

## Working to Recognize the Highs and Lows with Dr. Al Montoya

00:06.930 --> 00:13.220

You are now listening to the Audacity to fail  
podcast, A podcast about Miss stepping into

00:13.220 --> 00:16.840

success.

Get ready to dive into conversations and real

00:16.840 --> 00:22.700

stories from leaders as they share how failure  
activates a growth mindset is an important part

00:22.700 --> 00:26.420

of learning and motivation for improvement.

I'm your host,

00:26.430 --> 00:32.230

dr Shari Dade psychologist with the National  
Center for Organizational Development.

00:32.240 --> 00:34.860

Thank you for tuning in.

Let's get started.

00:41.020 --> 00:45.400

## Working to Recognize the Highs and Lows with Dr. Al Montoya

Support for this leadership podcast comes from  
the National Center for Organization

00:45.400 --> 00:49.260

Development N. C. O. D.

Aims to increase the long term growth and

00:49.260 --> 00:53.170

performance of the Department of Veterans  
Affairs by collaboratively working with the

00:53.170 --> 00:56.890

leaders throughout the V. A.

To improve organizational outcomes by

00:56.890 --> 01:00.810

supporting the development of an engaged  
workforce For additional information on our

01:00.810 --> 01:02.920

services, click the link in the show notes,

01:08.440 --> 01:14.620

employee recognition is a powerful driver of  
positive change across any team or workgroup

## Working to Recognize the Highs and Lows with Dr. Al Montoya

01:14.620 --> 01:19.140

within the organization.

Leaders are often tasked with the practice of

01:19.140 --> 01:24.010

recognizing appreciating and applauding  
employees for their work performance,

01:24.020 --> 01:27.460

but there is no set instruction manual for how  
to do this.

01:27.485 --> 01:32.995

On this month's episode we will explore the  
missteps leaders can make when attempting to

01:32.995 --> 01:39.285

fairly and meaningfully recognize individual  
and team performance for this dialogue.

01:39.285 --> 01:44.555

I'm excited to be joined by Al Montoya, the  
medical center director at the V.

## Working to Recognize the Highs and Lows with Dr. Al Montoya

01:44.555 --> 01:47.680

A.

Connecticut health care system At one, a

01:47.680 --> 01:53.590

tertiary care facility with 3000 staff and care  
for approximately

01:53.640 --> 01:59.820

58,000 veterans in the state of Connecticut.

Get ready to join us as we explore the journey

01:59.820 --> 02:04.410

of miss stepping into success.

This is the audacity to fail podcast.

02:04.420 --> 02:09.070

Episode seven, recognizing the highs and the  
lows.

02:09.580 --> 02:13.060

Hi Al and welcome, how are you today?

I'm doing great,

02:13.130 --> 02:16.690

## Working to Recognize the Highs and Lows with Dr. Al Montoya

very happy to be here.

I am so excited to have you here on this

02:16.690 --> 02:17.870

month's episode.

Thank you.

02:17.880 --> 02:23.070

Well let's have some fun and chat for a while  
before we jump straight into recognition and

02:23.070 --> 02:26.860

the importance of recognition.

I always like to set the tone for our

02:26.860 --> 02:33.475

conversation and of course that means we are  
diving right into failure and missteps which

02:33.475 --> 02:38.215

can be extremely difficult to acknowledge and  
to talk about especially for leaders or

02:38.225 --> 02:43.315

especially for leaders of leaders, right?

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I always like to begin by asking my guests

02:43.325 --> 02:47.875

about their journey to this transformative way  
of thinking about failure.

02:47.885 --> 02:53.655

So al at what point in your career or your  
leadership journey did you begin thinking about

02:53.655 --> 02:59.140

failure as a pathway to success?

Yeah, so that that's a really really good

02:59.140 --> 03:04.250

question and I think it's one that really helps  
you look at high reliability,

03:04.260 --> 03:06.560

right?

And where we're going on our journey to high

03:06.560 --> 03:10.720

reliability.

And so for me, you know I prior to my time in

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03:10.720 --> 03:12.640

the in the V. A.

I was in the Air Force.

03:12.650 --> 03:15.890

Right?

And so I did 10.5 years as a Russian linguist.

03:15.900 --> 03:22.340

And so I think very early on in my career I  
learned that failure was was something to be

03:22.340 --> 03:23.620

embraced.

Right?

03:23.620 --> 03:28.820

So we see that in high reliability, we see it  
as a culture of continuous process improvement.

03:28.830 --> 03:34.570

And once you recognize that once you recognize  
that you can improve on those failures,

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03:34.570 --> 03:38.200

those missteps and come out on the other end so  
much better.

03:38.220 --> 03:42.570

It totally unlocks a different potential.

That piece that you bring in about process

03:42.570 --> 03:49.460

improvement is so important because if we  
aren't able to recognize or even acknowledge

03:49.470 --> 03:52.950

that there are missteps, then how do we improve  
processes? Right.

03:52.950 --> 03:58.710

How do we go back and observe things that we  
can change or things that we can enhance?

03:59.280 --> 04:03.680

Yeah, no, I, I agree.

And I think as, as a leader in the organization,

04:03.680 --> 04:07.600

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I think it's important to to recognize when  
you've made those failures and then to be able

04:07.600 --> 04:11.600

to have your staff also see that you've made  
that recognition.

04:11.610 --> 04:15.220

Right?

And so I'm a huge fan of telling stories as you

04:15.220 --> 04:21.680

know, and you know, so one of my previous  
stations right where I was a medical center

04:21.680 --> 04:25.170

director up there, I publicly made a mistake  
and uh,

04:25.180 --> 04:30.630

got very embarrassed about it at one point and  
then went back in our morning report.

04:30.630 --> 04:33.810

I said, well, how am I really going to

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recognize this?

04:33.820 --> 04:37.750

And I just came out front and you could tell  
that the employees there were like,

04:37.760 --> 04:42.490

wow, he recognized that mistake.  
He recognized what he's going to do to improve

04:42.490 --> 04:44.990

on it.  
And then it, it totally cut the ice for other

04:44.990 --> 04:48.770

people to say, wow, that's, you know, I did  
something similar to and this is where,

04:48.770 --> 04:52.410

where it led me.  
So I think it's that that recognition of the

04:52.410 --> 04:56.290

mistake, right?  
That helps make you a much better individual of

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04:56.290 --> 04:59.900

course.

And even after recognizing you took it a step

04:59.910 --> 05:00.810

further.

Right?

05:00.810 --> 05:04.870

So you are able to recognize and then you are  
able to acknowledge you're able to go in and

05:04.870 --> 05:10.130

say like, hey this is a misstep that I  
experienced and this is where we can go from

05:10.130 --> 05:12.260

here.

And it sounds like your employees really

05:12.260 --> 05:16.970

appreciated that part of the process as well.

Absolutely.

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05:17.180 --> 05:20.090

And some of the work that we've done together,  
you and I,

05:20.090 --> 05:25.930

we've had many calls in which I've witnessed  
you offering up recognition and appreciation

05:25.930 --> 05:29.790

for leaders and for employees in such an  
authentic.

05:29.790 --> 05:34.860

And what I believe is in a powerful way and  
your experience as a medical center director

05:34.870 --> 05:39.060

when it comes to recognition.

Where are some of the greatest missed

05:39.060 --> 05:43.950

opportunities that you notice happening for  
some supervisors and leaders.

05:44.525 --> 05:50.075

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But that's a really, really great question.

And I think the greatest missed opportunity for

05:50.075 --> 05:55.355

recognition is simply through rounding around  
wherever your workspaces.

05:55.355 --> 05:58.565

Right?

So if that's a medical center or if that's at

05:58.565 --> 06:04.915

central office or wherever that may be right,  
taking an opportunity out of your day and just

06:04.915 --> 06:07.525

walking that area.

Right?

06:07.525 --> 06:10.755

And so my days as a medical center director  
start really,

06:10.755 --> 06:11.855

really early.

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Right?

06:12.010 --> 06:18.550

I'm normally in by right around 6:36-45.

I check my email very quick and then I take my

06:18.550 --> 06:24.140

walking shoes and I hit hit the floors right.

I really start to go and walk each of the

06:24.140 --> 06:26.970

different areas in the facility to check in on  
people.

06:26.980 --> 06:32.810

And just that recognition alone really allows  
for psychological safety to go up.

06:32.820 --> 06:37.780

It allows employees to feel valued and it  
allows them to think that they can raise

06:37.780 --> 06:41.460

concerns to you to really see those through to  
the resolution.

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06:41.470 --> 06:44.960

Right?

And I think it also lets them see you as a as a

06:44.960 --> 06:46.940

human, right?

As an individual.

06:46.940 --> 06:49.980

And so I often joke, I'm like yeah, I put on my  
pants to stay,

06:50.145 --> 06:55.685

hey all of you do and we you know, I drive here  
just like you do and so you know I can go out

06:55.685 --> 07:00.745

there and around the medical center and do that.

And so I think that's probably the single

07:00.745 --> 07:05.195

greatest missed opportunity.

But it needs to happen at every single level of

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07:05.195 --> 07:08.045

the organization, right?

It can't just be from the medical center

07:08.045 --> 07:10.915

director, right?

It needs to be supervisors and needs to be

07:10.915 --> 07:16.555

Service chiefs front line supervisors going out  
and seeing how their employees are doing and I

07:16.555 --> 07:21.710

love that piece around rounding right?

So being being seen being visible.

07:21.720 --> 07:28.220

One thing that I know about recognition is that  
it starts with relationships and bonding.

07:28.230 --> 07:31.870

It starts with getting to know your staff and  
being visible,

07:31.870 --> 07:36.530

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being in spaces where your staff are, that is  
like you said,

07:36.530 --> 07:42.330

the very first step of making recognition  
something that is important or at least

07:42.340 --> 07:45.470

acknowledging that it is something that's  
important for your staff,

07:45.480 --> 07:51.405

for the employees just for the facility,  
definitely gonna add onto that a little bit

07:51.405 --> 07:54.175

more to that.

You know, once you do that rounding and once

07:54.175 --> 07:56.285

you get out there and your staff get used to  
seeing you,

07:56.295 --> 07:59.115

you can then take it to a whole nother level,

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right?

07:59.115 --> 08:04.005

And one of the practices that I've done at a number of assignments that I've had is to go

08:04.005 --> 08:07.615

work alongside the employees, the front line employees, right?

08:07.615 --> 08:12.585

So to go in and I call it a day in their shoes where you spend four hours,

08:12.585 --> 08:18.290

you spend five hours working alongside them. I can remember one assignment where and I still,

08:18.290 --> 08:23.710

you can hear you can hear the smile in my voice, but I can remember one assignment where I said,

08:23.710 --> 08:27.450

I'm gonna go work in the kitchen, right?  
And I love the kitchen.

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08:27.450 --> 08:30.780

I was I was raised in the kitchen, my mom when she was alive,

08:30.790 --> 08:33.530

owned the kitchen.

And so I found myself in the kitchen all the

08:33.530 --> 08:38.690

time and I said I'm gonna go work alongside our employees and food and nutrition and making up

08:38.690 --> 08:44.450

meals right for for all of our veterans.

And so I get in there and I'm working uh and my

08:44.450 --> 08:48.060

associate director then comes alongside and he starts working right?

08:48.070 --> 08:53.510

I think that day we probably lost the single most amount of dishes between the,

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08:53.520 --> 08:56.660

you know, the both of us because we cleaned up  
too, right?

08:56.660 --> 09:00.140

But you could see that the employees, right?

They they said,

09:00.140 --> 09:05.090

oh wow, they're recognizing where I'm at there  
recognizing the challenges that we're going

09:05.090 --> 09:08.090

through.

And you get to then get to know your employees,

09:08.100 --> 09:10.190

right?

You get to make that connection.

09:10.190 --> 09:15.870

And so when they do then get married right?

Or they do have Children or they do suffer,

09:15.880 --> 09:19.970

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you know, sorrows or deaths or something.

You can relate to them and really see them on a

09:19.970 --> 09:22.960

different level for sure.

And it starts at the people level,

09:22.970 --> 09:27.900

It moves past just the business case for  
recognition, which we can definitely give a

09:27.900 --> 09:32.870

business case for recognition.

But it also moves into that recognizing people

09:32.880 --> 09:39.357

recognizing employees as people and being able  
to be a part of their lived experiences as they

09:39.357 --> 09:43.237

are, you know, at work every day or engaging  
every single day.

09:43.247 --> 09:47.577

That's amazing.

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Are there any areas where you can say these are

09:47.577 --> 09:50.207

some of the roadblocks?

These are some of the difficulties that I

09:50.207 --> 09:55.607

bumped into when approaching recognition that

I've learned some lessons from that I've been

09:55.607 --> 10:00.537

able to change or enhance my process.

I think there's always lessons throughout

10:00.547 --> 10:04.294

everyone's journey, right?

And I think it's analyzing those missteps or

10:04.294 --> 10:08.084

those missed opportunities.

And I think another good example goes with

10:08.084 --> 10:12.464

rounding and so getting down there and rounding

with our front line employees.

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10:12.474 --> 10:16.534

The missed opportunity, you see there is that  
there's an opportunity for you around with your

10:16.534 --> 10:21.074

front line supervisors as well and your service  
chiefs and you have to make sure that that

10:21.074 --> 10:24.794

frozen middle right.

That that frozen level of supervision of

10:24.794 --> 10:28.274

management also feels that level of attention  
and support.

10:28.274 --> 10:32.881

And I think, you know, that that has been a  
misstep that that I've had in the past where

10:32.881 --> 10:38.041

I've said, you know, we have to focus on that  
group to make sure that they feel supported so

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10:38.041 --> 10:41.461

that when the complaints are the concerns  
raised from the front line,

10:41.471 --> 10:45.471

that group doesn't feel that as a director,  
you're there trying to take care of them,

10:45.481 --> 10:48.391

you're letting that middle management group do  
their job.

10:48.401 --> 10:52.171

And I think that's part of that supporting that  
recognition process as well,

10:52.181 --> 10:56.108

for sure.

And I think like you said, b able to do this,

10:56.108 --> 11:00.728

you know, you started with saying that has to  
happen at every level and so being able to know

11:00.728 --> 11:07.378

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that it's not just a peer to peer or it's not  
just medical center to employee or to direct

11:07.378 --> 11:13.968

report, it happens at all of those levels and  
being able to recognize each of those levels,

11:13.968 --> 11:19.238

just really helps with driving engagement,  
helps with driving satisfaction and allowing

11:19.238 --> 11:22.295

people to be connected to that mission moving  
forward.

11:22.475 --> 11:25.295

I agree.

I mean it's such an important part to have

11:25.305 --> 11:29.775

everyone engaged when everyone is engaged in  
firing on all cylinders,

11:29.785 --> 11:34.975

The organization can do amazing things and I've

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been at organizations that have done that and

11:34.975 --> 11:39.665

it's just simply amazing to walk through the  
hall and and see that that best place to work

11:39.665 --> 11:42.865

happening, right?

To see all of that, because at the end of the

11:42.865 --> 11:46.400

line, you know, it's a veteran who's getting  
absolute best case,

11:46.412 --> 11:50.222

right?

And so your employees are getting that absolute

11:50.222 --> 11:53.352

best support and it's just, it's an amazing  
thing to watch,

11:53.362 --> 11:56.832

definitely.

I will say, I'm often at the center of

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11:56.832 --> 12:01.872

conversations about recognition with leaders.

However, typically the conversation does not

12:01.872 --> 12:07.692

start with the discussion of recognition.

It usually is buried within questions of how to

12:07.692 --> 12:12.300

engage or how to enhance engagement and how to

enhance relationships.

12:12.500 --> 12:17.640

So why do you think it's often not so intuitive

for leaders to begin with thinking about

12:17.640 --> 12:21.330

recognition as they're looking to enhance their

team?

12:21.340 --> 12:27.910

My opinion on this one is that oftentimes we

think of recognition last because it's the last

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12:27.910 --> 12:31.060

thing in that journey, right?

So you work real hard,

12:31.060 --> 12:33.270

whether it's setting up a clinic, you work  
really hard.

12:33.270 --> 12:37.420

You see the veterans, you know, they have good  
outcomes and then you recognize your people

12:37.430 --> 12:40.930

where, you know, can we think of a different  
paradigm and say,

12:40.940 --> 12:45.750

let's recognize our people first, right?

How hard are they working then throughout every

12:45.750 --> 12:50.290

part of that journey, would the outcome be  
different and I would be willing to bet the

12:50.290 --> 12:53.990

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answer is yes.

I think that you would have employees who feel

12:54.000 --> 12:58.460

that they are valued better.

They feel like all parts of the organizations

12:58.460 --> 13:03.440

see them and the hard work that they're doing  
and then they also help deliver that that

13:03.450 --> 13:07.790

essential care to our veterans. Absolutely.

I think you hit the nail on the head right

13:07.790 --> 13:13.950

there with saying that oftentimes recognition  
is looked at as the after effect after

13:13.950 --> 13:17.090

something is done.

We want to recognize that action,

13:17.100 --> 13:22.740

but we missed so many opportunities when we

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only wait for the ending to start to recognize

13:22.750 --> 13:27.640

the entire process of, you know, what people  
are doing when they are coming up with

13:27.640 --> 13:30.630

different processes, what they're doing in the  
middle of processes,

13:30.630 --> 13:34.570

how they're working through each and every day,  
those processes,

13:34.570 --> 13:40.650

it's so important to recognize and to show  
appreciation for each of those steps along the

13:40.650 --> 13:43.950

way.

And I think sorry, the the I want to just kind

13:43.950 --> 13:48.510

of point out what you just said because  
recognizing it throughout the journey,

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13:48.830 --> 13:54.110

think about that for a second, think about, you  
know, when you're walking through your hospital

13:54.120 --> 13:57.630

or you're walking through your workplace and  
you see,

13:57.630 --> 14:01.060

for instance, that housekeeper who's working  
really hard,

14:01.070 --> 14:06.210

how much time does it take out of someone's day  
to say thank you so much for what you're doing,

14:06.220 --> 14:09.050

You're keeping this place clean and I think,  
you know,

14:09.050 --> 14:13.310

that's one of the things that I try and do  
every single day as I'm going throughout the

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14:13.310 --> 14:16.820

organization, you know, today is a very good point, right?

14:16.820 --> 14:20.380

The campus I'm at, you know, I was walking the halls and I see our,

14:20.390 --> 14:24.180

one of our housekeepers names Earl, probably one of the hardest working housekeepers that I

14:24.180 --> 14:27.430

know, and I said Earl, how's your day going? You know,

14:27.430 --> 14:29.020

I hope your day is going great. You know what,

14:29.030 --> 14:32.750

it looks phenomenal.

You are really doing a good job and,

14:32.760 --> 14:37.470

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and just that moment, it took me seconds to do  
that, seconds to stop,

14:37.480 --> 14:41.620

but the impact that it had on that housekeeper  
on Earl,

14:41.630 --> 14:46.810

right, It speaks volumes for him.

And so I think that we can all as leaders take

14:46.810 --> 14:52.250

that moment to really just pause and recognize  
those points throughout the journey.

14:52.260 --> 14:56.510

And that's where you really tend to get those  
best places to work.

14:56.520 --> 14:59.870

You get to see those engaged employees.

Yeah, yeah,

14:59.880 --> 15:03.520

A number of things one shout out to Earl, you

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know, definitely.

15:03.530 --> 15:09.716

Um, but then also it makes me think of some  
different stories or scenarios that I've heard

15:09.716 --> 15:13.746

from different work groups and different  
leaders and for instance,

15:13.746 --> 15:17.386

there's, you know, one workgroup where they  
often will say,

15:17.386 --> 15:22.386

you know, there, there are things that we can  
do to show appreciation to show recognition,

15:22.396 --> 15:27.286

but it has to be this huge thing, right?

It has to be an ice cream social or it has to

15:27.286 --> 15:33.922

be a raffle or you have to give away prizes  
after accomplishing goals and oftentimes when

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15:33.922 --> 15:39.722

they get feedback from employees that say, hey,  
I still need to be recognized leaders are often

15:39.722 --> 15:42.752

in that space of saying, well what, what's  
happening?

15:42.752 --> 15:48.952

Like we're giving prizes were doing socials  
were doing fun things and sometimes employees

15:48.952 --> 15:51.532

will say, well it just feels like I work at a  
fun company,

15:51.920 --> 15:58.000

but they didn't recognize me specifically, they  
didn't recognize me as the person and so they

15:58.000 --> 16:04.150

don't equate that with recognition.

And so the example that you just gave is a way

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16:04.150 --> 16:07.550

for you to say it doesn't have to be a big to  
do, right.

16:07.550 --> 16:11.820

It doesn't have to be, we've got to plan this  
big social three months down the road.

16:11.830 --> 16:17.955

It can be said simply saying, I appreciate the  
work that you're doing and then giving it a

16:17.955 --> 16:21.445

specific example of what you appreciate about  
that work.

16:21.455 --> 16:27.675

And so I absolutely love that example because  
it does show that it doesn't have to be a huge

16:27.675 --> 16:31.255

thing.

It can be, but it doesn't always have to be,

16:31.255 --> 16:33.625

## Working to Recognize the Highs and Lows with Dr. Al Montoya

it can be an everyday occurrence.

16:34.020 --> 16:36.770

Yeah, don't get me wrong, I like a mean ice cream party,

16:36.780 --> 16:39.210

right?

I love to just hand out some scoops of ice

16:39.210 --> 16:43.300

cream or pizza parties or whatever, but some of some of my,

16:43.310 --> 16:48.150

my most fun filled moments are sitting at the entrances, you know,

16:48.150 --> 16:53.010

at 7 30 in the morning, just greeting employees as they're coming in and saying happy whatever

16:53.010 --> 16:56.010

day of the week it is right saying, hey, have a safe day.

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16:56.170 --> 17:00.330

I love music.

So often times you'll find me doing that with

17:00.330 --> 17:05.130

journey turned up with, you know, whatever  
music of the day turned all the way up cranking

17:05.140 --> 17:09.710

and just having a blast with employees because  
they see you on that different level.

17:09.720 --> 17:13.690

It just reminds me of that statement, there can  
be no return without an investment.

17:13.700 --> 17:19.020

And it sounds like, you know, really being able  
to say this recognition process,

17:19.020 --> 17:23.390

this appreciation process is an investment, is  
an investment in.

## Working to Recognize the Highs and Lows with Dr. Al Montoya

17:23.400 --> 17:27.730

And then as leaders are able to see the returns  
on that as employees,

17:27.740 --> 17:30.510

they're able to see the returns on that for  
sure.

17:31.390 --> 17:36.210

So I've used the term, you know, we talked  
about just recognition and appreciation,

17:36.220 --> 17:42.490

kind of, this balance of fair recognition which  
you could quickly determine is the opposite of

17:42.490 --> 17:48.270

that dreaded word favoritism that sometimes  
leaders say if I recognize too much,

17:48.520 --> 17:52.130

it can lead into favoritism and I don't want to  
go into that boat.

17:52.140 --> 17:56.120

## Working to Recognize the Highs and Lows with Dr. Al Montoya

How would you encourage leaders to walk that  
tightrope of fair,

17:56.130 --> 18:01.890

well balanced recognition and appreciation.

Yeah, so I think that's a really good point and

18:01.890 --> 18:05.770

it's actually one where I've had missteps in my  
career on where,

18:05.770 --> 18:09.620

you know, I've rounded in particular units  
before, right?

18:09.620 --> 18:15.720

And constantly three or four times a week been  
in that area and the other one,

18:15.730 --> 18:19.840

the other areas they notice right, they say oh  
we're not his favorite.

18:19.850 --> 18:24.580

You know, he doesn't like us over here.

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And so I think to make that more balance,

18:24.580 --> 18:29.130

you really need to set up a system where you're recognizing everyone,

18:29.140 --> 18:32.490

right, that you're going to the different unit that you're going,

18:32.490 --> 18:35.130

you know, for instance, I break up my week and I say okay,

18:35.130 --> 18:39.020

monday Wednesday friday, I'll be in this area, Tuesday, thursday,

18:39.020 --> 18:45.030

I'll be in this area even though I like to go out and round every single day and to see those

18:45.030 --> 18:48.770

specific units.

I also know that there's other areas that that

## Working to Recognize the Highs and Lows with Dr. Al Montoya

18:48.770 --> 18:52.940

need leadership to be able to go and round and  
to be seen in.

18:53.170 --> 18:57.560

So I think that that is absolutely important.  
I think as you're going,

18:57.560 --> 19:02.810

you know, I I like to have these team  
Connecticut huddles every other week right

19:02.810 --> 19:07.860

where you're going in and you're communicating  
with your employees in a town hall type format.

19:08.030 --> 19:11.240

Uh so I like to actually, in the beginning do  
shout outs,

19:11.250 --> 19:14.110

right?

I like to, to go and say, hey, these here's

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19:14.110 --> 19:19.690

some great things that our employees are doing.

I very purposely put the ones in order from

19:19.690 --> 19:24.710

different areas of the campus is because I want

to make sure that people don't say oh he likes

19:24.710 --> 19:29.280

that group better or you know, that's his

favorite, but you have to be purposeful about

19:29.280 --> 19:32.250

it, you have to make sure you're going out

there and doing that.

19:32.260 --> 19:37.960

Otherwise you will have that look of favoritism.

And then that's a lot more cleanup work that

19:37.960 --> 19:42.260

you have to do on the other side.

Of course, I absolutely love that thought

19:42.260 --> 19:47.750

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around being able to be intentional, be  
intentional about the recognition that you give

19:47.760 --> 19:52.690

have a plan, have a structure, have a strategy  
for the that and it speaks towards this thought

19:52.690 --> 19:56.280

that some people like recognition in different  
ways, right?

19:56.290 --> 20:02.990

Not everyone is going to prefer these same type  
of recognition when it comes

20:02.990 --> 20:07.260

to having those conversations.  
Are there different things that you found to be

20:07.260 --> 20:11.170

helpful with asking direct reports?  
What are some of the ways that you prefer

20:11.180 --> 20:15.300

recognition?

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Yeah, So I think that's uh I mean such such an

20:15.300 --> 20:18.780

amazing topic right here, because there's so  
many nuances to it,

20:18.790 --> 20:21.720

right?

I I think of, you know, we have an employee of

20:21.720 --> 20:25.890

the month program, right?

And it's one of those programs where you don't

20:25.890 --> 20:29.910

think about it until you don't have one, right?

And then employees are like,

20:29.920 --> 20:33.180

well, I can't believe they don't recognize an  
employee of the month.

20:33.310 --> 20:38.030

And so, you know, when you think about those  
items, you really have to meet the employee

## Working to Recognize the Highs and Lows with Dr. Al Montoya

20:38.030 --> 20:42.540

where they're at, and I've had a number of  
times where unintentionally,

20:42.540 --> 20:45.820

I've said, well, if I were going to be the  
employee of the month,

20:45.830 --> 20:49.490

I would want them to call me in right in front  
of my peers and you know,

20:49.490 --> 20:53.750

and to say, well, this is what I was  
recognized as employee of the month?

20:53.750 --> 20:57.210

And, and I was like, wow, that that's what  
would make me feel special,

20:57.220 --> 21:00.250

right?

And so, um, a number of occasions I've,

## Working to Recognize the Highs and Lows with Dr. Al Montoya

21:00.260 --> 21:04.540

I've actually called employees in and you see they're, they're so uncomfortable right there.

21:04.540 --> 21:07.640

They're like, oh my gosh, I don't want to be in the director's office,

21:07.650 --> 21:09.660

I don't want to be called up in front of my peers.

21:09.670 --> 21:14.070

I just want you to come around, give me, you know, slide the certificate onto my pile and

21:14.070 --> 21:16.650

say, hey, you're the employee of the month, right?

21:16.660 --> 21:20.670

And then just, and then just get out of here and not have that public recognition.

21:20.680 --> 21:25.740

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And so I think the key to that is really being  
aware that not everyone is going to want to be

21:25.740 --> 21:30.640

recognized the same way, right?

That everyone has their own level,

21:30.650 --> 21:35.600

that they feel comfortable with and then be  
okay with it very first time that that happened

21:35.600 --> 21:40.050

to me where I had an employee, not, I do not  
want to to be recognized publicly.

21:40.050 --> 21:43.040

I thought, is it me?

Like, what did I do?

21:43.050 --> 21:45.910

Right?

And then I went back to that employee later and

21:45.910 --> 21:49.710

then employee goes, I just actually don't like

## Working to Recognize the Highs and Lows with Dr. Al Montoya

all of that.

21:49.720 --> 21:53.880

And that's what really was the trigger for me  
to really change that path.

21:53.890 --> 21:56.880

And I like that piece of you saying, I went  
back first,

21:56.880 --> 22:00.500

you did a little bit of introspection, You were  
like what's going on?

22:00.500 --> 22:05.700

Is it me did I do something wrong?  
But then you are able to go to that employee

22:05.700 --> 22:10.120

and say like hey tell me a little bit about  
what that felt like for you and being able to

22:10.120 --> 22:15.760

take that feedback and then using it and saying  
wow everyone may not appreciate the same type

## Working to Recognize the Highs and Lows with Dr. Al Montoya

22:15.760 --> 22:19.340

of recognition.

So you know I think that's very key with

22:19.340 --> 22:25.140

thinking about how do we get into those spaces  
where having those conversations around

22:25.140 --> 22:29.100

recognition?

Um And what that looks like for each individual

22:29.100 --> 22:35.850

or for each team or each workgroup definitely.

Well I know um we've used recognition and

22:35.850 --> 22:41.810

appreciation kind of interchangeably.

Um Do you see those two things as the same or

22:41.810 --> 22:46.030

different?

You know I think at first glance I see them to

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22:46.030 --> 22:50.380

be very similar right?

Um Although I think that you know recognition

22:50.380 --> 22:56.260

when I think when I just viscerally think of  
recognition I think of here's a plaque right?

22:56.260 --> 22:58.900

Here's an employee of the month, here's a  
certificate.

22:58.910 --> 23:03.930

Whereas you know appreciation.

I see it as something that you do every single

23:03.930 --> 23:06.650

day.

I think that they're synonymous terms they can

23:06.650 --> 23:10.090

go hand in hand.

The key about that though is that you're doing

23:10.090 --> 23:15.210

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it that you're going out there and appreciating  
people that you're going out and making them

23:15.210 --> 23:17.970

feel like they are the M. V. P.

Right?

23:17.980 --> 23:23.080

I like to watch sports right?

And I like to get engaged in at the end of a C.

23:23.090 --> 23:25.660

Super bowl or at the end of a you know Final  
four.

23:25.670 --> 23:30.110

Who was that? M. V. P. R.

Employees should feel like that every day.

23:30.120 --> 23:35.400

They should feel like when they come in  
wherever organization you're in that they're

23:35.400 --> 23:39.810

being recognized that they're being appreciated.

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So I think that's that's the bigger part of

23:39.810 --> 23:43.250

that statement right?

Is that we should be doing it for sure.

23:43.260 --> 23:47.330

So.

Right well we are getting close to the end of

23:47.340 --> 23:49.400

our time together.

Time flies.

23:49.400 --> 23:54.550

We went through that so quickly but before we  
end I always like to do word association so I

23:54.550 --> 23:58.770

like to give a word and then get your direct  
reaction to that.

23:58.780 --> 24:01.840

And so we're going to do that with a couple of  
words here so brace yourself.

## Working to Recognize the Highs and Lows with Dr. Al Montoya

24:01.850 --> 24:03.160

Get ready for that.

24:05.210 --> 24:08.230

No it'll be it'll be quick, it'll be quick and  
painless.

24:08.240 --> 24:14.010

Alright so the first word is fair recognition.

So fair recognition.

24:14.010 --> 24:18.760

The first thing that comes to mind is an  
equitable process for everyone.

24:18.770 --> 24:23.110

I like that equitable process right?

Not equal but equitable.

24:23.120 --> 24:26.990

So you're bringing to the table what each  
person needs.

24:27.000 --> 24:28.720

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That's great.

That's great.

24:28.730 --> 24:33.280

So the next word is appreciation.

You know the first thing that comes to mind

24:33.280 --> 24:39.520

Shari is love right?

Because I think that um you know in our world

24:39.520 --> 24:43.290

that we have today people want to be

appreciated and I think of,

24:43.290 --> 24:45.930

what does that, what does that feeling mean to  
me?

24:45.940 --> 24:47.750

Right?

What does it make me feel like?

24:47.750 --> 24:54.100

And I think that that feeling is loved, right?

## Working to Recognize the Highs and Lows with Dr. Al Montoya

It's being loved and appreciated and you know,

24:54.100 --> 24:58.330

being a part of a team and that's, that's what  
that word means to me,

24:58.340 --> 25:01.900

being noticed, being noticed, being  
acknowledged.

25:01.900 --> 25:08.810

And just aside with recognition, is that what  
we know is that people like to be recognized,

25:08.810 --> 25:15.000

whether it is just the, the positive you did  
great or even just the like the fair critiquing

25:15.010 --> 25:18.930

around just saying like, hey, maybe we could do  
this process a little bit different.

25:18.940 --> 25:25.420

And so I've and if it's not the plaques or the  
awards, people also like to be

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25:25.420 --> 25:32.180

recognized when you see that they can improve  
when you see that they can do things

25:32.180 --> 25:36.400

better and they feel much more engaged then if  
they're ignored altogether.

25:36.410 --> 25:41.670

And so recognition just, it's so important.  
So I'm so glad that you brought that up because

25:41.670 --> 25:45.810

I think that is the side of recognition that we  
don't talk about it,

25:45.880 --> 25:49.650

right?

But it's the side that has the biggest impact

25:49.660 --> 25:54.150

had leaders as I was progressing through my  
career, not stopped and said,

## Working to Recognize the Highs and Lows with Dr. Al Montoya

25:54.160 --> 25:58.380

al this is what that does or this is how the  
action that you,

25:58.390 --> 26:02.560

that you just did makes people feel on the  
other end.

26:02.560 --> 26:06.290

I don't think that I would be where I'm at and  
that's a process that never stops,

26:06.570 --> 26:09.280

right?

I I actually have that conversation with with

26:09.280 --> 26:15.970

my direct reports and employees to say if I do  
something, if you catch me doing something that

26:15.970 --> 26:19.140

you think I can do better at.

I want you to tell me,

26:19.150 --> 26:22.620

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I want you to stop and say, hey, time out.

This is where we,

26:22.640 --> 26:25.370

you know, this is what you just said and how  
you can make it better,

26:25.380 --> 26:28.620

right?

And I love that part of the recognition,

26:28.640 --> 26:29.950

right?

It goes both ways.

26:29.960 --> 26:36.330

But either way you go, either way you slice it,  
it's being able to see the person to

26:36.330 --> 26:42.700

acknowledge the person, um, and to acknowledge  
what they mean to the team and how their

26:42.700 --> 26:47.880

actions impact the team. Absolutely.

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The last word is audacity to fail.

26:47.890 --> 26:52.620

The audacity to fail.

I think to me that has such a positive

26:52.620 --> 26:59.610

connotation and I think to me it's positivity

because we should be doing things and

26:59.610 --> 27:04.450

having failures because at the end of that we

learn from that right?

27:04.450 --> 27:09.280

You learn how to be better.

You know, at first I think failures feel

27:09.280 --> 27:12.580

uncomfortable, right?

When we think of failures,

27:12.590 --> 27:16.770

it's such a negative thought in our mind, right?

Like I don't want to fail.

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27:16.780 --> 27:20.130

I want that trophy right at the end I want that  
medal.

27:20.140 --> 27:22.860

I want to be the best.  
But if you don't fail,

27:22.870 --> 27:27.360

you don't get better.  
And so that's that it's such such an amazing

27:27.360 --> 27:34.150

process that at the end you come out of the  
machine a much better person,

27:34.160 --> 27:36.520

right?  
So that's, I mean that's that's where I really

27:36.520 --> 27:38.520

think of it.  
It's that process, right?

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27:38.520 --> 27:44.540

It's that paradox of through failure, you  
become better through failure through missteps,

27:44.540 --> 27:48.520

you learn.

Yes, that's exactly what audacity to fail is

27:48.530 --> 27:49.660

all about.

27:49.890 --> 27:53.070

So thanks so much al for joining today's  
episode.

27:53.070 --> 27:55.360

This was awesome.

I had such a good time.

27:55.370 --> 27:58.210

I had a blast.

I thought that the words at the end,

27:58.210 --> 28:03.460

I was getting a little nervous, but you did

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such a painless way that I knew I could fail a

28:03.470 --> 28:08.150

little bit.

So I absolutely had a blast, you know,

28:08.150 --> 28:13.890

thank you so much for having me on of course.

Well thank you so much and continue to do the

28:13.890 --> 28:16.220

amazing work that you're doing out there in

Connecticut.

28:16.230 --> 28:18.120

Thank you so much and keep up the good work.

28:18.690 --> 28:24.080

So we've come to the end of another great

episode of the Audacity to fail podcast.

28:24.090 --> 28:28.640

Thank you for tuning in to learn how missteps

can lead to growth and success.

## Working to Recognize the Highs and Lows with Dr. Al Montoya

28:28.650 --> 28:31.190

Be sure to check out the key lessons in the  
show notes,

28:31.190 --> 28:36.360

for a refresher to request services from the  
National Center for Organization Development.

28:36.370 --> 28:39.040

Check out our website.

Also linked in the show notes.

28:39.050 --> 28:44.190

Remember if you missed the target 100 times,  
you have not failed instead,

28:44.200 --> 28:50.360

you've simply found 100 strategies that did not  
work, be well and continue to fail forward

28:50.370 --> 28:52.330

until next time.

Thank you