



**RED CAPE  
REVOLUTION™**  
*With Coach Darcy Eikenberg*

## TRANSCRIPT: Avoid the Commodity Trap

Exclusive for Women at Workday

As recorded live, Thursday, Jun 15, 2023

This transcript is auto-generated and unedited.

So thank you all so much for joining us. I'm Sandra Bazarian I'm one of the co-leads of Women at Workday virtual. And we're so pleased today to be offering this workshop from Darcy Eikenberg. Darcy joined us last year to give a fabulous career workshop. And we got such good feedback on it. We wanted to bring her back for this workshop today and another one that will be scheduled in September that will be promoting zoom. So we really appreciate Darcy joining us.

Darcy wears a lot of hats. She's actually an executive coach to leaders at companies such as Coca Cola, Microsoft, State Farm, Deloitte, and more. She consults and speaks on career growth, employee engagement and leadership. And she also blogs regularly on leadership and career issues at her site called red cape revolution.com, where you can join her free insider community and get weekly stories and strategies to help you manage your career. I've been a member of Darcy's insider community for for quite a few years. It's been over a decade since I first heard Darcy speak. And I really, really learned so much from her. I've got all her books. And so I'm really happy that she's here today.

She wrote the book red cape rescue save your career without leaving your job. And her ideas have been shared in Forbes, the Atlanta Journal Constitution, CNN and others. She's also served as a principal and communication consulting business leader at the former Hewitt associates now part of a light Darcy brings a sense of humor to serious matters in our work and careers. And she offers simple and practical ways we can change our lives at work for the better and for good. Please join me in welcoming Darcy Eikenberg.

DARCY:

Oh, thank you so much, Sandra. Thank you. Thank you all. Thank you, Women at Workday, I am really grateful to be here with you today. Thank you all for taking time out of your day, to not just be here with me, but to be here for each other. So that's really the power of groups like this, right? How can

we connect? How can we support each other, as well as how do we support ourselves. So if you haven't already, if you just join, pop it into the chat to tell us where you are in the world. And as we go along today, feel free to use the chat liberally give us some emojis give us some reactions, connect with other people. Y'all have done the zoom zoom a time or two I'm betting so you know that you can change the blue button if you want to direct message somebody that maybe you haven't talked to in a while, or someone says something that you want to stay in touch with. So this is your time, more conversation, less presentation. So I am really honored to be here with you. So let's get started.

So some of you may know who this is. This is the author Seth Godin. Seth is a prolific blogger, and a big picture thinker about the world of work. latest book, Seth had sent out a survey to the 1000s probably millions of people that he has in his community. And he asked about your best job ever. How would you describe your best job ever? And so you wrote it into the little form. And then he asked you to select some things that made it great. And these were different options he gave, you know, that are randomly things that sometimes we think about what makes a job great. So the book just came out, it's called the song of significance. And the answers of what people said makes their job great, have been a little surprising.

One of the top answers is I surprised myself with what I could accomplish. The other one is I could work independently, or the team built something important. And people treated me with respect, which I think those are all fascinating because working independently, but working with a team, you know, being independent, together, are really powerful. And what this reminded me of as I thought about the conversations that we want to have today is it's time to face the truth.

You know, the truth about our life at work is that we want our contributions to matter. We want to know, we matter. And maybe intrinsically we do or in our, our, you know, logical brain, we're like, Yes, I know, I'm here for a reason. But we want to be able to really believe it. And the truth is that we don't want to be a commodity. We don't want to be replaceable, outsource double, A is double. And we're going to talk today about what I mean by a commodity, and ways that we can prevent that. But sometimes it feels hard, right? It can feel hard to not fall into the trap of doing the same thing, following the same process, because in some ways, that's what makes our work efficient. It's what helps us connect the dots to each other. We want to be consistent, we want predictable processes. But sometimes, we can fall into the trap of it all feeling the same, too.

So that is why I am really excited and honored that you are here right now, at the perfect time. I don't mean the time of the conversation we're going to have but the time in our world, to be able to No, really no, and also grow your value. And I'm going to talk about what we really mean when we talk about value. And it's probably not exactly what you think. We're going to talk about how to do that without adding to your plate without more time, without more stress without compromising the things

that are important to you. Not only in your work, but in your life. sounds impossible. Sometimes I know. But this is why I'm glad that you're here. I'm glad that you are investing in yourself today. Because here's a secret. Investing in yourself, time, energy, money, whatever is the only investment that will ever consistently pay off. And I hope today that that you being here is not only going to pay off for you, but it's going to pay off for somebody else who's going to gain from you.

Now, as Sandra mentioned, I you know, I have been here with you before, and it's so fun to be able to be back. The talk we had before was on communicating your value while you're doing everything else. And if you haven't had a chance to watch that, there is a recording that's on the special page that we made for you. And it also has some other resources that you can tap into, we will put a recording of this program also on that same page with some additional resources. So we invite you to go out afterward, don't go now stay here hang with me. But to be able to go out after share this rewatch parts there that might be that you said like you know that went really fast. I'd like to hear that again, or I'd like to walk through that again, and maybe go through some of the exercises that I'm going to share with you. So with that is all going to be out there for you.

We are also going to do some mini groups, some breakout groups. And there's a reason for this, there's a strategy for this. You are not virtual, you are real. And even though we're connecting by screen, you're a human being. And we want you to have the opportunity not only to get a chance to connect with somebody who is in this broader circle of Women at Work Day, but you know what someone is going to learn something from you. Someone is going to benefit from you making that investment in yourself and being here today. So I'm going to ask you if you would please keep your cameras on. If you don't have a camera on, please put a camera on. And also you'll feel free to use the chat to connect with each other to ask questions. Feel free to ask questions.

We're going to try to have some time at the end. But I really want to offer to you the opportunity to have conversation, not presentation. And don't worry, no small talk networking thing. I'm your guide. I'm going to tell you exactly what to do. And it will be short and sweet and hopefully painless. So please Please Can hammers on. All right. As my thanks to you for being here live today, knowing that an hour of your day cost you something, right, we are going to give away two copies, two signed copies of my books, Sandra mentioned it red cape rescue, save your career without leaving your job. It's a guide to taking control over your life at work. And so if you would like to be in that drawing, please just pop into the chat. I'm in. And Deb Pelham, who's on my team is managing all of the back end, Zoom assigning, and she will track and at the end of our time together, she's going to pick two names randomly, again, just as a way to be able to say thank you for showing up for being here for us, and being here for you today.

Okay, now, let's hand it over to you. Here's the question that we're going to go into many groups of three or four, will let the technology do the math. And Deb is going to send you into random, unplanned groups. But here's the one question that you're going to answer with your group. What's the one thing you've done? Or decided not to do? That's mattered to you this year? So give me a second to noodle on that. What's the one thing that you've done, or the thing you actively intentionally chosen not to do? That's mattered to you this year.

Now, here's how we're going to do the groups. A person in your group whose first name is earliest in the alphabet, you are the queen of the group, you are the leader. So you get to choose who goes first, you get to make sure that if somebody's taking a little more time, and we're running out of time, you get to politely interrupt them, and to say, hey, we haven't heard from Sarah. So, person who's first Oh, I think we've got some A's. So they're APR or ands, or so people who, whose first name is earlier in the alphabet, you are going to be the queen of the group. You get to manage it. But everybody we want everybody to contribute. So Deb will also shoot the question up on the screen. So you'll have that. And then we're only going to do this for six minutes. Yeah, six minutes for people you do the math people. This will be fast. So no presh right. No perfection. No, I have to be perfect. Is my hair straight? Is my is do I do my makeup on? Now. Show up as you are, right where you are, and know that there's probably something you're going to share. Or say that might spark an idea for somebody else. Okay, so Deb, do we have it? Do we? Are we ready to go? Is everybody ready to set if you don't have your camera on right now, please turn it on. I can't see all the screens. But and if for some reason you are driving, and you have to have your camera off, go into your room anyway. And just tell your group why you can't be visible but participate. And leader we're going to trust you to help everybody be able to share and answer this question. Okay. All right.

We were told last time, this was one of the highlights of the presentations to be able to meet somebody else. So Deb, I'm gonna let you send us off to our many groups.

So tell me this. Tell me in the chat. Yeah. What'd you learn? What do you hear? You know, what do you wonder what? What did it spark? Give me some emojis. Tell me some things. Lynn says, fun to talk with someone new. You know, the opportunity to create a collision, sometimes can result in relationships that we never realize. And for those of you who are leaders or manage teams, these are also a little bit of exercises you can do to give somebody a really focused question, a juicy question to dig into a little more.

Because we don't always get invited to have these conversations with each other. We talk about all the stuff that isn't done in our work or all the things that are broken, but we don't always have the chance to have that encouragement, or share the ideas. So yes, thank you amazing stories. We tend to push ourselves hard and that it negatively impacts our lives. Yeah, these are great. Recognition,

encouragement, terrific. So keep sharing in the chat. And remember, if you want to connect with somebody else, or you want to make sure that you, you remember who was in your group, feel free to connect with them separately, feel free to reach out to them. So congratulations for doing that. I know that for some of you, this is uncomfortable. Good. Because here's the secret. Discomfort is where the growth comes from. So thank you for sticking it out.

There were a couple people, I was in a group for a minute and then bounced out. So apologies for leaving you stranded. Hope you had a great conversation. All right. Let's dig back in.

So we know that we've done things that matter. And we know that we want that in our life at work, we want to matter. And we want others to know how we matter how we create value. So let's go back to this idea of a commodity, what really is a commodity? So the core definition of a commodity is that it's something that's like everything else. So some of you may be old enough, give me an emoji if you are to remember when coffee, a cup of coffee in Detroit was the same as a cup of coffee. And Denver's the same cup of coffee in downtown Chicago was a whole the same. Didn't really matter. The distinction of where you got a cup of coffee. Until there's this little company that came along called Starbucks. But interestingly enough, how does Starbucks not be a commodity? They just sell coffee, right? Starbucks doesn't sell coffee. Oh, wait, what? I'm going to tell you in a minute what Starbucks really sells your way when you're like all the rest, or perceive to be like all the rest.

What happens? Well,

here's a real life story of what can happen. A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away. long distance calls cost a lot of money. The quality was awful. You if you want to make a long distance call, just even to the other side of the country, you have to wait to the rates went down. You would it was hard. And and you know, you would never think about calling overseas, you would never think about being in touch all the time. And then over time, we had breakthroughs. We had technology. We opened our eyes to wait a minute. We actually can do things in different places. And now today, our cell phones our ability to call long distance ability to call around the world and even tonight even have to call to be able to send somebody a text in Ireland in Mexico where some of our friends here are from long distance calling is now a commodity. There's nothing special about that.

So when there's nothing special when it's the same, it's replaceable. What's a Why does Starbucks survive when what they do is sell coffee. Because they don't sell coffee. Starbucks sells belonging. Starbucks sells community connection. Anybody here like it's super super duper Starbucks fan and they're like, I will drive five blocks out of my way to go to Starbucks as opposed to like get a cup of coffee, you know, at an office or something, you know, some of some other place. It has meaning. It's they've created something that for the people that it appeals to that matters. So raises the question

that for us in our lives at work, how do we stand out? You know, we can't just dress up in a bird suit and, you know, be like the odd duck literally or figuratively. And in the old days, in the not so distant past and maybe sometimes even in your current past. We were thought to believe well, the only way you stand out is to work more like I am the nose to the grindstone I come in early, I stay late, I just get stuff done. And there is a time and a place for that. There are the opportunities for people who will raise their hand, who will step in who will step out. There's nothing wrong with working hard. But the challenge is to know the boundaries of when working harder, is actually decreasing your value is actually decreasing your ability to do the things that are your best and highest use. This is the line that we all have to figure out in many ways for ourselves. But working harder and longer is just not the simple answer anymore. And it's not the differentiator.

The differentiator for each of us, and for our teams and for our companies is creating more value is the answer. And creating more value doesn't necessarily have to equal more time, more work. What is value? You know, we, when we talk, we talk about value all the time, right? And as I mentioned before, the last conversation we all had together was around communicating your value.

What is that?

Well, value isn't just economic value, it's not just tied to a number. It's not just how much money that you generate, or that you save. In today's commoditized, increasingly commoditized world, the way that we can create more value is through human values. And the things that truly matter, the differences not in what we do, but the way we do it. So human values are breakthrough, right? And they're things we don't always tangibly identify as things that help us add value things that help us be successful. But when we do them, or when we see them done by others, we immediately know that that makes a difference. So there are things like connecting and community building or influencing or interpreting or even simple things like self-management, like I don't get into the chaos, like I am not a drama person. I am I know how to make my decisions and be able to engage? And yes, even skills like being able to create humor, happiness, and dare I say that four letter word that we don't often talk about in our workplace, it's love.

Because these are the human skills. These are the human skills, not the technical skills, not the functional skills mean, you're an expert in your functional skill, right? Whatever your professional skill is, you got that down. Or if you're newer into the role, you're growing it right, you're learning. But the added boost, the things that make the difference now are the human skills. Those are the ones that add value. Anybody ever have a situation where like, there was somebody who really wasn't performing on a team? And you're like, but he's checking all the boxes? So but this is something that's off, give me some emojis tell me if you've had that experience. And part of what we've been missing is making the invisible visible. We've been missing language to actually talk about those human skills,

right? Like, what is the frustrating part? Is it that the team is all connecting, but they don't connect? Or they don't know how to connect or they're not willing to connect? You know, is it that they're in a position to move things forward, but they don't make the decision. These are human skills. So this is a concept that we don't talk about a lot.

So I'm excited for you to get a chance to play with it to talk about it a little bit with each other. And so for those of you who may have just popped in, first of all, thank you. We're going to do the second of our breakout groups have our mini groups, the conversation groups that allow you a safe, structured place to do some bigger picture thinking, to share some thoughts to have some discussion. And here's the question that we're going to go into our groups with. So here's the question, What's one way you could increase your value by using your human skills this year? Now? Don't panic, don't say, I don't know. Make it up. Trust your gut there. This is not a place for perfection. It is conversation, not presentation, there is no right answer. There is no a on the test.

This is just people who want to connect, talking and thinking out loud. And you have the permission to do that. And, again, the secret sometimes is we think no one wants to hear what we have to say, or we think, Oh, I don't have a fully formed thought yet. But just the gut instinct that you're going to share, as you talk about this question, that's going to spark an idea in somebody else. So please resist the urge to say, I'm going to opt out of the breakout room, I let me stick with the discomfort. That's where the growth comes from. So stay in it, be in it to win it, we are going to go to the rooms again, this is just going to be six minutes long as they are fast and furious. And you will probably leave the group wanting to have more conversation about this. That's great, you don't lose those people in the group, you can stay in touch with them, you can schedule a coffee chat later with them. But for this, lets you do the six minutes to be able to spark some thoughts. Now, as we did before, here's how we're going to pick the manager of the group. The person whose last name is earlier in the alphabet. So A's and B's, I can't see all the list here. But if you if your last name is early, it starts earlier in the alphabet, you are the queen of the group, you get to choose who goes first, you get to keep the ball rolling. And you get to gently tap someone in or out if they haven't shared and you see the clock running down or if someone is going on too long. Okay. All right.

So Deb is going to take us to this next mini group for the conversation about what's one way you could increase your value by using your human skills this year doesn't have to be perfect. It's just an idea. It's like maybe I could and that's good enough. Okay, Deb, you want to send us off to our breakouts to our mini groups. And we'll see you all back in about six minutes.

How was your group? Drop me an emoji. Give me a word. Give me a phrase. Give me something that describes it. If you are, now you took yourself off mute, which is obviously helpful when we're having a conversation. Please put yourself back on especially if there's any background noise or whatever. I

hear insightful. So throw a word in there throw an emoji, something you learned something that sparked because this conversation about how we could increase our value using our human skills is such an important one to keep going. Because these are the skills that matter that keep us separate. that keep us from being a commodity. These are the ones that are important. Okay. All right. Great. Keep the conversation coming. So great. Sounds lovely Darcy? Yeah, yeah, I want to be more human. Yeah, yeah. How do I make the time? How do I do that? On top of everything else that I'm doing.

So I want to tell you a secret. This is the truth about time. The numbers game. This is what we all have doesn't change. So you don't have a time problem. The time box exists in the way that time box exists.

What you have is a decision problem. What you have is the opportunity to think differently about the decisions you're making. And maybe make more decisions. And some of you may know that there's a chapter in my book and there's a whole workshop that I teach called Drop some balls, which anytime I mentioned that people like it that is not anything anybody can do, right? I don't want to drop balls, I pride myself on juggling all the balls. But that way that we're working is no longer working. We have to make smarter decisions about what we're doing, about the tactics we're doing to make time for the human value, the things that matter. The things that make us feel we matter is a great book called essentialism that talks about this in depth, and really has great research that says more effort does not necessarily yield more results, less but better does. We have to make decisions about what is better, we have to make decisions about what are the things that are right for us. And we might have to drop some balls. So you might be asking, then, hey, that, you know, everything seems important. Like I don't, I don't know where to start. Here are some ways to start, here's how ways to expand your time, so that you can expand your value. So first, start with just reviewing your average week at work, make a list just brain dump it, set yourself a timer and just don't judge it just just put it on paper. Because often there are hidden things we're doing that are taking our energy, our time, and we're not getting credit for them. And we're not really actually realizing the cost of them to us. When you have that list, then go through that list. And mark the ones that give you our OE return on energy. You know, what do I mean by this? Well, what are those things that are clearly in your superpower space? Like the things that when you're doing them, you are at your best and highest use, you could do them all day long. You could do them for hours at a time and it wouldn't be exhausting. You feel like you're soaring, like you've got your red cape on? And then in that list, then you've marked the things in your superpower space. But Mark, then what are the things that deflate you? Or exhaust you? These are clues, our emotions or signals our feelings are trying to tell us something? What are those things that are deflating or exhausting. And they may not be tasks, right? They may not be stuff we're doing. It may be how we're being how we're connecting. And it can be a number of things, maybe even our own expectations. Like it's exhausting to me to feel I have to be x, maybe I can make a different decision. Now, this is an experiment, right? There's no right or wrong. You are a work in progress. I am



a work in progress. But if we don't start to experiment with these things, to tweak a little here to say, You know what, I noticed that this kind of work, this kind of interaction, this kind of action actually takes more of my energy and time and keeps me away from the things that I have identified that i No matter. What are some different decisions that I could make? And recognizing that what if the way that you've always done things doesn't have to be the same anymore? Are you the same as you were a year ago, five years ago? Chances are not our world is changing so fast. It's such an amazing opportunity to hit the reset button to be able to think differently, to ask differently of other people. And I wrote a chapter in this book around ask for what you need, which is a skill we all have to home. And we often say well, people should know that I need the help or I need to do more of the people leadership and growing my teams instead of more of these tasks or more of this other work that drains me. But that's not how our brains work.

There's actually a scientific assumption a bias that we think other people believe they know what we need. But they can't know what we need. It's not the true. So I shared this in the conversation we had last year for those of you who were with us when we talked about communicating your value while you're doing everything else, but I reiterate them here. Because these magic words are such great door openers, as we think about starting a process to make different decisions. Now, believe me, I am a fan that there are some things we can do without asking anybody for permission. We know if we're spending a disproportionate amount of time on something and we know, you know, what, what if I experiment with a different choice? What if I only did that to this level, instead of thinking has to be to this level? Maybe that's enough. But when we have others involved, when we have people connected, we can use the words like this, all this changes, maybe think about x the thing I want to change. And so I'd like to talk about moving from x to y, what the new scenario might look like. So the report that we do that takes a lot of time on to talk about not doing it anymore, or doing it less frequently. The meeting that we started doing, during COVID that we've kept doing and doing and doing that maybe we want to stop and say, Do we really need that meeting anymore? Is could it be replaced by a synchronous communication by a quick update by something else? So think about these things for you. Okay, we're, in this case, I want you to think about this question. We're not going to go to breakout rooms. But I want to invite you to put in the chat if you'd like. Or just to think about it for yourself as a takeaway. What's the one ball that you're juggling right now? That's not your highest value work? And what do you need to do to drop it in the next 90 days? You know, the truth is that especially women, and many of us know this right, that women get saddled with a lot of the work housekeeping.

There are things that just we just we start to sponge up, we start to sponge up different stray things in our work. And all that accumulates, it's kind of like your junk drawer, right? The junk drawer where? Oh, we'll just throw it in there. It's like, oh, well, we'll just give it to Sandra. We'll just give it to Dominique. They can you know, they can have their they're amazing. They can handle it. And we feel

like yeah, I I should do it. I don't want to let anybody down. But who are you letting down when you don't have space to use your best human skills to add value in the way that you are uniquely meant to add value? Okay.

So as you think about balls that you're juggling, I want to invite you if you have questions, feel free to put them in the chat. But also, we'll have a place on the resource page where you can ask a private question, I can't promise I can get back to you instantly. But you can ask me a private question. And we'll probably have other resources and tools that we can guide you to that help you go deeper on any aspect of this conversation where you're like, I want to do some more thinking about the balls that I need to drop or I want to really understand like human values more like I want to get clear about that for me. We'll have resources for you there.

So again, as my thanks to you, we're gonna give away the two signed books. So if you have not already wrote it in and we're gonna have two books, then do that now and Deb is going to do the last drawing and we will finish and wrap up the drawing but with one story. So anybody know this movie? Maybe this this look familiar to anybody. You probably have seen the Wizard of Oz. Classic classic movie right? In that movie, Dorothy go wasn't on this journey to do what matters to get herself back to what she wants to get home. But as we know, the crux of the story is that she actually had what she needed. All along in those magic ruby slippers.

She had the power, it didn't take more effort. It didn't take more time. It just took her knowing. So I hope that today is a start for you to know. For you to know that you matter. I hope that you don't wait. We need you more than ever.

I want to announce two winners. And we the two winners of books that we will be in touch with to get your information is Barbara Knott. And Liz Lozano. So thank you for being here live. Thank you for showing up for yourself. And for other people, I encourage you to stay in connection to reach out and feel free to reach out to me. And when you sign up for any of the tools that we have. Sometimes they might go into a workday firewall. So feel free to use a personal email. All our sites are safe, we never spam. And we want to make sure you're getting the tools that you asked for from us. Thank you for everything. Sandra. I'm gonna hand it back to you for any last words in our last couple of minutes.

SANDRA:

So thank you so much Darcy. This was a fabulous session for for us continuing our conversation about career today and dropping those balls that we don't need to keep juggling. Thank you so much for this for all that you've done for us already. And keep an eye out on our next event with Darcy on September 20, where she will come back to do part three. So thank you so much Darcy. We can't thank you enough. This has been so valuable. We're getting fabulous comments in the chat. And really

welcome everyone to join Darcy's insider community. She gives great tips and advice please join and look out for an updated post with our women workday Resources page and the recording coming soon. Thank you so much, everyone for joining us today. And thank you again Darcy.

DARCY: Thank you all thanks for being here for yourself and each other. Have a great day.

For more resources visit [www.RedCapeRevolution.com/Women-at-Workday](http://www.RedCapeRevolution.com/Women-at-Workday).