

# Leadership Podcast – Leading the Way

## Transcript of podcast – Episode 9

### Jonathan Darling and Will Clement

(Music starts)

Jonathan Darling

Hello and welcome to this Leading the Way podcast. And I'm Jonathan Darling, your host, and I'm delighted to welcome our guest today, Will Clement. Will's going to tell us a bit about himself as we start off. So welcome will. Thank you very much for joining us.

Will Clement

Thank you very much for having me on today.

Jonathan Darling

So, Will, do you, would you just tell me a bit about what your role is, how you've been involved in the NHS and with RCPCH?

Will Clement

Yes, of course. Thank you. So currently I'm the managing director at Clement Leadership Development, Jonathan, and we've been going for three years. And we do what we're saying, the, in we develop leaders through various methods.

That can be a one day program or it can be a longer year long program, for example. And we also do executive coaching as well. So that's working with individuals. On a one to one or a group basis. So previous to that, I spent four years. Inside the NHS as the head of organisational development for Hull and East Yorkshire.

Had a great time there. Met some absolutely wonderful people. And, I really had the opportunity to build, something really substantial around, around leadership for, for everybody there. Very much system thinking, very much system leadership there as well. And my involvement with the Royal College.

So I was asked by the director of people and culture there to, to come in and run a leadership program for your leaders there. And I've been doing that for the last 18 months.

Jonathan Darling

Great. So you've done quite a bit around leadership within the NHS and then, and more laterally within the college.

So two different organisations that have, are both involved in, paediatrics in, in different ways. A was a bit more then about your approach to leadership and coaching around it. So how do you see leadership yourself?

Will Clement

Sure. So I think there's always been leadership for the time. For the, for the time.

It, it is, and I believe right here, right now, compassionate leadership is absolutely key. And there's lots of great papers out there. Professor Michael West, for example, wrote a superb book all around that notion of compassionate leadership. And when we think about compassion we always tend to look at it as a, as an outward aspect, compassion towards others.

I think a slightly different view in that. If, let me ask you a question, Jonathan. What's the longest relationship you've ever had?

Jonathan Darling

I've got a very good friend that goes back to age 13, I think.

Will Clement

Superb. Fantastic. I would put it that the longest relationship you had is the one with yourself.

Jonathan Darling

Okay.

Will Clement

And in a leadership position we've got. All those, we've got history, we've got all those thoughts, we've got all those decisions. We've got our career that we're

carrying with us all the time. Imagine all that information going round and imagine a situation where we regret a decision that we've made and we're carrying that regret with us.

What does that do to us as leaders? I think you take something away. So I'm very much of the mind there. Really good leadership begins within, it starts where we look at ourselves and we don't forgive what we've done in the past, but we're certainly compassionate for ourselves so we can make the right decisions and we do the right thing.

Jonathan Darling

Great. I'm interested you say about leadership at the time. Just go back a little bit, why would the time now be requiring a different sort of leadership. And why is that compassionate leadership?

Will Clement

So I think at the moment, I think there are. Incredibly negative messages out there.

The, at this time there, there are huge changes within the NHS. The NHS has always had challenges, but there's, there, there are huge changes now within it. And I experience through my coaching, I do with people. Say I'm currently coaching 31 people from the NHS and a lot of those individuals are clinical either in or moving towards burnout.

And I think the advent of KPIs, large targets, waiting, waiting lists, but right across the clinical spectrum I think is really impacting on people. But when that happens, it impacts the whole of us. And in, including the decisions that we make as well. We don't want to lose these people from really important positions.

Really important, kind of leaders now and indeed leaders for the future. So I believe, Jonathan, that is something that we need to tackle and we need that almost injection of positivity back into leadership rather than something that is directed rather than something that is deeply facilitated by us.

Imagine a situation where we can facilitate our own leadership, but through a really clear mind.

Jonathan Darling

Thank you. If we're looking at organisations where burnout is happening

Do you think compassionate leadership is a, is an approach that helps address that? And is that something, when you talked earlier about compassionate leadership starting with us. And how we perceive our ourselves and some of the things that we look back on. Do you think that helps in addressing burnout for both, for ourselves and for others?

Will Clement

I think it's certainly a part of it. When we talk about really of other leadership styles such as authentic leadership, I think are we being truly authentic if we are in or on the edge of burnout?

If we're stressed or we're anxious? Have, I really got the cognitive ability to make good quality decisions right here, right now. And I, so I don't believe it's the pan of every, of everything. If we can just slow people down, certainly within program leadership programs or executive coaching, Jonathan, we can just start to pull this apart.

We can start to pick out. What is causing this and when? Now, if it's something from history that we are tackling with, that's not something generally coach you can deal with, what we can look at is how is that affecting you now, right here in the present with me in this moment. And then we look to build forward from that. So I won't say it's a complete solution, but it's definitely a big part of it.

Jonathan Darling

Thank you. And just thinking about compassionate leadership, I think many people are aware of Michael West and all these talked about on this, but can you just summarize a little bit more for us, what it's all about? 'Cause you are focusing a bit on, on ourselves, but what does it mean in relation to how we work with others?

Will Clement

Yeah, sure. So I think if people can see. True was turning, the as, as authentic as we can be turning up, they will see a a pattern of consistency in our behaviour, in, in what we do if we're not, if we're not present, which is a key aspect of Professor West's work, we're detached and that will somehow affect our behaviour. Now, if people are viewing us seeing this in inconsistency of behaviour. So our current presence is not consistent. It's not fully there and fully evolved. How can people trust us? How can people really rely on us to make the, those collective decisions in, in, in a position of leadership?

Something that as aspects there are helpfulness and. I'm sure you all have this, Jonathan, people coming to you saying, have you got 10, 20, 30 minutes of your time? You probably haven't got a minute in that, in that particular day. And it's not about that kind of helpfulness. It's aiding others to think make mistakes, to run through options, to have the ability to say well we could try this, or we could try that.

People. Are in positions because they're competent and capable, and they're probably capable of making that decision. They're just looking for guidance. And for us as leaders, it is about being that sounding board for a moment in time, but not consistently giving answers, allowing them not even allowing, actually being, working through a process with that other person to get to a place where it's safe to look at options.

So that notion of being present and that notions of helpfulness will done well, empower that individual to make great quality decisions themselves.

Jonathan Darling

Let say I ask a bit more about present, being present. 'cause you, I say I'm here so I'm present, but I think you are getting at something a bit more purposeful or what do I actually do when I'm in it? So somebody's come to see me and I'm busy, but I've got, I'm just making some time. How do I be present in that, those few minutes?

Will Clement

We have a choice, don't we? That we have a choice in that if we're authentic and honest that, the option there, Jonathan would be to say, I really don't, and I'm not sure I could give you this time.

And a really good quality kind of discussion right here, right now. I may be able to do that later, but right here I can't do that, but let's check back in later today or when I'm over mind and I think it's that, it's that honesty of approach. It's that if I give time to you right here, right now, Jonathan, I, and I'm not here in, in my mind yet, in body, what kind of a conversation is that going to be really?

Jonathan Darling

Yes. So it's having the mental space and being able to be there for that person. Sure. And doesn't Michael West talk about listening with fascination? Isn't that part of the idea behind these conversations we have with people that they're really there and interested?

Will Clement

Absolutely. I guess I supplement fascination with curiosity.

Jonathan Darling

Yeah,

Will Clement

I'm that deeper sense of. What do you want me to be as a leader now? Do you want me to be a sounding board or do you want me to act with responsibility and accountability? IE give direction and just asking really good quality questions of that individual want to maximize their time. Two, to provide a, a foundation and a context.

And if it is genuine curiosity coming from a great place of great leadership, then the other person will absolutely pick that all. And I think as leaders, every email, every keystroke, every phone call, every viewable behaviour is being watched. Somebody's viewing that. And what a question I often ask leaders is, what are they actually seeing?

Jonathan Darling

That's quite challenging. Every key, every keystroke.

Will Clement

Indeed.

Jonathan Darling

You talked a bit to me before we, we started this recording about emotional mastery.

Will Clement

Yeah.

Jonathan Darling

And how that fits in. Could you say a bit about what that involves and what, how that fits in with leadership?

## Will Clement

Yeah, sure. I think. Leadership aspects out at the moment.

Jonathan is emotional intelligence and there are four in, in my mind, four, four key aspects and there's some great writers out there, Daniel Goldman has written extensively about this. The first one is intrapersonal emotional intelligence. How aware am I of myself? How aware of my emotions am I, what do they mean to me and why?

Why am I having them? Do they give me confidence? Do they take confidence away? So that real deeper, it's almost attunement, really attuning yourself to you, which is why I always speak about that leadership, begins within. If I can tag these. Before this podcast, as you can imagine, John, that a low level anxiety about it, how am I gonna come across?

Am I gonna be able to answer, these, these searching questions through recognising that. I now have a tactic for dealing with that, and there's something I can do. So imagine going into a boardroom. Imagine going into a, a senior clinician meeting, for example, knowing and having a tactic for the emotions that you going to have.

Secondly, there's the in interpersonal emotional intelligence, you and I. So what am I noticing about you? Is it consistent? Do I feel there's something wrong? Are you a little more challenging today? So what kind of communication are we going to have? And I think there's a deep honesty in that as well.

Talked about honesty before with you just there, Jonathan. By asking one simple question, how are you really? Third part is environment. Where are we? I'm not a clinician, so I can't imagine what it's like in, in very tense situations like that. But I have had tense situations and sometimes that needs very clear direction based on experience. Sometimes that needs consultation. Sometimes that needs just a pause, just a moment in time. Now, if we put all these things together, I understand me. I can view you and your behaviour. I get the environment. I have a choice around my behaviour and how I act, and that's what I term behavioural mastery.

I will, I may get this wrong, I may get this right, but I think it is a competence and through noticing the three elements in intra, inter, the environment, I can then come to a quality decision about how do I want to behave in this moment.

## Jonny Guckian

We'll be right back after this short message.

(Music starts)

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Jonathan Darling

Maybe we could move on to think a bit about coaching because I'm really interested that you, there's a lot of what you do. And you're involved with coaching leaders in the NHS and the college, so can you say a bit about what, what is coaching? How does it differ from mentorship? How could it be useful to clinicians?

Will Clement

Sure. So the. You may come across coaching or executive coaching executive, the word executive itself just means professional coaching. And it separates itself out from life coaching or sports coaching, Jonathan. So when you hear executive coaching and coaching, they are generally the same thing.

So professional based coaching. So how it differs from mentoring is as a clinician yourself, Jonathan, we, with many years of experience, you'll be able to pass on to Resident doctors, for example, your experiences, and that comes from a place of deep competency and deep professionalism with coaching.

And the people I meet, certainly clinicians, 95% of the people are me for coaching. I know nothing about their specialty or their professionalism. I may have a hazy view of that. The difference is that I'm there to deeply listen. To a scenario, an issue, something they might like to solve, or even, how do I manage success and ask really pertinent questions around that. In terms of dealing with it, with it for themselves. It's always confidential. It's always almost contracted. So it's you and I in a very safe space where I as the coach, hold no judgment, no bias, and even if I have an opinion. I have to hold that back because I'm not a clinician, so I have no training in it whatsoever. So opinions, even my opinions don't matter. The quality of the questions do.

Jonathan Darling

When you say no training in the field of being a clinical doctor, but then you've got lots of training in how to be a coach.

Will Clement

Yes.

Jonathan Darling

Amongst when somebody's looking for a coach what would help them? Choose an appropriate person.

Yes. I guess there's lots of people out there that can do coaching.

Will Clement

Sure. And I guess why professionals, clinicians come to me is that because I don't know anything about their profession, so I don't have an opinion about their approach. So when looking for them, find that chemistry with them, are they good to talk to?

What are you looking for in a coach? Are you looking to be challenged? Are you looking for a sounding board? Now if you're looking for an opinion or benefit of experience, you need a mentor, not a coach. Okay? And there are lots and lots of people out there. Who do lots of jobs and then type coach at the end because they've done a one day training course on it.

I would always look for somebody who has a professional qualification. So I hold a level seven qualification by the Charter Management Institute. I'm also a seller of the Association for Coaching. That means 3000 hours of coaching actual face-to-face coaching, and 20 years within, within that field as well, Jonathan, so you wouldn't just go buy a car.

You would, you would test drive it. If they're reluctant to have a chemistry meeting, I would urge you to walk away. Any coach, any quality coach will, will have that meeting, which gives them the opportunity to say, actually, I'm not sure we're a good match either. And that's a positive thing. Look for high colleague qualifications, experiencing the executive coaching field.

Jonathan Darling

Great. When we were talking in advance, you suggested maybe we do a little bit of pretend coaching session.

Will Clement

Sure.

Jonathan Darling

And so I'm gonna pick a scenario that I think is quite common throughout our professional lives. Which is about whether we take on something extra, so we've got all the day job as you might call it, just delivering on that.

But then we think, should I do something additional? And this can be as in your resident years or as a consultant or whatever role you have in the system. So let's just pick being, I say I'm a resident and I'm coming to you as my coach. And, I'm really quite busy and I finished my exams, but it's, I've got some young family is quite demanding.

But I'm wondering, should I take on this let's say college role that I, I've been asked, would I be a representative on the trainees committee? Quite interested in that. I do think it would be good to make a difference in some of these areas around the residents. What they, what the experiences are what happens for training, but I've already got along, so how shall I make decisions here?

Will Clement

Yeah, sure. So given that scenario, I would move into a situation where well, deep honesty and say, is this something you can really take on right here, right now? Or is it something for the future? Then you'd receive that question. And if they say, yes, it is something I would like to do, what benefits do you believe you would receive from doing that?

How is that going to age you as a professional clinician in the future? And you say about helping others. In what way do you want to help others? How are we going to use your clinical experience in that environment to help others? The reason I ask those questions is we need clarity, Jonathan, because I meet a lot of people from all kinds of backgrounds who see something.

They think it's a great idea at the time. So what we try to do is give those decisions and that, that single thought, some longevity, how, what, where, when, who, and why. So we constantly going through these, scenarios and questions to ensure that if at the end of the session, and they're usually an hour, they're usually an hour, they've, we've talked about all kinds of scenarios.

If then they still believe, we then talk about next steps. So what is the next step in? Do you know anybody in there? Are you comfortable with the application process? Do you know anybody in there who, who could possibly help you or even mentor you with your application? What's your plan? How are you gonna move on?

And then what is the actual action you are going to take given any time? Let's say the application closes in a month. How are you gonna break that time up? What is that going to look like given that you are already very busy? Okay, so it's just about that. Are they, do they have that clarity? In their mind that yes, this is what I want to do, these are the reasons why I want to do it, and I believe I'm doing it because it's the right thing to do.

And that single phrase, there is the right thing to do. I think Encapsules leadership almost completely

Jonathan Darling

great. Yeah, so going back to my scenario, having this coaching session would allow me to unpack things and gain a clarity I might not reach if I just. Was thinking about it here and there in my day-to-day life, think, shall I do this?

I'm not sure. But by the end of this session, I might have some very clear actions that I could take, that I'd come to, but with your help through asking these very pertinent questions.

Will Clement

Indeed. So what we do then is we would leave some time and then we would engage in, in the next session about reflections.

So we'd bring that up to speed and then go what? What are your deeper reflections about this? And. What's changed for you since we last met? Because, circumstances happened and your job may have come along or emerged or home life may have changed any, and there's always something, there's always something.

Jonathan, we, which we can talk about. Did one of the key aspects of here is you get to reflect with somebody.

Jonathan Darling

And typically do people you work with. Do that for a series of sessions around a particular issue that they're addressing? Or is it more a long-term relationship that they see that as valuable to their old professional journey?

Will Clement

That's a great question. I and me personally, Jonathan I prefer the, I always offer three sessions, or six sessions now,

To the third session and go, I just need a little bit more worth. And then take on the six. The reason I stop after six is that once I had a scenario where we went into seven and eight and they said that to their manager, I can't make a decision without speaking to my coach.

That's not right. You then become a crunch, some people have coaches for years. I'm not a fan. I think there should be a break. I think it's important to let go now, if you came back, Jonathan, in three months and said, could just do with a couple of sessions. Absolutely. Because the it will have morphed and changed.

Your life will doesn't stand still, doesn't it? But equally between the sessions as well, Jonathan, that, things happen, a great coach should be able to be agile.

Jonathan Darling

Yeah,

Will Clement

not talk about what was, talk about what it is today, here and now between you and I

Jonathan Darling

Thank you that helps give us insights on the whole coaching thing.

And maybe we can move on as we're heading towards our, the end of our meeting. But I'm interested that you've had all this insight into the NHS and leadership through your work with people in lots of different roles. Without breaking any confidences, are you able to share a bit of what you've learned that might be helpful to all of us who are involved in any sort of leadership role?

Will Clement

Sure. It, yes, absolutely. What springs to mind a lot is that the greatest leaders I've met and have the pleasure of meeting reflect a lot, and they pause. Some of that comes from what is the right thing to do? But I think more than that is what, what I tended to see in the NHS and what I get asked a lot from people within the NHS is, am I allowed to do that?

There's almost a permission seeking aspect to leadership in that and am, my stock answer is always, do you believe it's the right thing to do for you, your team and the organisation? If they can answer yes to all those three, then. I am nobody to give permission. I just facilitate learning. I and he's fascinating.

It comes up almost every single program that you know, that I'll run. Will, would it be okay if I, and then we move into a very brief minutes of coaching, what do you believe through sake, that decision? Do you believe it? It's the right thing to do and yeah, I, you know it. If you can answer three questions.

Do you, is it right for you? Is it right for your team or department? Is it right for the organisation? It probably is.

**Jonathan Darling**

I like your lesson on reflecting and pausing and I, I'm sure it's right. I'm just thinking how do I do it better? 'cause I, I remember a long time ago I did this course on teaching and at the end of it there was a real encouragement to stop and reflect regularly on my teaching practice.

I have to confess, I haven't been as good as I'd hoped to be doing that. And it's just hard to carve out the times. What practically can we do to help us do that better and make the most of reflection? Taking a pause.

**Will Clement**

I think the first step is pause, Jonathan. He's just carving out that time you make,

**Jonathan Darling**

so what you put in your diary or what

**Will Clement**

potentially, potentially I find out what time of the day you really are alive. For me, it's five o'clock in the morning. I've always enjoyed early morning, so I get that exquisite hour between five and six, but there's no emails, there's no phone calls

to think about everything that's going on with me, and it's this single Luke reflection.

Am I doing things right? Then there's double loop learning, reflection. Am I doing the right thing? And I know I keep coming back to that phrase. And I think that is a difference in, in the levels of thinking that you can have. Of course, we want to do things right, so then we take a course of action to move towards that.

But I, am I doing the right thing? And what are the options? What are the potential other options? Do I need to have a sounding board? Do I need to talk to somebody, a peer, a manager, friend, about this? Because sometimes we put that expectation on our, on ourselves as leaders, Jonathan, and sometimes it's just too much and the weight of that decision potentially can lead us to a poor decision.

I think the greatest leaders ask questions that they seek out people from wherever they are in the organisation, as long as they're competent and professional. Consult and ask and understand ultimately it is their decision, but is it the right thing to do and is it, does it sit with your personal values?

Jonathan Darling

That's a great image of you reflecting with your, I dunno, it's cup of tea or whatever, but five in the morning. I'm not sure I'm gonna quite do that, but we'll all think what are our times when we can find that pause moment? And and ask some of those questions of ourselves. So Will, as we come to the end, any take home messages on leadership for clinicians?

Will Clement

Yeah, absolutely. Check in with yourselves, number one, and how are you doing? So that, that incident you had yesterday, have you got a plan to deal with it? How's it made you feel now And do you need a little bit of time to be able to quantify some of those kind of decisions or thoughts even Jonathan?

And the second one there is take that pause and it will save you time in the future 'cause a bad decision will cost you hours. A great decision well made with that aspect of pausing there. It's not only efficient, but it's highly effective as well. So check in with yourself, take the time to pause.

Jonathan Darling

Those are great messages to finish on. So Will, thanks so much for sharing your wisdom and your experience around leadership and coaching. It's been really great to talk.

Will Clement

Thank you, Jonathan. I've really enjoyed that. It has been a true privilege. Thank you.

(Music fades in)

Voiceover

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(Music fades out)