



Human Optimization

Pod Club Discussion Questions



E67: Forward thinking leadership: Stop reacting, start leading

Guest: Coen A. Wijdicks, Ph.D., M.B.A.

The three big questions explored in the podcast:

Question 1

What is forward-thinking leadership, and why is it essential for leading yourself and your team?

Question 2

Why do so many leaders and teams struggle to think forward in a proactive rather than reactive way?

Question 3

What practical steps can we all take to become more forward-thinking to develop ourselves and our teams?

Discussion Questions:

1. Dr. Wijdicks opened by saying, "I'm not teaching from the top of the mountain... I'm still learning as I climb." How comfortable are you leading or guiding others while admitting you don't have all the answers?
2. Considering the three horizons framework—Horizon 1 (today's operations), Horizon 2 (emerging opportunities), and Horizon 3 (shaping the future)—which horizon do you naturally focus most of your energy on, and which do you neglect?
3. Can you think of a time when you said "yes" to a new goal or opportunity without deciding what you were going to give up to make room for it? If you could go back in time, what would you do differently? Dr. Wijdicks noted that forward thinking can feel like playing chess against your team unless you show them the whole board. Have you ever felt like a leader/partner was playing chess against you, or have you accidentally hidden the board from others?
4. Have you ever tried to push a vision onto others without gaining early buy-in? How did it go, and what would you do differently now?
5. Thinking about the Thomas Edison's quote, "Vision without execution is hallucination," which of your personal long-term visions currently feels like a "hallucination" because it lacks concrete execution steps?
6. Dr. Wijdicks talked about learning to move fluidly between "the ground level" (details) and "15,000 feet" (big picture). Which altitude is your comfort zone, and what happens when you stay there too long?
7. Based on this episode, what is one small change you are going to make to help improve in this area? How are you going to keep yourself accountable to that and measure your success? (Be sure to keep it simple, start small, and make it very clear).