

Announcer ([00:27](#)):

On today's episode of Tune in Tuesday, we'll hear about how to build emotional resilience to avoid professional burnout in a presentation sponsored by Western Governors University. And later, we'll tune into a conversation between SHRM President and CEO, Johnny C. Taylor Jr., as he sits down with Lauren Griffiths, an HR professional from Cisco, whose viral LinkedIn profile picture showcased what it really looks like to work from home. They will be joined by Cisco's Executive Vice President and Chief People Officer, Francine Katsoudas, to discuss the impact 2020 has had on employee mental health and how to foster a culture that embraces the new workplace normal. But first, here's your Tune in Tuesday co-host, Christopher Lopez.

Christopher Lopez ([01:15](#)):

Hello, everyone, and welcome to Tune in Tuesday. If you're joining for the first time, thank you for tuning in. And if you're returning, welcome back. My name is Christopher Lopez and I am so excited for today's episode where we'll focus on topics such as emotional resilience, employee mental health, and its impact on workplace culture in our new normal. Last month, SHRM's Chief Human Resources Officer, Sean Sullivan was joined by Kandi Johnson, President and CEO of the National Down Syndrome Society, and my friend John Register, CEO of Inspired Communications International, LLC. Together, they discuss the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and how as a community of HR and business leaders, we can be doing more to cultivate diverse and inclusive teams in our workplaces. In case you missed that episode, you can watch the replay at any time on this page.

Christopher Lopez ([02:11](#)):

As the voice of all things work, we know firsthand the importance of the work HR departments around the globe have been doing throughout this challenging year. SHRM we'll be your lifelong career partner giving you immediate access to the resources and tools that will support you and your day-to-day role and connecting you to a community of 300,000 members across the globe. You can rely on SHRM for access to compliance resources, one to one guidance from expert HR knowledge advisors, interactive tools, a peer to peer network, professional development, and so much more. Learn more about SHRM membership and join or renew your membership at [shrm.org/membership](http://shrm.org/membership).

Christopher Lopez ([02:56](#)):

This year, the world has changed dramatically and the workplace is no exception. As such, SHRM has been especially vocal about the importance of checking in with ourselves and our employees to understand the impact the year has had on our emotional well-being and professional performance. In our first segment this afternoon, we have two members of the Western Governors University College of Business, HR program mentor, Nikki Harrington, and course instructor, Dr. Patricia Morgan, joining the program to share with us how you can strengthen your emotional resilience to avoid professional burnout. I cannot wait to hear more about this crucial topic. Nikki and Patricia, over to you.

Nikki Harrington ([03:41](#)):

Hello, SHRM members. Welcome to the November Tune in Tuesday. We're excited to have you join us. My name is Nikki Harrington and I'm with Dr. Patricia Morgan from Western Governors University. Today, we're talking about emotional resilience and offering insight to compassion fatigue, building emotional resilience and helping to offer suggestions to assist employees during this most difficult time.

Patricia Morgan ([04:05](#)):

Thank you, Nikki. We are currently in a pandemic with COVID-19, and since March 2020 HR departments and HR professionals have been the unsung heroes. We want to recognize those who are in HR and let them know that we understand what they're going through, thank them and help them understand that their feelings are real, and give them the tools to help with their emotional resilience. Also, as an HR professional, you may have also had employees and/or their family members passing away from COVID-19 and its related illnesses.

Patricia Morgan ([04:45](#)):

Today, HR professionals are facing heightened challenges like never before. Some of these challenges include sick employees, employees with family health issues, employees dealing with grief and death, employee mental health issues, having to comply with new laws, restrictions and updates to protocols. Possible closure of business due to reduced production or services. HR professionals are making decisions that impact their employees lives, for instance, furloughs and layoffs. The updating of policies and new training programs that need to be met for the ever needs of COVID can be demanding.

Patricia Morgan ([05:31](#)):

HR professionals need more time and are conducting more investigations due to COVID. And HR professionals need to make sure to have the PPE and the appropriate supply of PPE to create a safer work environment. Mainly, the biggest challenge is the uncertainty of the ever constant changing situation of COVID, as well as working with scared employees. An HR professional may be struggling with the demands of staying healthy during the pandemic, as well as being an HR professional. If the HR professional does not have the strategies to respond to the day-to-day demands of their jobs with their employees, they may become frustrated, face burnout, leave their job, or even make the wrong decisions.

Patricia Morgan ([06:23](#)):

If he or she doesn't have strategies to respond to their own frustration and sense of failure, it will be much harder to close their skill and knowledge gaps. The HR professional must know how to address his or her emotional experience to better handle all of the upcoming challenges. So when Nikki and I were researching emotional resilience, we focused on several studies. One that stood out to us was on compassion fatigue conducted by Emily Gentry in 2018. Gentry is an RN. Gentry recognizes that we, as HR professionals, must work with management, employees, vendors, and many others in the workplace to be resilient as compassion fatigue is a serious illness. So what is compassion fatigue?

Patricia Morgan ([07:20](#)):

Well, compassion fatigue is also known as secondary traumatic stress or STS. It is a condition characterized by a gradual lessening of compassion over time. It is common among workers who've worked directly with victims of disasters, trauma, or illness. Compassion fatigue can also lead to burnout developed by repeated and chronic stress. Compassion fatigue can also lead to secondary traumatic stress. This has been defined as intrusion, avoidance, and arousal symptoms resulting from indirect exposure to traumatic events using a professional helping relationship with a person or persons having directly experienced these events. Other names for compassion fatigue include burnout and vicarious traumatization. Over to you, Nikki.

Nikki Harrington ([08:22](#)):

There are several symptoms of compassion fatigue in the field of human resources. Fatigue occurs in the HR professional and organizations' employees. These symptoms are categorized as emotional, psychological, physical, or community. Recently, I spoke to an HR director for a local government water project company, and she stated her biggest challenge is that some of her employees are no longer caring. This is becoming much more common than she has seen in the past. She struggles daily as an HR professional on how to handle this symptom. There's additional symptoms of compassion fatigue. There's a loss of initiative with fatigue that is out of the ordinary. You'll see more slowness of thought. Some employees do have difficulty prioritizing tasks. You may see more irritability. You may see more anxiety.

Nikki Harrington ([09:17](#)):

The employees may be preoccupied with minor issues and familiar tasks. There may be indecision. There may be a lack of concentration. You might see more signs of poor self-care or exhaustion from employees. You'll hear more talk about nausea, headache, heart palpitations, insomnia. The employees may hide or not talk in team meetings, and there may be an increase in substance abuse. You may see a lot of inability to relax, but even again, more hopelessness. There are organizational symptoms. There's more high absenteeism. There's constant change in co-worker relationships. There's an ability for teams to work together. There's a desire among staff members to possibly break company rules. There's a lack of flexibility amongst staff. There's a strong and greater reluctance to change. There's a lack of vision for the future.

Nikki Harrington ([10:27](#)):

So in order to help compassion fatigue within HR and in the employees, as Patricia stated, we can recognize what it takes to help the fatigue. We can be aware that employees emotional resilience plays a factor on how they handle this possible fatigue. How do you or the employees react in certain situations? Emotional resilience is the ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change. It is the courage to come back. What if individuals are not able to practice emotional resilience? Some effects could be they may have a negative influence on performance at work. They may also add additional negative impact to those suffering. There may be employee turnover. This may lead to poor morale.

Nikki Harrington ([11:17](#)):

The company may be at risk, if not performing. If there is increased burnout or an "I don't care" attitude, you may not be addressing employees issues or safety. The job is to protect the companies and the employees. Employees may not feel they can go to the HR department if HR is not resilient. And again, this could put the company at risk as managers may not feel confident in HR, and then putting those employees and companies at risk as well.

Patricia Morgan ([11:48](#)):

Thanks, Nikki. As discussed earlier, emotional resilience can simply be defined as one's ability to adapt to stressful situations of crisis. In HR, one may deal with very stressful situations almost daily. Individuals with a higher degree of emotional resilience are able to handle the stress that comes with daily life more effectively and calmly. Less resilient people have a harder time with stress and life changes. So when

someone has resilience, they have the four C's. They have control, they have commitment, they have challenge, and they have confidence. So what are some strategies that demonstrate the four C's?

Patricia Morgan ([12:34](#)):

Well, first of all, control is the ability to bounce back, both emotionally and physically. They also have the ability to persist. And they also have the ability to self-calm. Commitment is the ability to be non-judgmental and self-supporting to others. You're also hardy, you have a sense of coherence. Challenge is the ability to exercise and self-care, the ability to self-replenish, also the ability to use your social support network. Confidence is the ability to lead, the ability to have hope, and the ability to exhibit emotional expressiveness. You also have when you have confidence, the ability to be more optimistic. And Nikki's going to talk a little more about that now.

Nikki Harrington ([13:30](#)):

Even before the pandemic, a fourth quarter 2019 survey by Alright Solutions, surveyed 2,500 US employees at large US companies and found that less than half felt optimistic about their well-being. HR professionals and employees alike must focus on their well-being to gain and build their resilience. Having resilience in the workplace means the ability to bounce back, persist, self-calm, and be optimistic. Employees can share how to practice self-care. When they do, they can gain hope and are able to handle emotions. When they gain resilience, they are able to lead others in their own challenges and share their grit and remain optimistic.

Nikki Harrington ([14:14](#)):

At WGU, the HR department offers many resources related to well-being including a social and emotional website, and weekly group sessions, and even clubs for self-care and balance. Many wellness programs are now focusing on workers well-being, which in addition plays into physical health, encompasses emotional resilience, stress management, and financial fitness.

Patricia Morgan ([14:39](#)):

Thanks, Nikki. We also have a poll question in the chat. So please let us know in the chat how you or your organization is helping employees deal with COVID-19. So how can one gain resilience? Well, promote a belief in your ability to cope with current and new challenges. Stay connected with sources of support and seek new support groups. Talk about what you're going through with your peers and family. Be helpful to others. Helping is a great way to gain resilience. Activate positive emotion. Promote an approach of survivorship. Seek meaning both at work and at home.

Patricia Morgan ([15:27](#)):

Change your self-talk. You can change your attitude towards the world and enhance resilience. This is positivity. Have that strong support system, like we've discussed earlier, home, friends, family. Have that social support network at church, the clubs. Volunteer, it's a great way to help out and make yourself feel better about things. Keep a daily journal, practice self care, go to workshops, do trainings on this. Establish your boundaries and always reward yourself for a job well done. Share your feelings and concerns and stories to those who will listen to you.

Patricia Morgan ([16:11](#)):

Also, look at your employee assistance program. This is a great tool. Practice mindfulness, practice meditation. Take a break from work if you need to. What can your HR department do? Well, they can enhance employee communication. They can prioritize mental health. A lot of our employees are working from home, and employers should prioritize mental health due to the social isolation and higher stress that we're all going through. Offer teletherapy and pharmacy benefits. Offer stress management programs. Offer resilience programs. Offer caregiver support, new parent support, and even child care support programs. Offer financial security. Offer programs and resources. Offer incentives to employees participating in these programs. Be flexible. Work schedules and boundaries are really important for employees right now.

Patricia Morgan ([17:16](#)):

And also evaluate your leadership programs. Do they focus on showing up for the employees? These are some things that you can do to help your employees at your organization. And always remember, hire the right employees. Look for these traits in your employees that we've talked about today. And I'm going to pass it over to Nikki.

Nikki Harrington ([17:42](#)):

Patricia, another resilience technique is to be an optimism optimist. The advantages of optimism optimists, they have positive expectations for the future. For example, optimists tend to think things will work out reasonably well. They believe life is basically good. They look on the bright side of situations. Optimists tend to see the problems as solvable. For example, there are almost always ways to get a job done. Life can be improved through effort, stress is interpreted as a challenge rather than a disaster. On the other hand, if you are naturally a pessimist, you are more likely to feel unhappy and unhealthy and are more vulnerable to distressing events.

Nikki Harrington ([18:26](#)):

Listed here are SHRM resources related to emotional resilience and compassion fatigue. Remember, we are not counselors and we do not give medical advice. This information is provided to help you support yourself and employees who are facing challenges in their HR role or any other role they are in. There are many scenarios, but in conversations with employees you can listen for their behaviors, their symptoms, and their challenges. Compassion fatigue is real and can be a struggle for anyone, especially now to move forward with their jobs, goals, and home life. Keep this information at the top of your mind as you speak with employees. Collaborate with your peers, reach out and share resources to support yourself, the employee and the organization.

Patricia Morgan ([19:11](#)):

Thanks, Nikki. And if you're interested, we have 10 books to read on emotional resilience that will help you and in turn help you help your employees. Thanks so much.

Christopher Lopez ([19:25](#)):

Thank you both for sharing those insights and to WGU for bringing this topic into focus. If you're interested in learning more about emotional resilience and avoiding burnout, visit the link below. Now, let's turn our attention to a topic that has affected many in the workplace as they search for ways to integrate personal and professional duties in an ongoing pandemic. With many companies still remote

and K through 12 schools offering courses online, workers around the globe are struggling to challenge the unconscious bias associated with caregiving while working from home.

Christopher Lopez ([20:01](#)):

SHRM President and CEO, Johnny C. Taylor Jr., is here to discuss the impact that 2020 has had on employee mental health and how workplace culture plays a bigger part of the new world of work. He is sitting down with Lauren Griffiths, People Consultant of Customer Experience, and Francine Katsoudas, EVP and Chief People Officer from Cisco, to chat more about their company's efforts to support workers like Lauren in their pursuit of work life integration.

Johnny C. Taylor Jr. ([20:37](#)):

Thank you, Chris. Mental health and employee well-being has been a focus for many HR and business leaders throughout this year. While working remotely or even in the workplace, it is easy for us to hide behind our mask, be it professionally in emails, Slack messages, or video calls, or literally for those of us who are working in the office day to day as we are wearing that PPE to protect ourselves and others in public spaces. So we have two guests joining us today, two very special guests. The first is Francine Katsoudas. Francine, and she allows us to call her Fran, is the CHRO of Cisco.

Johnny C. Taylor Jr. ([21:15](#)):

And one of her colleagues, our other guests this afternoon decided it was time to show people what the reality of working from home really looked like. Her name is Lauren Griffiths. She decided to replace her LinkedIn profile photo with the selfie of what she really looked like in her new normal work environment. And boy, was she met with praise. With over 420,000 likes initially and 14,000 comments, this HR practitioner's post put a spotlight on the pressures and unconscious bias workers encounter every day as they adjust to the world of work around them. So I have a couple of questions. I'm going to start with the first for Lauren. Lauren, you have taken social media by storm recently with your profile picture change and you had a post explaining your decision. How do you hope this national dialogue changes the norm in the workplace? And were you expecting this type of reaction?

Lauren Griffiths ([22:15](#)):

Thank you, Johnny. I am so excited to be here with Fran. No. I was hardly expecting a reaction at all. Maybe a like from my relatives. But when the post started to build momentum, 1,000 likes, 1,000 views, 10 million views. And by the way, your numbers are a little bit off, so I'll [crosstalk 00:22:37]. Today, we're at 41 million views, 31,000 comments and 900,000 likes. Yes, I know. So it quickly became very, very clear to me that this was a conversation that needed to happen. The post was initially just about me sharing my personal journey, embracing the new normal by tossing my headshots, and showing how I truly look when I'm working and being professional. But the comments sparked so much more important dialogue.

Lauren Griffiths ([23:11](#)):

What does it even mean to be professional or look professional? Are there different standards for different groups? Should appearance count at all when making decisions in the workplace? And it also opened up a can of worms around vulnerability in the workplace. Whether that's showing your face without makeup, whether it's talking about the stress of being a caregiver, or the myriad of other

challenges we're all dealing with. In my post, I said that I was frazzled. And that resonated with so many people across the globe, feeling frazzled is universal right now. So there was a ton of praise.

Lauren Griffiths ([23:48](#)):

There were also a lot of commenters who said, this isn't Facebook, this isn't Instagram. In other words, LinkedIn isn't a place to take a selfie or share a personal experience. Obviously, I think that's a little ridiculous. And I challenged the perception of how we need to look and behave on LinkedIn or look and behave while being professional. And now I have this incredible platform. My goal is to continue challenging the norms so that workplaces can just be a safer environment for people to be themselves because we do our best work when we feel safe and when we trust our colleagues, our leaders, and our companies.

Johnny C. Taylor Jr. ([24:34](#)):

We have a tagline here and we launched it, if you will, in 2018. And it is, better workplaces will lead to a better world. And if you think about it, we spend so much time at work. And we sort of, and I'm going to talk with Fran about this, we have the opportunity to largely influence the world. This isn't just our grandparents personnel. This is like human resources. If we have sort of a captive audience, if you will, then we actually have the opportunity to influence the broader culture. If you think about, Lauren, the work that you did, which you call it fortuitously or what have you, it really forced us to have a real discussion about appearance, and how important is it? How fair is it? How fair is it to women versus men? These are real issues that you helped highlight. So thank you so much for doing it.

Johnny C. Taylor Jr. ([25:27](#)):

And now I want to switch to Fran. 2020 has been a year for the books. With a global pandemic, natural disasters across the globe, racial inequity at the forefront, and a very divided election year that we continue to be experiencing, the workplace has changed in ways we never could have predicted. As a result, employee mental health has taken a hit. And self-care may have taken a backseat. How has Cisco, I mean, you are the CHRO of the most important companies on the planet. How have you been prioritizing employees mental health this year when every day seems to bring a new coping challenge impacting workers?

Francine Katsoudas ([26:11](#)):

Thank you so much, Johnny, it's wonderful to be here with Lauren. It's wonderful to see her shine in this moment of being truly authentic and telling her own story. And I think people always respond to authenticity. From a broader Cisco perspective, what I would say is that we've been focused on mental health for quite some time. Two years ago, our CEO, Chuck Robbins, sent out an email to all employees. And in that email, he basically said, "Please take care of yourself." It was after the deaths of Anthony Bourdain and Kate Spade. And just mental health is health. And what was so amazing in that moment was that our employees responded back with the most heartbreaking and amazing stories.

Francine Katsoudas ([27:00](#)):

I think when there's enough trust in the system to tell your story, to talk about the fact that you may be dealing with depression or anxiety or whatever it may be, I think you've crossed a threshold to a very different type of company. And so for us two years ago, starting on that journey, I think was really

important. I would say we're not there. But having that foundation, I think has helped us quite a bit through COVID. And so the best example of that has been when the pandemic started from a global perspective, we started weekly conversations with our employees.

Francine Katsoudas ([27:39](#)):

And in those conversations, we had medical doctors with us that could give us their guidance and expertise as it related to the pandemic and what to do or not to. We were all learning together. We would also talk about our business and where we were going, answer any questions that our teams had. And then we also had a mental health expert with us as well. And we've continued that. And I think that is one of the best examples that I've seen of how we bring together the business and each of us as humans in a very powerful way.

Johnny C. Taylor Jr. ([28:15](#)):

I have just a quick follow-up on that. What made you do that? I mean, typically, when companies do that, think in such a way as to bring in mental health workers, it was because there was a trigger point. And so was there? Did you all lose ... I understand Anthony Bourdain and Kate Spade. But was there something at Cisco that made you think, as the CHRO, that we need to take care of people's physical and mental health?

Francine Katsoudas ([28:44](#)):

It's really interesting, because like so many good things, I think we kind of fell into this a little bit. And what I mean by that was, I was talking to our medical director, and this was back on, I think it was March the 9th. And I remember as I got off the phone with him, I felt so much better. Because as we all know, knowledge is power. Like the more we understand, even if it's not easy, or even if it's scary, just knowing is helpful. And so what happened was, I got off the phone with him, I was like, "I feel better." And I remember thinking, I wonder if he'd be willing to come and talk to our employees.

Francine Katsoudas ([29:19](#)):

And so I called him right back and I said, "Hey, any chance you'd be willing to come down and talk to our employees today?" And he said, "Yeah, I can be there at noon." So the funniest thing is, I sent an email out to the employee base saying, "Hey, I know it's like 30 minutes away, but if you want to join, we're going to have this conversation. And if not, we'll have it on video." With 30 minutes notice, 15,000 employees showed up. What that demonstrated was there was a pent up need for information. There was fear. But I also translated it, Johnny, as our people want to be in community as we sort through this.

Francine Katsoudas ([30:01](#)):

And so from that point forward, we started then inviting a mental health expert to join us as well. And Dr. Zane has been with us now since March. And I think we all feel so much better knowing that we can have the conversations about what we're doing as it relates to our business transformation and the fact that we're not sleeping well at night in the same session, and that it's okay. It's okay to not be okay.

Johnny C. Taylor Jr. ([30:25](#)):

Again, I have to really thank you all, not just for what you're doing at Cisco, but for the model that you are providing the rest of the companies. Because you're so right, it's so easy to focus on mental health,

we have great insurance, we don't have such great mental health insurance. And we at SHRM, for example, are working right now to find much better, higher quality EAP providers, because we kind of added that on as an add-on to our program, but you wanted to make sure that your physical health plans are really good and robust. So it's really important to see a leader like you and an organization like yours saying this is important.

Johnny C. Taylor Jr. ([31:00](#)):

Speaking of, here's another group, how are you all, and I'd like both of you to take a shot at this, Fran first, how is Cisco working to support and retain its female workers? Given that there's new data that shows one in four female professionals are considering leaving the workplace because of COVID. And in fact, we know that 617,000 women, 8 times the number of men left the workforce last month alone. They're doing it for various reasons. Some of these also are women who are actually been allowed to work remotely. So it's not just I made the decision that I couldn't work in the workplace, so I worked remotely. They're saying, I'm leaving all together. Because sometimes it's actually more stressful to work at home with three kids who need help with their homework and the dog and the distractions, you'd almost want to go to work in the physical workplace than stay at home. How are you responding to that as two women leaders?

Francine Katsoudas ([32:00](#)):

The first thing I would say is if the numbers are troubling, they absolutely are and I think we have to pay attention. What's fascinating is that from a Cisco perspective, we haven't seen that yet. And we're staying really, really close to our numbers. That could change Johnny. So I don't want to pretend like we are in a better place. But right now we're managing this through a few different things. So the first is we know that when we all have leaders that are empathetic, flexible, doing the right thing by our employees, that means a lot. And early on in the pandemic, our CEO would say things like, "Leaders, please allow your people that make their families the first priority." And I think that just makes it easier. Now, it doesn't make it easy, but I think it makes it easier.

Francine Katsoudas ([32:50](#)):

I think when we as leaders also share our stories about how we juggle, chances are at some point in this conversation, I will have a pet that will jump on my desk, my cat, and it will be disruptive, but I think we're just learning. So I'd say leadership first. And then I think we're looking at offerings, because all of the perks that we once had in the office, I think we have to rethink that now. And so it's something that we're starting is we're looking at offering subsidized tutoring to our employees, and maybe take some of the load off of both mothers and fathers as it relates to taking care of our children during the day. And so I think for us, as HR professionals, there are some very new and innovative ideas that will be coming forward to make this a little bit easier. But Lauren, I'd love your thoughts. Your kids are a little bit younger as well.

Lauren Griffiths ([33:39](#)):

Yes, and they happen to be home today. Unexpectedly. Because my daughter complained of a stomach cramp yesterday, so anyway. Fran talked a little bit before about kind of foundationally what companies need to do. I think some of this goes down to building a foundation where there's communities of women who from the get-go feel supported and feel like they have a place where people get them. Again, it also comes down to feeling like you have a safe place to tell your manager that I need help and

I'm struggling and I can't do this. And if you don't have a culture where people feel safe enough to do that, then we don't know what you need.

Lauren Griffiths ([34:18](#)):

So I think you know foundationally the things that Cisco are doing around bring it ... We had a speaker come in, Dr. Marc Brackett, who talked about permission to feel and words that we can use to describe our feelings instead of just always saying, I'm fine, and you? Or, I'm good, and you? That's a missed opportunity to connect around emotional intelligence. So how do we recognize our feelings? And then how do we express them? And then how do we do something about it? So I think yes, foundationally there's a lot we need to do for women to just say, I'm struggling and I need help. And then you can build offerings like flexibility.

Lauren Griffiths ([34:57](#)):

Fran has hosted caregiver sessions as well, which have been amazing. There's backup childcare, there's all sorts of fun events for after school programming that Cisco is offering. So there's a lot of other things that really help sort of enable us to work as a caregiver, and we feel very supportive to do that.

Johnny C. Taylor Jr. ([35:24](#)):

That really, again, I'm going to sound like a broken record, but I'm so glad your fellow HR practitioners can hear that you're playing a role in making sure that that women, and Fran, I love your comment, even men oftentimes, increasingly, we see single fathers out there. I know I'm one for example. And so when my daughter gets ... When I get a call from school, not that she's sick, but that someone in the class is sick, given this COVID environment, they release everyone. And I'm busy trying to figure out how am I going to get her and then be in this meeting, be on Tune in Tuesday with you all today, when I have a little one sitting in my office right now. It's tough.

Johnny C. Taylor Jr. ([36:01](#)):

And everything that we can do to give people, and I love that the permission to feel. What was the phrase again? I love it. The permission to feel and sometimes you feel overwhelmed. It's not the things that we all think about. It's just, I feel badly today, and I love it. You walk into the hallway, and you ask someone, how do you feel? And oftentimes, they don't even care what the answer is. You could say, yeah, I just found out I had X. And they say, good, good. And they keep walking, because they're really not listening. So that's important.

Johnny C. Taylor Jr. ([36:34](#)):

I want to wrap up with one question, and it's a little meaty, but as best you can, Fran, I'm going to tackle this at you. How do you how do you see unconscious bias playing a role in decision making within HR? Because the reality is when that word comes up, especially now in the environment that we've talked about racial equity, you think race, but the reality is, we all have unconscious biases, every last one of us. How are you confronting them within your organization? And how do you manage those conversations?

Lauren Griffiths ([37:05](#)):

Yeah, I agree there's unconscious bias everywhere, and we wouldn't be human and not have that. So we have to confront that. I think we're lucky at this moment from an HR profession, because the analytics and the insights to point us to that bias is absolutely there. The way that we're tackling it at Cisco is by working hard to ensure that from an HR perspective, we are proximate to all of the demographics of the workforce. And that we to the point that we're listening. We did a session back in December of last year where we brought about 20 of our leaders from the black community into my staff. And they sat in the center of the room in a circle, and we sat around them as one example. And for about two and a half hours, we facilitated the dialogue about their experience.

Lauren Griffiths ([38:03](#)):

What we heard in that dialogue was some really great stories and some really hard stories. And by the way, some of the hard stories involve the way in which we respond to issues as an HR organization. I think for us hearing that was really important. I think something that we all need to be looking at is how do we rebuild the employee relations organizations across all companies. I think there's a lot there that has to change. Something that we started about a year and a half ago, is we started sharing all of our employee relations cases with our employees, not just with our HR function, but all employees. And it was a way for us to bring a spotlight to the issues that exist across the company. I think there's an amazing opportunity for all of us as HR leaders to focus on unconscious bias, but also to lead the company in showing what you do when you find it. And I think that's something we're excited about.

Johnny C. Taylor Jr. ([39:03](#)):

Listen, I love it. To the social media superstar, Lauren, and also the consummate mom and HR professional and all of the other balls that you have that you're trying to juggle. And to Fran as the leader. I mean, let's give credit where credit is due. Lauren felt comfortable doing this because you've created an HR a culture, company-wide culture, but particularly within the HR organization, that she could go out and be her true and authentic self and talk about her vulnerabilities. You gave her the permission to feel. So thank you both for what you're doing. God bless you and I hope that you continue doing it and serving as a role model to employers everywhere. Thank you.

Lauren Griffiths ([39:54](#)):

Thank you.

Francine Katsoudas ([39:54](#)):

Thank you so much.

Christopher Lopez ([39:54](#)):

Thank you, Lauren, Francine, and Johnny for joining us this afternoon. And thank you to all of you for tuning in. We'll see you back here on December 8th at 2:00 pm, Eastern for our next episode of Tune in Tuesday, where we'll discuss how to recruit and stand out in our current job market.