughter... You noticed I said youngest and not baby. Youngest of three. I have two older brothers. My brother lives in Dallas, and he is an entrepreneur as well doing very well, and just did a recent start think competition and who is thriving in economic development. And my oldest brother is in the south and he has a chain of grocery stores in the south, and so we come from parents who've been married 52 years and so, growing up were very family-oriented, very close. I love my brothers, but I have to tell you one secret, I would beg my parents, for a sister.

My parents would often tell me that it just wasn't God's will. They never did anything to prevent getting pregnant after me, It just never happened. I used to put my hand on my hips as a little girl and I would say, "You know what dad, after I graduate from college, I'm going to get married, and I'm going to have two boys and two girls and... Well, I can tell you today, I am married after graduating from college, but my husband and I only have two, we have a son in a daughter. And so my father often says... Where's the other two?"

**Nichols:** Well, you know what, I'm laughing because I'm thinking you got a lot of sisters. Yeah, you've got a lot of sisters, now, right? And friends, but I hear you. I grew up an only child and I will tell you, I used to tell my mom and dad, "I want an older brother that's all I want. It was an older brother". They couldn't really do anything about it then. Yeah, but that's a great story.

Well, so you've had quite an amazing journey and you've been an entrepreneur yourself and now you're at WashU and talk to us a little bit about how you got into education leadership and performance management and organizational development and all the things that you're doing?

**Bailey:** I can tell you while I have been very fortunate or very blessed to have a very successful career in corporate America, in the area of human resources and organizational development, what many people don't know about me is that I really wanted to be a big Broadway star. In high school I did a lot of theater, I was a big thespian and show choir, and so I changed my major sophomore year in high school and start more of a business focus but my love for leadership development really started when I was 15 years old, so my parents in high school really didn't want me to have a job or really to focus on education and maybe community service.

So, one of the things they did allow me to do list to be a candy stripper, at Barnes Hospital. So at the ripe age of 15, again, I had the one of a privilege would be in candy stripper. My very first assignment as a candy stripper, was to work the courtesy card. And for those of you that may not be familiar what a courtesy card is, it's a huge card that you would go to the gift shop every morning, fill it up with all type of goodies and toiletries and then you would take that cart from floor to floor visiting the patients that were unable to leave their rooms and go to the gift shop. And so a little bit of that job description to was to add joy into their day.

I so enjoyed doing it and I did that for about four months but then I've always been a very ambitious and very driven young lady even from a child, my parents would tell you. And so I went to the Director of Volunteer Services and I had a conversation one day, and I said, "You know, I really enjoyed adding cheer to the patient in the hospital, I said, but I know there has to be more...

What else is there for me to learn and to explore? And she says to me, Okay, Little Miss ambitious. I'll get back to you. And so she came back to me on a Friday, and she handed me an envelope with the information of where I was to report on that following Monday. To my surprise, I get home and I read the information, the assignment and it's a report to the human resources

department at Barnes Hospital. So I went there, and at the time the person who was the VP of Human Resources, was a lady by the name of Bobby Wiggins.

Bobby Wiggins set me down before she proceeded to tell me what to do and she kind of talked to me about why is it that I want this new assignment. And so, when I got finished, she says, Yeah, I hear your name is Little Miss ambitious. So, here's what you're going to do, when you're filing you're not just going to buy a papers but you're going to pay attention to what you're filling. She would say things like, when you are with me, you're going to pay attention and make notes and then anything that I do from your observation we'll debrief and you talk about it. So I would often go and sit in with her at the age of 15, when she would do coaching sessions or consultation with leaders and talking about their particular leadership style, maybe when they were leading ineffectively, I would sit in on meetings with her. When employees we come in and say that they were experiencing the treatment of poor consequences of ineffective leadership and how they were being treated unfairly by their leadership.

I sat in on training classes with her and my parents, they were really big about us being readers and so at home. I was reading all these leadership books as a child. I was reading things like John Maxwell, Today Matters, or was reading other things like some of the Covey books as well. And so the seven habits of highly effective people.

I would go and discuss some of the insights that I would gather from the book with the director, Bobby Wiggins and she would say, "Yeah you're really taking a liking for this leadership thing. And I did, and ever since then, from just her serving as my personal mentor, at 15 me reading the leadership books I become a student of leadership. Every sense and I knew one day that if I did not go to Broadway that I would spend my time holding some senior level leadership position within some corporation really helping leaders to lead effectively and being an advocate for employees fighting for their fair equal treatment. And I can tell you that's what I've been blessed to do. My 20 plus years of my career, I've really dedicated myself to being a student at leadership and really coming alongside and partnering with leaders to help them to be more influential and to build powerful relationships.

**Nichols:** There's just one thing missing, your passion. If you could just be a little bit more passionate about this subject. I can just see the passion all over you.

Well, there's so much packed into that story that you just told us. The first observation that I have is you did not wait for somebody to come and tap you on the shoulder and say, Hey, I've

got something else here for you. You went and said, hey this candy-striping. I've loved this. I've loved bringing joy to the patients, but I know there's got to be more... So you raise your hand.

That's the first thing I noticed. And then the second thing, Bobby Wiggins, took the time that was necessary to bring you into situations so that you could learn. I love what you told... You don't just go file this paper want you to read it, I want you to understand what is it that you're actually filling? And I'm just thinking as leaders, we need to constantly be looking for those people that we can bring under our wing and do the same thing.

You need to have eyes that are wide open so that you can see those ambitious people because boy, there's just no substitute for that when you have somebody that is eager to learn and eager to grow, there's no substitute for that.

**Bailey:** I believe that as a leader that's part of what we're called to do is to help others rise higher and oftentimes we see things in people that they have not yet seen in themselves. And so, the unrealized potential or what I often refer to as greatness untapped, How do we help people to take their inner greatness from untapped to unleashed and help them to live an unstoppable life whether that's personally or professionally, but yes, helping them to have initiative, to helping them to stay curious and wanting to do and be more as well.

**Nichols:** Yeah, I just love that. So you became a leader but then what I see you doing, you're taking it a step further and your growing leaders I do that your whole career, that's wonderful. Well talk to us a little bit. Now you're at Washington University, you've been there for several years now.

Tell us a little bit about your role there, tell us about your role, and you and I have had a few conversations even about some conversations you've had recently about preparedness, and I would love for you to tell our listeners a little bit more about that.

**Bailey:** In 2014, I decided, in addition to running my own company, is to join Washington University and I joined as their leader of learning and organizational development and I get the wonderful privilege of not only setting the strategic direction for leadership development for the university, but also, what I'm most proud of is the team that I lead. I always tell people that I lead a team very talented, very passionate and high-performing learning and development professionals and I could not do what I do without them, and so I give them a opportunity to really unleash their greatness to... And so, really rise the occasion. Exposure. And so I give

them a lot of opportunities to show initiative, and to do some things that maybe not be in their job description, but really to help them grow outside of their scope. And we talked about the conversation you noted about readiness and preparedness.

One of the things you find sometimes but something so simple as your resume. And so one of the members, professionals on my team is my career development coach, and we were just having discussion lately about some of the clients that she's been seen internally, and they are getting ready to apply for other positions within the university, but the issue they're running into is that they want this quick turnaround, on their resume. Some of them unfortunately have not updated the resume for at least 20 years that, sad to say, and we were talking about the importance of staying ready. And if you stay ready, you don't have to get ready. And so, really being a savvy professional making sure that you keep that credentials like your resume and your portfolio updated more recently. Some people say even anywhere from three to six months, because you should be ever-changing, ever-updating. You should be updating with your latest achievements and accomplishments. And making sure that when an opportunity comes that you don't have to hurry up and get ready, but that you're already ready. And we talked about one of our favorite quotes is that when preparation meets opportunity that you're ready to step into that next opportunity and level.

**Nichols:** I had an old boss that would always say one of his favorite sayings was failing to prepare is preparing to fail. I've always loved that quote as well, but it's so true, we've got to... You may not be thinking Okay, it's important for me to grow in this area, right now, but it really is because when that opportunity comes, you want to be ready to step in to that.

**Bailey:** Often time's people feel like if they're not in positions of leadership then they're not a leader and I always tell people Well, I've never met anyone in life who's not a leader, and so they're like, "What do you need? I don't have a position of power. And I was like... Leadership has very little to do with position but everything to do with influence and action. And so each one of us every day throughout the course of our lives, we're influencing other people whether we do it intentionally or unintentionally, for the good or for the bad. We're always influencing people, so that places each one of us in that leadership position. And so I always say you should be leading something. So, I often will say to them, "Do you have a career? And they'll say yes, and I say, "Well you should be leading that career.

So, we really challenge our internal employees at Washington University that they absolutely should be sitting in that leadership seat or that driver seat, that they lead their own career

success. And so you're not waiting for the organization to tell you where you going to go next and to give you your next promotion but you're intentionally sitting in that driver seat with a plan and a strategy of where you want to go and where you want to end up ultimately within the organization as well.

**Nichols:** That is so interesting. I just had a friend reached out to me this morning and she's looking for her next assignment, and it was so interesting how she put this, she said, "You know, I'm creating my job description right now and you hear that sometimes, it's like you create the career that you want, he and you're constantly have to work on that, that it's just so interesting. So, you're passionate about helping all people become better leaders, but I know from talking to you, you have a special place in your heart for women. And you have a special place in your heart for younger girls and so for you girls that are sitting out there listening, right now.

Did you hear what Carla said? She started reading leadership books, when she was 15 years old, she is pouring good things into her knowledge base even when she's young. So you're really never too young to start but talk to us a little bit about that. And Carla you and I, I think are very somewhere in this because I have a passion for girls as well.

What are some of the obstacles that you see young women facing today? And then how would you coach them to overcome those obstacles?

**Bailey:** That's a great question, And when you think about the obstacles, especially in today's world, there are so many, I think they face even more so I believe I look at my own childhood and upbringing, I think about my own daughter who's 15 years old today, and she even faced greater challenges, in what I did, I feel like the world is just moving in a much faster pace. They're exposed to so much more because of this world-wide web, social media and the internet. And so the challenges that she's facing today were some of the things that I didn't have to worry about too much.

Maybe older age or... Or maybe not ever sometimes they were so far removed, but now the internet brings everything right to your world, and right in front of you so I would say some of the things they're facing are some of the things that are kind of age-old things that they've been facing, like the worth and value and to believing that they are enough. And one of the things my mother really taught me growing up, and so this has really helped me to be very confident woman, as well, she taught me how to have healthy relationships with other women, and she always told me that if I lift other women up it wouldn't diminish my shine. And so I grew up

always celebrating the other women. So sometimes, you know how other women may be a little bit competitive, or reluctant to say something positive about another woman, even if it's simple about her outfit, or if it's something simple about her skill or something she did well.

So, I'm very liberal and free with my compliments because I feel like that... What other sister or woman needs that? So I would say to you and gross is to believe in yourself, believe that you are enough. And because I am a woman of faith, I love the thing my mother taught me that, Carla you are God approved and He has given you great value that I am God approved and he has given me great value and she would say to me after that. So do you need to seek your value from other things? I said, No, she said, so there's nothing in this world that could give you more value than you already been given when you recreated. There's not a thing, there's not a person and so I find my center in my core to be centered in that Christ approval and worth that He's given me so I don't look for it in validation from things of where I live, my zip code, the education I've obtained or from my job title, I don't look for from other friends, how many friends I may have or may not have, how many people may be in my fan club or not how many likes I get on social media, so I don't have to look forward in superficial things like that because I know where the foundation of my confidence in my value and my worth, really lies, and so that's the message I would say to them today too.

Another thing was affirmations. My mother was really big and so I pass this on to my daughter, and start speaking words of affirmation to say what God says about them, how they were fearfully and wonderfully made, how they can do anything through Christ that curtains then and that there's no weapon that form against them. It's self-prosper. And so, how they're overcomers, so your self-talk.

Often times we listen to what other people say about us, but I tell my daughter, it's not what other people say about you but it's what you say about yourself, it's your own self-talk, because oftentimes, even if it's positive, if I tell you Lisa, that You're wonderful, you're amazing and you're fantastic and phenomenal. But if you don't believe that message yourself, then it's your your self-talk that will win out.

So it's the messages that we tell ourselves. And so, that own positive self-talk that I am enough that I am capable, that I am well-equipped that I am powerful. And so those messages that you tell... And so every day, I often do in some talk, I have young girls to hold up a mirror and to tell them repeat after me and to look in the mirror and say, "I like me, I love being me, I am enough, I am special, I am unique and I celebrate that." So, it's really just that positive talk, and really silencing the voices of the outer critic as well.

**Nichols:** So, Carla, there are 16-000 employees at WashU. Three different campuses that your team is responsible for. I mean, I'm sure that you have seen every level you've seen people that are wanting to grow and people that maybe haven't done too much to grow. How important is it for people to continue to grow themselves, how important is that? And talk to us a little bit about that.

**Bailey:** I think the number one priority is to stay on this path of continuous growth according to research that says that our skills, the skills that you and I have today have a shelf life of two to three years, and some researchers even say, less than that, before they become outdated and so it's very important if we're going to make sure that we keep our professional edge or leadership edge and keep growing and to be marketable and position ourselves for that next level opportunity or promotion that we have to stay in the state of continuous growth and so that learning agility to make sure that we're learning that we're staying relevant to making sure that we are up-skilling are re-tooling and to make sure that we're stepping away from the day-to-day.

I can't tell you so many times, you get into the thick of things. Especially at our medical school campus a lot of times we understand they're around patient care and patient care is very important, but I also say in, oftentimes, you'll find leaders saying, "Well I don't have time to allow people to come away to get learning or to training. And I would say challenge them, I dare that you don't have time not to allow them to step away from the day to day to get that training because I always tell them... People, whether you want either one of two things: They are either leave and quit or they stay and quit, and I don't know about you. But I think the latter is worse. To have people stay because when you see people stay and quit, they may have tenure but if you look through certain pockets throughout the organization you can see very clearly that they've stayed because they have the tenure, but they clearly quit as well, because they're disengaged or they're giving mediocre and average performance at best.

I always say to a leader if you had an opportunity to take that disengaged employee and to re-engage them or to raise their level of productivity, would you be interested? And they were like, Well, did you know that development is a great way to do that? It's a great tool, a resource to be able to re-engage them and to reconnect them and so, sitting down just coaching them and having a conversation about what is it that you're doing that work, when you feel most alive and what is it that you would like to be doing more of in the next one to three to five years.



So, you think about even the millennials, the workforce you... He talks about two in a few years. The majority of the workforce will be Millennials, and so millennials are entering the workplace, with an expectation of wanting to be on a path of continuous growth and development, and so, if that's their expectation, come in to the door and that organization would do well to make sure that they're creating opportunities to keep that motivation, there's nothing worse than going out and recruiting highly talented and skilled, and motivated employees, and bringing them into the organization, just to de-motivate them by not meeting their expectations.

**Nichols:** People can actually die on the vine. And I'm thinking as you're talking about these developmental opportunities are sometimes even if a passion has somewhat subsided you can reignite that in someone if they're learning new things, right? It just keeps us so much more engaged. So the organization has a responsibility.

**Bailey:** Absolutely, it's a shared partnership. So, yes, we said earlier, that the individual sits in that driver seat that they own their own career. I always say you own the career. The company owns the job, but being in that leadership seat, so there's a shared responsibility between three parties, The employee who is driving and leading the career, then you have the manager who is their partner and giving them support and being their success ally and helping them to grow and develop, and creating opportunities for them to do so, within the workplace.

Then you have the organization who's setting up structures of growth opportunities and growth for them, and providing them with the resources and tools that they need to grow. So it's a shared partnership between those three parties and getting people to really think about learning and growth, not just as a training event, but really to create a culture of learning. Sometimes you'll find organizations still treat training as a separate entity as a one-off. So it's a one-time event... Something just happens every now and then. But really, when you have cultures who do it well and created a culture of the learning those companies really have learning that's embedded and integrated into their everyday work life, so it's not just that 10% of that formal learning through workshops and seminars or maybe webinars, or reading a book, but they also really tap into the other 90% of how we, as adults, learn. That 90% is broken down to 70%, it's known as the experiential learning that learning by doing or learning by practice.

Those are things that leaders really have a lot of control or they can control whether someone increases their scope of responsibility or expands a project or they can give them opportunities to lead a special committee or to lead special project they can let them job shadow they can let them do job rotations so those are things that they can do. Oftentimes, what I've run into, "Why

should I develop people, because if I do, they'll leave and I always say, "Well the only thing worse than training people and them leaving is not training, them and them staying."

So, you want to make sure that you're creating these opportunities of growth to keep them again engaged that we talked about, but then also to keep them giving high productivity that you need as well. And then when you do development, it really increases things like retention. And so their loyalty employees who receive development are more prone to stay with an organization longer.

Some managers even say that they're afraid to do it because of, I don't have anywhere to promote them or I can't give them any more money and so I tell them, It's just a simple little shift if you can make the shift from where do you want to be in one to three to five years to where do you want to be doing? So a shift from being to doing and so, you post a question, what is it that you want to be doing more of in one to three to five years because you're right, sometimes leaders don't have the opportunity to create a promotional opportunity or to get more money. So yeah, that's the being part. I don't have anywhere to put you, but if you say, what is it that you want to be doing? I certainly can control what type of work you could be doing more of and creating those opportunities to support you to do the more of that.

**Nichols:** Well, let's talk real quickly before we sign off. I want to talk about something extra. So Carla, you and I've talked a little bit about this and I love, I love what you have. It's your something extras because you've got three of them but tell us what you believe that something extra is that every leader needs.

**Bailey:** Yeah, I would say very simply put the needs are humility, heart, and hustle and very quickly, just a one-liner each. Humility. It is to make sure that we understand that leadership is not about us, but it's really about those that we lead and that we model our confidence. Not in arrogance. And I would say the heart part is to really make sure that we love people that we love them well and that we always make the people that we lead feel like they matter and so that... We Love People over processes. And then the other is the hustle. That hustle is really just not about doing the hard work, it is hard work, but that's not all it's about... And it's not just hard work and leading and driving results, but it's the hard work of really continuing that continues learning on ourselves, or personal mastery to make sure that we're continuing to grow and evolve and be our best selves, for us and also for those that we lead, so we're continuing to challenge our own selves to live outside of that comfort zone while we're challenging those we lead to live outside their comfort zone and we're hustling to make sure we stay relevant and to make sure that we leave a powerful leadership legacy as well.

**Nichols:** And you just said something that I love, and I so believe we're growing, we're hustling and changing and growing ourselves for ourselves, but we're also growing ourselves for the people that are entrusted to us.

**Bailey:** Making it bigger than just about us. Leadership and what we do, the purpose of why we do it should be bigger than just about ourselves but also those that we serve more importantly.

**Nichols:** Well, goodness gracious, there's so much we could talk about. We'd be here for about 10 hours. Maybe we'll have to have a version 2.

So talk to us a little bit. Is there something Carla that you would like to promote?

**Bailey:** Yes, I would love for our audience to have an opportunity to connect with me, they can find me on LinkedIn, at Carla D Bailey or on Facebook, Carla D Bailey LLC. And so I love to connect with them and that's the way they can connect with me for booking engagements as well.

**Nichols:** Right, and you also are a speaker. If someone would need a great motivational speaker, you would be up for that as well.

**Bailey:** Absolutely, I welcome the opportunity.

**Nichols:** Very good Carla. It has just been my pleasure to have you here today. I feel like I'm coming away. Iron sharpen iron. So I just believe that I'm coming away with more in my tool belt and more things to think about. So thank you so much for sharing your insights and your wisdom with us today.

**Bailey:** Lisa, thank you. I'm equally as delighted to be here with you. Thank you so much.