



Hosted by Laura Overton, Michelle Ockers & Shannon Tipton

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**Michelle Ockers:**

I'd love to welcome Damien Woods to this special mini-series of the Emergent Podcast where we're exploring core strengths for L&D professionals to take bold action. Welcome Damien.

**Damien Woods:**

Thanks, Michelle. Lovely to be here.

**Michelle Ockers:**

And welcome back. In fact, some of our regular listeners may recognize you as a guest on a couple of our previous episodes where you've talked about some of the ground-breaking work you've done over recent years, which I've had the pleasure to watch, and to see you lead teams through some significant changes with learning in the organization. So for me, you were an obvious choice to invite to discuss this topic about taking bold action. So thank you for taking up the invitation, Damien.

**Damien Woods:**

Always a pleasure, Michelle.

**Michelle Ockers:**

So let's start with talking about what bold action actually means. What does it mean? Like what does it mean to you, the word bold or bold action?

**Damien Woods:**

It's a good one. I had a bit of a reflect on this in the last sort of 24 hours or so thinking about our conversation. I think it's being able to step outside what is comfortable and what is sort of acceptable or the norm where you are whether that's at work or at home or in any other aspect of life. I think it takes a bit of bravery and conviction because I think there's a natural tendency for most of us most of the time not to stand out as to be working within the acceptable boundaries of work or of social interactions outside work. So I think there's an element of being brave, putting yourself out there a little bit, and stepping potentially into the unknown, trying

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something new. So I think there's lots of different parts of it, but I think predominantly it's being able to have a conviction, run with it even though it makes you feel uncomfortable.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

Thanks, Damien. That's a really nice ground setting. So when you think about bold action then, what comes to mind in terms of a time when you've taken bold action?

#### **Damien Woods:**

I can think of a few and some of it has been premeditated and other others have lacked that forethought. I think earlier in my career, I can think of career decisions that were bold early on. I made a call to leave secure permanent employment and start my own learning consultancy which I ran for a number of years, and I often reflect on that many years down the track and think, gee, if I'd sat down and thought too much about that, I probably wouldn't have done it. And I think it was the fact that I just moved quickly and just did it that meant I went through with it. So I think in that sort of instance, there was an element of responding to a little voice inside me that I wanted to give it a go and just going ahead and doing it without overthinking it too much. And it was—and I mean, as you'd very well appreciate, Michelle, with your career path, you've moved from employment into running your own business and know all that all the various elements that come with that. It's a risk that you take which can go well, but it also comes a lot of hard work. So I think that was a point in time.

I think there are other sort of more practical examples. I know that in a previous employer, I sort of got fascinated about the various types of technologies that you could use to support learning and decided that it would be a nice thing to try building a learning program, which was sort of hung off a virtual reality experience. And so it was certainly not anything that was comfortably in the L&D remit where I was working at the time, but I thought it warranted some sort of experimentation. It was interesting. There was a lot of resistance to that idea, and it took a little bit of courage to say look, I still think it's worth us exploring this, and so, I'm gonna back the idea and build a pilot out. So I went ahead and did that but it was uncomfortable.

It was uncomfortable because a lot of people saying we've got other things that we should be focusing our attention on. We should be fixing the basics first. We should be chasing after shiny new toys and things like that. And I think if you let those types of voices get in the way, you tend to avoid making decisions or taking action that in that bold space. That was another example which I thought was a time where it took a little bit of courage to back myself and move ahead with it.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

You've mentioned a couple of ideas that I want to connect here and just explore a little bit. You talked a little bit about thinking versus overthinking and premeditated versus just taking action, and there's a couple of threads there for me. If you're kind of just stepping into something without thinking it through, is it still bold action or does bold action require that you've sort of thought it through and then you've decided to act anyway? Is there some element of risk appetite in the way you

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approach and manage risk associated with taking bold action? What do you think?

#### **Damien Woods:**

Absolutely. And look, I think from a personality trait perspective, I have a risk appetite that may be slightly higher than some other people, and I don't mind taking a calculated risk. So if I go back to that first example, it wasn't that I didn't think about it at all. I mean, I obviously did. I was making a call that I was going from a regular paycheck to I didn't know what income I was going to make and when. And I knew that I had a mortgage at the time. I didn't have a family to support, but I had a mortgage I needed to pay. And so, I had to think about that sort of stuff because that it could go spectacularly unwell and I could have found myself very quickly seeking full-time employment again.

I think you do need to have an appetite to take a bit of a risk sometimes, and I think unless you do that, you don't put yourself into that growth space where it is uncomfortable. And so, yeah, definitely, I think an appetite to take some risks is very important. And I don't think that means being reckless with your risk taking either I think it means it's got to be an element of "I understand what the risks are. I feel like I can mitigate those through my capability, my network, those types of things." So it's known risk, but I think you've got to be out you've got to commit to taking some risk if you want to be bold, that's for sure.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

And I like the phrase you used there; calculated risk, being able to take calculated risks. It's not about taking blind risks and being maybe a little bit foolhardy, but thinking it through, doing your risk assessment and then taking the action based on that. It's not without a safety net all together, right?

#### **Damien Woods:**

No. And look, we do that with our work on a daily basis as well. I know been presenting ideas to the senior leadership team at work. You've got to often present the risks with that and how you intend to mitigate them. And so we know that not every idea will work, and our job is to try and think about what could possibly go wrong here. And knowing what could possibly go wrong, what am I going to put in place to try and prevent that from happening? So it's a way of thinking that I've been required to do work particularly the more senior roles that I've taken on, and I think it's a framework that sits behind making bold decisions as well.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

There's an irony isn't there, in the fact that being too risk-averse actually is riskier in many instances than taking a little bit of a risk.

#### **Damien Woods:**

Yeah. I remember a friend of mine put a book together for me many years ago, and one of things that was full of inspirational quotations and pictures, and there's one that's always stuck with me, the greatest risk in life is to risk nothing.

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#### Michelle Ockers:

Absolutely. So where do you see the biggest opportunities right now for Learning and Development professionals to create change and impact?

#### Damien Woods:

It's a really good question. I think we're at a sort of tipping point, and again, I think the last couple of years has accelerated the need for change. And so one of the things I think L&D professionals need to do is well, there's a couple of things. Firstly, they've got to continually challenge themselves around am I staying relevant? Am I keeping up with where my craft is heading, and am I able to understand how I create value for the business? I think that's really, really important. So we're doing a lot of recruiting over the last six months and I'm deliberately looking for people who think a little bit differently, and I think there's a real challenge that we get very comfortable with what we know and we don't stretch outside that. And so I think L&D professionals need to deliberately put themselves into places where they feel a little bit uncomfortable because it's an unknown territory for them because it's the only way really that you're growing.

That's a challenge to individuals. And I think that as the way businesses operate, the way work gets done changes, whether that's through digitization, automation, the hybrid world that we work in, the blend of virtual and face-to-face work that we will be increasingly doing, we have to make sense of building capability that leads to productivity in that new world and it means that we have to do our work differently as well. I think a key thing there is to be a leader, and not a follower because quite often the business come and ask for help, and they've got something in mind, and I think the sort of brave more modern learning professional will challenge that and say, "I understand your business problem, and I can understand why you think X or Y might work, but had you thought about if we did it a little bit differently?" And I think that takes a little bit of bravery occasionally as well.

I think that one example in the last little while, I was called in to a business executive who wanted to rebuild some e-learning so that he could keep his troops up to date with what was going on in their market. I said, look, that's one way of doing it but you'll be having me back in six months to rebuild it because things will have changed so quickly. I could think of a way to keep your people up to date in a different way that you might not have considered before. What if we built some Twitter lists of the smartest thought leaders in your sectors so that people could follow on a daily basis what they were talking about, and that way we won't have to build anything for you? It's very simple. But he never thought about that as a solution. He was there very clearly, I need e-learning. I need you to build e-learning for me. And I saw my job as to try and sort of stretch your thinking a little bit. So I think we've got to be—to play that role, help the business, we've got to be prepared to stretch what they think they need or challenge what they think they need.

#### Michelle Ockers:

So apart from some courage and some conviction, to bring those kind of ideas, like that's a very different suggestion to what he was asking for. In order to be able to stretch the thinking of others which is part of the opportunity you just described to create change and impact, what else does it take for Learning and Development to

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be in a position to do that because it's about more than just courage at that point?

#### **Damien Woods:**

Yeah, look, I think you've got to build trust, right? You've got to build trust in that. The business will listen to you if they trust and respect your point of view. And I think that's a difficult commodity to build. But I think that it's terribly important, and I think that comes in a large part from understanding what their problem is and having a solution for it. So the problem with the previous example was my executives aren't keeping up with current market trends in those industry sectors that they need to work in. How can you help me with that? And they had the answer as, well, you build to me learning for us and they will do that.

I think that as learning professionals you've got to be a trusted partner, and trusted means when you've got an idea, I'm going to listen to it. And I think there's also an element of you've got to win their confidence to say, let's just give this a go. And sometimes, I think coming in with let me show you what I'm talking about helps as well. And so with that one, I'd actually done a little bit of homework in the background and started curating a list of professionals on Twitter that I thought they should be following. So I was able to actually demonstrate what I meant. I think that helps a lot as well especially if it's a new concept. Tell me about it is one thing. Show it to me I think helps immensely as well.

So you're building relationships with people you can't underestimate it. And a trusting relationship where well you're the learning professional and this stuff better than I do, so I'm going to listen to you when you've got an idea you want to discuss with me, I think that's critical.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

What does it take to build that kind of trust?

#### **Damien Woods:**

That's a great question. I'm always reminded that saying I heard years ago trust arrives on the tortoise and leaves on a hare. I think it takes patience and resilience and a little bit of you've got to back yourself right. I mean if you've got conviction in yourself that what you're talking about actually has mirrors, you've got to be resilient enough to get with objections or scepticism and stick the course with something. And look, it's not always going to work, but I think that you've got to be persistent and resilient and patient and continue refining your craft. I think that's really critical. People will pay attention if you're talking in a way that says to them this person actually knows what they're talking about.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

Yeah, that bit about refining your craft I think is important, and you talked earlier about one of the challenges being to stay relevant. So allocating some regular time having your own practice to stay relevant is important, Damien.

#### **Damien Woods:**

Yeah. I actually think it's one of the most vital things that we can do these days. I mean, we talk about the half-life of skills getting shorter and shorter, and so that what's in our toolkit today won't be what we need in five or six-years' time. We'll need



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it significantly different skill set at that point, so there's this constant upskilling or reskilling which we're telling the business they need to be doing. We need to be doing it as well. In fact, we should be the best at it. I think that's a challenge as well for learning people.

Going back to recruiting for learning people, I always ask the question; so who is it you follow in the L&D community globally? Whose opinions do you listen to? Whose blogs are you reading? Whose podcasts are you listening to? Who are the thought leaders? I'm so often disappointed by people's inability to give even one or two thought leaders that they're listening to or following because I think that how do you stay relevant if there aren't those people who stretch your thinking that you're constantly sort of tapping into? So it's one of the questions I always ask. Who is it that you follow or you listen to? Whose opinion matters to you? And then I also ask, so tell me about what you're learning away from work and how you're going about it because I want to hear them describe to me clever ways of indulging their motivation and their interest and growing a capability. And then I say and so what about at work? I think that really, that curiosity and that connectivity is so vital these days. I think that's really important.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

Yeah. So can you tell us about a time when the going got tough? Whatever tough looks like for you because tough is going to be different to each of us, right?

#### **Damien Woods:**

Yeah. Oh look, the going's gotten tough on many occasions. I remember one program that we were trying to stand up in a previous place I was working where we'd done a little bit of research into the experience of learning in a part of the business which said to us that the people there were crying out for some attention in a particular area, and so we built a business case to take to the executives in that area, and they were a really tough audience. We were asking for a bit of their money, mind you, and I remember a lot of work went into some meetings with those executives. So I sort of spent planning time with the HR business partner who supported them, and we got ourselves on their monthly agenda and we got our half hour time slot where we worked on our pitch.

I was nervous going in there. I wasn't looking forward to it. It's not one of the things I really enjoy greatly. Is that sort of high intensity environment where you've got busy executives who you feel like are ready to pick apart an idea, and they do it with sort of clinical precision quite often? Anyway, we went into that meeting. I thought I was well prepared with the business case, and within five minutes, it unravelled. And we were sent away with you need to do some more work for us. And that was—those sort of situations, to be frank, they're demoralizing. There's a lot of nervous energy that goes into preparing for them. You planned for the best whilst expecting things may not go exactly as you plan, and that one in particular was derailed within five minutes.

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#### **Michelle Ockers:**

I've been in those situations where you can feel it unfolding around you and it's like, oh no, I'm in trouble here.

#### **Damien Woods:**

The train's off the track and there's nothing I can do to stop it.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

How do I leave this situation with some dignity and some idea what to do next? So what did you do next? How did you respond to that situation?

#### **Damien Woods:**

I listened. I made sure I listened really clearly and took notes, and then I went I left and licked my wounds for a day or so. Then I sat down with the HR business partner who was there with me. And I was sort of watching her body language during the meeting, and she was much more seasoned at those types of environments. And I could see—the look in her face was basically saying, okay, well, this is going very badly. How do we sort of put a full stop on this come back regroup, and think about how we approach it?

I knew that we had to go back in there and pitch it again, and I also knew that there are people who understood how to do that better than I did. And so I made sure that I spent more time with the HR business partner which was tough because she was very busy, but then with some peers who similarly had to go into those types of meetings and confront that type of environment where it's high pressure, you've got busy, smart people who will very quickly, find a fault or flaw if you haven't prepared properly. Prepared better. It didn't go perfectly the next time, but the end of the story is we got the pilot off the ground. It took longer than anticipated but we got it off the ground.

Now, my natural reaction to something like that is to say, okay, I don't want to go back in there. I don't want to do that again, but I knew that I needed to and that I needed to work with other people to make sure it was a better experience the next time. But that sort of particularly in some of the very large corporate environments where I've worked that tends to be part of the course. And in my observation, there are some people who are relatively bulletproof, and that would be okay, that didn't go so well. Water off a duck's back. How do I go about next time? I tend to wear it a lot more heavily, and I sort of deconstruct and go through and replay and that sort of thing. So I find that sort of very challenging, and I think you need to surround yourself with other people to help you deal with that and dust yourself off and get back up and go in again.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

Yeah, I was going to say it sounds like one of the ways you address that situation was to draw on others around you, your alliances, your peers, the HRBP, coaches, mentors. So that's maybe one of the sources of strength. But one of the things that

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helps you to take bold action is those people around you and leading into them, Damien.

#### **Damien Woods:**

Yeah. Look, I don't do that as much as I should. I think it's middle child syndrome. I feel I've been a fairly independent person both personally and professionally, but as particularly as my careers progressed, it keeps becoming so obvious that you need other people around you, and you need to work with other people. And for me, in particular, that's meant being more deliberate about how I approach that because my natural tendency is not to do that. And so, I need to be deliberate be more deliberate about seeking help and working with other people and seeking advice more frequently.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

Yeah, that's interesting. And when you talked about having to pick yourself up and dust yourself off, it reminds me very much of Brene Brown. I'm quite a big fan of Brene Brown and she's got one book *Rising Strong* where she talks about being in the arena and being on the ground and your mouth full of dust and being able to somehow find it in yourself to get up and go again. It's that kind of grit. Sometimes, you have to draw on when it's been quite tough.

#### **Damien Woods:**

Look, I think that's absolutely right. I think Brene's stuff is fantastic. There's no one who's sort of had a successful career who doesn't have battle scars and war stories and times when things didn't work out. It doesn't matter who you look at. Whether it's entrepreneurs who had 100 failures before they struck their success and people only see the success and don't realize how hard they did it, the many other times when something didn't work out, whether it's a CEO or someone in a senior position like that. Everyone's got their own war stories, and I think it's that ability to get up and dust yourself off.

And again, it really helps having other people. I think also that just affirm that one failure doesn't mean you're a failure, and that things cannot work out at this point in time. It doesn't/ it's not a personal reflection on you. That experience gives you that it's harder. Some people are naturally born with it. They've sort of that bulletproof self-esteem, but most of us do have to deal with growing that ability to—that thickened skin to work through that.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

Absolutely. And so when you think back to that situation you've just described, in what ways do you feel that made you stronger?

#### **Damien Woods:**

I think definitely I'm more resilient going into those types of situations now. I think I'm probably better prepared as well in that I will deliberately think where what thread might they pull at this that might pull it apart? And so I try and plan a little bit better. I'm probably not as hard on myself in those environments where something doesn't go perfectly, and I continue to have them. I've had in meetings in the last couple of months where I've gone in and expected it to go smoothly, and it's gone on a parallel tangent very quickly. Sometimes, you just got to let it go, and other times, I feel like



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I'm a bit a little bit more forthright in trying to pull it back to where I feel like a conversation needs to go, but I don't necessarily have the sleeplessness afterwards when it's doesn't go as perfectly as desired.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

Yeah, so perhaps learning not to take things quite as personally over time.

#### **Damien Woods:**

Yeah, I think so.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

Let's just kind of checkpoint where we've reached in the conversation so far. Let's just summarize some of the key strengths you've spoken about that come up in our conversation here; core strengths that have helped you to take bold action. If you can summarize the top, I don't know, three to five core strengths, what would you list them as?

#### **Damien Woods:**

Look, I think it matters that you sort of have some trust and belief in yourself, so that's a really important starting point. If you second guess everything you do, you're probably never going to take bold action. So building some trust and belief. I think that is fostered and nurtured by having a good network around you. Not only because they will help grow you, but they will help support you as well. I think you've got to learn that things don't always work, and that resilience is critical. And as I said before, if something didn't work or something failed, it doesn't mean you're a failure. It means you look at it and learn from it and work out how to approach it differently going forward.

So self-belief, and that takes a lot of us a long time to get to. It's nurtured by the having the right people around us, and it's being prepared to say that didn't work. Dust myself off. Have another go at it, and so that resilience that I think is really critical. Yeah, I suppose those would be the top three things for me.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

And the other one that stood out for me from the earlier conversation was that idea of the calculated risk taking as well as a characteristic. So have you had the opportunity to help others to develop these strengths? And if so, how have you gone about that?

#### **Damien Woods:**

Yeah, it's interesting. I look, I was thinking about being bold as well. One other thing, I think if you're really passionate about your craft, you want to be part of the conversation. And so that means contributing to it, not just listening or following and reading. So I don't do enough of it, but I do like writing occasional articles and posting them on LinkedIn and doing conversations like this. And I've had numerous conversations with learning people over the years who say, well how would you suggest I start to go about doing some of that sort of stuff? And so I think that first of all, is you've got to realize you've got a voice. Work out what it is you've got to say, and then you've got to be brave enough to put yourself out there. And so, I have had in fact even recently the last week or so, I love connecting with people that I've

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worked with over the years, and I've got a really strong network of L&D people, and I love catching up and talking shop.

And often, the advice I give when questioned about that sort of stuff is - be part of the conversation. Don't be just lurking in the background listening. Put yourself out there in the mix and have a voice because I think that when you put stuff out in the universe, it usually comes back in stage. I'm actually thinking about that I had did some work with Harold Jarche recently, and I love his story about when he started his business and went from the security of employment to start building from scratch. And his belief that his blogging was really critical to how he sent his ideas out into the universe. And he talked a lot about that element of contributing so that things come back, and I would heartily recommend that. I think your contribution to the conversation around L&D that'll have things flowing back your way. So that is that's one thing I would highly recommend anyone who wants to be a serious L&D professional do. They've got to be part of the conversation.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

Yeah, I'm a fan of someone called Austin Kleon, and I'll put a link to some of his stuff in the show notes. He calls himself an artist who writes or is it a writer who draws? I think it's an artist who writes. And amongst these books is one called Show Your Work. And on the subject of finding your voice, his advice is really good. He says to find your voice, you've got to use it. So don't wait until you think you have something to say. Start engaging. Start having the conversation. Start using your voice and over time, you'll figure out what fits with your voice, and what things/ you want to have a voice on and how you want to use it what resonates, and gets interaction going with others as well.

#### **Damien Woods:**

Yeah, I think that takes bravery and that for a lot of people is a very bold step. And we've all said things or written things, and afterwards, we thought, oh really, I'm not sure that was quite what I wanted to say. And I think that sort of stops a lot of this. And so again—

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

Even if we bring that back to—you do some writing and speaking. I obviously do the same. Harold's talking about blogging. But even if you come back to those situations you're talking about right at the start of this conversation where you're talking about becoming a trusted partner, having the courage to present a different solution to the one that someone is asking of you, that requires using your voice and having a little bit of self-belief and confidence which is part of the core strengths you've been talking about. So not kind of sitting there second guessing yourself but testing the waters almost by presenting a different opinion and seeing what happens out of that.

#### **Damien Woods:**

Yeah, absolutely. I think environment can really help nurture that. Environment is so important, and there are elements of your environment which you can help nurture. And so again, the network helps with that as well, but I think also having people

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around you in the work environment which will support you and be a backstop for you if it gets a little bit tough. But yeah, absolutely.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

So what about - you talked about self-belief. Have you mentored or nurtured that quality in others as an L&D leader? And how do you go about that?

#### **Damien Woods:**

Look, I would hope so. I think one of the things I've enjoyed the most in my career is having teams of people who want to be—that L&D is their thing and they want to want to grow in L&D. I think that you've got to reflect on people the great things or reflect to people the great things they're doing because sometimes, it's not a natural thing for people to realize what impact they're having. I can think of where I work right now. We had one of the newer people run a pilot recently interestingly as a VR pilot for fire training, and she did an awesome job of it.

I wanted to shine a light on that, and so sometimes, it means to take what you've done, package it up and show it to other people. And I think you've got to nurture that it's not sort of blowing your own trumpet, it's just shining a light on the great work you're doing. I think that really helps people. I think it also helped that people feel like they're visible, and you pay attention to what they're doing. I can think of other places that I've worked in where particularly, if you're building a team and you're building for the certain capability, making it really clear to someone if you're asking them to join the team, look, you have these things that are really important to our team, and this is/ these are the strengths I want you to play to, and here's some areas where I think you can grow in as well. So I think giving people a sense of that really helps as well.

And I also set up a conversation between one of the learning people in my current business and someone I've worked with in a previous business. And I didn't realize it at the time, but that was a very rewarding experience for the previous team member because I was saying the work that you've done and you're thinking on around this problem, I want you to share that with my team member because you've got something that you can bring to the table here. I didn't realize that that actually mattered as much as it did, and someone else said well, they felt proud of the work that they'd done.

I think we've got to remind ourselves occasionally that little things like that just recognizing the great things that people are doing helps build that self-confidence and that belief. And particularly if you're a learning leader, looking at the many opportunities you've got to recognize a job well done, and also to have other people recognize it. So I deliberately grabbed that VR fire training pilot and I sent the pack into the SLT. I said just wanted to give you an example of a test and learn that we'd run had great impact, really good learning outcomes and it was in fact cheaper than how we did it previously. It's a good commercial one as well. I think that tells someone else, I back you. I think you're doing good stuff and I want to demonstrate to others that you are as well. I think those things are really important.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

And it's interesting. You've used an interesting phrase there which I'm starting to hear pop up a lot, and it's not a phrase I heard much a year ago, Damien. It's test

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and learn. And when we did our first Emergent series podcast in mid-2020, one of the themes that came out of that was experimentation. There was a very strong theme, and obviously, the responsiveness and the pace which everybody had to adapt during COVID has fostered that, but this new sort of—it's not a new saying, but it's just bubbling up a lot test and learn, and I think that's probably one of the ways. The same as try using your voice to figure out and find your voice. It's like test things, experiment with things, to figure out what works and what doesn't work, and it's about taking contained risks rather than moving too quickly for instance to pilot something, experimenting with something, testing it learning from it, failing safely almost.

#### **Damien Woods:**

Yeah, absolutely. I think the first time they ran the VR test and learn, the tech didn't work properly, which was fine. I think I'm very fortunate where I work now and that test and learn is part of our culture. It's part of the fabric of Agile ways of working, so we're encouraged to do it which is awesome. But I do think, yeah, it's something you see permeating more broadly than purest Agile businesses. And how do we evolve unless we're trying something new, we've got to do that if we want to evolve.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

Absolutely. So let's move to action time, Damien. If you were mentoring another L&D professional, what's the most important core strengths you would advise them to develop in order to take bold action, and your top three tips for how they can do that?

#### **Damien Woods:**

I think surround yourself with people who are going to support you, but also challenge you. So I think you need to build a good network; build a network of people who are stronger than you, who've got a longer track record, who might challenge the way you think. Secondly, have people around you for when it gets difficult or it doesn't work who will help you pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and get going again because that's a natural part of work and of life. We all know that, and it helps immensely if there are people around us that will help us manage that. And I think that third one is to be brave enough to have a voice and as you say to use it. So get involved in the conversations that are going on via whatever the channel it might be; whether it's LinkedIn, whether it's virtual or face-to-face forums, whether it's on Twitter, whether it's a different channel whether it's simply with other colleagues at work but be involved in the conversation and help develop, stretch your thinking get outside your comfort zone.

And look, I suppose that last one is don't be afraid to try something new and for it not to work. It's the backbone of innovation as long as you're prepared to reflect afterwards, and say why didn't it work, and learn from that and then have another go. It's the only way you really improve over time; having a go at things, working out what doesn't work, and trying something different the next time. And that means being okay with it, feeling uncomfortable, and realizing that something didn't work.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

The discomfort becomes normal.

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**Emerging Stronger: Taking Bold Action - Damien Woods**

**Damien Woods:**

Yeah.

**Michelle Ockers:**

Thank you so much for a really thoughtful conversation, Damien. Really appreciated your personal experience and insights around taking bold action. There's a few different resources that have come up there. Take a look in the show notes. We'll have links to those as well as the previous conversations we've had on Learning Uncut with Damien, and a link to Damien's LinkedIn profile if you've got any questions or anything you'd like to connect with him over. Thanks, Damien.

**Damien Woods:**

Thanks, Michelle. Lovely talking again.