Get Real Podcast Episode: 053
How to Rise Above a Toxic Work Environment
Hosts: Ron Phillips & Angela Thomas

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Angela Thomas:	Hey everybody, welcome to the Get Real podcast. I'm Angela Thomas and I'm here with Ron Phillips.
Ron Phillips:	Oh yeah. This is gonna be good.
Angela Thomas:	Thanks for joining us.
Ron Phillips:	They're all good. I say that every time.
Angela Thomas:	You do. You're like, this one's going to be good. And it is!
Ron Phillips:	Oh, is it's always beautiful out here in Charleston.
Angela Thomas:	Yeah, it's nice here this week too. I went to California last week when it was freezing and came back for the nice weather.
Ron Phillips:	Well, we're excited to be here.
Angela Thomas:	Yeah, we are.
Ron Phillips:	Hopefully get a ton out of this. Hopefully you guys are getting a ton out of all of these. If you are, you know, throw us a comment; like it. Share it. Don't keep us a secret. You know, you don't lose anything by sharing the Get Real podcast. So...
Angela Thomas:	No, there's room for everybody. So what we're going to talk about today is how to rise above a toxic work environment. And you know, I'm not sure if we're completely qualified to talk about this. We're probably not with anything we talk about. But we have experienced a lot of this and worked through it in our own company. So I think it's going to be pretty interesting to chat about here.
Ron Phillips:	Yeah. I mean this is for if you are in a company but don't own it. So a lot of times we talk about, you know, business owners and real estate investors cause that's kind of who we are. But a lot of what we talk about can apply to anybody, you know. And Angela has, so we're going to lean a little bit on Angela today. She has corporate experience. Ron has zero corporate experience, never worked in

a corporate environment. I feel bad. I mean a lot of times we talked to we talk a lot about business. We talk a lot about real estate investing. We talk about, you know, this stuff because it's what we do, right? But it's really important too, to understand that there's, there's a bunch of people out there who are stuck in, ah, I say stuck. People who have made the decision to be in the corporate world. Good, bad, ugly, you know, whatever it is. So we're going to lean a little bit on Angela, because Ron has actually had zero experience in the corporate world.

Angela Thomas: Yeah. And of course this does apply the smaller businesses. And if you are an owner of a smaller business, a lot of this might hit home. You might see it...

Ron Phillips: Or if you're the manager of a smaller business, right. Because you can affect change in your, you know, in your environment, wherever your environment is. So, yeah.

Angela Thomas: So first of all, I mean, the biggest reason this matters, of course besides making it miserable to go to work, is that high-performers don't stay in toxic work cultures.

Ron Phillips: And a lot of high-performers just straight they will never go there.

Angela Thomas: Yeah. But if somehow you manage to hide it during the interview process, they're not going to hang around for long. And obviously you want a lot of high-performers. So if your high performers are disengaged or not enthusiastic or quitting, this may be why. Another huge thing it does is it makes it so no one can make decisions in the company because you know, it takes too long to figure it out because no one knows... I don't know, what's going on. No one's engaged, no one, I mean it talks if work environment makes it so you just don't really care what's happening in your company. You're just kind of dreading it and going through the motions.

Ron Phillips: Yeah, and we, I mean we experienced that big time before. I, you know, in my last partnership, right? Because there was eight months or so where it was just awful. It was heavy in there. It was just heavy. All, everybody felt it. I mean, it was, you walk in and it was just like death in there. You know, nobody really wanted to be there.

Angela Thomas: It was miserable and they were kind of pitting everyone against each other. I mean, it was extremely toxic.

Ron Phillips: It was like the definition of toxic. If you could like look up, you know, toxic workplace, there would be a picture of, of it. It was really bad. Yeah. So I have experienced that and I've experienced it in a big way. Both of us have. And I think Angela has other experiences as well. But that was the worst I've ever

experienced it. And man, if people listening are going to an office every day and that's what it feels like I can't even imagine... I mean, I can't, we're going to talk, we're going to get real with some of this stuff today with respect to our company and places that we have room to improve. But good Lord, I don't hate waking up every day, dreading that I have to go somewhere that I hate or that feels like death. But I did for eight months, so I know what that feels like. I literally did not want to go. I just didn't want to go. So.

Angela Thomas: Yup. And I have experienced it in multiple companies and it's really hard to keep going. And I don't, I mean it crushes your soul. So I don't think it's good to keep going. You got to fix it or you've got to find somewhere else. So we're going to go through some of the ways you can tell if you're in a, I mean besides that crushing feeling Ron described, there's some really clear signs if your work environment is toxic. And we're going to kind of talk through them and so that you can identify it and hopefully figure out ways to rise above it or help fix it. Because you know, like Ron said, everyone can have an influence on this.

Angela Thomas: So number one that I want to talk about is working from or part time work is seen as lazy in the company and part time workers are looked down on, or people who work from home are looked down on. And this is pretty common I think because of the way the world's changing. I mean all of our, all of our parents were expected to sit in an office or go to work for eight hours a day. And being there was the most important thing, right?

Ron Phillips: So it had nothing to do with... so, so the flip side of this is that production doesn't make any difference really. You've got a warm a seat for whatever time you're supposed to be there. And if, and if you're one of the lonely, you know, 20 hour people, then well, you're just not worth much. If you were worth more, you'd be fulltime. Right?

Angela Thomas: Right, right. And that is a huge, I mean, man, I've seen that in so many companies I've worked with. Most of them, I mean, usually it's the owner or the boss, the CEO that kind of sets this cultural expectation that whoever shows up the earliest and leaves the latest is the most dedicated to the company and the, you know, the big dog. So it's a really toxic thing where people are fighting over who can be away from their family longer, waste more time at the office, you know, miss more holidays. That's, I mean, I've worked in a company where if you didn't miss Thanksgiving and Christmas, I mean, you were just, you didn't care about your job. You know, I missed my grandpa's funeral, my best friend's wedding, several holidays trying to prove I was dedicated to this company and man, do I regret that now. I mean, that company doesn't matter to me anymore. That sucks and Ron, we've seen that in our company even a little bit back in the day. So.

Ron Phillips:	Yeah, I mean, I did. And I've told people from, from stage, and I've told every business owner I can get my, you know, will let me bend their ear for a second. Don't do it. It is not worth it. So just anybody who's listening don't do it. It's not worth it. And I think that any company who has this mentality, and then you work for them, sooner or later it's going to come to a head. And that's one of the reasons why, you know, good talent leaves. They get sick of selling their soul. Many of them lose their families. And you know, lose their friends and all kinds of things that really matter to them in hopes of gaining some great financial reward. And a lot of times that doesn't even come because the company really doesn't give a crap about you either.
Angela Thomas:	You get a pat on the back maybe, but you're just a cog and no one cares. So yeah.
Ron Phillips:	I mean half the time they'll, they get, the company will be just like whack off the top leadership like hey good job. You guys rose all the way up. You sold your soul. Here we are. Ah, now we gotta just cut management. So...
Angela Thomas:	Okay, so I don't want to make this episode super long, but I think, I don't know Ron if I've told you this before, but that's actually why I quit that company; is because my territory manager who was above me on the totem pole, and I thought, I looked up to them, they'd been there like 20 years. All of a sudden they got rid of all the territory managers. Their jobs just didn't exist anymore. They decided they didn't need that level. And I watched my boss, who I looked up to and wanted to take her, you know, move into her position eventually when she moved up, her job was just gone and she had nothing. I mean, she had some stock or something, but nobody seemed to care. It was all of them. They were just wiped out in one swoop. And it was just, it was a financial decision, right? There was no thought to the people. It was just...
Ron Phillips:	You know, look, as a business owner, sometimes you have to make financial decisions. And that's hard because, you know, as Angela is alluding to, there's lives attached to those financial decisions, right? But the culture, if the culture is constantly this way, there's something wrong with the culture. It's not that you got hit, you know, from left field with some financial problems and you just had to, I mean, what Angela is describing is something that happens consistently in that company, right, is the over and over and over again, they do the same thing. And you know, human capital is not even capital. It's just waste, right? They just go through it. People, right. And so, yeah.
Angela Thomas:	And on the other side of this, since we have decided in our company to allow people to work from home and to focus on results and production and not on ours, our talent, I mean, I think that everyone in our company is happier and feels more loyal to the company, and our talent pool grew by enormous amounts because suddenly , we could you know, attract these, you know, stay

at home moms that are super successful in their old careers and weren't able to find something that works with their schedule. And we're now able to have them in our company and they're happy. And I mean, they're extremely talented and you wouldn't be able to access those kinds of people if you demanded they sit in their chair for eight hours a day, five days a week.

Ron Phillips: Absolutely. So we don't care. Number of hours doesn't matter to us. And it really shouldn't matter to anybody. Unless there is a specific reason in your company why you've got to have a warm body there. And even then having them there isn't the thing that really matters. While they're there, you need production. Right? That's really what should matter. This really what should be the focus anyway, I think.

Angela Thomas: Yeah. So switching from hours to production, even with hourly employees. I mean, I know you can't in like retail settings and certain places, but hourly employees in an office, if you switch that to what they're actually getting done that day makes a huge difference or it has for us. So yeah.

Angela Thomas: The next one on here is entrepreneurship frowned upon. And this one, Ron, I think you'd have a lot to say about actually because how many business owners do you know that are scared that their employees or their right hand people are going to go start their own business to maybe steal their ideas?

Ron Phillips: I know a lot of them and I think I've even said it on the podcast before that that's really shortsighted. Because you know, what if they do, what if they do leave? And what if, I mean, I think you just have to look at it a little differently, right? Some of the greatest ideas come from the entrepreneur mind. And if you can have a few of those minds in your company, and if you can have those people because of your culture, want to grow the company with their ideas, my gosh, you've got something that other people don't have. And if you, if they do grow, ultimately they're going to grow to the point where they need to go do their own thing. It's not about, they don't like you anymore. It's not about, you don't like them anymore. It's about they're just like you do, if you're a business owner, they have a desire and a need to go out there and create their own thing. And to the extent that you can help them do that, how cool is it that you've just created, I mean, you've just helped create another person out there creating jobs and making everything better. I think you just need to look at things a little bit differently. Right? So, I mean, I just fundamentally don't agree with that and I think I've said it before. I'll leave it at that. Check yourself before you wreck yourself.

Angela Thomas: Yeah, that's definitely a better attitude to have. So, all right, I think that was good. Moving on. The next one is management versus us culture. This is kind of like a top down culture is the way I see this one. Ron and I, and we've seen this in our own company where you get the top management kind of bloated and all

the ideas just are funneled down. No input from anyone below... Below. That's a horrible way to look at it actually. So.

Ron Phillips: But that's how it is in a top down culture right there. There's people below and that's what they're called, which is also interesting, right? And there's so much of this now in America, the politicians and the media are fanning this fire and it really pisses me off. So, even in places where there is not this culture, people are being indoctrinated with this and it's creeping into good cultures because people watch the news and they put somehow it's gotta be this us versus them thing and it's so stupid. There is no us versus them. I was just commenting on a post I think today or yesterday, one of the two, about systems, right? People want to systematize their business so that they can leave their business. And the quote was something about that that's a stupid thing. And I thought, well, that doesn't sound stupid. I mean, everybody wants to do that, right? And I made a comment about that and they were like, yeah, but don't you think it's people? And I said, well, of course people run the systems. People, you can have systems all you want. Nothing happens unless you have people to run the systems or to create the systems, right? You have the people are the most important part of the business. It's not the product, it's not the systems. It's not anything else. It's the people. And if you have a culture where it's constantly us versus them, like these stupid, big, huge companies that have the, that's the whole problem I have with unions, right? It's, it's all this us versus them. We can't just get along. We can't just, I mean, this is so stupid. Anyway, I'm going to go off on a really big rant.

Angela Thomas: No, no, we've, I mean, we've experienced this in our company, so like when it's, you know, management needs to fix this or, you know, the upper management, what are they gonna do to fix this? And then they, they just tell us what to do... That is not the kind of culture we want in our company. You know, people, everyone should be empowered to make decisions and the, to all the sides of the business, it should be one, which is what we've tried to do. We've tried to level it out and then we can continue to work on that.

Ron Phillips: Man, if you don't encourage people from the quote bottom to give you ideas, you're an idiot. I mean, some of the greatest ideas in the company come from the lowest paid person. It doesn't make any difference. Everybody is on the same team. We're all going the same way. And man, there's great ideas that come from everybody. Not just the brilliant people at the top of the company. Right. I mean, so if that's the way that your company is structured, you should check yourself again, and hopefully it's not. And if you work in a place like that, man, just, you know, we'll talk about some things that you can do to effect some change in those cultures. But man, that's such a horrible place to be.

Angela Thomas: Yeah, it is. So the next one is number of hours you work matter. And I know that that's kind of the same as looking down on people who work from home or are

part time. But yeah, I mean, we've seen that in our company too, where you know, you have one person that's just all hyped up about how they work harder than everyone else and work more hours.

Ron Phillips: And they tell everyone how much they work.

Angela Thomas: They work so much and they look down on everyone else because we're not putting in the same amount of hours.

Ron Phillips: Almost invariably these people... they say that they work more hours than it is possible to work. And they wear it as some kind of a badge of honor. Like you're an idiot because you're not working as many hours as me. And I'm thinking to myself, who's the idiot again?

Angela Thomas: Yeah. And it creates this weird culture where you go do anything good with your family or you take a couple of days off or whatever. That these kinds of people who worry about the number of hours, you know, they make comments that can make you feel bad and really, you know, make your environment toxic by, you know, I hope you hope you enjoy it, you know, your, your non-working. I had to pull all your weight or you know, whatever it is.

Ron Phillips: I hope you enjoyed it because I paid for it for you.

Angela Thomas: Yeah. I've heard exact comments like that. Wow. Good for you. Well, Oh, nice job. Thanks for paying for it for me. I appreciate it. So if you are doing that or someone's doing that to you, man, yeah, that's a toxic, that's a toxic thing to have. We luckily don't have those people in our company anymore and hopefully never will again.

Angela Thomas: Preferential treatment, having favorites in the company and giving them preferential treatment.

Ron Phillips: Just don't do that.

Angela Thomas: Don't do that. We don't even talk about it. But, and then talking down to people who have found themselves in the wrong role. We talk about seats a lot in our company, and occasionally you hire someone who ends up in the wrong seat. And they just aren't cut out for the work they're doing and you know, people can look down on them for that. And thriving cultures, we should help them, coach them, give them feedback, and hopefully help them get into the right role as is the ultimate goal here. So anyway,

Ron Phillips: Feeling that way about someone, that's the first thing you should check. Make sure that you don't have them stuck in a role that they're coming to work every day and they feel like they're going to hell extra. That's not what you've done.

Because they didn't do it. You did it. This, this is not, it's not their fault. It's your fault.

Angela Thomas: I remember not too long ago, we stuck somebody who was absolutely terrified of the phone in a customer service phone position. So we have done this in our company. It turns out she was having, she was having panic attacks.

Ron Phillips: I mean it was a shocker. It didn't work out. Now I would've never in a million years guessed this girl is terrified of the phone. She was outgoing, I mean, I would've never in a million years dream she would have some kind of phobia of the phone. But she did. I mean, it was bad. Like she had to take medicine. We made her, I think we put her on medicine. Well, we didn't. I mean we, well, I'm pretty sure she went and got medicine because we sent her, we, yeah...

Angela Thomas: Yeah. This is the Get Real show. We effed up bad on that one. Okay.

Ron Phillips: Yeah. Sorry. You know who you are out there. If you're listening, we're really sorry.

Angela Thomas: Yeah if you're listening, I'm sorry. So, okay, so the next one is core values. You don't have your core values outlined and articulated. Your employees may not know what your core values are.

Ron Phillips: And we've talked about them ad nauseum. If you don't have them and you still think that they are, you know, some stupid thing, then we really can't help you I guess at this point.

Angela Thomas: Right. And the next one is, you know, kind of the same if your core values just serve as copy on your website or they're, you know, a quote on a mug is a favorite. People like to say but nobody lives them, you know, that's a huge problem as well. And you need to keep talking about your core values and make sure that your processes and procedures are aligned with them. And this is kind of an ongoing task. You can't just write your core values one time and be done with it. We're constantly going through our processes and trying to make sure they fit and looking at our people, everything they do and making sure it's a fit.

Ron Phillips: So yesterday, this week, two times, a couple of our... Well some of our partner organizations, we made decisions this week, two times of whether or not to continue to do business with people based on our core values. One of them we did continue to do business with because they, you know, without knowing what our core values were one of our core values is own it and they owned it. And you know, we love people like that because they fit our core values. And just yesterday we decided to no longer do business with another company because they didn't meet our core values. And we've done many, many deals with them. But I was just on the phone with Heather and you know, we

	discussed this and she was like, you know, we were talking about the pros of keeping them. And then the first con was a core value.
Ron Phillips:	And I was like, okay, well we don't, we don't need to talk about it anymore. It's done. It's over. All of the, all of the positive is eliminated because they don't match our core values. And we have, Angela, how many times have we made a decision not by our core values and then we like two months, three months down the road we're like, Oh my gosh, like why did we do that? Because now it's a big problem and I, because they weren't a good fit. They weren't a good fit. Actually three times this week we did, because we chose not to work with another person just based on a phone call. And that dude texted me multiple times, called me. He's trying to figure out what happened. I'm like, dude, we're not a core value fit. What are your core values? So I sent him our core values. He goes, man, those are really good. Where do I not fit? I'm like, man, I'm not going to explain it to you. I can tell from the phone call you had, you're not a fit, you know, God bless you. Appreciate you.
Angela Thomas:	Yeah, those have become our guide in everything we do and its taken practice. I mean, it took us a while. I know when we first wrote our core values, we were called on not living them by, you know, people in our organization a couple of times because we had, you know, those were our values and we believe in them, but it takes practice to use them in everything you do and to think about them before you make decisions. But the more you do, the more successful you are. So.
Ron Phillips:	Especially if you get stuck in a rut, which I think we're going to talk about in a minute anyway.
Angela Thomas:	Yes. Okay, so next one is you do things because that's the way it's always been.
Ron Phillips:	Right now that's what we're going to talk about. This is exactly why we didn't do the core value thing, right? Because we've been doing something one way for so long and then somebody finally goes, yeah, you remember those core value things that we just talked about. You know, this isn't, this doesn't fit. And we're like, no wonder this doesn't ever work because it doesn't fit with our core values. It's also really important that you don't just yank those out of the air because then you can't... It's really hard to change something that's been done the same way for years and years and years.
Angela Thomas:	It's really hard to see another way.
Ron Phillips:	It's so clear, Angela, remember when those things came up, it was so clear. Like, we gotta change this because this doesn't fit. This doesn't fit who we are. That's why it doesn't feel right ever, you know?

Angela Thomas:	But for a long time we kept doing it because it's the way it's always been done. And we're still guilty of this in some ways. It's easy to, I mean, everyone knows this. In a new company, when new employee... Or in a company when new employees come in, they're full of new ideas. And I think, me personally, I'm not going to blame anyone else here, I have a tendency to want to squash those a little bit because I'm like, no, that's not the way we do it. And we do it like this.
Ron Phillips:	Who do you think you are?
Angela Thomas:	And you're new, like, seriously. No, I'm just kidding. That's terrible. That's terrible. Because like we said earlier, most of the best ideas come from people who haven't been, you know, in the forest as they say for so long that we can't see it clearly anymore. Yeah. So we are trying to work on this one because it's a hard one. You get stuck in a rut. You get used to doing things a certain way and you think that's the only right way. But you know, the more you listen to everyone around you, the more successful your company is. So we're working on that.
Angela Thomas:	Okay. Number six, if you aren't paying attention to the needs and drives of others.
Ron Phillips:	Yeah, this is a big one. And this goes like if you own a company and you don't understand what drives people and you don't talk to them relatively often about these things, you can miss really, you can miss really big things. You just can, right? I mean and we do this relatively well, but still we don't do it often enough. Angela, we were just talking about that beforehand. You know, these are actually a really good list because some of these things on here that we need to work on; this is one that opened our eyes. The next ones are pretty good. I mean we're pretty good at this one. Understanding the needs of our people. But man, sometimes even as good as you are, you can miss things if you're not asking constantly.
Angela Thomas:	Yeah. So true. And part of that is the next one is providing irregular feedback which we are guilty of... Because we try to talk to everyone in the company and figure out their needs and what drives them and where they are. And you know, that's important to us like Ron said, but providing actual feedback and doing it more of a structured way to where they have the opportunity to share how they're feeling about everything in their job and where you provide feedback on how they're doing and areas to work on and that's really important, you know, to get go deeper because a lot of our conversations people aren't going to share, you know, their deeper feelings in a lot of these quick calls that we have.
Angela Thomas:	So these sit down feedback meetings are something that we need to work on and I think they are really important for a nontoxic work environment where people stay. So we're working on that one as well. We don't have all these

perfect, obviously. The next one is if your managers or higher ups aren't upholding the values of your organization and that fits with a lot of the other ones we've talked about. Managers or leaders in your organization have to be held to an even higher standard than everyone else. And for good reasons.

Ron Phillips: On this one, it doesn't make any difference how big of a producer they are. It doesn't make any difference. You can't change the rules for big producers. Sorry.

Angela Thomas: Oh yeah. We've done that.

Ron Phillips: When it comes to core values and the values of the company, you cannot deviate. Because as soon as you do, because someone is a big producer or someone is really important, it'll destroy your culture. 100% it will destroy your culture.

Angela Thomas: Ask Ron how he knows that one.

Ron Phillips: Yeah, buddy. Listen, that's a scary thing, Angela. It's a scary thing for your business owner and you have someone who produces an enormous amount. What do you do? I'm telling you, if they're a core value mismatch, you've got to do something. So you better start planning now to root out whatever does not fit your core values.

Angela Thomas: Just trust us. We learned it the hard way. All right. And yeah, well, I mean this next one, your managers commiserate with employees. I'm not sure what to say about this one, Ron.

Ron Phillips: Yeah, I mean it's just when you know, when they get together and they start complaining. I mean you just, if someone comes to you to a manager or do you and they complain about something and then you guys, you know, get a pity party going... I mean, who was it? Who is it? That's, oh, Bosh. Michelle Bosh always says you got to get like the... you got to get rid of the itty bitty shitty committee. They don't...

Angela Thomas: Oh that's fantastic. I haven't heard that before.

Ron Phillips: There is no... Shout out to Michelle Bosh. I don't remember how long I laughed when she said that. But if you've got one of those committees in your business, you can get to get rid of that thing. And if it's employees and managers, which should all be called team members in my opinion, you can't have that. We just can't have that. Right? And you also can't have quote your managers disagreeing with company decisions openly and moving that stuff around in the company. Those kind of go hand in hand. You cannot do that and all that

negativity, if that's happening in a business, it'll just destroy it. You can't have that stuff.

Angela Thomas: No. And we see this in ours too, Ron, where people complain about each other, not necessarily just things the company's doing, but about each other to the managers or their boss or whoever instead of confronting the person and fixing the problem themselves. And that's, I think that's ultimately what we're working towards is you can empathize with them and say, I'm sorry you're feeling that way. But I think people need to be taught to confront the person or the issue head on that's bugging them instead of complaining about them to somebody else. Cause that is a huge toxic thing that happens in companies. Everyone's talking about each other behind their back. I mean that's, that's also under the definition of toxic workplace. Right?

Ron Phillips: Agreed. Yeah.

Angela Thomas: And we're still working on that one because it happens. Okay. Next one, you're not coaching and mentoring your direct reports using the values of the organization. So using your core values. All coaching and mentoring and feedback should be based around using the core values as your guide.

Ron Phillips: And if you don't do that, you create entitled little punks, and that's the next one. If there's entitled little punks in your organization, then you've screwed something up. You just cannot have entitled freaking people. We call them premadonnas in our office. You can't have entitled snots running around. Yeah.

Angela Thomas: Yeah. If you've got a bunch of people that are entitled or are thinking they're not making enough money and arguing about it and getting other people upset about it, boy is that gonna throw a wrench in your business. So.

Ron Phillips: So this next one, Angela, I think this is, this is really like every company has changed, right? But I think if people are resistant to change, I think sometimes it's the people's fault, but I think largely it's the fault of whoever the leaders are because the leaders are not explaining. Most of the time when people have a hard time with change is because they don't understand why, they don't understand the reasons. They don't get what you're doing, they just think you're doing something to them.

Angela Thomas: Right. If the leader is good, they get people excited about it and onboard with it and feeling like they're choosing the change as well. It shouldn't be the top down thing like we chose this change and we're making you guys do it. It should be we are all choosing to do this together because it's going to help us do X.

Ron Phillips: Yeah. What is that, I'm the government. One of the scariest things that you can ever hear is I'm the government and I'm here to help you. It's like that. Right? If

that's what it feels like when you come in with change to your team, that's going to be bad. It's going to be bad. And you cannot blame them for that. That means you suck as a leader. That doesn't mean that your people suck. That means you suck. So anytime... We've done this a couple of times where we have really thought things through, then we go present it and we didn't really think it through very well. We were like, Oh yeah, well I mean like, ah, you can get some, get some input first. Right.

Angela Thomas: Okay. So all of this kind of brings us to, you know, what do you do to fix this? And, you know, Ron said we were going to talk about what you do in a corporation. You can make changes in a corporation, but if it's a large corporation where this is prevalent throughout the entire thing and you're, you know, a manager, you're not going to have, you're not gonna be able to fix the whole organization. So this one actually kind of applies to smaller businesses or areas where you have some control over the hiring. Because a huge way that we've been able to fix this in our company has been through who we hire and our HR process.

Ron Phillips: Let me just say something though. I mean if you're a manager at one of these places and you feel like you're stuck there, then make change in your direct downline, right? Do these things in your part of the organization because when things start to change and they will in your little silo where they've got you, right? At that point, somebody is going to ask how you're doing it and then you can go and tell them how they're doing it. You can say you want to really know why? It's cause all this is effed up over here and here's how you fix it. Then they'll fire you and hopefully they'll take it.

Angela Thomas: That's great. It may not have worked in a couple of the ones I was in, but I think that's great advice. If you're able to do that, that's the best thing to do. So, but if you do have control over who's hired, we started screening potential candidates using our core values and I don't care how much we like them and how amazing they look on paper and how good they would be at the job, if they don't fit even one core value, we don't even consider them. And I still have a hard time with this because sometimes I'm like, but they're so talented and I...

Ron Phillips: Heather and I were talking about this yesterday. I don't mean the list of pros was big. There was one con that we got to and it was...

Angela Thomas: But it was a big one cause it's a core value, right?

Ron Phillips: Sorry. That's it. I don't care how good they are.

Angela Thomas: And that's tough. Especially with the unemployment rate low and you get a little desperate. But yup, you'll eff up your company if you let those people in. So it's really important. And like we talked about earlier, like who's responsible for it?

Every individual in an organization is responsible. As leaders, we're the most responsible. And it all comes back to the leadership. Of course. It starts at the top. But every person in your company, and can you kind of make or break your culture. So extremely important to be careful about who you hire.

Angela Thomas: So kinda to wrap this up, you know, if your workplace is toxic, you know, what can you do about it? Start with, you know, being careful about who you hire if that's in your control and then changing who you are. Ron, we talked about this a little bit earlier to start with. You have to start with trusting people first. Trusting people in your organization. And that kind of trickles down to everyone else. And that one's hard, especially if you've been taken advantage of or you know, had a problem with this for a long time. This kind of a toxic culture makes people not trust each other and not like each other.

Ron Phillips: It does. And anytime that you've been screwed over, it chips away at the trust. You cannot stop trusting people first. Let them give you a reason to not trust them before you do that. You can't start out distrusting people because then you started out on the wrong foot in your relationship, right? And that goes really well with the next thing you got to do, and that is to earn people's respect. Respect is not something you can just demand because you're quote at the top; that does not happen. Respect is earned. And generally speaking, respect is earned because you are also giving respect. You're not just receiving it, you're giving it, it comes, goes along with trusting people, right?

Angela Thomas: It does. And the next one goes along well too is be compassionate to people's circumstances. Remember, we're working with people here. It's easy to get wrapped up in you know, huge goals and making money and all that's great, but we have to remember we're working with people and be compassionate of them and their circumstances. So.

Ron Phillips: Let people grow, right? That's the next thing. Let people grow. You can't keep a lid on people. I mean, some people are going to be real content where they are. You're gonna have other people in your organization who are not content. It's not because they want to take over the organization. It's because they have the same drive to grow and learn and become as good as they can become as anybody else does. So you can't hold them down. Right.

Angela Thomas: Yeah. That's awesome. Respect the way people like to get their work done. We talked about this a lot with, you know, counting hours and looking down on people who work differently than you or work from home or have a different circumstance. However they like to get their work done. Respect that. You know, if they're producing, they're producing. That's it.

Ron Phillips: Yeah. And when you've given somebody the ability to make decisions, you have to actually give them the ability to make the decision. Right? You can't go, hey, I

want you to make this decision. And then when they do go that you go, Hmm, no, that was the wrong decision. Should've made this one over here. You suck. You can't do that. Right. And you can't go into a board meeting and ask for great ideas and then when the first idea comes up, you go, hmm. Not really what I was looking for.

Angela Thomas: Yeah, exactly. Exactly. Yeah, and I mean, that goes along with the other ones. Allow them to make decisions like Ron said, and then let them be themselves, however they are. As long as it doesn't go against your company cultures, let people be who they are.

Ron Phillips: Yeah. It makes the world go round. Yeah. Or was that fat bottom girls? I can't remember the song. I think it was fat bottom girls. It's actually fat bottom girls that make the world go round. Letting people be themselves is just a good thing to do. Don't tell people the wrong thing. Angela, obviously the rock song was correct.

Angela Thomas: All right. I'll just take your word for it.

Ron Phillips: It's true. I mean, if you haven't heard the song, you should look it up.

Angela Thomas: No, I have. It's excellent.

Ron Phillips: Yeah, it's a fantastic song. There's some other really good gems. I'll save them for future episodes.

Angela Thomas: Everyone's excited. I know I am. All right, so I mean we're going to wrap it up with that. This was kind of a long list but it all starts with people. It's culture first and if you recognize some of these in your organization, I'm sure there's some, cause we've been working on this a long time and we still have a long way to go. So there's changes you can make you need to make them and help your company transform into this better culture first organization. And remember it all starts with people.

Angela Thomas: So thanks for listening everybody. Thanks Ron.

Ron Phillips: Till next time.

Angela Thomas: Yeah, we'll talk to you next time. Like always, please let us know what you think. Let us know any other topics you'd like to hear about. You can visit us on getrealestatesuccess.com or on Facebook at Get Real podcast or on Instagram at the same name and yeah, we'll look forward to seeing you guys next time. Thanks Ron.

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