

## **Episode 36 – Emotion at Work in Learning Evaluation Chatting with Jim Kirkpatrick (@Jim\_Kirkpatrick)**

Phil: Hello and welcome to the Emotion at Work podcast, where we take a deep dive into the human condition, having conversations that you wouldn't necessarily expect. Now our guest today is someone whose surname spikes up a lot of discussion and debate within learning and development, organisational development and HR sector. He's someone I've known for a number of years, we first met back in I think it was 2012, so we worked together for a number of years. I feel very honoured to be one of the few people in the world that are a certified Kirkpatrick evaluation programme facilitators, there's not very many people in the world that can claim that title. Jim Kirkpatrick who is our guest today is somebody who is still spearheading and leading the world and the thinking on where evaluation goes. I know for some listeners you'll think really, leading the world on evaluation, I don't buy that and that's part of what I wanted to discuss with Jim today. So enough preamble from me let's get our guest on the air. So let's welcome to the Emotion at Work podcast Mr Jim Kirkpatrick, hi Jim.

Jim: Hi Phil, good to talk to you again.

Phil: Good to talk to you too. So as per this podcast we always open with an innocuous yet unexpected question because I think it gives us a much nicer way of getting to know the guest than just doing a tell us a bit more about who you are and where you come from. The question that I have today comes from Monica Parker, so when I asked Twitter for some inspiration for some unexpected yet innocuous questions, and her suggested question was, "What special meal would you make for somebody to make them feel special or honoured?"

Jim: You don't think I was expecting that question?

Phil: No, I don't think you were expecting that question.

Jim: I surely wasn't but just before I answer, one of the problems is for me to make a meal at all, we're to assume that I can make a meal so let's just get that out of the way. What I would do to make them feel special is to probably catch some trout in a river or bass in a lake and then maybe have them help catch it and then cook it over an open fire with some cut potatoes and some green beans or something. That would be taking an experience and turning it into a meal and showing them that they're special. So that's probably what I would do.

Phil: That sounds lovely, that sounds really nice. Mine just pales into insignificance, now I feel very inadequate, but anyway we'll go with what I was going to say. I'm a big fan of slow cooking, I like slow cooked curries, slow cooked chillies and things like that and for me it's the putting that slow cooked dish and whatever it is in the middle of the table with a ladle inside and everybody just diving in. Depending on what the meal is there's either glasses of wine or there's glasses of beer or there's glasses of water or whatever that might be, but it's the big pot in the middle of a table and everybody being around it and diving in and helping themselves, and it being that very big communal bringing everybody together thing. I like that about a slow cooked meal where you get a big pot of stuff in the middle and then everybody just dives in and helps themselves.

Jim: Phil, it's interesting you say that because we're both, you and I are similar personalities, we're about connecting with people and the human experience and both our examples were about not the food so much but the experience, bringing people together in some special way. I'm not surprised to hear you say that and I would dive into that bowl with everybody else, it would be a lot of fun.

Phil: It would be a lot of fun. Am I right in thinking you live near water don't you so is fishing a regular occurrence for you?

Jim: Yes, we could right out my back yard and catch some fish and maybe instead of diving into your bowl they could dive into the lake and get refreshed before dinner.

Phil: That would appeal to my swimming antics, I can go for a swim, then catch my dinner and then cook it over an open fire, that sounds lovely.

Jim: There you go.

Phil: I'm going to take that segue that you gave me just now in terms of the bringing people together and making a connection bit. Because when I came up with the title for this podcast about Emotion at Work in Evaluation, one of the perennial challenges I think that...irrespective of whether...whatever model or approach somebody might be using for evaluation, trying to evaluate something like that, bringing people together and encouraging that human connection and those sorts of things. I think that more behavioural or soft stuff I think can be harder for people to get their heads around about how they evaluate. Is that a challenge that you hear regularly?

Jim: It is Phil, and a lot of people would say Phil what are you even talking about, what does bringing people together possibly have to do with evaluation? Evaluation is very simple, you give people a smile sheet at the end of the class and you test them to see if they understand what you've told them and then maybe 90 days later you send a survey out, find out if they're actually doing what they're supposed to do, what is this bringing together. So really, you know from your work as well, that evaluation should be about getting information not just collecting data to throw into some file somewhere. In order to collect the richness of information, certainly we use testing and surveys, and things like that, but in order to get deeper understanding of what's going on both in the classroom and in the field, you flat out just need to talk to people. You need to observe people and talk to their leaders and get the deeper story, the additional story because that way we try and get as much of the truth as we can using technology, using different sources, using the human factor, because that allows us to get as much information as we can both in the classroom and in the field in order to make improvements. But, Phil, we're lone wolves out there sometimes because technology is basically telling us you don't need the human factor, all you need is automation to get as much information as you need to make improvements and it's just not true. A lot of people are buying into that myth that you don't need the human factor.

Phil: I agree with you in that the human factor aspect will always be present whether it be...even if it might be mediated by technology, so you and I are talking over the equivalent of a Skype call

today, and as regular podcast listeners will know I deliberately turn the video off when I do podcasts recordings because I want it to be an accurate representation of a conversation that we have. But either way you and I are affecting each other through the discourse and the interaction that we have. So even if that human connection is mediated over technology it's still there. I think you're right in the challenges that automation brings, which way will it go, is it about automation will free up time for more human connection or is it that automation will reduce human connection because people won't interact with each other as much? Is, like you said, a fascinating debate.

Jim: You know, Phil, one of the things about that is that the whole purpose of evaluation is to get that information in order to make improves as I said both in the classroom and in the field, in order to contribute to the mission. That's what it's all about, not just checking the box that someone's gone through training. And the other aspect of the human connection is it is required after training to maintain that human connection with supervisors and peers, and colleagues in order to encourage and inspire each other, and to compel each other to actually apply what they learned, because if they don't apply it you try and demonstrate value, there will be very little value. So the human connection again follows through the actual learning and performance journey as opposed to just the human stops at training and then people are just left to fend for themselves.

Phil: Yeah, absolutely. I do see and hear a much wider discussion about some of the...and there's different titles that talk about similar things. So some people talk about systems thinking or systems mapping and other people talk about the different factors, the human factors and other factors that are involved. And there's also, I can't remember the lady's surname, Anne somebody, with the action mapping work that she does. All of which are variations on the theme of the fact that learning doesn't happen in isolation. Yes, you could make some resources available for people, you could put them through a formal development programme, you could give people a load of job aids or performance support resources or whatever that is, that all of those things happen within a wider context, within a wider system. I think one of the big challenges that sits with evaluation is that when you build an approach to evaluation, often it's done without wider consideration of that system and where you can source data and information from to help you with that monitoring to see if learning interventions are actually making a difference and having an impact.

Jim: Phil you're all over that and all those examples that you used are about systems and whether it's holistic medicine or family therapy, any of those kind of things are about a package, a formula rather than a single event. That is a difficult concept for a lot of people to get away from because what we call Kirkpatrick Level 3 which is on the job application, is not without its criticism. Because what a lot of people think business leaders, supervisors and even a lot of people in learning and development think we can't control what happens after training, so let's just stick with what we can control and that's the classroom. Because it's a minefield out there because they may go and find out that there are some things that aren't happening and they will find that. Some people are not applying it and it could upset some people and it could make them think well are you saying that I'm not doing a good job of leading or is there something wrong with our company? So this is not an easy sell because there's a lot of tradition and there's a lot of advocacy to keep things the way they are, that the senior leaders give us marching orders for training, we deliver the training and hope for the best, and everybody will be happy. But they won't be happy because if people don't apply it, it

won't get the job done. So it is not without its risks of people saying go back to where you belong, back to the training class and leave the performance to us.

Phil: Do you think, because some of the criticism I hear about...people talk about the Kirkpatrick model, it can be quite evocative for people either in terms of advocacy for it or challenge against it. One of the challenges that I often hear is that it's overly simplistic. How would you respond to that as a challenge?

Jim: Well for one thing if they're doing traditional Kirkpatrick it is simple because they think Kirkpatrick is you give a smile sheet after the class, you give them a test before they leave and you do a 90 day survey that's simple. But that's traditional but that's not The New World Kirkpatrick, The New World Kirkpatrick is much different from that, it's much more focused on business results and mission results and performance. But to be honest with you, Phil, I think the Kirkpatrick Model is pretty simple. Now it is not easy to apply but the concepts are simple, but there's a lot of resistance to it and a lot of misunderstanding that this is really about change management and the majority of it has to do with getting people to apply what they learned. Simple concepts difficult to execute because of human nature, people don't want to be told what to do, they don't want people watching over them, they don't want help sometimes they just want to be left alone, but business doesn't work well under those circumstances.

Phil: Full disclosure as I said in my intro I run the New World Kirkpatrick Evaluation programme on behalf of DPG in the UK and in other countries as well. If anybody wants to find out more about what that programme is, both the bronze programme and the silver programme, I'll put links in the show notes so you can go and find out when future programmes are taking place and so on. I was doing some work recently with somebody in an NHS trust and they were talking about mandatory training. So there is a regular mandatory training programme that happens around how a particular cannula is fitted to a patient, there are certain protocols that need to be followed. The mandatory training outlines in really clear detail what those protocols are. Yet the hospital is still experiencing high infection rates off those particular candidates. So something is falling down and what we know though is it's not the training because the training tells the members of staff exactly what they need to do. To your point we have the surveys and the tests that show us that people understand and have the skills to do it, because they're observed in the room and they're tested on their required knowledge and they leave the room saying they're happy. Yet what we find is that when they're back on the wards they're not following the safest process. When I was talking with the individual they were saying well we shouldn't apply the model to that then because that's nothing to do with learning. I said, no, absolutely the opposite, we can absolutely apply the model to that because what this is doing is helping us work out where is it falling down? We can follow the trail to go right where is it falling down? If we genuinely have strong evidence that the people enjoy the learning that they take part in, if we know that they can display the knowledge and skills that they have. We then need to go and find out what it is at that Level 3 on the job application bit, we need to find out either what it is that's causing it to fall down or what else we need to put into place in that environment to make sure that the levels of infection decrease. Because the cost to the NHS in that example is absolutely massive, yet the conception was, oh we can't apply it here because it's not about training. Like you said it's not about training necessarily it's about change management.

Jim: Phil, you're so right and for instance when I talk to someone and say, what's your job? They say, I'm an instructional designer. I say, well from this day forward you're no longer going to just be an instructional designer where you design formal classroom instruction. You are now going to be a learning and performance architect. They say, I am? I say, of course you are. They say, well what does that mean? I say, well what it means is instead of designing a formal training you are also going to be designing what happens before training to set the table and what happens after training, this performance support and accountability, Phil, that you were talking about, to make sure you're at least making recommendations and being involved with making sure people are reinforced and recognised, and held accountable, and encouraged to apply what they learned. So it's really the package approach rather than the event approach.

Phil: Sometimes I find a real challenge for myself in it. So for example yesterday I was doing a piece of work on resilience, I was running a resilience workshop for a client and if I'm brutally honest with myself, do I think it's going to make a big difference in the organisation? No, because there are other things that are happening within the organisation that will limit its effect. But also I just don't think the organisation is interested in evaluating beyond did people have a good time? When I had the initial call with the client to explore it, the enquiry came in and we had a call to explore what we were going to do and what we were going to cover. During that we underlined lots of systemic challenges that are happening within the organisation, but when I started to explore and go towards those aspects I was told, no, no, we just want you to do a resilience programme please. It really fascinated me that there's still an approach which is no actually we just want a one day course. The words weren't uttered we just want people to have a good time and that's it, but it felt like there's still that view or that approach and that quite surprised me I think.

Jim: Well, Phil, you are making some really good points there because the New World Kirkpatrick Model starts with business results and what you did is you ask them, "What are you hoping to have accomplished from this course?" They basically said, well we just want people to be trained in it. Of course then you've got to be honest and say well then don't expect resilience to occur in the workforce and you become a resilient organisation. They'll say why do you say that, because with no follow-up it just won't happen? So what we have to do is be honest with the leaders and if they say we want these grand results but we just want training you have to say it won't happen. There is no programme we can possibly just deliver in of itself to accomplish the goals that you set. Hopefully they'll say well then what do we need to do and that's where you say I'm glad you asked. What needs to happen is to have a package approach that focuses on resilient behaviours and behaviours that will cause resilience and encouragement that will then manifest through the culture. Evaluation has to be about the truth not this charade, not this popularity contest that it currently is so often, but the truth of it is, is it needs to occur in the classroom and in the field or there will be no significant results. Then it's their call right Phil, they may say well we still just want you to deliver the class and sometimes you do and sometimes you just say, well I don't do that.

Phil: A couple of times so far, Jim, you mention the package approach. I wonder if it might be worthwhile just exploring that a little bit more, what is it you mean by a package approach, what does that mean for you?

Jim: Well the first thing we start with a concept we call necessities for success and, Phil, for instance if you are dealing let's say it's the infections, the hospital born infections, if there's something in a culture that is going to cause problems for that, you need to talk right up front with the senior leaders and say before we train people in washing their hands and documentation and all that stuff. What we need to establish first is some kind of monitoring system in the clinics and in the hospitals to make sure that the supervisors are prepared to observe for those behaviours and to correct people when they're not doing it and to encourage them when they are. So you want to make sure you set that up first and set the table. Then the rest of the package means that you are designing something that happens after training, either from a support point of view which are maybe signs in the restrooms or community of practice where people talk about the challenges and how to counter the infections. But the other half is about accountability where there are touch points and there is observation. Maybe five or six different things, some of them designed to support, some of them are designed to hold people accountable and make sure that that package is executed in the field and if it is those infections are going to go down, there's going to be more positive patient outcomes from that.

Phil: I like that, that's a really nice way of looking at it. So you talked about there needs to be something to monitor and to check that people are doing what they need to be doing, that they're following the processes correctly, they're using the right equipment there, documenting whatever they need to do in the right way. Then there's also ways to support and encourage the behaviours to happen, so that might be through like you said posters or job aids or checklists or that sort of thing. Is that what you mean?

Jim: Right. Especially that's back to the human factor, it's important you give them job aids and help desks but somehow there has to be regular touch points where you bring people together and say how are we doing, who's struggling with this, who's finding success? Phil, are you ready for this one, in one hospital what they did is, they determined that one of the things they were going to monitor is how much soap was gone through the soap dispensers in the washrooms. What people learned to do is as they washed their hands they pushed the dispenser five or six times and had the soap just run into the washbowl, into the sink and then people are saying oh look people are washing their hands because we're going through more soap than we were before. What you have to do is make sure that people aren't sneaking around these things because of human nature, this is what we're trying to counter is human nature. We don't always want to go and make changes in our lifestyle and our behaviours. We're programmed to go what's familiar and what's comfortable? So this package is all about countering human nature because very few of us are wired to say, oh I just learned something from Phil about resiliency, I am going to go and on my own really work to make sure I become a resilient person. We can't count on that, we have to stack the deck with these job aids and so forth in order to make sure there's a critical mass of people who are actually doing what they need to do.

Phil: This is where I think the emotion bit is really important, so if I stick with the same example, when I was doing some exploration with the client from the NHS, there are a number of things that came out, two of the biggest challenges were one was the speed aspect. So one of the requirements of the process was that you apply a disinfectant for want of a better phrase, I can't remember what the actual technical term was, but you apply a product to the skin where you're going to fit the



cannula and you have to wait 60 seconds for it to be fully effective. So it takes 60 seconds for that to be fully effective and to destroy any bacteria or viruses that are on the skin that could then subsequently cause infection. But what happens is people aren't waiting those 60 seconds, they're applying it, waiting, I don't know, ten, twenty seconds or something and then they're applying it. Because the perception either is that they need to be quicker to go and treat other patients or that...because I did a bit of probing and questioning and one of the other things that gets reported is oh well I've never seen one become infected. I don't leave it 60 seconds and I've never see one be infected so therefore it's okay. That's the human factor isn't it, I haven't seen it so therefore it doesn't happen but that doesn't mean it doesn't actually happen in reality.

Jim: That's why part of the L&D department or talent management, learning and development whatever you want to call us, is to make sure that those kind of things are monitored in the field, because if they're not effective there won't be any results and people will scratch their head and say what went wrong? 90% of the time if there's mission failure, business failure, patient outcome failure, resilience failure, whatever it is, it is due to the breakdown of what we call those required drivers, those drivers of application, those drivers of behaviour. So part of our job to be the bee in the field, to be monitoring, to make sure that the coaching sessions are happening and that help desks are being utilised and the touch bases are happening. It's a whole new world and the other thing, Phil, is we don't want to lead the classroom by this either because so many classrooms are focusing now on the learning objectives and the competences and the instructor's job should be helping people see beyond the learning objectives into the behavioural expectations, and making sure that a lot of that training is about now what's going to happen after today, what we will expect of you to do back at the job and how will you get encouragement to do it? We've got to get out of the belief that the learning objectives and the confidences are the Holy Grail of the training purpose.

Phil: So we've mentioned the classroom a few times but I guess I'd like to extend that as well and say I think it's also the digital stuff as well. So whether there will be instructional designer designing a face to face programme or designing an online solution, whether that be something that's some kind of a gamification thing or whether it's some kind of role play game type scenario. Whatever it might be there is that requirement to think beyond the learning itself in whatever that learning is put together.

Jim: Absolutely.

Phil: I think the idea of business partnering and being more aligned with the business is a narrative that's been running now for, well it's got to be at least eight years if not ten years I think. I was listening to a podcast by the folk at Good Practice recently and one of their guests said they feel as though that message is finally getting through, that there's more activity suggesting that learning and development partners are aligning themselves to the organisation. That is a big confidence booster for me. I think one of my worries though and I'm curious as to where your experience with this is, in my experience though I don't find practitioners thinking about evaluation at the outset in that way. Be really clear about how it might support a business goal or which aspect of the business strategy it's supporting. What I think is missing is then going okay so now I know that, how am I going to track the extent to which this activity is actually affecting that outcome?

Jim: Very good. Phil, you're all over that. This means starting with Level 4 which is results and it's building relationships and processes, bridges we call them from our department, our functional area to the senior leaders to make sure that rather than just ask them what will success look like and then we just run back and deliver our training, it is finding out what kind of evidence will you need to see ultimately in order to say job well done? What kind of HR metrics of retention? What kind of patient safety, patient outcome, patient satisfaction metrics? What kind of turnover? That way that's good news because that tells us what kind of things that we'll be tracking to make sure those things are happening. So that's the beauty of how Level 3 and Level 4 work together, the package is delivered post training to make sure people apply it and then you start to monitor what are the signs of success that we're starting to see. Phil, you know and you teach this so beautifully that Kirkpatrick is no longer Level 4's did it work or not, but is it working along the way? Because this is our early warning detection system where we're monitoring progress and if we don't see it we send a team out to the field and find out what is the hold up, what's the barrier and you fix it before the patient outcomes or whatever it is, is in jeopardy, the mission of the organisation. So really we want people to focus on is it working rather than just being tempted to answer the question did it work. The other part of that is you need to get senior leaders to sign onto these major programmes not just sign off on them and sign a cheque and put their feet on their desk and wait for the results. The more they are involved in this encouragement, support and accountability actively involving the human factor, both from a senior leader and from a supervisor point of view, the more likely there will be application, the more likely there will be results and that is what you need to sell the seniors on, is getting them as champions and not just passive support.

Phil: I find that's one of the biggest misconceptions that I think exists around Kirkpatrick is that it goes one, two, three, four, that you start a reaction and then you go learning and then you go behaviour and then you go results. Almost the questions that go with it are did they like it? Did they learn it? What are they doing differently and did it work? For me and as you said it's all about turning it around, it starts at four and then it works its way backwards. It's like well why are we doing it, then what do we need people to do to deliver the why are we doing it? So what do they need to know to do the behaviours that we need to them to do and how can we make sure that they enjoy it along the way. It very much is a turn it on its head, four, three, two, one, not, one, two, three, four.

Jim: Exactly. I'm encouraging any of you who are listening to this podcast these are simple concepts but there's a lot of depth to each one and, Phil, you do an excellent job of making it practical for people and not go overwhelmingly complex that people aren't able to execute it. I know you keep it as simple as possible and yet with the practitioner in mind of how to actually make it be successful.

Phil: Yeah, absolutely. So one of the things I said at the opening of the podcast was that one of the areas that people I think struggle with is evaluating some of the, some people call them soft skills or some people call them critical skills. Any of those more emotive or behavioural aspects. I was thinking you've been in and around evaluation for a long time as have I, so I thought it might be useful for the listener to hear from you and me any techniques or hints or tips or approaches that people could use if they're looking to evaluate some of those softer skills or those emotive aspects in the workplace?



Jim: I'm glad you asked that question, one of my favourite ones because there is the global excuse out there which...

Phil: Global excuse.

Jim: Isn't it, they say oh this Kirkpatrick Model only works for sales kinds of things, it doesn't work for softer skills. It is an excuse because it's not the truth at all. What happens is that people buy some leadership programme or critical thinking or something that they call soft skills and they get all charged up into the activities and into the competencies. What they fail to do is to begin with the end in mind and say all right this leadership programme what are the ultimate missions, what are the ultimate business results we're looking for from this and they don't do that. They just get so excited about what colour is your wheel, what kind of animal are you today and all the games they play. Those are necessary but they have to be purposeful towards application and towards mission. The soft skills are no different than a sales programme, it's just you have to make sure you start with the end in mind and focus on what are the behaviours people have to do in the field, rather than what are the competences that they have to have under their belt kind of thing.

Phil: I think the temptation for HR, learning folk to build a big massive competency framework where it's not needed I think is a strong one. I'm trying to think of a real life example that I can choose. I did some work through one of the programmes that I run with DPG with a fitness club and the desired result was zero customer accidents and creating a very strong health and safety culture within the fitness clubs for that organisation. I thoroughly enjoyed putting that evaluation plan together because yes there's a tangible metric at the end which is the number of accidents per customer. So that's very tangible but the way to get there is not anything tangible at all, it's all about attitude, it's all about behaviours that happen within the club. It's all about the ethos and the way that people think about the work that they do, when they're walking through a changing room are they picking up a towel? When they're seeing somebody using a piece of equipment incorrectly, do they go over and correct them? Those sorts of things. Whilst the outcome might be quite tangible the actual title of the programme which is creating a health and safety culture within our clubs, which is what...when I asked what programme are you looking to do, it was we want to have a culture of health and safety within our clubs. Eventually through lots of questioning we got to the point where the business mission and result was zero customer accidents within the club. But the way we went about building the critical behaviours was really different because we had to then say right well what behaviours do we need and from what groups of people? Is it from the centre managers, people that manage that individual club, those club managers? Is it from the personal trainers? Is it from the instructors? Is it from the health and safety champions? Is it from the regional managers? Who needs to do what within it? It was pinning down what those behaviours were.

Jim: Phil, that is an excellent example of what needs to happen and it takes an influence and some persuasion of senior leaders, because you're trying to change their whole mindset about training and we've got to end the myth that training alone is enough to get it done. But you teach and you've just explained a pathway to get there, it's reverse engineering, it's starting with the end and then what behaviours are required and how will we make sure people have the skills necessary to perform their job. But one thing that is also important is that you maintain relationships with the senior leaders along the way and say hey if it's all right with you for this new critical programme how

about if we meet every three weeks and we go over things of what's working and who's doing well and which units, which clinics, which hospitals and which ones it isn't? We come up with some interventions to help those who are struggling and to congratulate those who are. So it is a relationship, it's ongoing with them.

Phil, another example, how about this one, we work with a large aircraft manufacturer in the United States, there aren't many so you can probably figure out who it is and they called me the other day and said, we're doing your Level 3 and it's not working. I said, well what are you doing? They said, well just what you told us. I said, what did I tell you? So you said to send a 30, 60, 90 day survey to every supervisor for every single class that any of their people take. That means they get the survey on every student for every class. I said, I told you that huh? Which I didn't. I said, why do you say it's not working? Well they said the supervisors first of all were getting a 4% response rate on our 30, 60, 90 day surveys and most of it is hate mail. They're telling us we don't have two hours a day to fill out your surveys and Phil, here's the second thing that was more telling, they said we don't even know who you are. They're basically saying there's been no relationship, that we don't know who you are, you have not earned the right to send us anything. So what this company had to do is spend time crossing the bridge from their comfortable L&D world into the world of work. They had to seek first to understand, as Covey suggested to try and find out what are the deeds and the human to human contact where ultimately they can send a survey. They don't send 30, 60, 90 days and flood their desk, but targeted surveys because they've earned the right and it's part of a Level Three evaluation not the whole thing.

Phil: I guess that links back into something we talked about already which is about the closer the alignment between learning and development/performance and the business is a good thing because, yes, it's understanding the links to organisational goals and priorities but more so it's having those relationships there and having those relationships in place that also allow you to earn the right to go and ask those potentially difficult and challenging questions. So that started with what techniques, hints or tips you would use when you're looking to evaluate some of the softer skills or some of the emotive aspects of the workplace? Is there anything else that you would like to add just around that? I guess I'm coming back to it because I think it's a key issue that a lot of people face and you said yourself it's one of those, what do you call it, a global excuse. What other hints and tips would you give people to try and adjust the global excuse that you can't evaluate those softer aspects?

Jim: Well there are really two words that I encourage people to fall back on when they're trying to make an argument, one is mission and that's when these soft skills or any training it becomes the games, it becomes the shiny new object, it becomes the training, the learning objectives, confidences. Always try and bring them back to the purpose of all those things or just stops on the way, steps in the journey about mission, contribution to mission. Not your build your resilience class or your infection prevention class is solely responsible for patient outcomes, but it's supposed to make its fair share of contribution. So whenever people start to get focused more on training and focused on their turf and getting protective of not wanting any Level 3 data to come out, you say well this is about mission, this is not about our own individual turf, it's about mission. The other thing, the word is truth and truth means we've got to stop just giving partial truth when it comes to...if we only use one source of data collection, surveys or tests, we have a concept called blended

evaluation, similar to blended learning only it means we want to use a variety of methods and sources in the classroom and in the field to get as much information as we can. For the soft skills especially in the field that's very important that we use different sources that we're talking to and surveying, and interviewing, and using different methods to get as much of the truth as we can about what's happening in the performance world, which then is going to be the key to applause for a job well done which is Level Four. So those two words truth and mission, throw those in with the word package and you pretty much have New World Kirkpatrick.

Phil: I think there's a disproportionate weighting that's given to quantitative data and I think there is a misconception that all senior leaders care about is the quantitative data that you can provide that shows...

Jim: Phil, you're killing me, I've got to sit down because that is so prevalent. They're saying our tests are qualitative because we get numbers. Our surveys are quantitative because we get numbers, therefore those are metrics and that is much more valid than any of this other soft anecdotal stuff. It is not true. First of all most of the surveys people are delivering are garbage, they're questions that are not getting much truth, they're questions that are serving the trainer rather than really trying to understand what's going on with the students. Second of all we don't just ask for people's opinion did they like the class, ask the supervisors are your people doing their job better? What we try and get is quantitative historical data from those interviews, from those questionnaires and things where a supervisor, if we help them to see the data along the way they can ultimately say here's how we used to do this, this infection prevention programme, we used to just use education and hope for the best and the numbers didn't change. But now that we're using a package approach that Phil helped us to develop, we are now seeing an improvement in the behaviours, we're seeing actually performance improvement which is leading to fewer infections, which is leading to fewer re-admissions and the lower satisfaction. So they can actually provide numbers if we help them and guide them how to do that and that becomes quantitative, we call historical comparisons and I'm telling you, Phil, the senior leaders and sponsors of programmes, and those who hold your future in their hands are much more impressed with that than they are smile sheets and pre and post test course. They don't give a darn about those.

Phil: I agree completely. I also think you're right that if we can get that quantitative data that can show at an organisational level the impact or contribution of impact I think is important. Alongside that I run the risk of sounding a bit cliché now, but I think the power of the story telling that goes with it can never be underestimated. I remember I used to run a leadership programme in a local council and when it came to the presentation of impact, I got the people that were participants in the programme to deliver the presentation and not me. Don't get me wrong I worked very hard behind the scenes to build the story and to work with them, to get them to practice it and so on. But it was the stories that those individuals told about impacts on their practice, their work and their team, those were the compelling things that got the reinvestment in the programme. Yes, the fact that we could show improvement in 360 degree review. For me that's one of the default settings that L&D folk have, I'm going off on a bit of a tangent but I'll come back. So if we're doing behaviour change let's do a 360 before and after and therefore there's our evidence. I went that's not evidence, that's not evidence to impact that's evidence of people's change of perceptions potentially, but it doesn't tell us how it's impacted themes or individuals or customers or residents

or anything like that. That's where the qualitative data has to come in. I need to be clear, what I'm saying is I think qualitative data needs to have equal importance with that quantitative data, because as you said, it's a massive part of the story.

Jim: Well, Phil, you know we call them lawyers in our country, I don't know if you still call them barristers over there, but they win in court, not just with presenting the expert witness data but you have to put the weeping widow on the stand and tell her story. It's the same with Jim Collins' talks about capturing the minds and hearts of the learner. We also have to capture the minds and hearts of our juries, of our stakeholders and you can't just do that by throwing numbers at them. Phil, the other thing that you did is you let them tell their story and what happens is that's why you're the foremost authority in a Kirkpatrick model in the UK because of what you told us, your secret is and that is to let them get the applause, different supervisors and different employers. But do you know what, in the end those leaders are going to point to you and say we know who was behind all of this. Rather than just saying you Phil as a training provider or a consultant they see you as a catalyst and the architect, the orchestrator of the whole change management initiative. That is when we know it is the ultimate destination of New World Kirkpatrick is when they point to us and say job well done and thank you for letting my people, our people take some of the glory. That is the ultimate indicator that you have successfully executed the New World.

Phil: Definitely. So one of the things that we've mentioned indirectly or implicitly so far is the isolation argument and again this is a very emotive topic. How do I isolate my contribution to the ultimate result? I can't possibly say that my programme has affected this outcome because there's lots of other things that go into that as well. What are your thoughts on that isolation argument or that isolation point?

Jim: Just to put it mildly it's garbage and let me explain why.

Phil: That was more polite than I was expecting.

Jim: Let me just tell you the reason why, and I'll use your quote, Phil, you said my contribution to the results. Now if my contribution is strictly delivering training that's all they got and I guess they have to use the isolation because they have no other involvement in any other package, any of the follow up stuff. But the problem is first of all training alone only provides about 12 to 15% of what people actually apply. That isn't enough to get much results. The other thing, Phil, is in the New World model where you are building relationships for supervisors and you're following up with students who are working hard to be performers and people manning the help desk and communities of practice. What the isolationists are basically doing is saying we are factoring all those other people out of the equation when we go before a jury, when we go before our stakeholders and we're going to thump our own chest and say this is what our class delivered as far as the return on investment. So first of all there isn't much return and second of all they are cutting their own throats because they are discrediting the people that they need in order to create the results in the first place. So it's career suicide is what it is.

Phil: That's one of the things that I was saying all the time both in the programmes that I run but also just generally, being able to stand somewhere and say this group of people had a really big

impact on the success of this, and that group of people are nothing to do with me, yet I know without them we would have really, really struggled and the impact would have been negligible. If you put yourself in the seat of a Finance Director or a Managing Director or a HR Director or anybody that's sitting up on that senior team level, would you rather hear, I didn't bother engaging anybody else and I just wanted to see what individually my thing would do? Or do you want hear somebody say I realise that with these people we can make a bigger difference quicker, so we work together to make it happen? What would you rather hear? Surely you would rather hear people are working together in the organisation and not trying to work apart from each other. Why would you even bother trying to isolate everything else out. If you were going to go so far as to really understand what the actual problem is, so if we deal with that classic order taker mentality, business says give us leadership training, we say okay. To one where you say all right then where's this coming from, what's going on? Tell me what's happening at the moment? What's this leadership training hoping to do? What problems is it hoping to solve? What issues is it trying to address? What questions will it answer? What other things are happening that will enable these people to perform? If we're asking all of those questions to then at the end of it disregard all of that other stuff is just folly in my books. You've done the work to work out, you've mapped out what the current situation is and at the same time you've mapped out the bedrock for your evaluation strategy, because you're saying these, coming back to the package you talked about earlier on, these are some of the things that will enable people.

I'm about to finish a 18 month talent programme I've been running with a client and what we've been doing along the way is we put in some good practice. So we did lots of investigation upfront and then we engaged the line managers for example, we said one of the things that we know is important is the way that we engage line managers. So we run focus groups with those line managers during the programme. Not as consistently as we could or regularly as we could but we have. Those focus groups have served a number of purposes, one of those is we tell the line managers what the learners are getting. So we say right this is the content that we're going through. Also this is what we're expecting them to do, these are the actions that we're asking them to do as a result and this is what we need from you as supervisors along the way. That was the content of the first one. Then what we did for all the subsequent ones is add I, "And what changes are you noticing so far? What are you noticing about the individuals that are going through it?" We've been capturing that either in notes or in audio recording the meeting and all of that is evaluation data that is going to form part of the evaluation presentation that we'll do at the end when we talk about the impact of it. So we've been evaluating this programme for the 18 months that it's been running and I think that is one of the biggest areas that again people let themselves down on is they think evaluation happens after the learning has finished. As well as the line managers though each individual has had a coach or a mentor, each individual in the programme has had a journal that they could complete themselves. We've also wrote focus groups with the participants as well. We run action learning sets as well. The perception could be that all of those things are designed to support learning. Yes, they are, but more importantly they are data points and information points for me as the practitioner to find out are we on track. You said earlier on about, we didn't name them I don't think, but the leading indicators, the checkpoints that you would expect to see on a journey, that's where all of the data is coming from to tell me that we're on track. We lost our way because the business had some really important commercial aspects that it needed to focus on, so we didn't do any work with the participants for six months. That really annoyed them, the fact that we essentially

stopped any intervention with them for six months and that put us back. But I know that and we can put in place steps and solutions to address that. Part of it was about apologising and saying look we're really sorry that we had to do that, these are the reasons why and dealing with a lot of the emotive aspects that sit around them.

I think I'm very much on my soapbox and I'll step off in a second, I think practitioners need to wrap their heads around that you are gathering evaluation data all of the time, you just need to keep it and record it somehow, so that when you come to share the impact of whatever it is that you've done you can talk about the things that enabled it, the things that have got in the way of it succeeding, the things that have fast tracked its success, the things that without which it wouldn't have made a difference. So one of the variables that seems to have come out so far is we had a mix of internal coaches and mentors and external coaches and mentors, and the reported feedback from the participants, and I'm waiting for the data to come back from the coaches and mentors, that the participants that have had external coaches and mentors value that relationship much higher than those that have had internal coaches and mentors. That's an interesting piece of data for me to think about. Well what are we going to do with that then? Does that mean we change our approach and we get all external and so on and so on? Sorry I will now stop and step off my soapbox, sorry.

Jim: Well said. That's a great wrap up of all we've talked about, that's excellent.

Phil: Are there any other myths or misconceptions that you think, Jim, around either evaluation in general or the Kirkpatrick Model in particular that either we haven't already addressed? Are there any other ones that you think we need to address or put to bed?

Jim: That's a fine question. No, Phil, I could make up some stuff but it's about truth, it's about mission. It's a disruptive model because it will disrupt tradition. The main thing is training alone will not get the job done even though there's a great lobby and a lot of money at stake, even our own associations are trying to tell us that it will, if we just buy more games, if we just buy more competency models, more leadership models, train better, make it look prettier, make them have more fun. That's a lie, it just isn't true but that's where the money is and that's where the lie is coming from, at least that's my view. So stay the course, take the road less travelled is my encouragement and get people like Phil to help you on the journey.

Phil: If people wanted to know more, obviously I'll put a link into the face to face programmes or workshops that we run, in terms of books or articles or anything like that, because I think there's a lot of folk out there that think the Kirkpatrick Model is the classic one, two, three, four, as your dad would have articulated it as. But where can people go to find out more?

Jim: Oh, our website has quite a bit on that. There's a book that Wendy and I wrote last year, I think it was or the year before Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Training Evaluation. That is published by the Association for Talent Development, ATD. Phil, we pretty much got it in there, it's all in there and a step by step process that mimics the bronze and silver programme that you were talking about. But we want to encourage people to sign up for webinars, future podcasts and also for the training that Phil mentioned.



Phil: I'll make sure in the show notes that go along with this episode then I'll put links into the [kirkpatrickpartners.com](http://kirkpatrickpartners.com) website and also upcoming events that you've got in there. I'll also put a link to the book that you talked about as well, so I'll put a link to that one. Beyond yours and Wendy's work, is there anybody else's work around evaluation that you think is worth a look or additional investigation?

Jim: Well I do know that we have about 60 different free sources maybe 70 different free resources of sample surveys and things, if you go on our website [kirkpatrickpartners.com](http://kirkpatrickpartners.com) and click on the resources tab, we've got white papers and tools and tips. If you just sign up to our website we have weekly newsletters that will usually give you some good nuggets as well.

Phil: So a couple of final questions to pull it together then, are there any other everyday practical things that people can do to help them evaluate more effectively do you think?

Jim: Yes, here's one. Don't realise so much in the field and the supervisor always being the one to review and to observe, and to audit those kind of things. They all say oh we need the supervisor to do all that, that's a vertical hierarchy and kind of the boss subordinate thing. More and more people who are being successful with this across the world are using more colleague, peer to peer, communities of practice where they meet regularly, whether it's virtual or human to human kind of thing and encourage each other and challenge each other. The supervisor pops in once in a while. Well, Phil, if it's your programme you would pop in once in a while and find out how it's going, but it would be our job to help create that community of practice, make sure it's running because that doesn't have the stigma of the boss and people are more honest about it and they get after each other and they encourage each other. So that would be one more tip.

Phil: Wonderful, that's great, thank you very much, Jim. Also you mentioned about Jim Collins so I'll put a link in the show notes to his book, *Good to Great*. We also talked about the complexities of surveys, so there's a guy called Paul Thoresen, on Twitter he goes by the Twitter handle @surveyguy2. And again he's a really good resource to help get people thinking much more deeply and clearly about what effective survey questions can look like. I remember I did a piece of work awhile ago where I was asked to review an employee engagement survey that a company had written themselves and there was just so little thought put into the questions that were being asked and so on. Paul's a really good resource to help think about what a good question or what a good bank of questions might look like. I'll put a link to his profile in there as well. To finally wrap us up and pull this together, Jim, is there anything else that you're thinking or feeling or want to say?

Jim: I just want to tell people who are going to be listening to this that congratulations you have an opportunity to go against the grain a little bit, but if you explain it in a way that's about mission and success I think you'll see results that are far beyond what you have in the past. So thank you for doing that. Phil, thanks for inviting me in on this.

Phil: Thanks for coming on, Jim, it's been great to have you on today I've really, really enjoyed it, so thank you very much for your time.