

## Wichita Chamber Business Accelerator

Episode 115

Julia Fabris McBride

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Don Sherman: [00:00:00] welcome to another exciting edition of The WCBA Power, of course by Evergy. First, thank you for listening. Don't forget to like us, love us, share us, share the love. We truly [00:01:00] appreciate you checking us out in the house today, E Kansas Leadership center.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: Yes, we're excited. We're gonna have such a lovely conversation.

We have Miss Julia Fabris McBride in the house. How's it going?

Julia Fabris McBride: It's going great. Yay. Thanks Ebony. Thanks Don, for having me here.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: We are thrilled that you decided to join us today. So you're with the Kansas Leadership Center? I am. Well, let's talk about that. Can you share a little bit about what the Kansas Leadership Center is?

Julia Fabris McBride: Yeah. The Kansas Leadership Center is all about lifting up people and communities so that we can solve tough challenges and thrive. So it's all about leadership development, facilitating engagement, and helping people from across. Factions, as we call them, across political spectrums, make progress towards their biggest aspirations, solve their biggest [00:02:00] challenges.

So really, so we all can thrive. K L C was founded here in Kansas with a. Big grant from the Kansas Health Foundation who continues to be our biggest supporter, and our mission is to foster civic leadership for healthier, stronger, more prosperous communities in Kansas and beyond.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: That is awesome. Can you remind us what year the K L C come about?

Julia Fabris McBride: Yeah. K L C was founded in. K L C was founded in 2007. My co-author at O'Malley walked into a small office at the Kansas Health Foundation on January 2nd, 2007, and



our building in downtown Wichita opened in the fall of 2013.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: Yes. That is so wonderful. You know, that was one of the greatest things when we were in the Ruffin building at Evergy.

Looking across the street and seeing all of the wonderful activity that would take place at klc. So could you remind the audience at this? [00:03:00] You guys bring in people from across the

Julia Fabris McBride: We do. Yeah. We have had, we had somebody from Saudi Arabia show up having found us on the Wow. We also have developed partnerships through, through Jack Debore.

We developed a partnership in Myanmar. We have partnerships with Leadership Victoria in Australia and. People on five continents literally have come to Wichita for Kansas Leadership Center programs. It is

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: don't think, we don't talk about That enough. Yeah. Right.

The type of, you know, KLC is an attraction for the state of Kansas and for Wichita, people are seeking the leadership tools that you guys provide from across the globe.

Julia Fabris McBride: They are, and of course across the nation and across Kansas as well. On a, if we have a three day program, you'll have people pouring out onto Douglas Avenue in the breaks and afterwards to go [00:04:00] visit our restaurants. And I just love hearing from people. We had people here. last week we had someone here from Australia and people from across the nation.

And just to have them in Wichita and to have people say this is a great place to live, is really exciting. And I love that we get to contribute to that.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: I love that. I love that so much. So the think about KLC is everyone knows. , your motto or the thing that you come out is everyone can lead.

Julia Fabris McBride: right?

Yep.

We're all about that. When everyone leads, our toughest challenges get seen and solved,

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: And so I hear you have a book,

Julia Fabris McBride: We have a book.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: Yes.

Julia Fabris McBride: we have a book. It's called When Everyone Leads. Yes. How the Toughest Challenges Get Seen and Solved, and I'm super excited because we also have Quran Oh, which is the Spanish version

Don Sherman: She wrote that Good

Julia Fabris McBride: by our friend Claudia.

Don Sherman: [00:05:00] Claudia. Claudia.

Julia Fabris McBride: Yeah. So this is another like Wichita. Has made this book, and I just really, we have an audience of Spanish speakers here in Kansas. Right. And again, like in, in Mexico, central America, south Wow. And this really opens up a lot of possibilities for our work.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: thing. I love that. I mean, you see how that's what I love about our community, how we connected. We didn't have to go anywhere else to do the translation. Right. Right here. Yep. Connection. She's

Don Sherman: transformational.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: So let's talk a little bit about the book. What I'm curious, what made you decide, you and Ed you?

Were you sitting down one day and you were like, you know what? I think we need to write a book. How did this happen?

Julia Fabris McBride: I think we sat down a lot of days and thought, what's the next?

we have a book called Your Leadership Edge that Ed co-authored with Amanda [00:06:00] Sabu. And we actually started talking with our publisher, Todd Satton at Bard Press, possibly about re-releasing your leadership edge for a larger distribution, which Bard Press did.

But through those conversations, we also realized that. , your leadership edge is about the how. And in a lot of ways it's for the people who are already converted to thinking that leadership is an activity and that's a VA not a position. . Because there's still a lot of people out there in the world who are who they hear the word leader or they hear the word leadership and they think positional authority.

Right. And your leadership edge kind of skips right over. That conversation. So we felt like we needed a book that goes right to the why, to the principles that our leadership framework and the way we do civic engagement are built on that. Leadership is an activity. It's [00:07:00]

available to anyone, anytime, anywhere.

It starts with you and must engage others. It's risky because you have to go outside your comfort zone, and it's about our toughest challenges. So this is about the why, and it's also a call to action. It's a call to say, if we're gonna, if we're gonna solve the toughest challenges facing our communities, facing our small businesses, we need everyone leading. have this book is the why,

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: that, and I love that. I, you know, I think about being in different organizations and just in different meetings and a lot of people are still challenged by the idea of people in your terms raising the heat. Yeah. Right. And asking these tough questions, And, you know, I remember when it used to be Y p w, now it's w Thomas was a yp with me in a lot of meetings.

There was a lot of raising heat. You know, and that makes people uncomfortable. Can [00:08:00] you talk about why it's important to raise

Julia Fabris McBride: Ebony? Am I allowed to ask you a question?

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: Well, that's not kind of how this works, but , you're raising the heat on me.

Julia Fabris McBride: Tell, can you tell me just a tiny bit more about what that felt like for you Well, when somebody would raise the heat or when Thomas would ask a question that was just a little bit outside the ordinary.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: Sure.

Yeah. It's uncomfortable,

It makes you think, wow, have I been doing it wrong or have I been thinking wrong? Is everything that I know in life, like wrong

Julia Fabris McBride: Yeah. Thank you. Yeah, so for those who don't know Thomas Stanley we talk about him in the book, and Thomas Stanley was a K L C staff member who died tragically at the age of 33.

And Thomas, a part of w was great at bringing those tough questions that can stop people in their tracks. in ultimately a really good way. Because, so [00:09:00] when we talk about raising the heat, what we mean is putting the conversations on the table that need to be had. So I don't know what the conversations exactly were at W that needed to be had, but often it's talking about values clashing and really elevating, okay, there's this value that might. getting things done. And for instance, for an organization I was thinking about today, serving the people who

need our mental health services. today, on the other hand, is the value. is building our capacity and making sure we can retain quality employees for the long haul. Right? So when you're raising the heat, often you're bringing, you're putting those two things out on the table and you're letting people chew on and talk about.[00:10:00]

how do we, what, when are we pri prioritizing one? And maybe when are we prioritizing another? And how are we gonna make the tough choices in the face of those competing values?

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: Yep. Well, thank you for explaining that and talking about that, because it is, it's important, but again, it takes you through that uncomfortable feeling, but you have to go through that, right.

In order to solicit the type of change that you want.

Julia Fabris McBride: Yeah. And that's why in the new book. We do, we talk about risk and we talk about authorizing yourself to lead. And sometimes what authorizing yourself to lead means is that you are staying in your chair during those conversations and you're breathing and you're listening, and you're offering an alternative way forward.

Or maybe you're asking a question yourself that you don't know the answer.

Don Sherman: Excellent. I wanna hit on your book first, but I [00:11:00] wanna go back to klc. I love klc. I'm glad

You guys helped Everyg when we were going through something with the polls and I reached out to Ed, I said, I need your help, my man.

And he hooked me up and You guys helped us through that situation, so I truly appreciate that. But you're also just had a leadership change, did you not?

Julia Fabris McBride: We did.

Don Sherman: this is women's month, so we got you a rockstar up in here and I think you got another one share about that

Julia Fabris McBride: We have a rockstar new president and CEO named Kaye Monk-Morgan, who who started Yes. Oh, okay.

And we are so thrilled with that. Kay has been working full-time at KLC since last April.

She was chief impact Officer and before that she'd been a member of our teaching team. So this is just a beautiful evolution for klc. And couldn't be happier.

Don Sherman: Excellent. Excellent. What you think we can see, and I know we gotta get her on here somehow.[00:12:00]

Agreed. Tessa, where at ? We gotta get, she's not here.

Julia Fabris McBride: we all agree we gotta get her

Don Sherman: Get her on here.

When that announcement was made, or I'm sure you was all in there, but what do you see the future of KLC before we move on to your book? Now,

Julia Fabris McBride: Let me tell you what I heard Kaye say yesterday when she spoke to the staff, and I've heard her say it a couple of times. KLC has a strategic framework in place and it really is, it's about making sure that we are able to reach all Kansans and to meet people where they are with leadership development.

Facilitating engagement and that Kay doesn't have any big changes on her mind. Okay? She wants to listen and she wants to listen to the community. And knowing Kay, as I have come to know her over these last few years, I know that she's gonna be listening [00:13:00] with a lot of care for the people she's come up with.

Who are people who are first Generat. College students, for instance. And we're already talking about the possibilities of KLC doing more work in K-12 education and in higher ed. So that's the part that I, you know,

I love that. That's a little scoop.

little scoop You heard it here first. Excellent. I also just would underline that KLC and our board has a strong vision and.

Well, you know what, I'm gonna let her talk more.

Don Sherman: You okay? No, you gave me a little scoop. I'm, so, I gotta have her on. She has not absolutely been on.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: Absolutely. Can't wait to have her. She's one of my favorite people,

Julia Fabris McBride: obviously.

Don Sherman: Well, and I like that part when she, you said she listens? Yes, because Ebony does not listen as you can tell right now.

Julia Fabris McBride: You are so wrong.

Don Sherman: Wow. Wow. And you can tell right now I couldn't even get it out.

She wouldn't listen, but [00:14:00] that's okay. But no she's good people. Everybody knows that Ebony's good people too. Okay, . That was hard to say. It was hard to say

Julia Fabris McBride: Yeah,

Don Sherman: It was brutal. Okay, so let's pivot back to the book. You and Ed met a few, you said a lot. how does one decide, you know what, I'm gonna write a book, the Audacity to write a book and thinking people will read it. I mean, how do you come up with that dec, a business decision like that?

and how, and let me compound a little bit more. How do you know, everybody think they're. A journalist or whatever, if they post on Twitter, they're journalists, don't have to be vetted or anything. What made you decide to write a hard copy book? What was that process?

The business process of doing.

Julia Fabris McBride: That's a really good question and it is a big [00:15:00] investment of the, of. For the then CEO and myself as Chief Leadership Development Officer. It's a big investment of our time and what the gift from the Kansas Health Foundation has done for us is allow us to have that kind of time. to put ideas on paper and sometimes that's digital paper on our website, but other times in the history of KLC that's been in books and. Again, ed wrote your leadership edge to get the ideas out there.

I have some a couple of books that are out there for a very specific audience of people who teach and coach and Okay. Around le around the KLC ideas. So we had, we both had experience writing books and knew what we were getting into. Gotcha. [00:16:00] A book like this allows more people to access the So we, and we want these ideas to saturate organizations and companies and communities in Kansas and beyond, and we know that not ev, even though the pandemic has really expanded our ability to reach deep into companies and organizations, because it's much easier for people to access programs.

And right now KLC offers programs in person and online.

So that's like that the, that online programming allowed us to go maybe a little bit deeper and really move beyond the upper echelons of companies and communities into middle management and frontline workers. And this book and the Spanish version there, there are discussion guides available. [00:17:00] This allows people.

To facilitate conversations in their organizations without people having to go to a Gotcha. it. So

in order for this idea that everyone can lead to permeate our communities, we need some people who really know the ideas, you know, who are. Geeks about leadership perhaps, or really bought into the KLC ideas and they know how to work a complex challenge.

We need other people who have, have a book deep, or even just a couple of conversations about a cartoon in the book deep to be able to think, okay, I have, I can authorize myself to ask a different kind of,

I can authorize myself to say, Hey, what do you think the people who are not at the table would be saying about what we're doing [00:18:00] right now and what we're talking about right now?

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: You've mentioned authorize yourself quite a bit. Can you talk to us a little bit nice to, to our listeners to explain you know, I think there's a couple steps in that.

Yeah. How do you authorize yourself to lead?

Julia Fabris McBride: You authorize yourself to lead. When you say I care about something, I mean, maybe I care. More young professionals in Wichita staying here and living here and raising their families here. Authorizing yourself to lead means first, having that aspiration.

and then second. going out and starting to have conversations with people about that challenge.

So it could be as simple like an au authorizing myself to lead. If I'm somebody who hasn't thought of myself as, quote unquote, a leader could mean just asking you, [00:19:00] Ebony, what do you think when somebody stays in Wichita, perhaps even. An African American woman. When an African American woman chooses to stay in Wichita, what's behind that choice?

And what else did you consider, or what do you imagine when somebody leaves Wichita? What do you think is what? What happened there? See, I'm authorizing myself to get curious about this challenge, and it's almost inevitable. That. Once I start having those conversations, I'm gonna find people who care about the challenge and maybe have a different perspective, and then I kind of authorize myself to look for a way that we can work together and that happens out in the community.

It also can happen in a company or an organization.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: that makes sense. Thank you for explaining that to us.

Julia Fabris McBride: glad it [00:20:00] makes sense. I love the question.

question.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: Wonderful. Well, friends, it's time to hear a word from our sponsor.

We will be back soon with Miss Julia Fabris McBride.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: Welcome back friends. We are here with Miss Julia Fabris McBride and we are talking about how you can lead.

So as we know, leadership is for everyone. But how can business leaders, you know, and I'm specifically want you to look at Don when you talk about this, okay? Wow.

Julia Fabris McBride: All right there Don, I'm gonna look at you [00:21:00] Don.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: how can people in position of authority make leadership less risky for others? Cuz we've talked about taking the risk out for others to lead.

Julia Fabris McBride: I think the first thing somebody can do is talk about leadership as an activity and make it really clear that you want people to and in the book we really say there's three things everybody can do.

They can ask more curious. open-ended questions. They can make multiple interpretations and they can act experimentally. And so as a person in authority, you can let people know when. When there's a complex challenge that requires everybody to lead, or at least everybody to help with diagnosing it.

You can let people know We need your good questions.

We need your interpretations and they don't even have to be Right. We just need your help. Seeing this [00:22:00] challenge. Yeah. From multiple perspectives.

Excellent.

And then if somebody fumbles, and for instance, and Thomas used to do this, sometimes he would make an interpretation and it would land like a lead balloon in the middle of an all staff meeting and Ed or somebody else with a little bit more authority than Thomas.

Could help reframe that interpretation so other people can hear it.

Wow. So them. Have their back. Wow.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: Yes. Have my back, Don.

Don Sherman: I've had it since 2015 , so.

Julia Fabris McBride: Yep. Keep having it, Don.

Don Sherman: I try . I try. That's

Julia Fabris McBride: But that's exactly right. Yeah. That's how we create these cultures where everyone

Don Sherman: Understood. Thank you. Now, how can businesses, you have this book, you've also translated for our Spanish speaking brothers and sisters.

How can businesses use your book.

Julia Fabris McBride: Thanks for that question. Yeah. Businesses [00:23:00] are using this book. For book discussion. So the book is really accessible and frankly, you can skim the book and read the bullet points and look at the cartoons. There's some nice q and as in here, so you can do, you can have people skim or read a chapter or five chapters and then have an hour long discussion about that book and.

Bring up the ideas. So I think that's an easy way for businesses to get the ideas into the culture and to be able to then have conversations about where can I authorize somebody to lead? Where can I authorize myself to And what are the challenges where we need everyone leading? So I've, I'm seeing a bank do that, a credit union a big tech company is doing those book discussions.

really, and you can do them. And we've also had companies do them in like, [00:24:00] read a short chapter. And these chapters are super short. Read a chapter and then we're gonna take 10 minutes at the beginning of our weekly meeting Yeah. To talk about that chapter. And you'll do that for 25 weeks and you'll really have built that into your culture.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: I love that idea.

Don Sherman: Excellent. What's the best way for 'em to get the book?

Julia Fabris McBride: you can order it online wherever books are sold at water. It's available here at Watermark in Wichita, and.

Okay.

Anywhere else. The other thing I'll add is we have a short one day program, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM that we're offering. That's called When Everyone Leads.

It's gonna be offered starting in April virtually and in person, and that's a great low cost way. Companies to get several people or many people introduced to these ideas, so you can then go

back to [00:25:00] your company and play with them.

Don Sherman: What day in April? I'm sorry.

Julia Fabris McBride: April 4th is the first offering that's virtual, and then there's several more.

Don Sherman: And you said the year.

six hours.

Julia Fabris McBride: It's six hours, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM with lunch there in the.

So this is our first, this is our most accessible open enrollment program that we've ever had. know,

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: because typically they're three days and longer. Right?

Two days.

Two

Julia Fabris McBride: days or, and longer. So,

Yeah.

Don Sherman: And it's gonna be at klc

of course, At klc.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: And who would you recommend? So this, if I'm a manager, who would I, should I,

Julia Fabris McBride: good question. My recommendation is bring every. If you're the kind of business that can shut down for a day and do a staff, basically a staff retreat at KLC with, with other people, bring everybody.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: And if you're not, that type of business, that,

Julia Fabris McBride: and if you're not that type of business, think about. Who [00:26:00] can, there's four offerings over the course of 2023. Send a quarter of your staff to each one.

So that's as the person who wrote this book and who wants these ideas permeated through your whole company because we know you'll be more successful when everyone leads. I want

you over the course of 2023 to bring everybody,

Don Sherman: Gotcha. So do they go to KLC website to, to get into this program

Julia Fabris McBride: Kansas Leadership Center dot.

Don Sherman: There you go.

So is it one? It's one day. One day. It's not a cohort. Over four times. Okay. One day. Gotcha.

Julia Fabris McBride: If they wanted to come back and go to other k c programs, there's a little of

Don Sherman: course.

Julia Fabris McBride: after that but no, this is a standalone alone.

Don Sherman: Excellent.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: A standalone program. Program, sorry, a standalone program. . So, Question for you as we're getting ready to wrap up, I've heard [00:27:00] someone say, or I've seen it, or that leadership is somewhat like improv. Can you. Tell us a little bit about that before we go out.

Julia Fabris McBride: Yeah. Ed and I both have experience in improv ed doing com in as a part of a comedy troop during college I didn't know that. That's a Isn't that interesting? Yeah. All

Don Sherman: ED I'm comedy

Julia Fabris McBride: Uhhuh. Yeah. And mine was a little more on the darker side, physical theater and improv about sort of darker stuff in my career as an actor in Wow. Okay. But

The thing with improv, two things. One, you say yes and to your partner. . So somebody makes an interpretation, you might wanna say yes, and here's another way to look at it.

And here's another way to look at it. Also, improv. Improv is experimental. You might not get the [00:28:00] laugh on your first try, but you don't. You're not, and you don't like try something and then run off stage. Instead, you try something, see if it Right.

Learn from what happened, and then pretty quickly get back in there and try again.

So it's an experimental art and it's also like very few people do improv alone. It's with other people, sometimes even with the audience. Right.

Don Sherman: makes sense. I love that.

Excellent.

All right. All right, well, we're gonna pivot and do some word association. Uhoh.

I'll give you one word. You give me one word back is not wrong cuz it's your word.

Are you ready?

Julia Fabris McBride: Are you gonna find out I'm crazy.

Don Sherman: Are you ready? I'm ready. Oh boy. Here we go. Leader

Julia Fabris McBride: Activity

Don Sherman: Success

Julia Fabris McBride: Progress

Don Sherman: College.

Julia Fabris McBride: [00:29:00] Really important.

Don Sherman: And let me interject. Did you grow up here?

Julia Fabris McBride: I grew up in the Chicago area. I moved to Matfield Green, Kansas in 2006.

Don Sherman: Matfield Green

Julia Fabris McBride: and college is really important. That's a special message for my 15 year old,

Don Sherman: ah

Wow. Gotcha. Excellent .Failure.

Julia Fabris McBride: Inevitable.

Don Sherman: Entrepreneur.

Julia Fabris McBride: Hero.

Don Sherman: Boy. You flowing with this. Wichita.

Julia Fabris McBride: Wonderful.

Don Sherman: Vacation.

Julia Fabris McBride: Matfield Green.

Don Sherman: Matfield Green getting a lot of love up in this.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: That's a lot. That's a lot.

Don Sherman: Hero.

Julia Fabris McBride: Right now. Kaye Monk-Morgan.

Yay.

Don Sherman: Chamber. Wichita Chamber.

Julia Fabris McBride: Essential.

Don Sherman: Family.

Julia Fabris McBride: Also essential.

Don Sherman: Fun.

Julia Fabris McBride: hiking in the Flint Hills.

Don Sherman: Nice. Last but not least, and you gotta tell truth. Oh I'm going to fact check you beverage.

Julia Fabris McBride: [00:30:00] Coffee.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: Yum.

Don Sherman: I can't do anything with that. I was wanting something that I was wanting another scoop. Wow. But I didn't get it. Coffee is it? Coffee? Is it? Thank you. Good to see you.

Julia Fabris McBride: Thank you, Don. Thanks, Ebony.

Ebony Clemons Ajibolade: Of course. Thank you for such an engaging conversation. Yes.

You've heard it here, please go to the website, sign up, look for an opportunity to go through the one day course, read the book, and make sure that everyone knows that everyone can lead. All right. Till next time.

Don Sherman: Peace.

[00:31:00]