

3 Takeaways Podcast Transcript

Lynn Thoman

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Ep. 125: Which are the 10 Most Powerful and Compelling Takeaways of 2022? Listen and Find Out.

INTRO male voice: Welcome to the 3 Takeaways podcast, which features short, memorable conversations with the world's best thinkers, business leaders, writers, politicians, scientists, and other newsmakers. Each episode ends with the three key takeaways that person has learned over their lives and their careers. And now your host and board member of schools at Harvard, Princeton, and Columbia, Lynn Thoman.

Lynn Thoman: Hi, everyone. It's Lynn Thoman. Welcome to our 2022 highlights episode. After each takeaway, I'll tell you who the 3 Takeaways guest is. I bet you can't guess who the guest is before I tell you. In each case, listen for the three beeps followed by a guest voice. Then I will introduce the guest and you will hear a longer segment of what they had to say. Here we go. Enjoy the show!

beep beep beep

Kevin Rudd: America now needs economic, military and technological strength to cause the Chinese to conclude that they are dealing with a bigger entity than that made up of 50 states in the union.

LT: That's former [Prime Minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd](#).

KR: I know enough about America to know that in the post 1945 period, most of the time, America being ally rich, it probably has somewhere between 44 and 46 treaty allies around the world. China has one that's called North Korea. Look after your friends and allies. And for the first time since 1945, the wisdom in Washington will be to understand, given these balance of power dynamics that I've just referred to, that America now needs its allies more than ever before simply to achieve a collective critical mass in economic, military and technological strength which will cause the Chinese to conclude that they are dealing with a bigger entity than that made up of 50 states in the union.

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George Will: Congress doesn't so much pass laws anymore as it passes velleities, passes aspirations.

LT: That's [George Will](#), the columnist for the Washington Post, known for his independent thought and insights and his contributions to the Conservative movement.

GW: The government is doing so much. It's in so many aspects of life. The Congress, which has had 435 members for more than a century, whereas what Congress is involved in has increased probably 50 fold since 1921. Therefore, Congress doesn't so much pass laws anymore as it passes velleities, it passes aspirations. It says we should have a quality education for everybody. You guys

over in the Education Department, you define quality education and write the rules. So most of the legislating is done by federal bureaucracy, which is, if the Supreme Court would enforce the non-delegation document, which is John Locke's, then legislatures can make laws, but not other legislators. It would say Congress just can't do this. It has to legislate. It can't just hurl big dollops of discretion at the federal bureaucracy. It would require the government to be more parsimonious with its energies and its intentions.

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Danny Meyer: We hire people who are actually wired to be happier themselves when they're providing pleasure for other people.

LT: That's restaurateur [Danny Meyer](#), CEO of Union Square Hospitality Group.

DM: Well, we hire people who have the emotional wiring to say that this actually matters to them. I don't know how to teach somebody to care who otherwise doesn't care about providing hospitality. We've identified six emotional skills that are always present at a very high level in someone who's got what we call a high HQ, high hospitality quotient. But we just don't know how to teach anyone to have any of those emotional skills. People who do have those skills at a high level, who have a high HQ, are people who are actually wired to be happier themselves when they're providing pleasure for other people. And I don't know if I want my kids to know this, but when they were all young, there came an age when I would do this kind of fun experiment. And all you got to do is you give your kid, let's say they were maybe six years old or something. I forget exactly. You give them that yellow bag of Nestle's chocolate chips and you make sure to have all the ingredients in the house. And you say, I want you to follow the recipe and I'll help you if you need it.

DM: But let's see what happens here. So think about it. Anybody can make Toll House cookies. Almost every kid likes them. And so in that one bag, you've got reading, you've got a little bit of math, you've got learning to follow instructions, you've got safety training because you're dealing with something hot as well. You've got a little bit of impulse control because you could eat the batter while it's not cooked. You could take the cookies out a little bit too soon. But then the coolest thing is when the cookies are baked, so you've gone through all those great learning opportunities. When the cookies are baked, now I get to see whether my kid's got a high HQ or not, because now I get a chance to see, does the kid put all the cookies on a plate and take them to their bedroom and hoist them away for good times? Or is part of the pleasure taking that beautiful platter of cookies and presenting it to mom and dad and their siblings or whatever and say, look what I made for you.

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Sophie Scott: Actually, laughter really matters in your day to day life. It's probably one of the most important things you do in your day is the time when you're just chatting to colleagues with a cup of coffee and having a laugh about something that happened in a meeting.

LT: That's neuroscientist [Sophie Scott](#). She studies the science of laughter.

SS: So listen to your laughter and I think value your laughter. It's often because laughter, maybe it feels childlike, it feels trivial, it doesn't feel civilized and sophisticated and comedies never win Oscars. And people who are comedians are always assumed to be improvising on the spot rather

than incredibly polished artists. But actually, laughter really matters in your day to day life. It's probably one of the most important things you do in your day is the time when you're just chatting to colleagues with a cup of coffee and having a laugh about something that happened in a meeting. That feels like wasted time, but it's actually probably some of the most important time in your day. So value your laughter, make time for it.

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Sir Alex Younger: I've made plenty of mistakes, of course, but I have come out with the conviction that if you trust people, life gets a lot easier.

LT: That's [Sir Alex Younger](#), former Chief of Britain's legendary secret intelligence service, MI6.

AY: If you trust people, life gets a lot easier. So that may sound paradoxical coming from someone of my background, but in a highly complicated, fast moving situation, there's two ways of dealing with it. And I was the Director of Counter-Terrorism, so I speak with some authority here. One is to try and do everything yourself, check everyone else's homework, impose strict control on everything that's going on and ensure that you've got your arms around everything. And that is a very human response, particularly when you bear responsibility, including for some really forbidding outcomes. The other is to trust people, to assume that they're in the jobs because they know what they're doing. They have taken the time to understand them and to ensure that they understand what they're there for. But to recognize that you're surrounded by high quality people. And whilst one time in 100, you might have someone who shouldn't be trusted, who doesn't deserve the confidence you placed in them, 99 times out of 100. You'll be so much more capable as a leader if you are prepared to delegate and let people be their best.

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Clarissa Ward: At this moment in the U.S., we all think we're right about everything, that we have all the answers. We need to listen. We need to be curious. And we need to be humble.

LT: That's [Clarissa Ward](#), CNN's Chief International Correspondent. Be curious, be humble, and listen. And they sound like three really simple things, and they are three really simple things. But they're things that all of us, including myself, often forget to do. And they're things that if you really put them into practice, will just blow your mind and change the way you see the world in ways that are really positive. And I think, especially at this moment in the U.S., we all need to do that. We all think we're right about everything, that we have all the answers, that the other person is an idiot, that the other person is this. We need to listen. We need to be curious. And we need to be humble.

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Ray Dalio: You can deal with that by being radically open-minded and humble, and then reduce, eliminate your worst-case scenarios.

LT: That's [Ray Dalio](#), who founded and built Bridgewater into the largest hedge fund in the world.

RD: What you don't know and how you deal with it is more important than anything you know. So, I want to emphasize how you can deal with that. You can deal with that by being radically open-

mindful and humble to take in the best thinking of other people and consider the situation and then reduce, eliminate your worst-case scenarios.

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Alan Murray: We've now reached an era where the machines are going to take care of themselves. They're going to become smarter. They're going to be more effective. And what we're going to need to survive and thrive over the coming decades is for people to be better people.

LT: That's [Alan Murray](#), CEO of Fortune Media.

AM: This is really about all of us becoming much more human in the way we approach work and life. I have a colleague, Geoff Colvin, who wrote a book a few years ago, and he said that, and I think this is correct, that business has been most of the 20th century trying to make people into the equivalent of machines. That's what scientific management was about, right? You had these big factories where people are asked to do repetitive jobs or repetitive activities over and over again. So there was a huge focus on working together in lockstep like a machine. We've now reached an era where the machines are going to take care of themselves. Thank you very much. They're going to become smarter. They're going to be more effective. And what we're going to need to survive and thrive over the coming decades is for people to be better people. Much greater ingenuity, much greater empathy, all the things that make us distinct as human beings.

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Alex Carter: I call it my two magic words that you should use on every occasion. And the two magic words are tell me. Tell me is the broadest possible opener invitation to a conversation.

LT: That's [Alex Carter](#). Alex is a Columbia Law School professor and Director of the Mediation Clinic at Columbia Law School.

AC: The best question to ask, and this is a secret, is almost not a question at all. In fact, insider baseball, the Simon & Schuster copy editors and I went back and forth a couple of times on this one. And because they said, you know, Alex, this isn't technically a question. And I said, I know, but we're putting it in anyway. I call it my two magic words that you should use on every occasion. And the two magic words are tell me. Tell me is the broadest possible opener invitation to a conversation. My next question is tell me more. So you talked about the reporting chain and how that's creating some confusion. Talk to me more about that. In other words, we all think that it's going in and how much space we can take up in the room, how well we can state our arguments right at the top of the conversation.

AC: I like to tell people when you walk into a room and deliver your pitch or your argument, that's actually not negotiation. That's public speaking. OK, a negotiation is a conversation where you're steering a relationship. And so I like to gather as much information as I can up front because whether it's a child, a spouse or partner or colleagues that you've worked with for two decades in the office, we often assume we know what somebody is going to say when we ask a question. But we often don't, and especially with the close people in our life, we're not going to know unless we ask them to tell us.

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Kannon Shanmugam: There are always things we can do to make the country more perfect. And I think that that's an important responsibility for all of us.

LT: That's [Kannon Shanmugam](#), Chair of the Supreme Court practice at the law firm Paul Weiss Rifkind, which is one of the largest law firms in the world.

KS: There's one charge I could leave your audience with. It's that everyone think about ways to become engaged on these issues. The preamble to the Constitution contains the famous phrase, in order to become a more perfect union. And it's always seemed to me that what the founders were really doing was delivering a charge to all of us to think that the country is never perfect, that there are always things we can do to make the country more perfect. And I think that that's an important responsibility for all of us as citizens to keep in mind.

OUTRO male voice: If you enjoyed today's episode and would like to receive the show notes or get new fresh weekly episodes, be sure to sign up for our newsletter at <https://www.3takeaways.com/> or follow us on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#). Note that 3Takeaways.com is with the number 3, 3 is not spelled out. See you soon at 3Takeaways.com (<https://www.3takeaways.com/>)

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