

# Audacious Inclusion with Caroline Casey (Transcript)

## PODCAST

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**Chris Congdon:** Our guest today – Caroline Casey – spent a good part of her life hiding her true self. When she finally opened up to the world – amazing things happened. We loved our conversation with her so much – we want you to hear all of it. Learn how her story started when she was inspired by the Disney movie *The Jungle Book*, how she found herself on elephant-back in India, and how she started an inclusion revolution in the workplace.

Welcome to Season 3 of *Work Better*, a Steelcase podcast where we think about work and ways to make it better. I'm your host Chris Congdon alongside our producer Rebecca Charbauskki.

**Rebecca Charbauskki:** Hi Chris – I think anyone who listens to Caroline is going to instantly be inspired by her. It's especially interesting right now given some of our new global research – which really surprised us – in a good way.

**CC:** Exactly. We've tracked attitudes about the workplace and what's most important to employees and leaders for years. In our latest study – we asked global leaders in 11 countries: What workplace issues are most important in the year ahead. What they said was: Employee wellbeing, diversity, equity and inclusion, and sustainability.

**RC:** These topics aren't new. But they always lived further down the list of choices leaders need to make – things that were important, but not as urgent. Now that's changed.

**CC:** Yes. So this conversation with Caroline – and this entire season actually is filled with guests who are making a positive impact on the wellbeing of people and our planet. Rebecca, can you give us a little more background on what led us to Caroline?

**RC:** Absolutely. Caroline is an Irish activist and management consultant that just so happens to be legally blind. She leads the Valuable 500 – which Steelcase is proud to be a part of. The Valuable 500 is a partnership of 500 of the most influential organizations in the world that have made a commitment to work to end disability exclusion.

We also would love to ask our audience to share this episode with a friend or colleague. It's such a great one.

**Chris Congdon:**

She has an amazing story. Caroline joins us from France. Thank you so much for joining us today, Caroline.

**Caroline Casey:**

Thanks a million for having me. It is a real pleasure.

**CC:** We know that people are listening to us obviously because we're on a podcast and even though you and I can see each other on video in the spirit of inclusivity I'm just going to tell the audience that I am a woman with fair colored skin and I have dark brown short wavy hair and I'm wearing my favorite red glasses because they make me happy. What about you?

**Caroline Casey:** I'm so happy you do audio description! I am an Irish woman with very fair hair. I'm going to be 52. I have very quite blond hair, just beyond shoulder length. I'm wearing a bright orange t-shirt. I have my second favorite pair of glasses which are big thick rimmed black glasses. I also have kind of blue eyes that shake a lot.

**CC:** I love your glasses, I have to say.

**Caroline Casey:**

I love yours actually, but I like red glasses. I used to have a pair of pink glasses in the Barbie theme for a long time but nothing to do with Barbie, but I loved them. I've lost them and I'm in search of them again. I love a color pair of glasses.

**CC:** Oh that's so frustrating! Caroline, I'm really excited to talk to you today because I've had a chance to read and learn a little bit about what you're doing. But for people who don't know your backstory, could you just take a few minutes and tell people about you and the journey that you've been on to get to where you are now?

**Caroline Casey:**

I think I'll give you some highlights. Also, I'm Irish and I probably talk too much so you're going to have to tell me to stop.

**CC:**

I'm sure everyone will be interested!

**Caroline Casey:**

Well, there's the things that I do and there's the person that I am, and the person that I am is very much like most of us, comes from where we came from. I was born in 1971 in Dublin and I'm the eldest of 3 children. I have two parents who I think were slightly eccentric for sure and my father was like a six foot 6 – we used to call him a gentle giant. He had size fifteen feet and big hands. He was an entrepreneur and they were both black sheep, so they went about their life very differently. I grew up in that environment and I had these sort of dreams as a child. I think that were very much normal in my family. I was going to go be a cowgirl and I was going to race cars and motorbikes. And I was going to be Mogli from the jungle book because I'd seen The Jungle Book when I was 6 in a tiny little cinema in a county in Ireland and I went through life thinking I was pretty much the same as any other kids except for my wild, strange ambitions. So, when you finish school and everybody has these things you're going to do – are you going to go to university? Are you going to go and be an apprentice? What are you going to do? I was not going to university. I wanted to go traveling because it was the most of all the things I wanted. It just happened on my seventeenth birthday that I was at an eye specialist. I have gone to an eye specialist or an eye consultant all my life because I had been accompanying my sister and she has had a rare eye condition. It was in this eye consultant's office on my seventeenth birthday that I found out I had the exact same condition as my sister, which is ocular albinism and, although I know I grew up not knowing because of my parents, in their eccentric way had made a decision – when they were deciding what school to send me to – they decided to send me to a mainstream school because I have about a foot and a half vision and they wanted me not to be labeled or limited by other people's perceptions of my sight. My vision would not be compromised because of other people's view of what sight is, and so they brought me up as a sighted child. I had no idea. I wear glasses of course like we just talked about glasses but they don't fix my sight. I have 6-60 vision. I was too young and too immature and too ill-informed to understand what I was about to do. What I did was I had decided I got to 17 without knowing that I had a condition that was going to change the way people viewed me, so I decided to hide it. It was my choice and I went into what I call the disability closet where I remained very successfully. One of my most successful attributes for 11 years. I did that to a variety of careers – an archaeologist, a masseuse, traveling around the world, all the things – a landscape gardener and eventually ended up with Accenture, a management consulting firm, as a change management consultant and I didn't tell them. I got away with it very successfully for two and a half years and just at the turn of the century – which is a great way to say just as we went into the year 2000 – I tumbled out to the disability closet. For the first time in my life ...

**CC:** What made you tumble out of the closet?

**Caroline Casey:** Well, the tumbling out of the closet is you know, I'm often well known to say, I mean I love Maya Angelou for many reasons, but her quote, "There's no greater agony than an untold story inside you," I think that's what it was. I mean we could talk about lots of other academic reasons why it was hard. There were lots of reasons. But what was really hard was trying to be somebody that I wasn't. Hiding what I might need so I could belong, because I think we all want to belong and a complete misconception of what living with the sight impairment was – and actually I really didn't like myself anymore. I'm high energy. I'm generally known as a very positive person. I have my heart on my sleeve. I had been brought up really not to ever ask for help. You know it was always like we're truckers in the Caseys – you know we truck on. And I just didn't know how to unravel the lie that I had got into. I think I just was starting to just – I didn't know myself and I think that's that there's sometimes it happens in your life that you can do nothing but do what you do and that's when I did come out of the closet. I went to see the head of HR and, I mean it's a joke, but it's true – I said 'I can't see you right now' and she said 'Don't worry, we'll reschedule the appointment.' I was like no no, no, I really can't see you.' And that is what began a lifetime of nearly daily disclosure of my vision because if you were to see me. There is nothing to tell you or indicate to you, other than my eyes that shake, that I can't see you because I have learned – absolutely I'm a ninja – at managing to look like I can see perfectly because I had no other way. It's how I have to do it. So, yeah, and that's now, oh my gosh, 23 years ago. And there's so much that came after it. But that's the backstory of me I guess and the person that I am is that I'm a big heart person. I love seeing things change. I believe in every human being having their own dignity and ability to rock their beautiful self. I love dancing, photography. I love architecture which is strange for somebody visually impaired. I love nature. I love the sea. I swim around Ireland, which is very cold. I love magic. I believe and I'm gutsy and I have a fierce heart and I'm a bit of a rebel. So I might not sit on the motorbike. But I think I live it out in lots of other ways.

**CC:** I just watched your Ted talk with my dog curled up – my big goldendoodle at 100 pounds who's terrified while there's a thunderstorm going on while we watched it, but I was amazed watching you move around the stage. I never would have known watching how you navigated the stage that you weren't sighted. I mean I just thought that was amazing. But then from that point you went on to do something that I thought was also pretty amazing. Maybe you did it before that. But you rode across India on an elephant right? What made you do that, like talk about that Mogli.

**Caroline Casey:** Well, how could you be Mogli? I'm not a boy. I didn't grow up in the jungle of India but, I mean, I truly – when I say I love creativity and art – it drives my heart. There's no doubt. And I love animation. So to this day I love the Jungle Book and I'm also a massive lover of Jim Henson's the Muppets. That Ted talk was about 9 years after I rode the elephant and you know it was actually at a very strange point in my life that we can... you can never know who's on the stage right? You never know. I guess it's like what we see on Instagram. But I was very scared that day and you heard my voice shake a lot. Because the elephant trip was my first chance of really being myself and it happened within a year after me disclosing to Accenture that I had a vision problem. They sent me to a doctor and that doctor said "hey lady you know what's your problem? Just go get yourself a white cane. And then he asked me what I wanted to be when I was a kid and he asked me was I happy and I mean I hadn't done therapy then and I do I haven't done it since, but I realized I really wasn't loving what I was and I'm not joking but it was that day as I left his office that I have this kind of radical thought: Well I have to take some time off to help my eyes. What did I want to be when I was a child and so I want to be Mogli from the Jungle book and I'd always loved elephants and somehow in the way the universe does conspire when you're supposed to do something. And then all of a sudden I had this idea: I could become Mogli by becoming an elephant handler because there's this great scene in Mogli with the elephants and so then – no joke – eight months later I found myself in southern India with my forehead on the forehead of an elephant called Kanchi who became mine at the end with the national Geographic camera behind me. I had no idea what I was about to do. I had no idea what it was going to mean in my life. It's just my heart and my fear that brought me to that place and I rode across southern India for four and a half months and I believe I'm the only western woman to do a journey like that. And I trained as a Mahout. It started my whole disability activist career. I mean it's an extraordinary thing. My greatest life's teacher was that elephant. Yeah, you can't hide from an animal.

**CC:** I'm just at a bit of a loss for words which doesn't happen to me often. Just to hear what that experience must have been like for you is – it's kind of mind boggling you know. The fear that you had to just get over. But then as you've gone on in your career...

**Caroline Casey:** The fear of it was the fear of not doing it, Chris. That was more than the fear of doing it and that is the absolute truth. Did you know that in this world it certainly was easier to get on an elephant in India than to get on a bus in Ireland as a visually impaired person? So it's like there comes points in our lives and because everything about all of these conversations that we have and about how we create impact in our worlds – you can only truly create I believe meaningful impact, healthy impact, when you're being yourself, you know? From that moment I got off that elephant the whole of Ireland certainly were like oh my gosh you know albino irish woman on elephant. Actually the media were fascinated. That's really what introduced me to the scale of the enormity of the problem. Of disability exclusion globally and realizing for myself going, "Oh my gosh I unconsciously discriminated by not owning my own identity and not being proud of it was just who I was and so there was a lot of shame attached to it. There's been a lot of atonement. And then also a lot of joy. A lot of joy because if I learned one thing on that elephant is, what would have happened in my life if I hadn't?

**CC:** Well, one of the things that might not have happened – you’ve gone on to found the valuable 500. Can you tell us first of all what that is? And I’m also really intrigued by why you chose that name of all the names that you could have chosen versus like disability warriors or something like that. You chose the valuable 500 but tell us what the organization is.

**Caroline Casey:** Well it was born out of a lot of frustration because when I came off the elephant, I started into this work immediately. I wanted to be part of ending global exclusion. I’m very specifically disability exclusion and, from the outset from the very beginning I truly believed that business has a significant role to play. It’s one of the most powerful forces on our planet and a CEO can create change in moments that a politician never can because of fear of not being reelected. So, I’ve always believed in that, right? But I also believe in the power of brands and I believe in the employees in the business who are also consumers who are also voters. But within that is just so much power. And I don’t want disability to be framed in charity and worthy and pity and value and inspire. Don’t get me wrong. But so many people are inspiring. You don’t have to have a disability to be inspiring and I think some of that, all of that kind of mix was just... I’ve really felt the focus area I could put was to truly get business to see the value. Here’s the name coming from the value of people with disabilities and their families which is 54% of our global economy and not because you want to feel good about yourself. But because of the insight and innovation and spending power and just the huge fabric that it brings to our humanity and we’ll all be disabled at some point so that was kind of my presence. So I believed in business. I believed in the value of people with disabilities. I totally believe in the power of Brand. I believe completely in the power of collectives like strong collectives. But mostly I totally believe that if you have a CEO at the top of a business. If that CEO abdicated their responsibility of inclusion, sorry, it’s just going to be heroic actions of individuals within the business and it’ll never change. It systemically will never change. It’ll just be somebody’s passion project and I always believe that CEOs in the shadow and the light of a leader. You know that leaders make choices and those choices create culture and everybody had left that aside and for years from the moment I got off that I from 2001 that is the place I’ve been working. And what happened is and believe me we had huge success. That’s why when I was on the TED stage I had a huge failure. That’s why my heart was beating but Valuable was created for two solid reasons. One is that my heart was broken because I hadn’t seen accelerated change within the business community at that time. Disability was somewhere on the sidelines of the diversity and inclusion agenda. At that time it was generally just about one or two areas but not ever disability, and despite our success nothing had changed and the second one was that my heart was absolutely broken because my father had died.

**CC:** Oh, I’m so sorry.

**Caroline Casey:** At the close of 2016, he had known that in the back of my mind I had always wanted to go big like I'd always wanted to challenge the world in our uncomfortable thinking and to create a global campaign of 500 of the world's biggest companies and CEOs to radically transform how we see disability in business and I wanted to cause an inclusion revolution and it was a few days before he died and he pulled him in really close to him and he just said what are you waiting for? When you see somebody that you love leave – somebody who has been a huge part of your life – I think you get, if you're lucky, a moment to re-examine and the heartbreak and the anger of grief is what drove the Valuable 500 to existence which now is the world's biggest business partnership. I use that word partnership with very great emphasis. There's nothing like us in the world of 500 companies and their CEOs who work together to end disability exclusion and to drive system change, and to build it in the first place. Chris can I just tell you I had no money. I had to remortgage my house. I mean I rode across Colombia on a horse to find our chairman Paul Polman. My heart was broken in so many different ways and I launched it from one of the most important stages in the world which was the world economic forum in Davos. And people used to roll their eyes. You know they used to go, "Ah, bless her!"

**CC:** My jaw just dropped there for a minute because the next question I was just dying to ask you is how did you approach your first CEO to start getting some momentum and then the next thing you're at Davos like, how did that happen?

**Caroline Casey:** If you want to make big change happen, you've got to be audacious. You can't do this small and for me if you want to get 500 of the world's biggest CEOs and anybody can see on our website like we've got the biggest in the business, I have learned over the years that I had been working with business that you want to get the best platform. I'd learned from the stage in TED platforms matter. Get a really good brand behind you and I shared a stage with Sheryl Sandberg. She was the COO of Facebook at the time I was on my TED talk. I saw the power of a leader with a brand that everybody wanted to be with on a stage that everybody looked at so that's how it was. It was that formula. It was going right? I need to get to the main stage of Davos. And I need a leader, a business leader with a brand behind them that will make others follow. I needed my first follower and my first follower was the phenomenal Paul Polman who was the CEO of Unilever who I had ridden across Columbia on a horse to go capture his attention because everybody kept me away from him. Because I'm known to generally eventually get what I need and so he said okay and he said what do you need and I said you get me the main stage of Davos and he did and it was amazing. Honestly, I left Davos in 2019 with 10 companies. We had Julie Sweet of Accenture, Satya Nadella of Microsoft. We had Richard Branson of Virgin. I got to tell you it took us 2 years and three months to build but there is nothing like us in the world for any issue. Can you believe that? Not for climate, not for gender, not for race. And we represent 22,000,000 employees, 64 sectors 42 headquarter countries, \$23 trillion in market cap. I mean 22,000,000 employees.

**CC:** Yeah, it's extraordinary. Those statistics are just mind boggling on their own. I'm also really interested in the leaders themselves because you know I understand and I think this was in your trend report that business leaders, major organizations, you may have something in common in terms of like audacity and bold things but that a lot of business leaders may have disabilities that they don't talk about, but they're starting to share those things. Can you just tell me a little bit more about that? Why is it important that a leader discloses those kinds of things?

**Caroline Casey:** It's everything. I mean firstly 80% of disabilities occur between the ages of 18 and 64 – eighty percent of ability is invisible. So don't tell me there isn't disability in our C-suite. Of course there is. What we discovered was 7% of our CEOs, 7% have a lived experience of disability but 4 out of 5 do not disclose. Like I didn't 20 years ago now. What does that say about what's so loaded behind our understanding about disability? So everything with the Valuable 500 I've been asked. How did you get them? How did you get those CEOs and how do we keep them? Which is important because we operate with our heads and our hearts. Don't ever think if you look at our logo. It has a V for valuable and the heart and the V is that it's – it's the statistics. It's the business case. It's the data around why this is essential for business and society. But the heart is about the human being in it and when a CEO openly speaks about their disability, it transforms the way that people in their company speak about disability. And we have seen this again and again and again. So when Richard Branson now speaks about his dyslexia as a superpower – when you hear many of our CEOs talking about it I mean we have this incredible disclosure this year when a woman who is at the top of the food chain had no idea she was going to do it, disclosed about being deaf. Her people didn't know. So she is the head partner and she spoke about it so what happens then is because the big issue around ability is that our companies don't realize that there's anything between 10 to 12% of the teams are hiding a lived experience. Let alone if they've got a family member and so you're asking, why is it important the CEO speaks? Because they create the culture. That allows people to know it's ok for you to be here and have those things. You asked me at the beginning, why did I choose the name Valuable 500. Because I truly believe in the value of every human experience. This isn't disabled. People are not more valuable than anybody else. But we're also not less than or damaged. We're not a higher risk to you than anything else. We are valuable. All of us are and those stories are valuable and the 500 companies that we asked to do this, I want you to normalize disability in your business as customers and suppliers and talents and members of the community. But let's start this. Let's stop this.

**CC:** Let's talk more about the employees. I know you've also done research on this and this idea that people – this craziness because it's crazy and that people don't want to use the word – who have disabilities feel less happy at work or they feel like work negatively impacts their mental and their physical state. Not every disability is one that you can hide as easily – some of it's very visible. Can you talk a little bit about the impact on employees in terms of being in situations where either they feel compelled to hide or they feel like their work is problematic in terms of you know them just being healthy and who they are.



**Caroline Casey:** I see I can speak to this very personally, to disclose is a very personal choice. But I want to talk about the damage when you don't disclose. I think Harvard did a huge piece of research about the cost. What they call covering and this is not just about disability. It could be about your sexual preference. It could be about living with cancer. We don't know but the cost of productivity which is a horrible way to talk about is about 30% but when you're covering a significant experience of yours and I know this because I see it and I hear it all the time, you're not giving your very best. You can't be the best leader. You can't be the best partner. You can't be the best friend because if you're not being yourself, you're putting energy into trying to be something else just so you can fit in. I don't want to fit in. I want to uniquely myself as I want for everybody and then on the other side and this is what happened when we did the trend report and research is to say you know it's extraordinary. The amount of people with disabilities who do not feel supported or are comfortable in their work environment and a lot of that is because they are not disclosing. Because they're frightened of getting caught. What will it mean if I tell you but look how well they must be doing in the jobs anyway, right without even asking and if and I don't believe on the whole that people if you asked for help in a business are going to say no. If you're already succeeding, don't you think I mean look at what people do against all the odds so to create an environment where you might be able to succeed is just a no-brainer and when I think about myself isn't it extraordinary that when I finally came out of the closet. Look what happened to my life, look at all the potential that I could have wasted but the most important thing is you know it's maybe taken me this long but I'm 52 years old and I think I'm okay, it's taken me a long time. It didn't just come out of the closet. It wasn't just building Valuable 500, it's finding a way to know that I might be okay, just as I am enough and valuable as I am and cultures that we live in and the people that we're around really affect that.

**CC:** I want to ask you for your thoughts about inclusive design. We spend a lot of time thinking about that. How the physical environment can communicate things to people. Certainly in terms of accessibility. But just what the physical space says about the culture and the organization. I'm interested in what you think about that and are there any organizations that you've seen where you go they are doing that really well. They're really thinking about that in a smart way.

**Caroline Casey:** I think we're all really at the very beginning of this journey. I mean maybe not just at the beginning because universal design or inclusive design or design for all has been around a long time as we know, and I think once again. It's kind of obvious don't you think Chris like there's 8 billion of us on the planet. One design way is not going to solve it for everybody. I mean it's so obviously ... and do I love it .. do I love when this question is asked yes because how do we make it happen? It's when any company is designing a product, a service, an initiative, make sure you have the diversity of thinking experience right at the outset so that we design in inclusion, we design in belonging, and we're seeing that now. We're seeing great advances. I believe in digital universal design, in digital accessibility, because actually since Covid particularly we've all been living through our screens right? So we're seeing the importance of that and it's not just about disability. It's about language and many things. It's important to accept that governments have put laws in place to say we need to have physical buildings to a standard but like we're not here for compliance. Compliance is a dirty word right? We should be here for something more and particularly we're talking about business. Why would you keep business out of your places of profit? I don't understand it. There's a few that I love. We know the big tech ones are investing so much in it and that's fantastic. But I remember saying you know what? Netflix honestly it was one of those first kind of wow moments you know that captioning was there right. Then they had to do it and they have so that's amazing to see and then starting to see the content on Netflix you start looking at this disability programming right? So that's an accessible mindset stuff. AirBnB. I'm currently staying in the south of France in an Airbnb and we do not go and look at any airbnb unless we look at all the accessibility features. We're just making a point to myself and my husband and our 2 dogs and it just gives me.... I mean it's delightful. You know. Came in. It's a farmhouse. It's in the middle of nowhere. Chris I'm in the middle of a field and they have truly a ramp going up into the farmyard. They have a ramp going into their yard so that everybody will be able to share the same experience as a family. Have you heard of the sunflower lanyard if you go into retail. Yeah so it happens in airports and it can happen in um, big supermarkets you can put a lanyard on that has a sunflower and what that indicates to the teams is that you're somebody with an invisible disability and you'd like help. So the team is trained to come up to you and say what do you need now for somebody like me, amazing because I can't see toothpaste from I don't know garden weed killer. So there's some of the things in it and what it takes is I believe it takes once again, the leadership of the company and the business saying, "team go do it and be thoughtful and know it's never going to end and it's going to take us to be curious and it's going to take us to ask questions and we're going to get it wrong thousand times. But every time we get it wrong, we'll get 1 step closer.

**CC:** If you ah if you gave some key recommendations to leaders if we have leaders listening right now and you were to say to them do these three things or whatever choose your number that that you think are really important to focus on being a more inclusive workplace, what would those things be?

**Caroline Casey:** Number 1 tell your story to be a vulnerable role model. For example, you know again, leaders make choices, the choices create the culture. So tell your story. Whatever your story is to where you were vulnerable. What your experience was. Number 2 is to be accountable and that is to admit, you don't know and then go seek help. That's the most important part. So if there's an area that you don't know about around inclusion, go ask. And be very clear that you don't know because you don't have to know but be responsible right for putting in targets and measurable outcomes because impact is not going to happen unless you have the courage to say okay I don't know. Where are we today? Take a quick check of where you are and then go out and set targets, make them small at the beginning but start at least start. The third thing in a business is talk to your people, talk to your people because they're the ones who know the experience and this is why we are very supportive employee resource groups around lots of different issues. It can be around disability. It could be people who love stamp collecting but you know encourage that because and then go out and ask how do you want this company to turn out and be inclusive. What is it that you want to demonstrate? So for me, it's again, it's a combination of stats like putting the reporting .... I don't care how bad your reporting is ... have the courage to report, set goals. There's the hard line. The targets. Go seek the information but then the stories. Be a human being. For at least now human beings run business I'm not sure for how long with AI. But for now we're designed for and by to serve humans.

**CC:** I am a big supporter of humans and human generated content materials, so I put in my vote for that one! Okay, Caroline I have to ask you one last question that we've been asking all of our guests this season and I find it kind of difficult to ask because just talking to you I feel like you've already answered it. But if you had to pick one person, one group, one event, one moment, one thing that you think has just really made an impact on people or the planet and what would it be? I know that's hard. That's like asking you to choose your favorite movie of all time.

**Caroline Casey:** I'm very bad at favorites. I'm so bad at favorites because there are so many places but I will say to you, there was a podcast I listened to and when we were driving two days ago and I cannot stop thinking about this podcast and it's called a Diary of a CEO and it's done by Stephen Bartlett it's not him but it was the guest and I just found myself profoundly impacted by her and she was the CMO of Apple and Uber and her name is Bozoma St. John and the reason that I felt it was so impactful which will answer your question. The people who I truly believe bring about change are those of our world who are able to be accountable and responsible for their faults and their failures to deal with adversity in a humble way and who admit that they have a lot to know and I found her - there was something about her humanity. She told a story about how her mom always told her that she was worth something. And I think, I'm not a biological mom myself, I'm a stepmom and going to be a step grandparent in a few weeks, but I think people who give permission for themselves to see their own worth and their own value through their own journey give other people permission, and it's really important to know every one of us has the ability to create impact. You don't have to be Richard Branson, you don't have to do a Valuable 500, you don't have to run a massive company or not for profit. It's actually that we are here to live our life to give a sense of self love, compassion, acceptance and to reach our potential in doing that we deliver that permission to everyone around us because inclusion is all for everyone or not at all. And the first person you've got to include in that is yourself. So anybody who's got that courage. Yeah.

**CC:** Yeah, you know Caroline you just brought to mind a memory for me when I was a teenager and I went outside to change a flat tire on my car which my mother was a little surprised that I knew how to do. But I went out and changed the tire when I came back into the house, I overheard her on the telephone talking to somebody and she said that kid could do anything. I don't know who she was talking to. I still don't know but that's what my mom thought about me and I thought that makes me cry for good. Wow, I'm yeah I like I believe you mom maybe I can so thank you for sharing that. Now I'm going to cry. I've never cried on a podcast before but anyway.

**Caroline Casey:** You know it is so important. But you ask where the impact comes from its thin these stories, these places. We're all different. So therefore we're the same and we spend so much time fighting over these identities and yet, when somebody turns around to you and says I believe in you tomorrow there's your mic drop right? That's the impact.

**CC:** There you go. On that note, Caroline Casey, thank you so much for joining us today. I'm very grateful for your time.

**Caroline Casey:** Thank you for having me.

**CC:** Thank you for being here with us. Rebecca who's on tap for next week?

**RC:** Next week we're talking to Jeremy Myerson. He is a director at WORKTECH Academy and co-wrote "Unworking: The Reinvention of the Modern Office." The title of his book "Unworking" is about how we need to rethink our assumptions about work so that our workplaces can have a more positive impact on people. For example - Instead of designing for the process of work - we need to design the places we work to create experiences. Maybe - he says - our offices need to be inspired by Walt Disney. But he doesn't mean characters and rides - he has developed four different workplace models he thinks organizations should consider in a post-pandemic era. It's a new way to think about how we work.

**CC:** If you enjoyed this conversation - share this podcast with a friend or colleague and visit us at [steelcase.com/research](https://steelcase.com/research) to sign up for weekly updates on workplace research, insights and design ideas delivered to your inbox. That was a great conversation. We hope you'll join us for that one. Thanks again for being here - and we hope your day at work tomorrow is just a little bit better.

## **CREDITS**

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