Episode 219 - Beth Kanter: The Happy, Healthy Nonprofit: Creating a Self-Care Culture Within the Workplace

[00:00:08] Welcome to inSocialWork. The podcast series of the University of Buffalo School of Social Work at www.inSocialWork.org. We're glad you could join us today. The purpose of inSocialWork is to engage practitioners and researchers in lifelong learning and promote research to practice and practice to research. We educate. We connect. We care. We're inSocialWork.

[00:00:37] Hello my name is Louanne Bakk. I am delighted and honored to be joining Peter Sobota as a cohost of inSocialWork. Just a little bit about my background. I'm currently an assistant professor and director of the Institute on Innovative Aging Policy and Practice at the University of Buffalo School of Social Work. Prior to joining The School Social Work I spent a number of years serving as an aging services director within the nonprofit sector. As many of you may have experienced yourselves the need to practice self care in the workplace is critical in order to prevent feeling overworked and overwhelmed. Yet it is also a test that's often minimized within the nonprofit setting. In this episode Beth Kanter author of the happy healthy nonprofit offers strategies to help both individuals in nonprofit organizations obtain impact without burnout and to create a culture of self care within the workplace. She discusses her own experiences in advancing personal wellbeing as well as promoting organizational changes that are designed to create a system that supportive of employees. This includes some creative techniques such as engaging in walking meetings effectively managing technology by disconnecting or setting up firewalls in building a community within the workplace. She also offers tips for introducing self care into an organization. The episode concludes by highlighting why creating a care culture is important to the well-being of both the individual and the workplace. Beth Kanter is a well-established international leader in nonprofit youth of networks data and learning. She was interviewed in April 2017 by Dr. Nancy Smyth our dean here at the School of Social Work.

[00:02:37] This is Nancy Smyth and I'm dean at the School of Social Work at the University of Buffalo. And I'm really excited that Beth Kanter's agreed to talk to us today about the book the happy healthy nonprofit. And you don't actually have to buy the book but I think after you hear all the wonderful things that are in it you may decide you want to do that because I think it's in a really important topic for nonprofits and I would say for organizations in general. So Beth can you say a little bit about why you ended up writing this book. What led you to this.

[00:03:06] That's a great question Nancy and it's so great to reconnect with you. I must say some of the work around self care that you've published at the school was a great inspiration to us. Why were writing the book. As you know I'm looking for networks and technology that sort of stuff. So writing a book on well-being in the workplace was a bit of a you know strange but really. I actually went to see my doctor not too long ago and I got those cholesterol tests the gun you know and my scores came back. My triglyceride with something like. 399. Which as you know is off the charts. You know less than 150. Percent obviously with eating too many cheeseburgers sitting around and maybe there were some tequila. Most of all like working nights weekends saying things like all sleep when I'm dead and not taking my vacation time. So my doctor said to me you know if you've just started walking a little bit. Every day it would do wonders for you. So I got to sit there and I don't know if you have one as well that measures your steps. And I just started walking. And if you're familiar with that it has that leaderboard so you can crowdsource your motivation. And before I knew it I was walking 15000 steps a day which is about seven miles. And I went back to get my test results and I came down to normal range. But something else happened. Aside from losing a lot of weight I felt better. And it was more than just how even though I was spending less time at my desk. I was way more productive. I was more help work. We had a more prevalent happier or less. One of my teenagers like to say I got really excited about you know walking and you know as part of your workday and my professional colleagues would say How do you find the

time in the day. And I sort of came to this idea that health care such as walking or mindfulness or Unplugging for the weekend that that's not a luxury it's really part of doing the work it's not separate. So as we started looking into the research and I came across a study from Samper that talked about how walking meetings can make your team more creative. And another interesting study from the University of Illinois that actually gamp people's brains did comparisons are periods that we're sitting still for a half hour and a brain that has just taken a 20 minute walk 20 or 30 minute walk. And the one that has taken a walk was all lit up at the those were you know connecting with the brain that was standing with star support you know what kind of brain you want to bring to your work. If you're a leader what kind of brain you want your staff to bring to work. Of course we want the brain that's all lit up and with lots of ideas and excited and have the ether right and then it was a little bit after that happened to me the founder of the Black Lives Matter chapter in New York. His name was Alan and he was telling me this great story about. How the summer of August 2015 and how they were all coming in the we know what was happening during that time that was the height of Ferguson. They were coming at meetings that were doing the check-ins and saying how are you feeling before they actually got down to the work and people were saying sorry that's angry and so they asked then why are we doing the work. And then they realized they needed to actually practice self care during this really stressful intense time. So not having a whole lot of money. They kind of started to barter health care activities. And you know I have a coupon for a massage. Another person said I'm going to sleep in on Sunday and another person said I'm going to spend time with family and they started focusing on you know health care together and being their own accountability buddies and that kind of hit me as well this is a great idea. Called from self care to we care. So that's kind of the book in a nutshell it's kind of a manifesto for mindset change and tips for individuals who work in nonprofits to take care of themselves. And then how do you bring that to the workplace.

[00:07:09] Well that's a lot in there and it makes me start to think about the difference between an individual deciding to do something and then reaching out and creating a culture and sort of a movement. Even beyond that which I think is part of what I would hope your your book leads to. You know I was wondering if you could say a little bit about that because I mean you think there's something about the ethos that's developed in nonprofits especially those that had sort of grassroots beginnings about the sense of sustainability doesn't always extend to ourselves. And so when you start to as a leader start to change that you know to start to say well actually encouraging people to take vacations is about being more productive. But but what are some of the struggles that individuals and leaders go through as they start to think about moving to this kind of a paradigm.

[00:07:54] That's a great question. Well first of all I think that like if you want wellbeing in the workplace it's not just an individual responsibility. It's both. It's both and it's both individuals. But also the organization. Case in point I guess if let's say as an individual you've decided to commit to healthy eating right. But you go into work and go the staff meeting and everybody stuffing chocolate doughnuts. Not that there's anything wrong with that. But you're carefully avoided. You know some of these sugary snacks and here they are in the workplace. So when health care is on the backs of individual then it becomes the thing where you might have stopped care abusers. We just care about crap so somebody might say I'm not going to not fund raising event tonight health care and then it puts the. You know. Difficulty on everybody else when it's not an organizational strategy. So I think there's a couple of steps. You can't just go and say do you need to be happy and healthy. I think individuals need to kind of assess their level of stress or whether they are on the path of burnout. And think about it not just in terms of their health and cholesterol numbers or stop smoking or whatever but to really understand what their overall well-being and work is sort of part of that. So it's. Worth understanding for yourself. You know work life balance with calling her stress are any symptoms you're feeling are those the first stages of burnout and becoming aware of that and deciding to create your own health care plan. But also understanding you know what is it in the workplace that's contributing to that and what happens a lot. A couple of things as you said

before it can be leaders who are so passionate about social change in the mindset that we have in the private sector about scarcity and we're just going to work harder and longer to overcome and that's not sustainable. Or we might have a toxic culture or toxic leaders who are modeling burnout behavior and that becomes the cultural norm.

[00:09:51] As a school of social work that's been implementing what's called trauma informed care. The whole meaning behind trauma informed care is creating a system that is supportive for people not just the clients who come for treatment or the students who come to school but that the whole system has mirrored that from the beginning from the top to the bottom. And so we've talked about self care and we have this sort of discussions about what self care for one person may not be for someone else. So for me e-mail is toxic I have a real hard time with e-mail. And so I choose to be really careful and in a dean's role and I do not check e-mail regularly on the weekend and I don't generally check it past a certain time in the evening and I don't check in on vacation. And I've told my staff all know that if there's something urgent call I mean if it really can't wait we do have a telephone you can call me or text me. And that's works just fine for me and I have colleagues who look at me like I'm out of my mind when I say that they say how on earth can you do that. And yet. And now there's a member of my team who's doing e-mail at 5:00 in the morning 5:30 or 6:00 in the morning for her self care. It makes her feel terrific to get in and out at that hour. And for me I would be allergic to that. And so we try to sort of accept well OK. When when so-and-so sends e-mail at that time of the morning it doesn't mean that she expects everybody else to be on there. It just means that that's when e-mail is for her. What do you think about that kind of a balancing act.

[00:11:18] The problem that happens is when you get someone who is in a leadership position who is modeling that. I'm on at 5:00 am. Then there's this kind of. Disgust expectation that people are going to respond to that as well. And so I think the important thing is for leaders especially maybe to start using some of those scheduling tools and to have e-mails go out during quote normal business hours. You might be waiting them at 5:00 a.m.. And you may be reading them at 5:00 a.m. but you also have to have empathy for the person at the other end who may be. Just browsing and receiving it at the other end. And what the expectation that creating now for individuals here's a really interesting exercise. We know that according to research from Larry Rosen technology behavioral studies behavioral addictions that 52 percent of smartphone owners check their phones a few times an hour or more and they pick it up I think 20 times a day. OK. So not all of us I think not all cell have made that sort of separation between their work e-mail and their personal use of their phone. I mean I use it to go find Yelp. Or I'm going to get directions but Google Maps doing that but we kind of get into the habit of checking Facebook or maybe checking e-mail and that gets us sort of sucked into this after hours thing. It's an actual behavioral addiction. I use a software program app called Moment because remember that statistic I said that's not me for track your usage from the cell phone how long you've been on it how many times you picked it up and what percentage of time goes to which I have. And I found that I was using my mobile phone to our two and a half hours per day almost 18 hours per week and I picked it up 30 times per day. And the reason for that. Is that mobile phones e-mail social apps have this thing called a ludic Lulu. Lulu. Lulu is a loop of repeated activities that happen because every once in a while we get a positive result. The classic example of course is the slot machine which leads to gambling addiction. And that's the reason why that happens at least according to Laurie Rosen research. He wrote the book Brain. Like studying what is the impact of being online all the time. And he's saying that there's this urge for us to check our e-mail comes from within. You know it's a lot of promises Gee I haven't checked e-mail or Facebook. I want to go check it and checking it cutted generates the. Stress. Hormone called cortisol and it's that same hormone that the primitive men anxious and hyper aware and think oh I've got a watch out there maybe a fiber to tireder that might eat me. So that prompted our head produces the cortisone and to reduce our anxiety we check our e-mail and this keeps us in that loop when I've been trying to do is to put more of a wall between you know be aware of that. And do things like that we designed my mobile phone so that I don't get addicted to it. For example

I set up notifications for special people. I don't get notifications from ads only from people I put only tools on my front. Screen. I also regularly scramble the order of my app so my thumbs. Lose the memory of it because I can mindlessly go my bones and then I've also made things harder to get at by putting them into folders and putting them on the third or fourth screen. And the thing that's really scary is there's a guy waiting for thrive which is Arianna Huffington's new site called Time Well Spent and his name is Tristan Harris and he's a former Google employee and in interface design there's actually interface designers that are designing these apps. So we'll get addicted.

[00:14:57] Brains are going to head toward anything novel and of course anytime a new notification comes up it's new so we get a little shot of dopamine and that makes us sort of that's a pleasure response. So yes they are designed to evoke that and it isn't our fault. But as I also think I can hear you talking about we haven't sort of labeled it but I know you have in the book is mindfulness. It's the ability to sort of watch myself and be aware of what's going on and as I'm doing it so I can interrupt some of these cycles. And then you have an app that sounds like that helps you really observe yourself in terms of that Apple's called moment I think you said and certainly that can help us be a little more honest about what we're really doing. But I think yes sir to struggle with tech. You obviously talk about self care in many many different ways but this is probably the large challenge that many people are struggling with right now in our culture and it's becoming part of that expectation to be connected all the time because these devices are 24/7 even if we aren't. And that's what I think the struggle is for folks. I mean I know nonprofit leaders who really work to encourage people to take vacations. But then at the same time are checking in with them via e-mail and instant messaging apps those kinds of things while the person is on vacation. Those are two sort of contradictory behaviors with people learning how to disconnect and really set up those firewalls. I think is the larger challenge. I was curious about what you said about you do with your home screen. I'm sorry. This is really a helpful strategy for me. What is it.

[00:16:24] Yes. OK. OK. I don't put any apps on there like my coloring book apps or things that are work related to boring work time and then rearrange the order of it if I'm on vacation. I actually take out. My work e-mail and I take out my my tools that are used primarily for work and I also take off Facebook. This is hardly. So I rearrange the top screen. So. Depending on like if I'm taking a break so I don't have that temptation and only the things that I would need like on vacation like Trip Advisor Yelp you know Google Maps phone the texting. I also take advantage of like I use an iPhone. And you can actually. Control the time that people text you. So I might block out. And I actually walk them out. In evenings. I have certain things that I only can receive certain text messages from close friends and families after you know 8:00 p.m. at night. If it's a work thing that might be an emergency funding then I can you know change the permissions attached to that contact. So it's really about being intentional. And thoughtful and also designing it so you do have those boundaries. I think the most important skill these days is how to navigate these boundaries and how to not feel guilty about it or I see one of those. Nonprofit people who would quote go on vacation. But I would not log off. I would have two suitcases packed. I have one of my stuff vacation clothing and the other suitcase full of work that I'm going to do. Because I have some quiet time. I realized while I did I'm not setting boundaries here. And I really need to have that. Pulling away. Just with family and. With therapy ocean or. Going on a kayak or whatever it is. According to research it's going to be more successful. So I started actually to play my vacations Carnival and put them in a calendar by the ticket. So if there's any like request it's like while I've already bought these tickets would you like to pay the cancellation fee. Of course they don't. And talk let people know. My clients know. But they will respond to e-mail. Here's my phone number in case there's an emergency. No one's ever called to make sure as I'm getting closer to the departure date that I closed out things and then also to plan a couple of re-entry days and nothing bad has happened because I be learning what kinds of structures in place to set those boundaries both re-entry days and for me I have to plan closing days days to handle all the last minute stuff that comes in because people know I'm going on vacation you know get those all taken care of. So we've been talking a lot

about tech which is obviously a huge challenge. And you talked a little bit about walking meetings. But can you say more as as you try to create a We Care culture in a non-profit. What other kinds of things are helpful to build in

[00:19:10] One thing is and this is more the individual and I'll talk about it more globally for the organization. Right now I'm using a standing desk. It's actually a stamp for my. Laptop. So I'm standing as we're speaking. And so stand up at work. All of us sitting as we know sitting in there smoking even if you exercise and go to the gym. It's not about that it's the fact that you're being sedentary for longer than an hour or so is not good for your major systems and it leads to brain fog. And I hear from oh the standards are so expensive. Well I have a colleague that's trainer actually I used the photograph when I present she has a standing gas but she has set of a music stand in a cardboard cartons. And there's lots and there's now a cardboard carton standing death for 15 bucks. You know I happened to have one that. It's a metal one that fold. It's great. I love it. Think about standing more at work if you get a standing desk don't try standing for eight hours. Right off the bat. Ease into it gradually. And you may also want to get a footpad because your feet do get a little sore. The other thing that I have found is stop using your. Computer keyboard as a lunch tray. You were trying to go out for a walk if you are given a lunchtime. Break. And so many of us eat lunch at our desk and it's just not healthy. So what I've been doing is actually maybe eating really quickly and then going out for a 20 or 30 minute walk. You know I go out to a coffee shop and I'll bring a book with me. Oh and I'll read for another 15 minutes and then I'll walk back. Those are some easy ways as an individual. I know more and more nonprofits are experimenting with getting standing desks for employees and having that be part of the option. And even those with tight budgets have gotten a communal standing debt so that people can rotate using him. Walking meetings are great. I have a great story about introducing it into your organization. It comes from an organization that's in Brooklyn. The organization has it as a Jewish organization that looks at sustainability integrated into Jewish life. And their director of major gifts her name is Gina. She's a marathon runner very fit and she had been a consultant before she came into this organization which had a winning culture and she wanted to get people walking. So she started this thing called the weekly afternoon walk and it was just 20 minutes after launch to energize and build community. At two o'clock come out for a walk and the first time only one person showed up. And then she realized while there's organizational schedule. So she got it in the organizational Google calendar. And then next week two people showed up. And so what she did each week when they went out on this walk they would take selfies and then they would share it with everybody else out and and each week they got a few more people going. And she sort of tapped to the basic tenet. This is going to go out for 20 minutes. Take a walk around the river and bring you right back and it's become a thing now and she doesn't even have to be there. People do it. They say it's great the way they feel a little bit reenergized and they're also kind of building a team as well.

[00:22:17] That's a great example of how to introduce that sort of step at a time in an organization. Now I was laughing at one of your cartoons in the book that walking meetings and about how well they were going except for the White Board stuff and it shows somebody sort of trying to write on a white board as the team is walking. So sort of curious if you could talk a little bit about that because walking meetings can be terrific. But there is the capturing of what happened in the meeting and what are some of the best strategies people have for doing that. So they're not just adding to their list of things to do. When they get to get back to the office before they can leave the office

[00:22:55] I hear this question all the time and that's a concern that keeps people from doing it. So first of all the number one thing is think about what meetings you want to make your walking reading. OK. It doesn't have to be the staff meeting right off the bat. OK. It could just be a one to one and it could be just maybe the Check-In. Now you have someone that's working for you that's maybe a half hour meeting that isn't really about having to look at data on a screen while you're walking or to capture everything they say. So to get started maybe having as a one on one go out for

the walk but navigate back to your computer in your office maybe five or ten minutes before the meeting doba. And that's where you can capture your your to do or takeaways from the meeting. And when I started doing that I found that while actually remembered stuff because I wasn't glued to the screen. Another way to do it. You know with one once or maybe a smaller meeting is just bring a pen and paper and just jot down. We when we take walks where are we sharing little nuggets. And she does voice memos on her mobile. So said that you are again and this will it into her phone if you're orchestrating a larger walking meeting. Like walk America's dogs with their mission is to encourage people to walk more to a big staff meeting walking and they'll each have their intern bring their laptop to a coffee shop where there's Wi-Fi and they'll take a break in between to look at the screen or capture some notes. It takes a little planning. Like all good meetings what's your agenda. What kind of notes do you need to take. You know who's going to talk about what and the additional layer of planning is. What is your route. Because a lot of people where you're going to be a stopping point and what information should you give out in advance.

[00:24:41] So if you're not going to have a screen while you're walking those are all excellent tips and I think that the creative approach of having somebody meet them at a coffee shop with a computer it sounds like a nice in-between if you have to do that.

[00:24:55] Yeah I mean I present this idea and we hear well I have a few people that have and it's all going on a walk and some of them start with a smaller group or else another great. This is this comes from way back when I want to say his name was most Bovin who is the head of Health and Human Services back way back at maybe during Bush. They used to do leadership walks every Noon on Wednesdays. The CEO was going to go for a walk and anyone can be invited to join. But it gets people access to that CEO as well which is always helpful variation on sort of the Open Office for folks. Well you talked about in the book is nutrition as well and you sort of hinted at that with a comment about doughnuts but can you say a little bit more about how that relates to wellness both individually and in terms of an organization. So in the book we came up with a lot of different ways to explain things but we talk about how there's the wellness triad of exercise sleep and. Nutrition you know healthy eating. You know we've all heard this information that we probably all memorized that our doctors or our mothers or with ever told us about these things. But that's really important to kind of start at the base once you have those that triad of things in place you can start to change other habits. As you know. And so. Like bringing no nutrition into the workplace. There's a couple of ways to do it. I mean one is thinking about you know going to an audit about like how healthy is the food that you're serving at meetings where that's in the vending machines and thinking about changing it and getting input from staff around them they don't feel like that there's food police or whatever. There's some really great resources from the American Heart Association. There's actually a vending machine audit checklist if you will. Another thing to having a communal meal sort of has had two purposes that can be you know have healthy food but also build community on staff and I think about this great story from an organization called Pathways to Education which is up in Canada and they provide low income youth with a transition to college and so they might have like 25 30 staff members and their executive director started this thing called crockpot Monday. She bought a crockpot off of the Canadian version of Craigslist and then put a sign up sign it's like who would like to create a vegetarian or healthy meal for the whole staff. We're going to go in on Monday. Somebody will prepare it and we'll sit down together. And so they actually have a Google document with people signing up and they loved it and it's become a thing and it's become so much of a thing now that when they have people applying for jobs and they've had no one apply applying Arabic's said well I heard about this thing you do called crockpot Mondays. So we just thought that was so nice that you had a culture in your organization that kind of builds community. So not only is you know some people might think oh that's woo woo. And maybe not everybody on staff has to be friends with each other or go out beer but it's nice to have that way for people to get to know each other a little better appreciate each other as human.

[00:28:01] Yeah it's a nice way for people to connect and it sounds like that people were really willing to sort of pitch in and start to do it together so that again creates more of a communal team culture and the organization as sort of thinking about at the organizational level and what you're trying to create I was wondering about issues of what kinds of benefits approach to time off make the most sense to really creating wellness I know places that are now starting to talk about mental health days for people in other words that people don't have to call in sick to lie but that they have a way for people to take time off in more flexible sort of circumstances and I wonder what you had to say about that in terms of how it fits into a healthy nonprofit.

[00:28:46] OK I think it's really important because I think the number one thing that I hear are that makes life bearable at work is flexibility and. You have a continuum of flexibility. You might relieve Ridgeway where you have to clock in every day to 9 to 5 or 9 to 6 or whatever it is. You can't leave your desk to something called results based workplace which is. You don't have meetings you don't have a schedule you can come in or not come in. But as long as you get work done I think going to that. Is. Difficult make a culture change from one extreme extreme to the other. But when we hear a lot of nonprofit doing is that they may have flex schedule but negotiating team by team basis. And Ted does a great job of this. Their manager of Education Director of Education. He has two younger kids that need to be picked up from school. So he could he negotiated where he leaves early on like Tuesdays and Thursdays because that's a day to pick up the kids and then we'll continue and pick up the time later at home or he'll come in early. So having this kind of flexible work schedules kind of negotiated some organizations do things like give a free vacation day on the staff person's birthday others do kind of fun stuff like I think it's do something or has something called todo Tuesdays where on Tuesdays they start playing Toto Africa on the loudspeaker and they play it really loudly until everybody leaves. There it's not. One person leaving the whole staff has to leave early. What is a worldwide Wildlife Fund WWF has with the panda as their logo. They have panda Fridays during the summer where they allow people to leave at noon on Fridays. I think there are some you know nonprofits are approaching this from finding creative ways.

[00:30:25] I love hearing the collection of all these different ways. I know when you've posted blog posts you have a way of pulling them together. But those kinds of stories can be helpful way of educating leadership but also board members about practices that the organization is moving to. It's nice to hear some specific examples like that. Are there organizations that you've come across that have really good lessons learned in this process. Things that they tried and then they found they needed to do differently.

[00:30:52] No that's a really great question and the story I'm thinking about is Crisis Response Network in Phoenix which has a suicide prevention line the old fashioned kind. With phone versus text and it's a quasi government agency. And we had I don't know about 120 150 employees mostly people who were on the phones. But you know what your staff but they had a real culture of fear and they only saw your staff when they were escorting someone to the door who was getting fire. And as you know suicide prevention counseling is stressful. Right. And they had all kinds of benefits like gym memberships. They had a quiet room and all that but those benefits weren't being years because of this kind of culture of fear. Well they brought in a new and younger executive director whose name was Justin. And so he wanted to go about like changing the culture so he did a listening and engagement tour. You know talking to the employees in groups and finding out what's it like to work here. What would make it less stressful. What is it that you need. What would make you feel like there's a community here. He found out that they weren't used in the gym memberships. It was you know. But what they would like is a place to let off steam. Like. Punching bags. So he created this appointing me committee. He found out that permits health insurance the cost of the punching bags can be covered. You know as exercise equipment and you let the employees design you know on an old conference room that wasn't being used into like a little on

site jam. So if somebody felt they needed to let off some steam or the other thing they found out was the reason people weren't using the quiet or the meditation rule was well it was painted bright white. It had fluorescent red light and it had giant photos of cactus on it. So they were in Arizona OK. Now with that calm that doesn't sound relaxing. How so. So he appointed a new employee engagement group gave him a small budget. Tells him when we designed this room so it's meditative and calm and soothing and the and earth tones and they got a couch from the goodwill and they got some nice lighting and pleasing posters that weren't upsetting and magazines and some music and people started using the room for example. This is one of my favorites. And their shift to kind of bringing well-being into the workplace happened because of their rules but in their own building they were trying to encourage people to use the stairs or the elevators down they downloaded the five you know from the CDC that they you know take the stairs but they don't really like look at the stairs. And there were rats and cockroaches in the stairs and they weren't really well lit. No one's going to take the stairs. So the idea here is to avoid these quick fixes that you really need to have a combination of leadership involvement and modeling as well as employee engagement

[00:33:46] Yeah I can hear that that balance is really important. Those are great examples. Let's assume someone's listening to this podcast and thinking OK I'm probably an example of all the worst things I could be doing and this feels overwhelming to think about all these different things. Where should I start.

[00:34:05] OK. So it depends on who they are in the organization. Are they bullied or are they an employee and in kind of the culture of the organization. But let's just say an individual who stressed out would probably want to start with doing some of the assessments around burnout kind of understanding the symptom and thinking about one or two things they'd like to change in terms of their new care habits. Are they going to be more conscious around their use of technology. Are they going to start walking more. Whatever that is they make a commitment to doing that. If it's a leader or an organization or someone thinking about it like bring this into my organization. Another way to start might be to give your staff the opportunity to take those assessments. And here you have to be kind of tricky because. You know could be personal information. But as a kind of. Way to help them understand if they are struck and then maybe to have a second meeting maybe a staff retreat for people to talk about what it's like to work there. What can make it less stressful and that can give you great feedback around things that you might want to establish in your play handbook or as part of the culture or way of working. And I think that it's as simple as that. I mean that sounds simplistic but. It's getting feedback it's starting that conversation and having the discipline to start to put small thing into the culture and the way you do your work

[00:35:25] Just getting started. But the most important thing if you're trying to do this at an organizational level like in here is the importance of engagement of talking to people of hearing what people's ideas are and moving at a pace that they're comfortable with focusing on the priorities that emerge from the people that you're working with and maybe also at the leadership level.

[00:35:47] You know if they if they think this is a bunch of woo or they're asking like what's the hurry why have happy healthy. I actually heard that term. This is a bunch of woo. You know there is. The book summarizes a lot of the research about what you know what the return on investment is. You know. There's hard. Cash. There are like fewer absences and sick days of lower health care costs. But there's also things which are measurable and important like higher employee work satisfaction and retention. I mean think you know when you lose a person that time and eventually money because you have to retrain realty when you think about it younger also younger professionals in the field are really kind of savvy about. The culture of different organizations and they want to work in places where there is a culture that's focused on well-being and has that versus you know a burnout them. And if you do have happy and healthy employees they have better

productivity. They're more motivated they're resilient they're better brand ambassadors to be good that they love working there. They're going to think great things to other out in the world about working there. If you have a burnout. I can imagine what they might say to others you know and that you know build organizations reputations and brands which ultimately impact their ability to do things effectively.

[00:37:05] Well if you're in the business of then serving people and you have clients who come to you for services burned out staff are going to be not as effective with those folks that's going to be sort of transmitted to the recipients of whatever you're doing and an influence the quality of what they get. So those are pretty important issues both branding and I think the quality of the interactions. It sounds like though as as a leader someone would be thinking about if I'm going to be talking to a board or two to donors to really be able to talk about the return on investment if I don't use those phrases I can at least talk about what this is really given an organization with the positive benefits of implementing these approaches are to productivity and creativity and to things like money that's lost when you lose employees and turnover is always an issue and you can retain good people here. You've really cut your costs and a lot of major ways. Is there anything we haven't talked about that you think is important for people to know about this topic. I mean you've got tons of great ideas in your book and on your blog. But anything that sort of stands out right now.

[00:38:12] I just want to sort of emphasize that healthcare isn't about kale smoothies and the thousands that you know although those are nice. It's really about party of doing the work and that there's a lot of benefits here and bring it into the workplace really depends on the combination of leadership. Modeling and endorsement if you will. Authentic endorsement and also authentic employee engagement.

[00:38:37] It's a combination of a lot of skills. It sounds like I guess that's not surprising. I really appreciate you taking the time out I know you have this incredibly challenging travel and presentation schedule. So if anybody can talk about modeling self care and in terms of a really demanding schedule it certainly you and I will say you do a great job of modeling that for the rest of us. Thank you for that.

[00:39:00] Well thank you.

[00:39:01] Sounds like that's just become an integral part of how you relate to the world which is I think a good thing. Thanks again. And I would really encourage people to check out your blog and if you just search on Beth Kanter it comes up immediately. So thanks for taking the time to start us. Bye bye.

[00:39:16] Thank you so much. You've been listening to Beth Kanter's discussion on how to create a self care culture within the workplace. I'm Louanne Bakk. Please join us again in social work.

[00:39:37] Hi I'm Nancy Smyth Professor and Dean of the University of Buffalo School of Social Work. Thanks for listening to our podcast. We look forward to your continued support of the series. For more information about who we are as a school our history or online and on the ground degree and continuing education programs we invite you to visit our website at www.SocialWork.buffalo.edu. And while you're there check out our technology and social work research center you'll find that under the Community Resources menu.