

## Where Do You Get Inspiration - Transcript

Welcome back I'm Kim Baillie and she's Fulyana Orsborn and you're listening to Inside Exec. Today, we're going to talk about dreams and inspiration. We're going to share with you the dreams and the goals that inspired us on our journeys through our careers.

I remember when I was very young. I always was very hungry and fascinated by travel and meeting people. I guess that's because I grew up in the city which was totally dependent on tourism and the fact that my father was in tourism as well. That was something that was huge back then, like travel our circumstances and that it seems like a dream that would never ever take shape. I still was very attracted to travel and one day as you will recall or some of you would in the sixties man landed on the moon and there's Neil Armstrong and he's on the moon. I suddenly thought, this is massive. This is like something nobody could have ever ever thought of and now it's happened. So if this major thing can happen, then my little dream is possible. So that's how it all started.

What Fulyana has carefully neglected to tell you is the part of this story where she used to get into trouble for talking to all of these visitors, who would stay with the aunties at least during Christmas and asking them ten thousand questions about who they were, where they lived and what it was like. For those of you who know Fulyana, you and I know that hasn't really changed.

Yes, I see that as being super inquisitive and hungry to learn.

Those sorts of inspiration happen early in our lives and I guess we don't see them as inspiring or as goals that we want to achieve. It's just something that fills us with passion and fills us with enthusiasm. So perhaps, as we get older, we start to not recognize the signals that provide us with that same sort of enthusiasm and passion and we don't recognize that feeling is associated with us, maybe unconsciously or subconsciously, seeking a goal or being inspired by something.

When I look back on my early years as well as my working life, there would have to be instances every year of things that have inspired me. Things that have filled me with a desire to be able to achieve at a particular level. Sometimes it's just straight recognition. I want to win this medal, this ribbon, this prize. I want to be the best. I want to be top of the class and it's all about self-gratification. But I think that we also find inspiration in other people achieving and certainly that's the case for me at the moment. I've got a couple that I have mentored for some

considerable time now and I have seen them completely change their lifestyle around so that they have become world class athletes certainly with the potential to compete at a world championships in their chosen sport. And that in fact, he of the couple has now qualified three times for the World Championships. I think he's going to make sure that every race, is a qualifier for him so that he can go to World Championships knowing that he's absolutely qualified to compete at that level.

The sense of achievement that I feel is obviously not to the same degree that they do, but I am inspired and I am thrilled for them and I do feel pleasure in the achievements, that both of them have found by pursuing goals that we identified for them very early in their training and yes, I used the goals word.

The goals that we sent for them were very specific. And they've been able to attain those and they in turn are inspired by other athletes and not just athletes.

My inspiration in a work sense, in the corporate sense, I sort of always knew I wanted to work in the office type of environment as distinct from a trade or anything like that. When I started work, I really didn't know what exactly I wanted to do. I didn't know where I want to end up but I have been exceptionally fortunate in that other people could see things that I could do that I really truly couldn't see in myself and in some cases they forced me to go into positions. I remember the first time somebody got me out of my first job and into the second. One has said to me, this is not about you. You grow up and you listen to me. We need you in that role. We need you because you can do it, so get up there and do it.

Now that at the time was just the way leadership worked, but wasn't I the lucky one to have received that because after I did it, I realized that there were some skills there that I didn't think I had. Fortunately, again, I did well at that job and it went from there. My career has been changing all the time, which is really good because I really, really hate labels. I hate somebody, I very much respected specialization, don't get me wrong, but I hate somebody to say a label - you're good at this and you can only do this. As I said, I've been very very fortunate that people helped me that way and now I'll try to help other people to say, what is the harm in trying. If you think that you've done a great job in where you are now and you have a passion and you have a desire to do well at another role, give it a go. Start off small, if you like, but start off by working on the project in the area, by having a secondment to that area, give it to go and then decide. Don't sabotage yourself by saying I can't and I wont and no, I'm not good enough because somebody else is better than me. I learned that the hard way and I

most certainly advise people to help each other, but also to give themselves a fair go.

Does that then mean that you are inspired by the confidence that others have in you to do this task that you hadn't considered? And because you are inspired by this confidence from other people, you then set yourself goals that you want to achieve to repay them for the confidence that they had found in you?

Very much so and I don't know if I did it consciously, to be honest, I did it because it's the way it felt right at the time. I also remember later in my career in a senior role, when again, it happened again, and I almost did it again, said, well, no, no, no, I couldn't possibly do that job as well as I would like to and as well as you think I can. Then my boss at the time said, well, I know that you will do a good job and go give it a go. And I said to him on one condition, that if I find that I'm not happy with my performance, even if you are, I'm going to pull out. And then he says well that's ridiculous because I think we both know that if I was it would be based on fact and on performance and on outcomes, but if that makes you feel any better, go for it. So I felt a bit stupid having said it but I went and did it and based on facts and measurements KPIs and all the rest of it, I was happy that yes, I stretched myself, I've learned more, I gave more and I moved on to something bigger.

Even within that period of time where you were unsure of the extent of your capabilities, you still set yourself goals.

The goals were always based on measurement. How am I going to grow? Which meant, in some cases I decided I want to go and get another degree or another certificate, or go to certain conference, I build that in because that gave me more confidence in that I have the backing as well as the experience, the hands on.

So we can see that you can be inspired to identify goals that you want to achieve. If we take that out of the equation and you just look at goals, do goals have to be inspiring?

Goals can be inspiring like my goal to travel, that's a goal and it's a big one and it's exciting and all the rest of it. But it goals can be small. For me to get to travel, I need to save a number of dollars and in the early part of my career when you're buying a house and all that sort of thing, that was a huge goal. You have to find ways. So set a goal and that goal will inspire you to find how to satisfy the goal. So if you need more money, what would you do? Would you do another role, would you do different role? Would you do two jobs, whatever it is to save those

extra dollars. So you'll find a way.

Do you think that they are always interlinked, there always has to be a goal, always has to have some degree of inspiration?

Inspiration most of the time but evil necessity other times. So tell which one is easier, which one more sustainable for where you want to go? Well they both are going to get you to there, which is the endpoint if you like and they both get you this. So, you know, that I have to do that because then I'll be happy because I did what I said, I wanted to do, which is in this case, travel.

So if you're faced with mundane, routine activities that lead you to a goal that has been identified, that can be achieved, how do you make it inspirational?

I guess, the first thing you do is ask, how does it help? What does it contribute towards? In other words, even on the day-to-day basis when you're doing a job and you think this is really really boring, what you do makes my staff happy, my clients happy, it's going to make life easier, whatever it is. So it's boring, it's tedious, but it has a purpose. And if you can't find a purpose, if it doesn't help anyone or anything, then you've got to question why is it being done?

So if we look at what inspires us and keep it completely separate from goals, should there be things that are inspiring us every day, or is inspiration a long activity?

It's both and it's in between as well. So it depends on what it is. Let's say that by next week you want to lose weight. And then you say OK, my inspiration is to lose weight by next week. My goal is to achieve this and so it can be incremental towards the big question. Inspiration might be what keeps you going, added incentive to keep working at something that might otherwise not be achievable.

Inspiration is also not necessarily always planned. For example, you come across a person and a behavior by a person. You think this person, whatever the circumstances, whatever corner of the world and they managed to achieve this. That's so inspirational. It makes you put things in perspective. It makes you redefine your targets, your goals, whatever you want to call them, and you learned from that.

Inspiration comes from without. So broader than me, broader than my immediate environment, broader than my work environment and inspiration comes from elsewhere and that in being exposed to something else that I find outstanding or

impressive, my reaction to that inspiration is to do better at what I'm doing, not for any perceived goal, but just because it adds a dimension of excitement about living that might not otherwise be the case.

You see that inspiration also comes from not just success. At work you come across many, many people of different stages of their careers, different age groups, different gender and inspiration from multiples of those because it's the way they may have handled a setback, it might be a way they actually didn't let things get to them and got on with things. It's the way, they may not be the top of the company, but it's the way they conduct themselves and sometimes it's just that consistency of being true to your, sorry, but I have to say it, values. You're allowed to use one word from The Blacklist in every podcast. Good.

I learned a lot from graduates that came to the organization, the way they viewed the world, the way they wanted to do things, the way they responded to things, the way they hungered to learn. I learned a lot from middle managers. I learned a lot from top managers. I learned a lot from everybody around me who inspires me in a different way, only because of a particular thing they did or particular way they behaved. I'd think, I hope when I'm in that situation I will be as good as that.

So in an organisational sense then, are we as managers responsible for providing inspiration or should our teams be looking personally for inspiration? I think it's both. I don't think anybody has a monopoly on inspiration. Inspiration, as I just said, is not a top down and bottom up. I think that it is, it is a bit like when you talk about success sharing, a group or a team, had done something really really well and they share that. So a sales team might have used a method or a way or something that helped their customers and increased productivity and sales. And so you share that and then you share it with other countries and other countries say, you know, it's actually doesn't work here, but elements of it might. And that is inspirational.

Interesting because my next question was going to be about should we share what inspires us? In thinking about the question I did remember that there are quite a number of websites that just provide daily inspirational quotes and really they are more about motivation. I don't think they're about inspiration. Some are motivational and some, say if it's a topic you never really thought about, can be inspirational.

So then, what is the difference in organizational terms about motivation and inspiration? They're interrelated. You might be inspired by something, so then

you're motivated to go and do something. It's interesting that we do tend to interchange the terms without necessarily understanding what we mean when we say them and that could well be confusing. You know, if you've got a team that you're trying to bring around to a more positive outlook, the words that we use need to mean something to them and so motivation, I just don't think it has the same sort of positive reinforcement as inspiration. Motivation to me is about something, get motivated. It implies a coming from a really negative point and you haven't done anything about a particular situation. Whereas inspiration is more of that, I'm going to overachieve, go beyond what I've been doing.

Interesting observation, I guess. I hadn't really thought about comparing the two. You're inspired by somebody, for example, changing careers at the time when most people think it's retirement time, in your seventies or something, relocating to another country, build your own business or whatever. You look at that and you think, that's inspirational. It's also motivational, I can use the word when it drives you to think, well I don't necessarily want to restart, but I want to do with this other thing and that drives me to do it. I can certainly relate to that because when I was at the stage of finishing High School, up to that point, all of my focus, all I had done, all of my family's expectations were around achieving a career in medicine. I hadn't really thought about it other than that was just what was expected and that was where I was headed and didn't put much effort into thinking about it, I have to be honest.

Then I went as an exchange student to Carmel By the Sea in California, which I encourage you all to visit because it hasn't changed in all of those years. I was inspired by this town. I was so inspired by the way the town was laid out and planned and the plans that they had for the town itself and how it was going to be populated and how it's going to be developed and having seen it in those ensuing years, I know that all of that plan came to fruition regardless of who was in charge. That was inspirational for me. I came back and I didn't apply for medicine. I applied for architecture, which was probably as far away from medicine as you could get without having to do engineering, which I didn't consider. I was always very happy and comfortable with that choice and it wasn't until my family saw this town that they understood the decision that I had made.

I guess, I would say dream, as big or as small as you want. Your dreams can come true, there mightn't be a very, very easy path to your dreams, but there are ways to achieve that dream and I think if you're ever stuck in, this is not going to happen, you look at what other people achieved. When you look at Martin Luther King saying "I have a dream", that somebody would have said at that time, that's a lovely dream but isn't going to happen and it did happen and I really think that

you look at those things and you say alright then I am going to be determined to follow that and the dream and make it happen. Making it happen will have commitments, continue with passion it. Make sure that you put some goals against it and those can be incremental and reach what you want to do. Don't let anyone stop you dreaming. Don't let anyone stop you believing that you will achieve what you want because it's only you have to convince yourself.

And that's really important that when you think about the difference between Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" or the alternatives that he could have said - "I wish things were this way". It's a very big difference between dreaming and wishing things. Dreaming means that you're going to make a commitment to make it happen. Wishing implies that you're hoping for someone else to help you along this path and you've really got to rely on yourself to achieve your dreams.

So with that very sombre ending we might say that that's it for this time around. I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec.