

Kevin Minor: 0:04

Welcome. Naspo Pulse. This is a podcast where we are monitoring issues in state procurement. We've got our finger on that pulse. I'm your host, Kevin Miner. Episode lucky number 13. 13 pulses that's not too shabby, if I do say so myself. So what are we doing.

Kevin Minor: 0:27

We're gearing up for our 2020 annual conference. It promises to be a pretty exciting time. It's our first hybrid conference. It's part virtual, part in-person, so we're looking forward to those attending, whether you're coming into Lexington, Kentucky, or you're experiencing it over the web. It's anything like our virtual REACH conference that we had in July. It is bound to be a good time.

Kevin Minor: 0:54

Speaking of great conferences, we got another good one for you today. Folks, I'm talking with hold on to your hats international keynote speaker. Author. Hold on to your hats International keynote speaker. Author. Student affairs, professional boat aficionado and the 2020 NASPO annual conference keynote speaker, Dr Kevin Snyder. We discuss reorganizing the thought process amidst uncertainty and Dr Snyder gives us a sneak peek into what he'll be talking about during our annual conference on the 15th that's September. Really interesting guy. Got a lot of great experiences, a lot of great stories. Great to listen to. I guess that's why he's a professional speaker. It makes sense. Actually, you got to check out his website. I'll put that up in the show notes for you, but you know what to do. Take that pulse, Dr Snyder. Thank you so much for joining me today on the Pulse.

Kevin Snyder: 1:51

It is an honor to be with you.

Kevin Minor: 1:52

Dr Snyder is a professional motivational speaker who speaks to multiple organizations all over the world. So, Dr Snyder, you give us just a little bit of a background of how did you get into the field of professional motivation.

Kevin Snyder: 2:06

Yeah, you know, I think in life passions are cyclical, and that's why it's important to pursue those, or at least keep the door open, because you never know what might happen in life.

Kevin Minor: 2:16

Absolutely.

Kevin Snyder: 2:17

But for me, growing up as a teenager, I struggled and, long story short, I battled a lot of mental health issues and so when I got to college I kept my bags packed. I never thought I'd make it. And in my first year of college I went to the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and my major was marine biology. So marine biology to motivational speaker, you know how in the world. Well, that first year was real tough for me. I had a bad roommate situation. I was in a long distance relationship. I didn't feel a connection, I didn't have many friends and I tried dropping out numerous times. And every time I tried to drop out of school I had to go to the Dean of students office with this withdrawal, withdrawal form. And every single time I did he looked at me and he said form. And every single time I did, he looked at me and he said Kevin, there's something about you that will make me regret signing this. Will you just give us another few more weeks? And that dean of students who believed in me every time I saw him just planted this new seed of hope kind of in me. And I know, you know his job was to kind of keep me in school.

Kevin Snyder: 3:23

But I remember my sophomore year, going back to college and just wanting to give it a second chance and say,

look, you know, I either got to make it or I'm done. Right and um. So I went back that that second year and things completely were different for me. And in college, for me it was like a transformational experience. I went from near dropout to homecoming king and was like Mr Engaged, you know, on campus and as a senior I was working for admissions, giving a campus tour, and I just said one day to myself, leading about a hundred people you know about, you know, should they come to UNCW, I just it hit me like a lightning bolt and I said I want to work in student affairs. I want to be a Dean of students so I can help other struggling kids like me.

Kevin Snyder: 4:08

And so that's really what guided my whole pursuit of working in student affairs and that's what I did. So I went back, got my master's degree in higher ed at University of South Carolina, I worked at University of Central Florida, I worked at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and then I became a dean of students at High Point University, which was an absolute dream. And I was a young dean. I was a young dean so I learned a lot in a short period of time. But along that whole pursuit of me pursuing what I felt was my destiny to become a dean of students and be a top advocate for students at college campuses, I started speaking for fun, just on the side, you know, doing fun, little workshops for students and gosh, first time I ever got paid is because somebody asked me what my fee was and I'm like you get paid doing this.

Kevin Minor: 4:59

What do you mean? People do this for work.

Kevin Snyder: 5:03

Yeah, oh, I mean so when I would go and speak a con or, I'm sorry, when I would go attend conferences for my job, I usually would go actually, you know, also present like a, a breakout session on leadership, on motivation or something like that. And and I did it for fun, I didn't even really enjoy it, I just did it because I felt like I felt like something was there.

Kevin Snyder: 5:20

And and so you know. The more you do anything, the better you get you know. And um, repetitions the mother of skill. So over a period of years, I started developing this craft, for for speaking that I published my first book. I was a Dean of students and then, about two years into that, I resigned because I said I really feel like speaking is calling me and um, and it wasn't an easy decision, but it was something that I felt that I needed to pay more attention to, and so I I resigned that job and I've never looked back.

Kevin Minor: 6:01

I feel like there's always that one catalyst right, that one person in everybody's past that you can point to and kind of say this is how I got to where I am. So that's that person for you.

Kevin Snyder: 6:12

Yeah, you know, and just recently that person passed away and they were on the cover of the UNCW magazine and, looking back, they touched so many. Like I have spine tingles right now just thinking about this person because the amount of people that they, that they influenced and touched and changed their lives, I mean I'm just a pebble, I'm just one person, but I felt like you know, speaking became that platform for me.

Kevin Snyder: 6:35

Where I could, I could become the Dean of students in a different way. I could still inspire and and and share content, not just with students but also now with professionals.

Kevin Minor: 6:44

Yeah.

Kevin Snyder: 6:45

So I look at, what I do now is absolutely just as important, if not more, than what I was doing before at one campus.

Kevin Minor: 6:52

So would you say that that experience, your college experience, has truly influenced what you speak about now too, right?

Kevin Snyder: 7:04

And what the content in your books? Absolutely. You know, in my doctorate degree, when I did research for my doctorate, the framework that I looked at student success was self-efficacy, which is basically your belief system, and whether you believe that you will achieve desired goals or not. And the research participants that I that I focused on that were in my study. A hundred percent of them graduated college who had the highest levels of self-efficacy.

Kevin Snyder: 7:32

And guess what happened to the students that that didn't have high levels of self-efficacy and high levels of belief in themselves? Those are the ones that I, unfortunately, would lose track of because they would drop, and so, and so I think all of us, no matter what role or what position you have, and and you know whoever's might be listening to this all of us have to be self-motivated to do what we do, and and just like a skillset, it's a, you know, it's a muscle, and we have to work that muscle. Um, positive thinking isn't something that comes naturally for most people. It's very difficult to do, and when you're amidst adversity, it's extremely important that you influence other people. So you have to also be thinking not just of yourself, but also you have to think of other people, because as much as energy is contagious, so is influence.

Kevin Minor: 8:34

Yeah, absolutely, and I feel like it's almost natural sometimes for us to battle those thoughts right To go against.

Kevin Snyder: 8:43

You know, and one of the things I talk about up front in any presentation I do is um, I let my audiences know, hey, everything I share with you today. I struggle with myself at times because I want them to know that this isn't just. Yeah, I'm not like mr motivation boy and I'm telling it like, oh, mr happy, like no way. I mean, there are some times my wife gives me a copy of my own book and was like you need to read chapter two today? Yeah, but here's the difference I'm aware of when I need to work on it.

Kevin Minor: 9:19

Right Like.

Kevin Snyder: 9:20

I'm aware of when I have these internal beliefs, or what I call this internal head trash, that will only limit me, and I still have it sometimes. I mean anytime I'm doing something new or heck. Here you and I are, we're doing a podcast amidst the pandemic. Five months ago I didn't even have a virtual studio. I didn't have, I didn't even understand how to set one up and now I'm rocking and rolling with it. It's the one of the biggest learning curves of my whole life and I've pushed through and I've pushed through. So I think we all need to be you know I'm kind of digressing here but I think we all find those, or at least we're in those moments where we're really being tried and tested, and I think that's when leadership and really being motivated is the most important.

Kevin Minor: 10:13

The pandemic. How has it?

Kevin Snyder: 10:13

affected motivation of organizations and people that you speak with? No, absolutely. You know, a lot of my

speaking engagements are coming back now, right, and I've done the best I can to keep in touch, you know, with friends who are in the workforce and folks that I was talking with about speaking. So I think a lot of us the past couple months have been just trying to figure it out.

Kevin Minor: 10:34

Yeah.

Kevin Snyder: 10:34

I mean, what the heck are we going to do? How bad is this really going to be?

Kevin Minor: 10:38

And stay positive right.

Kevin Snyder: 10:40

Exactly, and and here you you know, you and I were talking kind of late August schools are just back in session, whether they're virtually, or in person, or a hybrid um colleges as well. How can we still move forward? Right right that's the key, I think. Right, there is how can we still just move forward and um, and that's, I think, where a lot of organizations they really thrive is because they have this forward thinking mindset rather than a reactionary mindset.

Kevin Minor: 11:08

Yeah, yeah, well, and in procurement I know, know for our membership and those in procurement you almost have to have that forward thinking, because if you're reactionary and something's already happened like a pandemic, then you're 20 steps behind if you're reacting.

Kevin Snyder: 11:26

Absolutely, and I think now, for a lot of organizations, this is an opportunity to differentiate, this is an opportunity to do things that can actually help you stand out and actually grow as a result. I mean, you know, before pandemic, people always talked about change, and change this and I would say to my audiences is that, look, you know, change is this assumption that you know, we all, we nobody wants to change. Well, you can change without growth, but you can't grow without change.

Kevin Minor: 11:58

I like that.

Kevin Snyder: 11:59

Yeah. So, as a leader, you know if somebody's in charge whether it's a department or an organization, or even just a small team, or whether you're part of that team I mean gosh, in order to grow, you're going to have to have some type of change as a result. So you know, let's replace, let's get rid of the word change and replace it with growth, because that's what people really want to follow. Who wouldn't want?

Kevin Minor: 12:21

to grow. Change is more taboo than growth.

Kevin Snyder: 12:25

Exactly. Yeah exactly, and, and there are. I'll share these more in the keynote. But there's two other words or phrases that we're using now more in 2020 than ever before, and I'll share these more in the keynote. But there's two other words or phrases that we're using now, more in 2020 than ever before, and I believe that they're the two most destructive words that we could possibly use. Yet we use them almost daily, but they mean the exact opposite, really. I mean, I could give you one of them if you want.

Kevin Minor: 12:47

Yeah, yeah, give us one, Give us one.

Kevin Snyder: 12:51

Okay, I'll give you one. So the word pivot. Okay, I'll give you one. So the word pivot. And I grew up in Durham, north Carolina. I'm a big college basketball fan. If you think of what pivot actually means, let me give you an analogy, for basketball is, you know, you have the ball in your hand and then you put your foot on the ground and then you do what? You move around in circles, right, right, yeah, and and you know, there's a I I get the people trying to use it in a way that, oh, we're supposed to shift or we're supposed to adapt, yeah, but you do that moving forward, not in circles. So I think people are using the word because a lot of, because other people are saying it, but so many times it's like we, we say things and we do things that are actually destructive without even realizing it, and that's just a simple example.

Kevin Snyder: 13:34

So what I always encourage, it's like we say things and we do things that are actually destructive without even realizing it, and that's just a simple example. So what I always encourage, it's like the word in a growth versus change. Let's get rid of the word change, let's just talk about growth. Let's not talk about the word pivot. Let's get that out of the dictionary, or out of our vernacular, so to speak, and let's replace it with the word transform or shift. How do we shift? Right Cause we always want to be moving forward, and that's that's what my keynote is all about is how to become a shift thinker, and not just amidst a pandemic. But how do we do that in good times as well? Because, look you know, for people that are in the procurement profession which is most people listening to this at the best of times procurement is very complex. So now we're in one of the most disruptive times of a generation. Gosh, how do we do this now? I mean, the game has literally changed, and it's always changing.

Kevin Minor: 14:26

So you're saying perhaps think of it in a transformation or shifting rather than pivoting, where you can only move one foot and you're going in a circle.

Kevin Snyder: 14:35

Exactly. I mean, that's really what pivoting is all about. I mean, in basketball you're supposed to pivot to then shoot the ball, but still you're, you're, technically, you're, you're. You could go around in circles and not make any progress. Right, and? And I think when we look at extraordinary organizations and also achievements of just ordinary people that did things well and became extraordinary, that's kind of a common factor, at least from what I've seen is is they kind of look at things a little differently. And one of the quotes that I love is is this and we're amidst it right now. But you know, adversity does not define us, it reveals us.

Kevin Minor: 15:12

Who said that?

Kevin Snyder: 15:14

us. It reveals us who said that. Well, I said it, oh wow. That's a great quote.

Kevin Minor: 15:19

That's a great quote, I love it.

Kevin Snyder: 15:21

That's a quote that I share in my audience. Hey, write this down Adversity doesn't define us.

Kevin Minor: 15:30

It actually reveals us, but when it's most required is when it's most difficult. So I know during your keynote, I know

you'll be dropping those experiences that you have and really giving our membership, the listeners, those nuggets of ways that they can improve, whatever position they may be in mid-level management. Your keynote is called Becoming a Shift Thinker Leadership Amidst Uncertainty. Would you be willing to discuss some of your keynote? Maybe just give us a little bit of it, that what you're going to be discussing on the 15th Don't give it all away for us, but just give our folks a glimpse into your presentation.

Kevin Snyder: 16:03

Now, absolutely, I'm really excited about this opportunity to share this new keynote that I've designed over the past couple months amidst this pandemic, because I was asking myself, you know, things are so upside down right now that I have to be so relevant. Right, I've got to, I've got to provide and I've been listening, I've been researching, I've been collecting information, but how, how are some organizations actually, you know, moving forward despite these changes? And a lot of it has to. It begins really with their team, with their employees and with themselves.

Kevin Snyder: 16:41

So the number one determinant of success, I believe, is how we think. Right, I mean, that's, we all have to be self-motivated to do what we do. The number one determinant of success for an organization is its people. So you know processes and policies and all the you know all the things that go into what we do are extremely important, but who are the people that design those? Who are the people that actually carry those out and facilitate those? So I think it's really important to kind of marching forward in order to grow forward. We have to really be mindful of how are we, how are we shifting our thinking to accomplish that?

Kevin Minor: 17:18

So you presented for quite a range of audiences, both public and private sector, from your experiences working with those groups, what kind of common challenges, what kind of themes do you see that these organizations face?

Kevin Snyder: 17:35

Right? Well, you know there's. There's not a one size fits all, because I do feel like every organization is unique and where they might be, you know, is unique.

Kevin Snyder: 17:45

But I do feel that some of the challenges that a lot of organizations share with me and this actually comes a lot from my work with the Center for Creative Leadership too where these high-level executives would come on-site for a two or three day event and part of it was a 360 degree assessment that they'd have to complete or that others would complete of them and they would see those results at this on-site event and not to give too much away about what we would do at CCL.

Kevin Snyder: 18:12

But many of these leaders that held high level executive positions, yes, they got results, but as much as they drove results, they're also driving employees away, and I think what's important about that is, yes, we need to be process oriented, we need to be performance driven, but it's again, it's the people that that make that happen. Right, and how do we create a culture? And like a high performing culture where people they don't, they don't have to go to work, they, they get to go to work, right, they, they see what they do. It's more purpose, it's more purpose focused. You know they, they get excited about it and they know that in any role that they might have, they can make a difference. So I think the challenge is a lot of organizations struggle with that. Or, um, I mean there another study from society for human resource management, which is SHRM, self-reported 76% of employees are unhappy to miserable in their daily job.

Kevin Snyder: 19:12

Yeah, now of employees are unhappy to miserable in their daily job. Yeah Now, when I first saw that statistic I

thought I mean that seems kind of high.

Kevin Minor: 19:18

Yeah, it makes for long days.

Kevin Snyder: 19:20

It's like, oh my well, you know what. And then, when I asked my audience is how many of you have ever had a job? Raise your hand Right.

Kevin Minor: 19:31

I get you know I'm raising mine.

Kevin Snyder: 19:35

And they kind of smiled at it. And I say now, how many of know somebody air quote who's ever had a job that they hated?

Kevin Minor: 19:43

Yeah.

Kevin Snyder: 19:44

And guess how many hands go up every single one. And then I asked him I was like, all right, now look around, pause, look around and if you see someone with their hand not up, check their pulse, I think if we're the if we're part, you know the challenge is if we're not the person in that leadership role. I think leaders need to be aware of that reality so they can do their part to provide as much of a culture it's really about culture that inspires people to do more.

Kevin Minor: 20:18

Yeah, it's interesting. I was on another podcast episode. Yeah, it's interesting. I was on another podcast episode. I was talking to a professor at a college local college here and he was saying that the role of leadership is really to manage your people and make sure that they can do the best job that they can do, right, and you deal with all of the gobbledygook at the top so that your workers, so that your team, can do the job that they're supposed to do.

Kevin Snyder: 20:50

And I think that's kind of the point you're making. Absolutely, I was on a webinar with the CEO of an international hotel chain and he was asked a very similar question. I was on this panel with him. He was asked this question.

Kevin Minor: 21:08

his answer to this, this question, that you asked me was number one thing that that's most important for him and his role is to listen, yeah.

Kevin Snyder: 21:12

And he explained it about listening. You know, that's where you get input, that's where you, that's where you make people feel important, right, because you're asking those questions. You're making them feel like they matter.

Kevin Snyder: 21:23

You're invested yeah exactly and, and and he's like you know I can't do all their jobs. That's impossible. So you know, leadership is really about influence, not management. Um, and one of the things I love when what I say about so spoiler alert, people will hear this in my keynote, but leadership, it's one of those misconceptions. Leadership is not a noun, it's a verb, it's what we do.

Kevin Minor: 21:48

I like that.

Kevin Snyder: 21:49

So you know, we have to be real mindful of what we think the true role of a leader is. And you're right, Much of leadership is about how we influence others in a positive way.

Kevin Minor: 22:00

Yeah.

Kevin Snyder: 22:01

We can definitely drive results, but we don't want to drive our people away to accomplish them.

Kevin Minor: 22:06

Well, before we go, do you have any advice for our listeners Besides come listen to you at the keynote for the 2020 annual conference?

Kevin Snyder: 22:16

of course, Wow, you know, find what are the things, because a lot of us are working from home, you know what? Have a routine in the morning before the world wakes up, um, do things for you in the morning to kind of set the right tone, Like for me, for example, I go out, I feed my chickens, I feed my koi fish and I sit outside with a cup of coffee for about the first 15 to 20 minutes and just I listened to my, my waterfall and and I don't live in any kind of different neighborhood than most people, I mean, it's a normal house. We just build a koi pond and sounds very serene.

Kevin Snyder: 22:53

Yeah, and that's, that's how I start my day, and so I think, no matter what I have coming up, it's like, hey, this is my moment, this is for me, but I also try to surround myself with just some positive inputs throughout the day. Uh, making time to read, um, and I'll tell you one, one big thing, I'll leave it at this would be one big piece of advice for anybody would be have something every single day that you can look forward to. You know, even if it's watching a rerun of the bachelor, or you know, even if it's watching a rerun of the Bachelor, or you know.

Kevin Minor: 23:23

So it doesn't have to be a big thing, just something small.

Kevin Snyder: 23:25

It could be something so, so tiny, you know, having a bowl of popcorn with your partner or spouse. I mean just something. That way, no matter what you're going through throughout the day, you can have that one thing that you can look forward to, no matter what.

Kevin Minor: 23:39

Dr Snyder, professional motivational speaker. Thank you so much for joining me on the Pulse today. It's been a pleasure to speak with you.

Kevin Snyder: 23:47

Oh, it's been a pleasure for me as well and look forward to connecting with folks.

Kevin Minor: 23:50

So shift thinking, avoiding head trash and being motivated is perhaps more crucial right now than it ever has been. Use this as an opportunity I think is what he's saying to make your office stand out. I know we've spent a lot of time

this season talking about this, but pushing that innovation standing out, achieving that buy-in, is critical, especially in a time like this. Email us your questions, thoughts, comments, answers. We would love to hear from you Podcast at podcast@naspo.org and, if you haven't already, make sure to subscribe to us on Apple Podcasts, spotify, google, wherever you get your podcasts. Make sure to check out our blog, pulsenaspo.org, and catch up on some procurement articles written by your very own NASPO staff. I'm Kevin Miner. Until next time.