



Episode #: 10 **Title: Best Practices in Inclusion**

Guest: Debra Ruh

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Hello, this is Debra Ruh, and you're listening to Human Potential at Work. Thank you for tuning in today. Today, I'd like to spend a little bit of time talking about my experiences at the United Nations last week. There was a young woman that was representing Japan, that is a person with a disability and one of the most eloquent speakers that I've ever heard. Her speech about learning what needed to be done from people in the Philippines and bringing it back to Japan, right before the typhoon hit, and then really having to test it out during the cleanup of the typhoon, it was a really beautiful story. And I'm also going to invite her to come and speak on the program.

I met people from Morocco. I met a team from Morocco that was talking about a single mother who has a son with autism, and she wants to create an employment program and Morocco then employs people with autism. I met people from Kenya. I met so many people from different countries, I can't even remember them all. But it was just amazing.

And to see the work that the United Nations is doing to help further these conversations, the work of the International Labor Organization and the work of the United Nations Global Compact are just two examples of work that's being done. And they're creating programs, training programs and workshops and all kind of different things, to really help frame out disability so that we all can sort of have a level playing field. There's still a lot of work that will have to be done. We still have to understand how to accommodate people better, how to make sure that as an employer we're ready to accommodate a person during an interview, that we understand what accommodations look like, that we know how to retain a person once they acquire a disability in their working force. I mean, there's still a lot of work to do.

I also had a lot of conversations about my book that launched last week, Tapping Into Hidden Human Capital, and really focusing on what are we learning from the corporations that are actually including people with disabilities, all through the world. It's so interesting because there are certainly a few corporations that stand out as best practices. TD Bank out of Canada, which has locations in other parts of the world, they are an amazing best practice of inclusion and diversity and accessibility for their employees and their customers. A T&T is another wonderful example, coming out of the United States. They did a press release a few weeks ago, where they committed to employing 25 percent of their workforce would be persons with disabilities. 25 percent. That's a good reason to switch to AT&T, if you're with another provider.

HUMAN POTENTIAL AT WORK Host - Debra Ruh

And just so many other wonderful examples. There was talk about some of the programs that people with autism are getting employed in, in the STEM. For example, with SAP, talked about Vodafone coming out of Spain and Europe. There's just a lot of very, very interesting things happening all over the world.

I remember being so nervous about speaking at the first session. I thought, oh no, these people, they understand these laws and legislation so much better than I do. I really want to make a good impression. I finally thought, just calm down, Debra, just calm down and speak from your heart and speak about what you know. When you wrote this book, it took two years to write this book, Tapping Into Hidden Human Capital, but you documented many corporate journeys all over the world. Talk about those.

And so, as different countries asked me questions, and it was very interesting how they did it, it was my first time doing this. So they would say, Mr. Chair, because our chair was a gentleman, and then the chair would call, Jordon, you have the floor. Spain, you have the floor. Mexico, you have the floor. And the different country representatives would ask their questions or make their statements about the work that they're doing in their countries, to assure that people with disabilities are fully included in the workforce. It was just a really, really cool experience.

I remember looking out in the audience and all the countries represented, the European Union and disability persons organizations and it was just really, really an honor to be part of this. Up at the top of the balcony, there was a glass window where people could look in and see who was speaking at the United Nations and who was there representing the different countries. I just thought, wow, I'm not exactly sure why I'm here but I am so grateful and so humbled to be here, and so I really need to make sure I do a good job so that I can represent my community well.

So I spoke from my heart and I really, really enjoyed it. But it was really, really an honor to meet the prince of Jordon and to meet the founder, Martin Essl from the Zero Foundation, and his team, Thomas Butcher and Michael, and it was just really, really cool. I met Maria Luisa Marteles, from the Mission of Spain to the United Nations and Juan Carlos Mendoza Garcia from the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica. It just was so amazing. And the Shafallah Center, I met the gentleman, Mohamed Badr Al Sada, the executive director of the Shafallah Center. I'm looking forward to actually going over there and visiting them and documenting the Cutter Airlines best practice.

I just met so many amazing people. I met one of the advisors from the Disabled Persons International Organization, Dorodi Sharma, who was an amazing speaker. And on and on and on. But special, special thanks to the people from the International Labor Organization, the Global Compact of the United Nations, because the work that they're doing is going to really help raise the bar for all of us.

So thank you for letting me tell you about my adventures at the United States. It was also, last week, M-Enabling Conference that is held by E.J. Krause and G3ict, was held in Washington D.C., and there were global leaders from all over the world and we did a book launch. So that was really, really fun, the book that I finally got out. I was so excited to be signing the book, and I'm getting some really nice compliments on the book. So we're excited about getting the book

HUMAN POTENTIAL AT WORK Host - Debra Ruh

out, and we're actually now talking about taking the book and making sure that it's in Spanish and Japanese and Arabic and certainly all the United Nations languages. We're going to make an audible version of it, an online version, and accessible version, and also a Kindle or an online version, as I mentioned, as well.

So we want to make sure that as many employers as possible will read this book and learn from this book, and hopefully it will lead to employment outcomes. I'm very, very hopeful about that. I'm getting really good reviews out of the gates, so I'm hoping that we'll be able to continue to get that out to everybody that wants a copy of it. So what I'm also going to do, as I mentioned earlier, is I'm going to be having some of these guests that I've been meeting, I'm going to have them on the podcast, and I'm going to interview them and let them talk to you about the best practices that they're having in their countries. I think it's really important to really dig into these best practices and see what lessons we can learn from them.

So stay tuned, because I'm going to start inviting guests to the program. As a matter of fact, we are putting a schedule together right now. And if you know of a best practice that we should talk about on the program or you yourself think that you could add value to this program, please let me know. My website is www.RuhGlobal.com, and I'd love to have as many voices heard as possible. I think it's going to take all of us to solve these employment problems. But I actually, especially after walking that path last week at the United Nations and M-Enabling Summit, going back and forth on Amtrak, from Washington D.C. to New York, back to Washington D.C., back to New York, back and forth, until I finally came home to Richmond, Virginia. And we had such a bad storm on the way home, that when I got into Rockville, Virginia, I actually, as I was going home, trees were littering the road. I had to turn around four different times to try to find a way home, and many people are still without electricity. So that was very interesting. Adding a little bit of excitement to the end of my week last week. But all is well.

So thank you so much for listening to the podcast. I look forward to bringing you some really, really interesting best practices on employment and persons with disabilities, and really tapping into what human potential can bring, what kind of value it can bring to society if we really give people the chance to tap into their abilities. So look forward to bringing these stories to you really soon. So remember, the only disability is not being able to see human potential.