

Leading For Good with Claire D'Abreu-Hayling

Living Well Together – People and Planet

Belonging, authenticity & the importance of intersectionality.

Elaine Herdman-Barker, Chair of Global Leadership Associates and Partner for Mutual Growth and the search for the Common Good and Claire D'Abreu-Hayling, Chief Scientific Officer at the global pharmaceutical company, Sandoz, discuss bringing our whole person to work. They explore, what sits above and beyond our professional and technical capabilities? How can we wholly embrace our authentic selves at work and collaborate effectively despite our personal differences? Can we stay true to our identity, be acknowledged for the value we contribute, and still advance in the world?

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Hello! I'm delighted to be speaking today with Claire D'Abreu-Hayling. Claire is the Chief Scientific Officer at the global pharmaceutical company Sandoz. Hi, Claire; welcome.

Hi, Elaine. Thank you for having me.

Claire is the also a member of the Executive Committee at Sandoz. She has 30 years' experience in drug development. Alongside her expertise, Claire works tirelessly for inclusion and diversity... She's made it her business to encourage more women into STEM roles. For those unfamiliar with STEM, it stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths. Claire's passion is for us to see people as they are, without filters; and this is what we're talking about today. We'll also discuss – and these are Claire's words – how we can bring our whole person to work. Claire, I've paraphrased, perhaps horribly there, what's dear to your heart. I'd love to get closer to the tone and depth of what matters to you, though! Because I sense you're advocating for real change in the leadership landscape. Is that right?

Yes, that's correct Elaine – and thanks for the introduction. I believe the term 'human being' is something we've misunderstood in the workplace. Misunderstood and misrepresented, actually. We focus very much on doing, and not being. And I think our ability to 'do' comes out of who we are; all aspects of ourselves... That we're best represented and most successful when we bring all of who we are into the workplace.

In what ways, Claire?


In terms of our identity, our thinking, our reactions and our emotions. Very frequently the emotions are put to the side, and we focus on how do we do something in a standard way. And I think that's something I want to unpack, as we spend time together in this conversation.



And how might we unpack that, Claire? Because – in our last conversation – you used a phrase that had an impact on me... You said, “How can I be who I am, and be seen, and progress in organisations?” Can you say a little bit more about that?

It's no surprise that black females are underrepresented at senior leadership levels... Particularly in the STEM field. And I think that's something that there's been lots of work on... Trying to understand how to remedy that. To a large extent, it relates to having certain expectations in the workplace. Things being done in a standard way, and coming into that workplace and trying to conform. The trap of conformity is something I think limits your ability to be who you are. It forces you to try to meet expectations, meet standards. I've found that where

I've come from is very different from the environments that I've been in. From a cultural and an environment point of view, I mean. But that's not unique to me... I think it's something that's experienced by women, because we're in a male-dominated environment. I think also, from a culture and ethnicity point of view, we need to recognise that we bring a level of diversity into the workplace. That level of diversity isn't always accommodated because of that standard-conformed environment we're coming into.



We're all different in different ways; we're not cardboard cut-outs. You're speaking here about the very personal experience of being from different backgrounds, possessing different identities. And the question of how we can learn to work better alongside those personal differences. Am I catching the sense of what you're talking about here, Claire?

How do we create a leadership landscape that's inclusive? Where there's psychological safety? Where an individual can come in and be all they are... And bring all their professional and technical capabilities. The professional and technical capabilities are almost like your qualification factors... You come in and you can do the job. But what's sitting above and beyond the doing of the job? How do you live in that environment? How do you live as part of that community? Because the workplace IS a community! Having that sense of belonging comes from the level of acceptance of your authentic self.

**So in that, Claire,
are you saying that
it starts with the
individual, the level
of acceptance of
ourselves? And if
so, how do we get
to that place in the
environments that we
work in?**

That's a really interesting question... One that – with 30 years in the industry – it's taken me time to get to. Because I don't think you come in initially with that as a definition; that's something you learn over time. It builds with experience, and it builds with that sense of understanding your value... What you represent, your core beliefs – and how they align with those of the organisation with which you work.

Once that connection's there, it's about understanding how you navigate the workspace. How do you do that? In terms of the relationships, conversations and reactions you have in that workspace? It's a two-way journey. And there's an element of self-ownership, self-acceptance and self-belief. But there's also an element of being in an environment that enables that inclusion. . . A landscape that's able to value the diversity in a real sense, that gives you the freedom to be open about who you are.

**It sounds like
organisations have
the power to either
weaken or empower
that room for sense of
self?**

Yes, I believe organisations have that power. They can weaken and embolden individuals to be themselves. To a large extent, our identity is defined by what we do, where we work, our roles and our success in an organisation. There's also a performance element... And I think that performance element and wanting to be seen to belong and be successful is an important part of either being weakened or emboldened.



In what way?

In the way that you can be yourself in an organisational context. So from a leadership framework or from an organisational framework, really having been in an environment where who you are – the way you contribute – can determine your sense of belonging in that organisation... Both at a technical and interpersonal level. And I think if you don't have a sense of belonging, it weakens you. Because every time you come to work, there's an ongoing journey to seek that acceptance and belonging. But where you do have a sense of, 'yes, I am me; I'm bringing a level of diversity', that diversity is appreciated and valued. I think that lets you step up. It lets you be brave and seek to contribute more to the organisation's success.

And have you, Claire, experienced a change in the freedom you have to speak out? Have you been on a journey through different organisations? Or different parts of your career? Meaning that you now express yourself differently?

Yes, definitely. It's been a journey. It's been a journey in self-discovery; in understanding different organisational contexts. A journey in understanding some of my own biases, because I think everybody has their own biases.

But then, as part of the leadership of an organisation, I'm in a fortunate position... I'm defining a culture that creates psychological safety, where people can show up and be who they are. Having core values around inclusion, diversity, respect, openness, curiosity. That allows somebody to speak up, be heard, and know their contribution is valued.

Has the room to flourish fluctuated as you progressed your career?

It's not something I've experienced all the way through my career. Different organisations have different contexts – I've learned to address that challenge. And because I've experienced that, it's made me more determined... Determined to speak out and be somebody that advocates for such room. Not just within my own organisation, but in other organisations as well. Also, to raise the visibility of that! To see that it a lack of space to flourish is something that hampers the potential success of an organisation... If they aren't enabled to accommodate that diversity and bring that psychological safety for every employee within their workspace to feel included, and have that sense of belonging.

Can you say a bit more about the belonging... Having the space and freedom to belong?

There needs to be a space – an element of who you are and what you bring – to have that true sense of belonging. And with that true sense of belonging comes a sense of freedom. That freedom empowers you, and enables you to contribute at the highest level.

So the highest performing organisations bring a true sense of inclusion and belonging. That enablement expands to the full work population... They can all create something together.

Let's continue with the diversity of talent, Claire. You've done some research which pointed to the impact of intersectionality...

Absolutely. I wanted to know if my experience was unique to me, or whether it was something we see across other sectors. I interviewed nine black females all across the STEM industry. I was looking to understand their lived experiences. And I did a lot of literature research as well... That identified that governments have set metrics around women in leadership. Also, lots of organisations have focused on bringing women into leadership. However, they've done that from a very unidimensional view of that. They look at women leaders versus men leaders. What they haven't looked at is the intersectionality...

What does that actually mean?

The intersectionality means looking at more than one attribute... Whether it's ethnicity or whether it's abilities. So there are different combinations of factors that you need to look at. And when you look at it from a black female point of view... Well, that intersectionality shows a lack of representation. A lack of representation of senior black female leaders – particularly at C-suite.

With many of the lived experiences we discussed – as ten women – some strong common elements came through. This is around coming into a workplace that didn't have an environment that facilitated that sense of belonging; that sense of inclusion... That and the ability to speak up, and know that your voice was being heard. To a large extent, being able to bring yourself to work was not as strong a factor as conformity in the workplace. It's such an important part of intersectionality. But it's not something many organisations work toward.



Can you say a little bit more about **what conformity means** in this regard?

So what were these women feeling? They felt pressured, feeling the need to conform. In a sense, they were jettisoning part of themselves and their contribution. Conformity really means there's a standard way of doing things in the workplace... That there's a standard definition of leadership. And anything that doesn't conform to that standard definition is seen to not be promotable. It affects the ability for these individuals to progress and be promoted. Some simple examples are the way you socialise. The old habit of you socialise either through playing golf, or you go to the pub, say.

What if, though – as a female – you have a different way of socialising? Or you're not available at that timeframe? It means you're not sitting in that social context! But that's where some informal discussions and decisions are being made. When you come back to work the next day, you're finding the conversation's moved on! "I've missed the bus; my view hasn't been taken into account" – the decision is done. To a large extent, that creates a sense of exclusion. Because you haven't conformed to the expectation that we have a certain way of socialising.

And what about socially accepted conventions around leadership? **Are there still some unhelpful patterns out there?**

In terms of some of the leadership behaviours, there's a definition of lead.. Like, the old definition of leadership. That might have been command and control. And that may be very different from the type of leadership style that a woman would typically bring. But she probably gets overlooked. Why? Because her style didn't match. It didn't match at the

time you were looking for leadership and career progression. And these are some of the simple factors we discussed... Where intersectionality did make a difference – where coming in and operating from a very different base wasn't seen to be valued. That's where the conformity factor came into place. And that can be seen to be negative to the career progression of black females.

What about the representation of black females?

When you look at intersectionality and leadership, the data says you'd have a certain percentage of women coming into the workplace... Roughly 40 percent. As you progress through leadership, that starts to drop off; the leaky pipe is happening! If you become more senior...The environment becomes less favourable to your leadership style. That's true to the extent that many women take a decision not to stay in that workplace. They leave! This is why you find you've lost a lot of capability and talent in the organisation. But it's not recognised. And the root cause isn't evaluated because there's no analysis of the data in an intersectional manner.

I understand from our last conversation that appreciating intersectionality is of central importance in terms of leadership in the workplace, as we've just discussed. But it's also about competence, isn't it? Our competency to treat people well medically. Is that right?

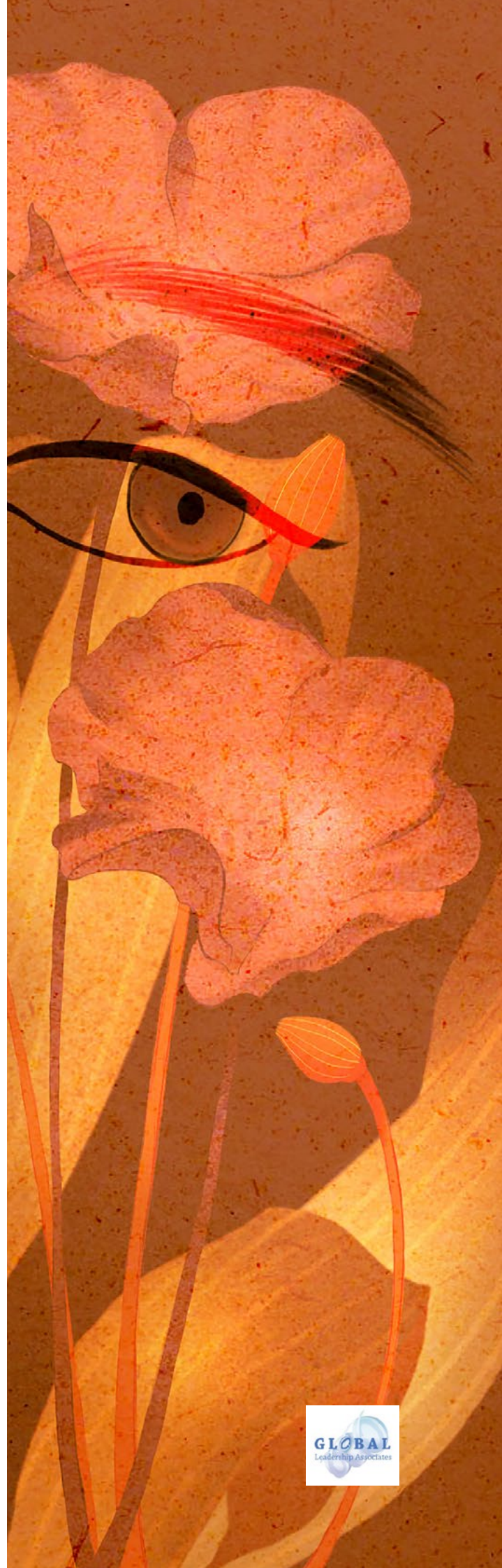
Yes. So that's an important point. We look at intersectionality within the workplace, of course. But we also need to look at intersectionality within the treatment of medicines. For example, take how innovative pharma designs clinical studies. Typically, their candidate pool is white, male and of a certain age. So the demographic is quite narrow. And these medicines, once approved and released to the market, then treat everybody...

But look at COVID. COVID disproportionately impacted Black

and Asian communities. Because diseases don't represent themselves uniformly – and similarly with medicines. So the FDA and other agencies are starting to advocate for diversity in clinical trials. That should ensure that ethnic diversity is factored into clinical studies. This should mean treatment strengths, dosages and development all link to performance in individuals. So even here, intersectionality is such a critical aspect to consider.

And that's such a brutal and shocking fact, isn't it? To wake us up to the importance of intersectionality?

Yes. Absolutely. It's intersectionality in terms of male versus female and in terms of ethnic diversity. Because there are situations where patients are given the wrong dosage. They're either under- or overdosed, because the medicines aren't tailored to them... They're not tailored to their particular physiological makeup. That's something we need to address. We need to take a broader view of intersectionality, across many dimensions.



Thank you, Claire. You spoke a moment ago about women leaving the workplace. We've recently seen that with the multiple pains experienced through COVID... Women leaders suffered more job losses during the pandemic, for example. I wonder what that says about the global relationship to women in business? And how – at a societal level – there are matters that need addressing.

I think that's a really astute observation. And again, this comes back to the same factor. That the work environment hasn't created enough flexibility... It can't accommodate the unique needs of women.

At some point, the inflexible work practices don't accommodate the way you need to balance your life... Your family and your work situation, maybe. Or, lacking a sense of belonging, you come to work every day with a psychological burden on you to keep working to fit in and that burden of mental health becomes too high. So, again, you see that level of drop off. I think it's understandable that we saw that with the COVID situation. Because everything shut down: people needed to be at home. They were looking after children who weren't at school. Perhaps they couldn't work from home or their employer couldn't accommodate different ways of working so it's understandable that we saw that level of attrition. These are learnings that industry needs to take on to rebalance... Not just the presence of women in the workplace, but particularly women at leadership level.

And you mentioned earlier about there being two or more sides to these situations. In your experience, what's worked well to open up the room for women and diverse communities to be in leadership? And what can people themselves do? What's worked well for you to help open up room and freedom in organisations, to contribute as you wish?

What's worked well for me has been recognising the situation. You have to see it, and recognise the challenges, and understand how to address it. And that's at both levels... In my own self, and in terms of having a determination to not let the landscape I'm in dissuade me from continuing to try. Because, again, one of the

decisions some women have taken is to get out of the workplace. But I think there's also an element of working with the organisation, the HR... Trying to influence change in the environment. That change can be around recognising that there's practical training that can be done.


Can you give me some examples of that?

Things like unconscious bias training. And asking: how do we create an environment of inclusion? By understanding why we're reacting in a certain way.

For myself, I've also had to look at some of my own biases. I've been very open to continuing to learn and develop. To recognising that I've a lot of value that I can bring to the organisations I'm part of... And not letting an obstacle deter me from continuing to progress.

What else, Claire?
What else have you seen working?

Change in recruitment practices. Deliberate and intentional change... Thinking to include females in the talent pool when you're doing interviews. That way you have female candidates alongside male candidates. And ensuring that you have women on the interview panels! Because they're looking at different things.



And what about wage parity? This is something I discussed with Kate Isler in episode 5... The worldwide gap in access to senior decision-making roles and economic reward.

Yes, another element is looking at the fairness of pay. One organisation I'm part of has signed an epic pledge. By 2025, every individual will get specific information on their payslip. It will tell them where they are in terms of the industry benchmark for their role and their grade. That way, employees understand where they sit within that pay band. Male or female, that actively reflects the rate at which they should be paid for the work that they're doing. These are the types of activities I think will help rebalance that landscape... And really recognising that diversity and inclusion.

But it's not just an HR activity: it's actually a leadership activity. And at all levels in the organisation, from the CEO all the way through. There has to be a dedicated focus as part of your ESG... To ensure there are metrics and KPIs, and that attention is paid to creating that landscape. Because the landscape should be inclusive for everybody to succeed in the workplace. I think some of these are important factors that need to be taken into account.

I love this notion... That it's leadership throughout the organisation that's going to bring about change. Because leadership's not just a system activity, or an individual activity, is it? It's a community activity.

That's right.

And where do you see this going? **The expansion of a more holistic sense of leadership?** The expansion of inclusion and diversity? In a hopeful sense, what's an evolution of this going to look like over the coming years?

In a hopeful sense, you'll see that – across companies – the demographic will change. You'll see the creation of a level playing field... One where a combination of diverse factors exists at all levels of leadership. That will be across organisations regardless of who you are... Regardless of gender. Regardless of ethnicity and ability, or whether you're fully physically able.

The industry target in the UK is to have 35 percent female representation in the FTSE 250 companies. The conversation about making sure you have representation of at least one ethnic minority in leadership at C-suite level in all the UK's top companies hasn't happened yet. And that's something that you'll start to

see changing, as diversity really gets valued. It's not the colour of my skin but the content of my contribution to an organisation that needs to be valued. So how I physically look or present myself because of my culture and my background doesn't impact... It doesn't impact my ability to contribute to the success of an organisation. It's no longer a limitation.

As things change, we'll see a demographic shift in representation across companies. That valuing of diversity will also bring better decision-making... More innovation and increased economic success. Because with that culture, environment and thinking, you're able to harness it to better results.

There's real strength and clarity in what you're saying. **It's not colour of the skin, but the character and contribution of the person that matters.** We do use terms to create that architecture for greater inclusion, don't we? To get us to a true representation of talent in society... Terms such as behavioural competency, diversity of talent. But I do have, Claire, a rumbling anxiety! That there's a danger in emphasising competency and diversity of talent – organisations risk making inclusion all about performance... As opposed to representing a desire to include people because inclusion matters! **It's inclusion that we value in our society.** Do you see what I'm getting at there?

I do. And I think it comes back to the first point I made about the difference between being a human being and a human doing.

Yes, absolutely.

Because, again, I find that I'm most effective when what I do comes from who I am – and what I'm being. That element of recognising that it's not just a technical competency. We've all gone to the same schools, we've all got the same education, and we can all do the same thing. What really makes it special, or what makes it different, is how? The 'how' is so important, and the 'how' comes from

the heart. The 'how' comes through the emotion. The 'how' comes from the psychological makeup of the individual. Again, that's part of the diversity of the individual. The point at which that becomes valued, it stops being routine. It becomes something that brings a lot of value to the organisation.

Lovely, thank you. Now, in one of our programmes last year, an individual spoke about the importance of being a good ancestor. That really struck me! So I wonder how that resonates with you?

That has huge resonance for me, actually. I'm a mother of three... Part of the reason I've become so passionate about the conversation we're having today is that it isn't just for myself. I think it's because I also want to be a good ancestor. I want to leave a legacy. As you know, I'm in an executive position in the pharmaceutical industry now. In my career, though, I've always been either the most senior black woman or the only black woman... In meetings, in conferences and other contexts. I don't want that to be the situation moving forward. So, to me, being a good ancestor – and leaving a legacy – means seeing that status quo as unacceptable. And I have to take responsibility to speak into it... To influence the change so that the generations that come behind me don't experience the same. I don't want my daughters to be sitting having the same conversations in five or ten years' time.

They're both entering the workplace now, so being a good ancestor and leaving a legacy resonates. As I use the platform I have, I use opportunities to really change the space. Then future generations can say, "Wow! I really like this landscape! I feel I can go to work and be all that I am. I can bring all I have, and really succeed... Both for myself, because of my own personal sense of achievement, and for my company.

What a wonderful thought... For our children to be saying, "I really like the landscape here." And for us to all think about how we can use our platforms to speak out! To make a difference to that landscape of the future. I think that's beautiful. To bring our conversation to a close, Claire, I wonder if we might return to the very start... I'd like to draw in a central element of your life: your Christian beliefs. We discussed before that this is a very personal part of being who you are. Different belief systems are part of intersectionality. Is there anything you want to say about that?

Yes, I think – from a faith element – that also is part of intersectionality. And it was actually one of the factors that I studied when I was doing my research on black females in the workplace. It was within the context of faith; black female Christians in the workplace. It's a lot of what fuels my determination to address this topic... Because, to me, diversity and inclusion isn't just a good economic proposal. It's actually a matter of social justice. And I think that social justice is something that's close to the heart of God.





Close to the heart of God?

Right. As Christians, we need to take ownership for addressing imbalances we see in society. I think there's been a lot more political correctness around that... The ability to bring your faith context into work. To some extent, that's been further progressed than the ethnic context. And as regards levelling the playing field, these aspects need taking into consideration.

I do believe that we are body, soul and spirit. A lot of how we operate comes from our spiritual context... From our belief system. And how we resonate with the core values of our company comes from our own inherent belief system. So that's something that links not just to your physical dimension, but also to the spiritual... Those spiritual aspects of who you are as an individual. And to really be all of who we are at work, all our different attributes and elements need to be brought together in a holistic sense.

Thank you, Claire, for being so open in sharing your personal experience. Your words close us out beautifully... "To really be all of who we are at work, all our different attributes and elements need to be brought together in a holistic sense." Thank you! *Thanks Elaine*

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