

Women in Business and Technology

Transcript of Episode 029 - Achieving clarity through coaching with Tenshey CEO
Maggie Chan Jones

Guests: Maggie Chan Jones

Summary: Sonia returns from the Forbes Under 30 Summit in Amsterdam. Our hosts chat with Microsoft summer interns before they head back to school. Colleen interviews Tenshey founder and CEO Maggie Chan Jones about advancing gender diversity in the workplace through coaching programs. The show wraps with a conversation about information sharing across cultural boundaries.

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MAGGIE CHAN JONES (VOICEOVER): What coaching can allow us to do is to have clarity. When we have clarity on our values and how we connect with the organization we work for or company that we're trying to build, that really speaks volumes into connecting your passion as well.

(Microsoft Ignite advertisement.)

VOICEOVER: You are listening to the *Women in Business and Technology Podcast* from Microsoft. In each episode, you will hear from women in amazing technology and business roles as well as male allies who are helping make the industry more inclusive and bringing you tips on how to build a successful career in a supportive community. Welcome to *Women in Business and Technology*. (Music.)

SONIA DARA: Welcome to Episode 29 of *Women in Business and Technology*, I'm Sonia Dara.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And I'm Colleen O'Brien.

SONIA DARA: Summer is quickly coming to an end here in the Pacific Northwest. We've had a few of those fall-feeling rain showers, unfortunately. But we wanted to close out the season with something that is so quintessentially summer -- interns!

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Interns! (Laughter.)

SONIA DARA: In this episode's Community Connect segment, we'll be hearing from some amazing Microsoft interns who worked on very impressive projects this summer.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And then well we'll jump into an amazing conversation that I had with Maggie Chan Jones. Maggie is the former chief marketing officer of SAP, which landed her on the Forbes list of the 50 Most Influential CMOs. And now she's diving into entrepreneurship and her commitment to coaching as the founder and CEO of Tenshey, be sure to stay tuned for that.

SONIA DARA: Yes. And, finally, we'll end with our Cutting Edge segment, with a look at some research by Burcu Subasi, which suggests that people share more information with colleagues of similar cultural backgrounds.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: But before we jump in, Sonia, I know that you have been working pretty globally over the past several weeks. Can you share any highlights from the road?

SONIA DARA: Yeah. I was pretty lucky, where I got a chance to go to Amsterdam for a week where Forbes Under 30 was having their European summit, and Microsoft was a sponsor -- specifically, Microsoft 365.

So, we got to show them some of our latest technology and had Surface Go there, and all I can say is I feel very confident for the future because these are some of the most talented and impressive young entrepreneurs ever, and so I'm very excited to see what they all come out with.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Excellent. Anyone in particular who you were very impressed by?

SONIA DARA: There was one gentleman who's working on sustainable fish farming investments. So, he was actually working at a VC firm, and so he was trying to find areas where they can find sustainable protein.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: It sounds like some very big ideas and some very bold networking in Amsterdam.

SONIA DARA: Exactly. (Music.)

VOICEOVER: Community Connect, get involved, and stay connected.

SONIA DARA: Microsoft University internships are open to students around the globe in all job families -- engineering, UX design, finance, marketing, sales, you name it. Opportunities are open to students in bachelor's, master's, MBA, and PhD programs. There's even a summer program for high school students.

Before the Microsoft Summer Interns headed back to school, Colleen and I caught up with a few of them at a lunchtime fireside chat with Microsoft Chief People Officer and former guest Kathleen Hogan, as well as Microsoft's Chief Marketing Officer, Chris

Capossela. The interns shared some of their highlights from the summer, as well as what they had learned working on real projects that matter to our business.

Mitchell Johns is a program management intern with the Microsoft Stream team. He explained that collaborate was critical to complete his projects.

MITCHELL JOHNS: Yeah, so much of my work has been, you know, I've been able to work on like three or four kind of different sub projects within my team and work with my 20, 25 different people around the team and see what marketing people are doing around me, legal people, developers, all different types of roles around Microsoft and explore kind of the different corners of the company.

SONIA DARA: Elena Woo-Yan (ph.) is a program management intern on the Cortana team. Customer obsession is a key take-away from her summer project work.

ELENA WOO-YAN: I'd say one of the main things that I've learned this summer that I'll really carry forward with me, regardless of where I end up, is just really empathizing with the customer and their needs, so putting yourself in their shoes, thinking about their perspective, their pain points, and what their number-one priorities are. That's something that my mentor and manager have really driven home this summer as I designed my spec and thought about what I'd want my Cortana feature to look like. I think that's just really helped me develop deeper insights that I wouldn't necessarily have thought about otherwise.

SONIA DARA: Marcus Heyer (ph.) is a data science intern on the Azure compute team. With only startup experience to his name prior to this job, Marcus shared how working at a big company offered the important for impact at a different altitude.

MARCUS HEYER: The more kind of seeing, all right, how does it work to like leverage what other people have already done in the space and then build on top of like work that's already been done before me? And that's a big take-away from the summer that I've gotten.

SONIA DARA: For more information about Microsoft internships, including first-hand accounts of the intern experience, visit careers.microsoft.com.

And now, let's get on with the interview.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: I am really excited to welcome to the studio the founder and CEO of Tenshey, Maggie Chan Jones. Maggie, welcome to the show.

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: Thank you so much, Colleen.

SONIA DARA: Can you tell our listeners a little bit more about Tenshey and what your day-to-day looks like as the CEO of the organization?

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: Yeah, absolutely. Tenshey, our mission is to advance gender diversity in the workplace through executive coaching. So, our focus is really about helping leaders to grow through the coaching environment and, you know, when you talk about day to day, I can tell you that there's really no same day for a founder and CEO of a startup. I could be spending the morning with the development team figuring out what we need to do from a platform perspective, or talking to my communications manager about what we need to do from a content perspective, or talking to my coaches and clients.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And is there an ideal customer or client of Tenshey? What does that person look like?

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: Yeah, you know, I would say they are either female leaders who are in manager, director-level, mid-career level, all the way to the C suite, and also leadership teams as well that are cross-gender because what we want to do, and which is really a passion of mine, is how can I help the next generation leaders to grow? And how do we create an inclusive environment in the workplace?

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: I am all for that mission. And can you tell us a little bit more about the meaning of Tenshey? Is there a story there?

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: Yeah. You know, when I decided to found Tenshey, I was, of course, thinking through a list of different names, list of different words that connect to the business. And I just kind of stumbled across the word "Tenshey," which actually spelled differently is T-E-N-S-H-I, and that stands for "angels" in Japanese and also in Chinese as well. So, I decided to change it to "Tenshey," spelled as T-E-N-S-H-E-Y with the "she" in it. So, I really believe in -- we all need our angels by our side, so this is a great name for the business and for my mission.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Now, Tenshey coaching programs are built on this concept of a career north star. Will you speak to that idea of a career north star and how to go about reaching it?

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: Yeah. I will tell you a little bit of a story. That actually happened when I was still at Microsoft. It was about two years into my journey at Microsoft in 2006/2007, and I was ready for my next role within the company. So, I was doing a lot of interviews of different internal jobs, and I remember my VP came to me and said, "Maggie, so, before you go to take on your next role, do you really know what your career north star is?" And at that point, I was looking at him, I'm like, "What are you talking about?" And he was like, "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

And that really connected with me. So, I ended up -- actually spent a day, went home, did a PowerPoint slide, of course, and I went back to him and showed him that, you know what? One day, I want to be -- and, you know, at that time, it wasn't even called a CMO, but it was like I want to be a head of marketing for an organization. And then it really helped me to start crystallizing what I wanted to do long term for my career, and therefore what are the competencies that I have to build along the way?

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: That's great. Not thinking about your immediate next job, but where you want to be down the line, and then building your career path, your journey based on that end goal.

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: Exactly. And also, I would say, you know, many times when I have people coming to me for career development advice, I always say, "Don't just think about your next job, think about your next-next job." Because when you think about your next-next job or your career north star, then it kind of helps you to figure out what are the competencies? What are the skill sets that you need to build? And that is a lot more useful than jumping from one thing to another.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Right. And once you have this career north star in focus, it's likely clearer that there's a specific skill set to get there, but are there any other strategies that you employ or that you are teaching through the coaching method on how to get there?

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: Absolutely. One thing about coaching, it's very much about discovering yourself and discovering your superpowers. And I personally started having my executive coach when I was still at Microsoft when I became a director in marketing in the U.S. subsidiary. And that was so helpful to me in mapping out where I was in my career and where I want to be. And, therefore, how the coach was really helping me is coaching the gap that I need to build in order for me to realize my potential.

So, coaching, I would say, is also different from mentoring and sponsoring. I absolutely believe that any leaders would need all three of them. Mentors are the ones that, you know, they have been there and done that and they have the competencies of things that you want to learn from.

For example, when I was a first-time manager or I really looked to the people who I see as great people managers as my mentors, and I learned from them on what to do and what not to do. And sponsors are the ones that can help you open doors for you to get into the next opportunity, whether it is a stretch project or a completely different role. And coaches are the ones that are really your confidante in helping you to build your skill set and helping you to map out where you want to be so that you know what that point A to point B needs to look like.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Yeah. I think throughout my career experience, there's been an emphasis on identifying mentors. Only recently has this conversation about sponsors who will help you get to the next level come into play. But it sounds like coaches really have been a really core component to your success, and something that you believe in. And the strategy really breaks down to building up this support system of all of those types of people to help you get to where you're trying to go.

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: Exactly. And it is also very important not only thinking about your support system at work, but what is your support system in your personal life? Whether it's your friends, your family. All of those come into play when you are mapping out your career as well.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And mapping your career is likely very influenced by your identity. And I think with Tenshey, you are very focused on promoting gender diversity in the workplace. What motivated this focus, and are there any anecdotes that really prompted you to look at the business world through a gender-specific lens?

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: Sure. When I was at Microsoft, and subsequently at Level 3 and SAP, for every single company that I was part of, I was always one of the sponsors or executive sponsor for diversity and inclusion because this is really important to me as an immigrant myself, also as an Asian American, I really believe in a diverse environment, in a diverse team, and we've seen studies after studies that show that when a team, especially when a leadership team has diversity, then the results will be better.

In fact, I believe there's a study that says that when a leadership team or C-suite have 30 percent women or more, thought their net profit actually would go up by an average of six points.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Wow.

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: So, it is not just because you want to have a diverse team, it's because it really helps drive better business results. So, that has really been ingrained with me, and for every one of my leadership team, I always strive for getting that diverse perspective. It's not only about gender, it's not just about race, but diversity of thoughts, diversity of experiences, and really have those type of very healthy debates in the leadership team to drive to better outcomes.

So, because of that, and I also have a lot of people coming up to me in different events when I was doing a talk or speaking, and people always said, "Wow, you know, Maggie, you have such an amazing career. You know, what are you doing to help the next generation?" And so this is one of the ways that I feel like I can really pay it forward and I always have a lot of fun doing it as well.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Prior to founding Tenshey, you were the global chief marketing officer of SAP, one of the world's largest enterprise software vendors. And you were the first woman in that role. You led a team of 1300 marketers and drove double-digit growth in marketing contribution during that time. And because of that work, you were named one of the world's 50 most influential CMOs by Forbes in 2017.

With those accomplishments under your belt, perhaps there was this expectation that you would continue to pursue even larger CMO roles with more direct reports, something along those lines. How did you build the conviction and the confidence to contradict that expectation, and instead, dive into entrepreneurship?

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: Yeah. I would say, first of all, I have some friends that, after very successful careers, they decided to take a sabbatical. And I remember talking to one of my friends a few years ago. And she said, "Oh, I'm going to take a summer off before I decide what I want to do in my next role." And she was spending the summer with her girls. And I was just thinking, "Wow, I wish I can do that." Because my career has been from one job to another to another. And I think a lot of people can relate to it is you rarely even have a two-week vacation, let alone having a sabbatical and taking a break for a few months.

So, that was really top of mind for me that after 20 years in tech, I really wanted to take a break. And doing something that I really haven't gotten the chance to do, such as learning a new sport. I actually, last summer, I learned how to wake surf.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Wow.

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: For those who may not know, wake surfing is actually surfing behind a boat. We have a lake house in Connecticut, so I decided I wanted to learn that. So at least, now, I can stand on a surfboard for at least a few minutes now.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Congratulations, that's really fun.

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: Thank you. It is really, really fun. And I wanted to, just because of my type-A personality, even when I was on break, I still need my checklist because, otherwise, I feel like I'm not relaxed enough.

So, I also wrote down a list of people, my friends and family, that I didn't really get a chance to spend a lot of time with. So, I just did that and I went to Hawaii to surprise my uncle for his 60th birthday. I mean, there wasn't a moment that I was like, "Wow, you know, I wish I would spend more time to cultivate my personal relationships where I was working." So, that contributed a little bit on my thinking.

But more importantly is I thought about my internal compass. And what I mean by that, I think about there are three different pillars: The pillar of professional aspiration, the pillar of financial goals, and then the third one is personal values.

In my 20s, I was very much focusing on my professional career goals and I spent the majority of my time at work and also in my 30s as well. But when I was getting into my 30s, I was starting to think more about, okay, how do I get to financial independence? And that was when I hired my financial advisor to start mapping out financial goals. And now where I'm at now is I really wanted to focus on making an impact -- making an impact in an area that I'm super passionate about.

So, developing the next-generation leaders, especially women, is the area that I wanted to do. So, now I don't really have any more career aspirations that I want to do X, Y, and Z, and that gave me the freedom to basically have a blank sheet of paper and say, "Okay, anything that I can dream of, then I can just go do."

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: In addition to the mission of your company, you're supporting female entrepreneurs as a newly minted angel investor. How did you decide to wear that cap as well?

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: You know, between being an angel investor and an entrepreneur, I think I can call myself an "accidental angel investor" and an "accidental entrepreneur" as well. So, let's go through the angel investor, as you said.

I just published a blog on this topic on LinkedIn today. And it's kind of funny, Colleen. I just, out of the blue, I was on a business trip in Asia, and I got a call from one of my teammates from my Microsoft days two years ago. And her name is Joanna Bixell (ph.) And Joanna said, "Hey, Maggie, after leaving Microsoft and subsequently the Gates Foundation, I really built a passion to help women in Africa because they don't even have the basic feminine products or healthcare products that they have access to. And this is an area that I think I can really make an impact. So, therefore, I, myself, and my family are moving to Africa. Would you be an angel investor?"

And that really got me thinking because I never really -- having spent my entire career in corporate, even though we work with startups, but it never occurred to me that as a corporate executive, I can also make a personal impact to someone's startup by being an angel investor.

So, I started to look into what does it take to be an angel investor? I talked to her attorney as well. And then that was my first angel investment.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: The blog that you published was incredibly informative about the current rates at which women are getting funded by venture capital, and I love that you have figured out this work-around to make sure that women entrepreneurs are very

successfully funded. And I also really appreciated that you took an inclusive approach in writing this blog. Angel investment is not a scenario that everyone can financially engage in, but I think one of the last points in your blog is you can also just be a customer of female-founded businesses and just be intentional about how you're spending your dollars.

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: Exactly. And, you know, some people may say, "Well, you know, I don't necessarily have a gender lens," but you do because when you look at so many startups that are funded are primarily started by men, you have a choice to make. And you can be more balanced in the way you spend your money.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Right. So, I want to point out that you've called yourself an accidental angel investor and an accidental entrepreneur. After that, taking a step back, taking that sabbatical to be very thoughtful about your next move, you moved into entrepreneurship. What was that transition like? And can you describe any differences between the corporate experience you had and what being an entrepreneur is like in your day to day?

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: Being an entrepreneur, I think in many ways because of my experience as a corporate executive, I can still very much leverage the same skill set that I have from leadership perspective, from collaboration and making business decisions. At the same time, I also see a very big difference when it comes to how you manage your day-to-day activities.

As a corporate executive, I would say you have so many things that are coming at you. You are constantly doing prioritization and reprioritization. We, as a startup founder, especially early-stage startup like Tenshey, we are very much about outreach. So, I spend a lot more time doing personal outreach to people in my network, to people that I have just met in the new startup ecosystem.

So, that is, to me, is the big difference. But I personally love that I'm learning something new every single day.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Absolutely. And you know, in addition to the first-hand experience, I know that you graduate with a bachelor's in business management, and of course you've mentioned that coaching experience that you had access to at Microsoft. I'd love to dive more deeply into that coaching experience and how you feel like it changed the trajectory of your career.

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: Yes, absolutely. So, when I started getting coaching from my coach, Mary, back in 2011, you know, I was still very much thinking -- I would consider myself at the mid-career level. And that was a time for me to really think through, you know, knowing my north star is to become a CMO one day. What were the competencies that I already have? And what were the competencies that I still need to

build? And how do I really map out not only from a career perspective, but personal perspective, personal life perspective, how do I balance the two?

So, those are the pieces that I'm very much focusing on spending the time with my coach, and more importantly, it's the leadership acceleration. Every single time when I talked to my coach, it was always about connections with -- from a leadership topic perspective, from a team perspective, and I also spent time to ensure we do specific assessments. Whether they were assessments to get to know my personality and also my own super powers better, to more around team dynamics.

So, my coach also helped me to facilitate some leadership workshops as well. So, not only did I work with my coach when I was at Microsoft, I continued to work with my coach, the same coach, when I went to Level 3 and also when I went to SAP and even now with Tenshey. She and I are still very much connected, and in fact, she is also one of the advisors on our advisory board as well.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: That's amazing. You know, I'm actually going through the process of getting certified as a leadership coach, myself.

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: Congratulations.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Thank you very much. As part of that process, we do a lot of peer-to-peer coaching. And I can very viscerally feel how my self-awareness is growing, how I can get clearer over the course of an hour talking about my values and my ambitions, how the clarity and focus just really helps me get through the day and make sure that the things that I'm doing are really aligning to those ambitions.

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: And, Colleen, you're absolutely right because what coaching can allow us to do is to have clarity. When we have clarity on our values and how we connect with the organization we work for or company that we're trying to build, that really speaks volumes into connecting your passion as well. And that is very important, which is why, for me, when I think about Tenshey, it's very much about connecting the right coach for the right person because I believe in the chemistry, the trust is the most important element in that relationship, so we spend a lot of time working with leaders and our coaches on cultivating that trust.

And on top of that is the leadership dynamic. It's never about just one person. Anytime when you have a group of people working together, not to mention when you're in a big organization, then you have many more organizations and collaborations across different functions. It's very important for us to get the understanding of where the other party is coming from, how do you really drive that win-win situation?

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Yes, I agree wholeheartedly. Connecting with a coach is incredibly important, that chemistry is critical, that mutual respect, that confidentiality, and it is so important to get that match.

Maggie, your time at Microsoft was incredibly busy, in addition to this coaching experience that you got, you were also pursuing your executive MBA at Cornell's Johnson Graduate School of Management. How did you solicit support from your management at the time to make that investment? It may have pulled you away from work at a certain time every day, how did you manage that?

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: To make things a little bit even more difficult, I was actually in transition into a different role within Microsoft when I was about to go into the Johnson School program.

SONIA DARA: You enjoy a good challenge, don't you?

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: I do. And I always do. So, what I did was when I was interviewing for a new role at that time, I already knew I was accepted to the Cornell Johnson program. So, I actually used that opportunity to talk to my potential manager. At that point, I was debating between two jobs within Microsoft. And I remember having the conversation with Gretchen O'Hara, who is still an executive at Microsoft, and it was one of the early days, the SaaS-based cloud-computing role in marketing, and within the Worldwide Partner Group at that time.

And I remember saying to her, "Wow, you know, this is an amazing opportunity." And it was early days in the cloud, so I figured this job is going to be so hard that I wasn't going to be able to do a great job in it while doing the executive MBA program.

So, initially, I said no, I didn't want to take the job because I felt like I wasn't going to be successful in it. It was Gretchen who told me that, "You know what, Maggie? Knowing you, I know you're going to do great in the role, and I know that you're going to do great in your school as well. And I will work with you."

And I think getting that transparency with your manager and also getting the support from them is so important. I mean, from Gretchen to Marie Huvey (ph.) at the time to Allison Watson at the time, I mean, everyone was so supportive of me of doing both the -- working full time in a very new role, and also going through an executive MBA program.

Now, I would say the hardest part was actually the pressure that I put on myself, because as a type-A person, I was really struggling with, okay, how do I get an A-plus in the job and also get an A-plus at school? And I was taking a course -- and I forgot the exact name, but basically is statistics.

And I was so sure I was going to fail that class. And in the program, you cannot fail any classes or you will not graduate. So, I was really debating, "Gosh, do I need to quit my job so that I could continue my program?"

But what it boiled down to was I needed to be okay with myself during that 18 months that maybe I'll just get a B or B-minus in both my job and my study, because you only have 24 hours a day, so it's really about reprioritization of not only the work, but also your own expectation during that time.

And I would say during that 18 months, that was the best training I could get when it comes to prioritization as well because between homework, classes, and my day job, like, you're constantly trying to figure it out down to every hour, what were you going to do? Not to mention family time as well.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Absolutely. And I'll just echo some of your sentiments. I also went through an 18-month program at the University of Washington at the Foster School of Business. And there was no way that I could have done that without the support of my management. You can't sneak around and go to school right after work, you really need your manager to know what's going on and to be able to ask for that support or that flex time when you need it.

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: Absolutely. And I think, Colleen, I'm sure you and I did the same thing. What I love about those type of programs is that you don't wait one or two years after you finish school to apply that you've learned into your day job. You basically, you know, went to classes, you learned the new tools, and then you apply it the next day. And that's what I love about that type of program.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: I agree. I am such a proponent of executive programs because applied learning is how things really cement for me. And I didn't become valuable after I got my MBA, after I graduated. Slowly, over time, I was bringing more into the workforce, like into my day-to-day job. So, yes, I agree, 100 percent.

You know, your belief in mentorship and coaching has manifested not only in your venture, in your company, but in your philanthropic life as well. You are a startup founder mentor with the Founder Institute, the world's premier idea-stage accelerator and startup launch program. And you're a member of the board of directors at your alma mater, which we just spoke about, the Cornell Johnson Graduate School of Management. How did you decide which organizations you could best serve? And what advice do you have for others who are looking to pay it forward?

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: Yeah. I would say this is really hard, Colleen, because I get asked a lot on different type of roles or advisory type of roles. And many of them sound really, really good. And they all have really great causes. So, that is definitely -- one thing for me is learning to say no sometimes. And that has always been the hardest

part, but for me is at the end of the day, it's really about the people. And also, what are the programs that really connect with you personally and that is really how I decide to choose which programs I want to be part of and which ones maybe not now, and possibility for sometime in the future.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And, you know, some of the work that you referenced earlier, that process of taking a step back, of figuring out what your true purpose is, where you can have the most impact, it sounds like that's really foundational and can be applied not only to how you're spending your working hours, but which of those philanthropic organizations also aligned to whatever you are trying to do in your life.

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: Absolutely. And, you know, one of the very easy ways to kind of get a sense on whether it is something that you want to do or you gravitate towards it is when you talk about the program or a specific area of interest, your friends or your colleagues can tell when you're talking about a certain topic, if you light up, then usually that means this is something that you're excited about. And I would say go towards those type of things.

When you have come across areas that you feel like it's really taking energy away from you, and that may be a good time to take a pause and think about whether that is something that is still within your interest.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: You know, part of the coaching program that I'm in right now is really about being aware of that energy. And in our coaching sessions, coaches respond to the things that light you up or the things that change even the way your body is held in the moment. Our energy around different purposes, different opportunities is really reflective, and I appreciate that I've been really tuning into things that are giving me energy right now.

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: That is so wonderful. And I think that is also why creating a coaching culture is great for organizations when you have leaders who can spot those energy. I mean, just think about how much you can potentially help the talent to grow. One of the things that I love being a leader is that I see the potential in people before they see it in themselves. So, I love it when I push them to do something that they didn't think was possible, and then they came back and say, "Oh, my gosh, I couldn't believe I was able to achieve X, Y, and Z." And the smile that you can see on their faces, I mean, that is priceless.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Yes. And, you know, I would be remiss if we didn't get your advice here for our listeners who are thinking about hiring an executive coach. What advice do you have to guide that process?

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: Well, first of all, I would say definitely check out [tenshey.com](https://www.tenshey.com), and we share a little bit of advice on what to think about when you are thinking about

an executive coaching. And at the same time, I think it's really about what do you want to accomplish? What do you want to work on? People usually have a moment, whether it is an inflection point in your career or in your life, or you are getting a new role and you're just trying to keep pace with your career growth. And I think those are great moments to just kind of pause for a second and say, "Can I get any support that will really help me grow?"

And, you know, Colleen, one of the many reasons why I'm so passionate about what we do at Tenshey is that I truly believe that all of us can -- especially women in tech -- we can get all the support that we can get. And we absolutely should take advantage of different opportunities that help us develop, whether it is mentorship or sponsorship and coaching, get all the support that you can get, because the path is not easy, but absolutely doable.

There are so many women and men, I would say, that were there to support us, to grow as well, so definitely take advantage of that.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Yes. I 100 percent agree. Those are such great nuggets of wisdom. In addition to tenshey.com, Maggie, where can our listeners find you on the Internet?

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: You can definitely find me on LinkedIn or on Twitter @maggieCJ.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Excellent. Maggie, thank you so much for joining us today. I appreciate all of the wisdom that you were able to dispense. Thank you for being on the show.

MAGGIE CHAN JONES: Thank you so much, Colleen. (Music.)

VOICEOVER: Cutting Edge, our take on stories in the business and technology world.

SONIA DARA: In this Cutting Edge segment, we're going to take a look at research by Burcu Subasi that was published in *Harvard Business Review* on September 5th under the title *People Share More Information with Colleagues of Similar Cultural Backgrounds*.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Subasi points out that information sharing is a problem in most companies, but her research shows that it's even more of a problem on multicultural teams.

According to Subasi, quote, "The more cultural distance employees perceive, the more the problem is exacerbated."

SONIA DARA: In collaboration with Dr. Wendy van Ginkel and Professor Daan van Knippenberg, Subasi found that people tend to trust colleagues whose cultural backgrounds are similar to their own. The result: Information tends to polarize around

members of the majority nationality group and minorities who share cultural similarities with the majority.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: The experiment by these researchers split 180 participants into teams of three, which included two Dutch team members and a German or Chinese third team member.

To accomplish the exercise, all participants needed to receive vital pieces of information. German and Dutch participants performed equally well, but Chinese participants received less information and performed worse.

SONIA DARA: Thankfully, Subasi shared some strategies from managers to prevent cultural biases from infiltrating their teams. So, number one, oversee and observe groups. According to the article, the social pressure of being watched forces employees to look beyond the cultural differences of their colleagues and, instead, rely on an individual's merit. Subasi flagged that open-plan offices make this monitoring easier.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Number two, value knowledge sharing and diversity. This is a two-pronged approach, encouraging knowledge sharing through asking questions and giving feedback and increasing the diversity of teams. In other words, getting more culturally diverse people working to solve problems together.

A quote here that I thought reinforced this: The more cultural differences your team members have, the more likely they are to perceive themselves as one unit.

SONIA DARA: And, lastly, the third strategy is to help your team get to know each other. Promote your employees' areas of expertise. (Music.)

Well, listeners, summer is wrapping up and our interns are heading out. But I'm glad we got a chance to talk to them before they head back to school.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: I agree. And I am still buzzing from my conversation with Maggie Chan Jones. For those of you who are heading to Grace Hopper later this month in Houston, Texas, please keep an eye out for Maggie's Senior Women's Program Keynote, I'm sure it's going to be great.

SONIA DARA: Meanwhile, Colleen and I will actually be heading to Orlando, Florida, for Microsoft Ignite, our conference for IT implementers and decision-makers, data professionals, and enterprise developers. If you're on site, especially for the diversity and tech pre-day on Sunday, September 23rd, let us know. Our Twitter handles are @sonia_dara and @colleenobrien. We will be there, and we're excited to meet you.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And thank you, again, for tuning into another episode. Please remember to rate, review, and share our show on Apple Podcasts or wherever fine podcasts can be found.

SONIA DARA: If you have any feedback or questions, you can e-mail us at wibt@microsoft.com, or tweet us @microsoftwomen.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Your mission for this episode, if you choose to accept it, is to learn more about TEALS, an acronym for Technology Education and Literacy in Schools.

TEALS is a program supported by Microsoft Philanthropies that helps high schools throughout the U.S. build and grow sustainable computer science programs.

This fall, my alma mater, Woburn Memorial High School --

SONIA DARA: Woburn! (Laughter.)

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: -- is officially offering computer science education thanks to TEALS. And it all started when I flagged the amazing program to my high school guidance counselor, Rosemary Donovan.

SONIA DARA: Shout out. (Laughter.)

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Who's committed to making Woburn High great. If you want to figure out how to get a computer science program up and running at your school, visit tealsk12.org to learn more. (Music.)

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