

NTB Transcript with Christiana Riley

CHRISTIANA: So, it's got to start with people observing you as a leader, doing what you said you would do. And that's when they recognize, all right, she said she was going to streamline operation X, Y, Z, and that, that would lead to better outcomes for all of us. And guess what? She went away and she did it and it does actually make my job better. And it does actually make my ability to deliver from my clients a lot easier.

CHRIS: Welcome to *No Turning Back*, a podcast, hosted by General Stan McChrystal and myself, Chris Fussell. Our goal here is simple: to have serious conversations with serious leaders so that we can learn from the best and navigate these complex times together. Thanks for joining us.

Stan and I are excited to have a discussion today with our friend, Christiana Riley. Christiana is serving as the CEO of Deutsche Bank USA. And she has spent the majority of her professional career there. Though from a non-obvious background, graduating from Princeton, with a degree in linguistics and literature, she went on to enter into the analyst world and has been at Deutsche bank for, coming up on two decades. She spent a good amount of her professional time with Deutsche Bank in Europe and came back to the United States relatively recently to take over this, this new role. So, we have a great discussion with her about where she sees change happening in the financial industry, her relative comparison of how the European markets approach that world, as compared to her experience now in the United States, and the different sorts of skillsets that she's developed and been able to bring to bear over the years.

A very, very impressive person, some great insights into something that matters to all of us, right? The future of the financial markets, both from a US and European perspective. And just her lessons as a leader. She is clearly, as we'll come across in this discussion, a thoughtful person who understands the importance of the people that serve with, and underneath in any leader in any space. And that I would argue is one of the skills that she's honed over the years that has made her so successful and positioned in such an important place right now inside of her institution at, at Deutsche Bank.

And just a quick caveat about today's discussion with Christiana. In the remote age that we're all living in, we had some disruption in her audio, but you'll get the ideas. We edited it up as much as we could to clean up the audio, but it'll be a little bit disruptive, but her core points are absolutely worth listening to will, will come through loud and clear.

So, hope you'll bear with us. Um, we definitely didn't want to miss this opportunity to let you hear from Christiana. We hope you enjoy this discussion and want to thank Christiana and her team for making the time. Now over to Christiana.

STAN: Christiana, welcome, and thanks again for taking time. I was really excited for you to be on today, Chris and I both, but because I was one of your board members for a while, but also because you're one of a fairly small group of leaders who are leading a global firm through a pandemic. And, in addition, through all the normal things of leading a global firm in business.

And so, for the listeners, I'd like to start by just asking you to describe that experience because you took DB USA right before the pandemic arrived. And that's a pretty amazing time. Can you talk about that?

CHRISTIANA: Absolutely. Well, first of all, thanks Stan. And thanks Chris very much for the opportunity to have a conversation today. Stan, as you rightly say, you and I got to know when we were a director of our US Bank holding company here, and we overlapped for a couple of months. I joined about six... and I came over from overseas about six months before the pandemic hit with a pretty ambitious restructuring plan and my briefcase on the way over from Frankfurt.

So even in the absence of the pandemic, we had quite a challenging set of operating circumstances to be dealing with. And then the pandemic hit. And as you rightly say, Stan, we are a globally systemic financial institution. The largest European financial institution operating here in the US by certainly some measures.

And while we, you know, run wargames and stress tests for scenarios like this. And at times, very robust stress tests for times like this, nothing compares to when it actually hits you. And we had to, you know, obviously balance the priorities of first and foremost, keeping our staff safe. That was our number one priority as it was for all corporate leaders balancing through this very, very difficult set circumstances, but also with the fact that we perform an essential service as part of the global financial services system, that we needed to be continuing. And we needed to ensure a system system-wide stability while getting our employees out and home and safe.

So, I'll tell you it was, it was exhausting, but it was also exciting. And a period of time, you know, in those first couple of really tense weeks when central banks were pumping extraordinary amounts of liquidity through public markets to see our technology, our risk management systems... all of that volume while people were essentially, you know, completely distributed in their home environments, it was kind of a thrill. Right. And it, it validated all of that hard work and investment that we've been doing since the great financial crisis to make sure that we are resilient and robust for whatever the world is gonna throw at us.

And so that moment, when we did start to see, you know, the cogs of the wheels really coming together and the financial system performing its role in stabilizing markets, it was great. Banks were part of the solution in this situation in very sharp contrast, of course, to the situation in the great financial crisis.

So that was, that was a thrill, and, and very reassuring and exciting and allowed us then to kind of shift away from the immediate emergency, you know, all hands to the deck, just get through this crisis and make sure everything works, to reflecting on the longer game. Right. And we think we realized all relatively quickly, once we'd all gotten little home offices and back in front of our screens, "Hmm. Hang on. There's something that's going to be pretty permanent around this." And so, we shifted our focus to connectivity, right. And how were we going to keep our 8,000 staff across the United States and into Latin America, continuing to collaborate and engage

and stay connected to our great institution if we weren't able to keep them physically in office premises for a very long time?

And so that shift was tricky one, right. And we all went through it. And Stan just enough to give us a bit of your time in a very, very early weeks when with some very powerful advice for me and my leadership team, which was communicate, communicate, communicate. And we went ahead and did that.

We took you at your word and I've been on, you know, more all-staff calls in more impromptu, informal videos shot from my kitchen, by my 12-year-old son with a shaky iPhone. None of that mattered at that point in time, it was just about getting in front of people and then, you know, using the crisis as an opportunity... Deutsche Bank, for better or for worse is an organization that's known to come together in a crisis situation. We often, you know, reflect on that. Why is it that we can come together so well in a crisis, and struggle at times to keep that same momentum, in normal course of business?

Reflected that this was an opportunity for us to do that differently. Knowing this was gonna be a much longer experience for us. How could we take the opportunity of these crisis conditions to reflect on how we adapt and change the organization in response? So, we communicated, communicated, communicated in a two-way dialogue, as best as we could understand what people needed at a time like this.

They needed, it was a whole lot of empathy for their situation, their individual circumstances, this pandemic hit everybody differently. And so, we did communicate, we also did a lot of listening. We got into a much better trust-based dialogue with our staff that has now endured for the last 13 months and seen as a totally unexpected by-product and extraordinary increase in productivity.

So, yeah. Lot of a lot to unpack there, Stan. And I've given you ... kind of the arc of, of 13 months from the deep dark days of what started out in March of a pretty extensional crisis for everybody involved, but putting those, you know, initial couple of weeks of intense market volatility, and the sigh of relief that everything was kind of working.

Okay. We got into a mode of communicating and listening and ultimately being more, having a much more trust-based engagement with one another, that's become kind of the enduring legacy of this experience.

STAN: Yeah, it, it would be impressive even if you and the team had just survived the tsunami without the boat capsizing, but a little more context for everybody.

I entered the Army in 1972. And the United States Army in 1972 was as close to broken as an organization can be. Coming out of the Vietnam War, there had been all kinds of issues in the force and just the drain of more than a decade of combat had left it exhausted and doubting itself and reputationally challenged as well.

You came to take Deutsche Bank USA at a time when, for a number of years, the banking industry had had a difficult eye put on it and Deutsche Bank itself, it had choppy waters. So even without a pandemic, you are going to have a full-time job here. And so, and yet I got to know the people of your firm and they are hardworking, honest, great people, but they get up in the morning and about once a week, they look at the paper and they see some story that talks badly about them. So how do you provide that kind of leadership for an organization that might be doubting itself and doubting the way ahead?

CHRISTIANA: I think you described the situation very well, Stan and I, I will borrow that metaphor of the military at the time of the start of your career, because I think it really is, is quite apt.

And I arrived at it 18 months ago in the summer of 2019, after a 15-year career with Deutsche Bank on the other side of the ocean to a US organization that was feeling very alienated and had been dealing with its own set of pretty unique and pretty rough reputational challenges here in, in the market, much of which self-inflicted from, you know, unfortunate incidences of misconduct in the past that we have been working very hard as an organization to put behind us, but the fabric of any organization is built upon its performance and its integrity.

And we had a lot to prove on that front. And it was, as you rightly point out, very difficult, the hardworking individuals in our organization who were coming in every day, giving their best, to be seeing, you know, their contribution not the appropriately rewarded.

I got a lot of input in my first couple of months at the organization that I needed to be doing more to improve the firm's reputation in the market. And I totally accept that challenge. I agree. I'm the chief executive of this organization and that's on me to help lead through that reputational recovery.

But I was very clear with everyone when I arrived and in those first couple of months, yeah. That repair and recovery starts from inside the four walls of our organization. And if we don't represent with a hundred percent authenticity, we believe in this place and that we are doing what, everything that needs to be done to repair the challenges on performance and integrity, how can we with confidence project that outside of the bank?

And so, my first, you know, for six months pre-pandemic, and then the, of the last 12 months have been incredibly focused on restoring the commitment, the engagement, the loyalty and rewarding and recognizing the loyalty of our staff within the organization before, you know, we've got any ability to get out there, and represent that to the outside world.

It's been, again, one of the unexpected side effects, of the experience of the last 13 months, that through that trust-based conversation, we really were able to engender a whole lot more commitment, enthusiasm, and pride on the part of our employees, because we listened, we recognized everybody's circumstances, we gave a lot more flexibility and autonomy and it's been paying wonderful dividends for us as an organization.

CHRIS: Christiana, can you build on that a little bit because a lot of leaders will talk about the importance of trust in their team. If you ask people what makes a great team, one of the first words that 80% of the room will say is trust.

As you discussed, you had to rebuild some of that. Trust can be negatively impacted during a crisis if there isn't honest communication, but you also are a very senior leader in a part of the economy where all of our trust matters, right? If we start to lose trust collectively in the folks that make the economy work in ways that many of us don't understand, then you know, economic disasters of the past, tell us that that can lead to massive negative effects down downstream.

Can you just your observations on how you talk about that with your teams and the criticality of that type of trust as a society in, in your part of the economy?

CHRISTIANA: Awesome question. I think the first thing that I would say about trust is that it is an outcome not input, right? If you walk around the organization and saying, "Don't worry, you can trust me." You're not really doing a lot to raise the level of trust in the organization. So, it's got to start with people observing you as a leader, doing what you said we would do. And that's when they recognize, all right. "She said she was going to streamline operation next X, Y, Z. And that, that would lead to better outcomes for all of us. And guess what? She went away and she did it and it does actually make my job better. And it does actually make my ability to deliver from my clients a lot easier."

Another big theme that I think many organizations have been focused on in the course of the last year and we certainly have as well is around the issue of being able to, you know, to trust that you can bring your whole self to work. Right. We had a lot of conversations and did a lot of work around that issue that, you know, if I open up to you, if I'm authentic as to who I am, you know, whether that pertains to race, religion, sexual orientation, or anything else that you feel differentiates you, you're still going to be included and you can count on that and trust in that, that you're still going to be included within this organization.

So, we've role modeled a lot of that without walking around and telling people, "Hey, don't worry. You can trust me on this one." And it's taken root and I think it's had its desired effect in rebuilding that relationship of trust between our staff and their leadership.

CHRIS: Yeah, it's a great point. And the way you framed it, that it's an outcome of one of... one of the things... I know that Stan and I have a lot of conversations with leaders that are thinking this through and try to make a point, you articulate it much, much better there, that you have to look for those teachable moments to show people what trust means. Transparent and regular communications is key to that, but highlighting examples or making the point that I trust you to do this and here are examples of when it's going well, you're taking independent action and sometimes things will go wrong and we'll deal with that.

But it has to be the force, the broad swath of the organization has to be educated as to what that looks like. So, it's not just a buzz word coming out of the senior leader's mouth. So, it's a, that's a great way to look at it.

STAN: Yeah. I remember when they announced that you were going to come and take over in New York and I was happy about that, but somebody asked me, “Well, what do they need?” I said, “Well, they, you actually don't need a great banker. What they need is a great leader.” Because as you've got the expertise inside the bank, but if you think about how most of us start our careers, when Chris became a SEAL, I presume they had to teach you to swim Chris, and all the things that SEALs do.

But the, you know, you grow up being a doer. You know, you gotta be technically competent and in banking things. And then suddenly at some moment you hit an inflection point. It's often not announced it just happened and you're a leader. That's what you do most. Can you talk about your journey there? And when that inflection point seemed to have come?

CHRISTIANA: Yeah, it's so apt and you're absolutely right. Whether it's, you know, I don't have any conception of how difficult the training, basic training in the SEALs must've been, but certainly in our financial services industry, there's a lot of basic training that goes on in your first, very foundational six to eight years of your career.

You're measured on your individual contribution. Can you, do you get the numbers? They do have a commitment to work ethic. Are you professional? Are you a good communicator? All of these things that are kind of individual disciplines and what is your output look like? And then all of a sudden, as you rightly say, Stan, there comes this moment where, you know, you kind of have to stop turning your face up to the top of the organization and turn your face out to the organization. And at least for me, that happened. So, I grew up in my career after 15 years within Deutsche Bank getting some experience prior to that, but it really has represented the bulk of my career, and had grown up in, in kind of a small, Oh, let's just see, looks like we were ....in the office of the chief executive running all matters of corporate strategy.

And so, I had a small 25, 30% team of highly intrinsically motivated individuals. All he had to do was come in in the morning and say jump. And they would say, “Yes, ma'am! How high?” Right. And, uh, so I always looked like a hero because like my individual output when I would go and present to the board, looked phenomenal. And because I had this super intrinsically motivated team.

So, you know, in reward for that great performance, I was promoted to a significantly larger jobs, which maybe in retrospect you'd say, “well, you know, that was, that was a big stretch.” And it certainly did feel like it at the time. I went from managing a team of 30 people to a team more than 600 people.

And when you go from that, you know, small scale of highly intrinsically motivated people to a broad group of people, many of whom, you know, totally understandably think about their career differently, very committed to the organization, but without, you know, perhaps that, that intrinsic motivation of somebody who was really a fast-tracked career.

It was a really important learning moment for me in the criticality of outlining a vision for everybody in that organization to feel like they were part in a bigger mission, right. And that

when you come in to work every day and you may be performing a relatively manual process to ensure that the books, the bank's books and records are accurate and correct, you're part of something much bigger here in driving the overall outcomes for the firm, our shareholders and our clients, and never had to do that before.

It was just, you know, implicitly understood. Of course, we're here for, for a very good reason. And when you have to stand up and face 600 people and lay it out in your own words and do it in a compelling way and it makes you really also check, you know, how strongly you believe it and how effectively you're communicating it. It is a very important inflection point in one's career.

The big thing you have to also acknowledge there is recognizing your own strengths versus where you need to surround yourself with people who balance that out. And ceding control, to a degree, and that's where Chris, of course the trust element comes in.

I wasn't a CPA or a CFA, charter financial analyst, by background. It wasn't, it wasn't my skillset. And so I needed to be, you know, certainly I guess I was being put it into a role of a chief financial officer of our biggest operating division. I wanted to make sure I had the right experts around me and I was going to rely really heavily on the advice that I got from them. Very different from the role I had previously performed as a chief strategist. I'm a problem solver by nature and McKinsey trained.

Like I totally got that. So, if the inflection point is around articulating vision, and making sure that you've got those trusted lieutenants around you, who help round out your profile. They're never a threat to you right there. I think there are many people who grow up in, in corporations who think about, "Oh, I can't let that person get ahead of me or I can't, you know, give that person too much of airtime or visibility because they're going to steal my sunshine."

Those are in my experience, the people who do tend to die out over the long term.

STAN: That that is great. What about relationships with peers? When I draw a comparison, when I was a battalion commander, that's when you suddenly have 600 people in your unit and you also have about 15 peers in a division, and you're all sort of competing to be the best battalion commander.

And I remember wondering when I got to the divisions who are looking right and left, is this a horse race, or is this a team effort? And the battalion commander who was next door to me, still a very close friend, he used to come over about once every three days. And tell me anecdotes about things his unit has screwed up.

And he would shake his head. He said, "Stan, you're not going to believe what my idiots did today." And what he was doing was building a relationship that kind of a vulnerability. And we developed this deep friendship based on the fact that we weren't competing. We were in this thing together. Does that happen at that level in banking?

CHRISTIANA: The banking industry is notoriously... all of the wonderful, you know, Hollywood interpretations of what it must be like to work inside of an investment thing for being cutthroat and competitive.

STAN: Yeah.

CHRISTIANA: I want to tell you that that's a very outdated image. I genuinely feel that as a consequence of some very painful experiences of the last decade and through the learnings that are out of the great financial crisis and the really meaningful steps that the industry at large has taken in driving for greater diversity in its workforce. There's been a pretty meaningful change in what it takes and the attributes that it takes to rise to the top of the financial services organization. I won't tell you that there are still those profiles and that as an industry, we're not still committed to a very performance-oriented culture. But I think that performance orientation and collaboration can't go hand in hand with one another. It's a balance. And then obviously can't let one, you know, come at the expense of the other, but we learned a lot that I would not be here where I am in my job today if it weren't for the support and mentorship of many above me, but also the comradery and that ability to kind of exchange and spar and figure out, "Hey, am I thinking about this the right way?"

Or, you know, thinking about that the right way. And we've gotten to a place as, as an industry. And certainly as Deutsche Bank, I can attest, that it's leaders who are looking 360 degrees in the round who are making their way to the top of the organization.

CHRIS: Well, I don't, I don't know about Hollywood with Wall Street, but it gets the SEAL teams exactly right. We're all 6'2" and can bench press 300 pounds, just for the record. But seriously Christiana the... a little bit, I guess, on the, on the line of diversification of the makeup of that industry. Can you talk a little bit about being a very senior woman in an industry that has traditionally been male dominated? But you've obviously earned this very front and center position in the US part of the bank. What has that journey been like? And how do you see more, maybe more importantly, that sort of normalizing, are we in on the way that the backside of this transition? How do you see the future of that diversification?

CHRISTIANA: I really wasn't that conscious of it. The way up, which maybe just speaks to me, they've been really nose to the grindstone and very, you know, output-oriented and just do a good job and you're gonna, you know, continue to, to succeed the way you'd like to. Having now gotten to a level, you know, with this role as chief executor, chief executive of the US and, you know, representing the America's region, our group board, back in Germany, I am probably more conscious of my gender than I have been at any other point in my career.

And I'm certainly conscious of the role model function and that, that you, whether you like it or not, occupy when, when you kind of get to this level? I would very much like, you know, 10 years from now, 15 years from now, you know, to never have to answer the question again, you know, what's it like being a one at the top? Because we'll have equal representation and it'll be, you know, a normal course of business until we get there.



I do think we need to reflect a little bit on why is it different or why has it proven to be more challenging for women to make the way through the ranks and what do we, as leaders now, male or female, need to be doing to eliminate some of those barriers that seem to have gotten in the way, so it could be done?

I'm reflecting on that as a leadership team at the group board level, at Deutsche Bank. And the honest answer is there's clearly no single recipe, but it's gotta be about role-modeling behavior and is showing conviction at the top of the organization and that we are prepared to support and that we are here to make sure that we're creating opportunities.

You know, for me, some ways, you know, it was a little bit of, it's a combination of luck and opportunity, right. But having the confidence of having supporters and mentors around you rose through that journey was in retrospect and incredibly important and gave me the confidence to push through and stick with it even with two small kids at home in the middle of a massive organizational restructuring, when, at times that didn't maybe feel like it was worth it, you saw a longer-term path.

I do think it's incredibly important to have representation of women and others with diverse backgrounds at the top of organizations. It makes you such a better leadership team. I saw it throughout the crisis kind of conditions in the pandemic when we could kind of have a moment to just stop, look and listen. Right. Maybe me with my background, bring a little bit more empathy to the conversation. Some of my other colleagues around the table bring pace and discipline and you know, but together you bring the full perspective that ultimately gets you to the right result.

So we, I do think also that it is one of the biggest issues that this generation of leaders needs to confront. Why is it that we're sitting here in 2021, still with such significant under-representation of women and minorities at the leadership levels of our economy? And if we can spend the next 10 years really cracking through that one, getting to a better place, it's also going to do a lot for some of the other opportunity gaps and inequalities we're seeing across the society.

CHRIS: It's a great point. And I think the.... you touched on a few times there, the mentorship role...I learned this in the military, wasn't really cognizant of it, but now I'm old enough to have seen it happen in cycles that these, mentor and sort of grooming networks start so early and you become part of this little family of loosely connected people that fall underneath certain senior leaders.

And as they move up, for good reason there, this cadre sort of navigate towards them in each one of these is branching off underneath themselves. And, and you can track, you know, military history, back generations and these sort of connected lines. And I think hopefully with women like yourself being in positions like you are, you've had this whole group that you can now mentor throughout their careers and that the pyramid can widen, but the power of those networks is something that I think we're only starting now to understand as we try to point not just an industry, but other parts of, of society in the right direction. I think it's, it's a critical point. Stan, over to you.

STAN: Yeah, no, it's, it's key, you know, there's gender, there's also nationality. When I commanded in Afghanistan, it was 46-nation coalition and people used to come to me and they'd say, "Oh, isn't that terrible? You've got all these different countries. People won't fight or do this, or they do that." But that wasn't my experience. They all had very different capabilities. Some of the nations hadn't been at war in 40 or 50 years. So, they weren't as current.

But I never ran into any that weren't trying to do a good job and I didn't run into any that didn't bring something sort of uniquely effective to the battlefield. Now, since I've departed the military, I've been on as a director on two boards, one from Siemens Government Technologies and one Deutsche Bank.

And so, a global firm like this with a, in these cases, European headquarters, has a slightly different DNA and different habits. You've been a part of it, and you've also been a bridge as well. Can you talk about differences and how you serve as a bridge in an organization like that?

CHRISTIANA: As you know, Stan, I lived for almost 20 years over in Germany. And I've been back now for just about two years now. So, I'll speak first in organizational context within Deutsche Bank and then maybe some broader observations on coming back to the US and 20 years, after having lived here for the last time.

So, it's critically important in today's global economy that you have and fluidity, and the ability to understand one another across cultures. And we can no longer operate within our own borders. And think that the way we operate as Americans is going to translate into every one of the far-flung markets that we hope we're able to export our products and services into.

And the same obviously applies for European organizations looking to operate here in the US coming with a deeply dramatic perspective. And "this is the way things need to be done," clearly isn't going to work in terms of engaging with stakeholders and clients on this side of the ocean. So, I feel very privileged to have that fluidity and have been able to operate at on both sides of the ocean.

And I think for younger leaders, certainly in our organization at Deutsche Bank, but I would encourage anybody who's rising through the ranks at a global corporation to really take that opportunity, to get global experience and have that experience of finding yourself a little bit out of your depth and saying, "Whoa, that's a very different way to approach that problem."

You know, in my home market, we wouldn't have done it, but I'll bet you, I mean, more often than not, you're going to learn something very interesting around how others will tackle that problem. What it does, you know, living abroad for as long as I did gives you a very unique perspective then on your own country, when you do come back that, and I'll say, you know, for 20 years while I was abroad, I would really only dip in back here and would come for business trips. I might, you know, come to catch up for Thanksgiving or Christmas, but really, you know, living here now again for two years, and certainly living here in these pandemic conditions has really caused me to think about some of the starker contrasts and that I've observed.

I have high degree of skepticism around, ... some of the economic policy practices in Europe. When I first moved over there in German, we call it ... “social market capitalism,” which basically combines, you know, a lot of what we know about American capitalism with a very strong social safety net. It's very difficult to fall through the cracks in a European society, because first of all, there's a big emphasis on education, equality, and access to education. So more likely than not, you're going to come out of your education with some pretty relevant and marketable job skills. There are several layers of social protection that's going to make sure you can kind of get back on your feet. And a lot of that comes, by the way, from the role and representation of employees at the top levels of corporate governance in Germany.

So, Stan, as you recall from your Deutsche Bank days, you know, we have a senior board of directors, what we call a supervisory board, and ... corporate governance. That's made up of 50% representatives of shareholders. So, capitalism and 50% representatives of employees. And those two kind of have to get together in each other's interests to drive the decisions of the company.

It's a little bit slow. It's a little bit clunky, but ultimately it does come or do come out with some balanced at outcomes. Now, when I came back to the US and I certainly saw how the pandemic hit and how many people in this society really were on the edge of, of kind of an existential minimum very, very quickly as jobs were rapidly lost, particularly in this precinct where you saw... I reflected for myself how tragic it was that we haven't invested in a greater safety net in this country.

And as corporations we haven't reflected enough, I think that necessary balance of what we now call “stakeholder capitalism.” Right. And I think there is an emerging consciousness and awareness around that. But something, you know, as I say, it's what the international experience does for you. It forces you to see multiple sides of how things can get done. And there's potentially, you know, a fair bit that we can learn around stakeholder capitalism and seven decades, but in Germany, post-World War II has, has lived in much greater and better equilibrium on that front.

CHRIS: Just one quick follow-up. Do you... where do you see hope? Because it sounds like you might, that the lessons of the last 12 to 18 months will teach us around... I mean, Germany is a great, great example. They went through a World War that forced them to sort of redesign how they thought about themselves, their culture, their economy. There were a lot of lessons that didn't want to repeat.

Do you think we'll come out of this with the newfound sort of triple bottom line view on capitalism? Do you see areas of promise?

CHRISTIANA: Definitely optimistic, Chris. Maybe you could start parallel in Germany. Germany did experience as everybody, you know, students in history will know, a real strong economic boom post the war in the fifties.

And one of the things that journey learned through the *German phrase* is the critical importance of labor upskilling. They never would have been able to drive that reindustrialization and the country, if they hadn't made the necessary parallel investments in ensuring that they had a fully skilled labor force domestically within the country to drive that growth.

Right. And when I think about some of the challenges in the US educational system and some of the vast inequalities that we've got in the US educational system, I think we've got our moment now, as we do gear up for what we all hope will be at a period of increased prosperity and economic expansion for the country to make sure that we do it in a sustainable way by investing in up-skilling. Right. Considering perhaps some really innovative ways to be looking at vocational education and to be targeting it at the sectors that we know are going to be key to the future economy and hopefully to the more environmentally sustainable economy.

So, what should we be doing with them? Engineering skills to support the electric mobility revolution. What should we be doing in investing in technology skills? You know, making sure that we don't have the projected digital divide that we will otherwise beyond if we're not investing in equipping broad parts of the labor force with coding skills. Right? So I think there is an opportunity here. We are going to hopefully see some meaningful economic re-expansion in the next couple of months and into the next couple of years. Let's pause and make sure we're making some investments in up-skilling our workforce across this country that will pay dividends.

STAN: I'll jump on that and tell you that. I think you're absolutely right, Christiana. Chris and I teach a course at Yale and as we tell our students, it's a very rarefied group of very talented, educated, privileged, young people. They are neither the solution nor the cause to our problems. The solution is much broader and if we can't bring all of our society up into opportunity is the word I'll use. I would also like to double tap on something you said about taking things we can learn from other societies that from a distance may look a little strange to us.

In Afghanistan, where I spent a lot of time, they have a tradition called a Shura and when they have a problem in a community, even a very serious problem that may have involved fighting, they come together, and they talk it out. And they do that because they've learned from hard experience. If they don't, the feud will go on and definitely people will die and horrible things that the society won't work. You know, I, in our society, I think I sure Shura or two would not hurt at the political level force people into this kind of binding arbitration almost.

But what I would really want to do, Christiana, is tell you how much Chris and I admire what you have done already. But also thank you for your incredible generosity of time and wisdom this afternoon. I think listeners who hear an accomplished executive, who've just been through choppy waters, but has taken the organization through to a really good outcome can learn a lot.

CHRISTIANA: Thank you very much.

CHRIS: Christiana. Thanks. Thanks for the time. And we look forward to keeping in touch.

STAN: We were excited to have Christiana Riley, the CEO of Deutsche Bank USA. On today because I'd had some personal interaction with her. For two years, I'd been a director on the board of directors for Deutsche Bank USA.

And that was a period when the bank was trying to do several things, it was trying to rebuild its reputation, which was battered in the banking community. It was trying to rebuild its infrastructure, its information technology, which is critical to any big bank. Right now, it was trying to rebuild the talent because it's a competitive environment to seek and retain talent there. And it was trying to rebuild its credibility with the fed, with federal authorities. And that is a heavy lift. There was a, a number of things that had to be remediated. So I spent two years on the board at the request of a friend of mine, the previous CEO, as they worked through that first part, but it was, it was a task that was incomplete.

And so when Christiana Riley was selected to become the new CEO, I was curious. She had spent almost 20 years in Europe. And she was tightly connected with the senior leadership of the bank. But when she came in, she had a big job in front of her. And that big job was continue the remediation of issues in the bank to rebuild the reputation, to start to rebuild the confidence of the bank.

And she arrived just at the end of 2019 and boom, a pandemic arrives. And now we've got a leader who is faced with almost an excuse for failure. She could have said, "Oh, it's too hard. You know, who can have a bank work distributed?"

And yet I think 94% of the bank went distributed almost overnight. And during the pandemic, and I stayed in touch with her, they rebuilt many things that had been ongoing before, but were incomplete. And that was extraordinary. Not only did she hold the team together, she made the team stronger in that process.

CHRIS: Super impressive person. I hadn't spent time with her since you had left the board, I hadn't interacted much with the leadership in Deutsche Bank North America. But one of the things that jumped out to me was, and I'd love to get your thoughts on this, the, the role of a change leader, right. A leader that's put in that says, "Hey, you've got some, you're not just managing assets... there's some immediate stuff that we have to get back in order. I mean, I'm sure there are points in your military career and beyond where you've seen that or been personally involved with it. Where do you... examples, maybe from your own career when you've been that, that person, but any thoughts on where you start, because that's a different type of leadership? Your first 90 days is much different when that's, when you had that mandate to go in and get some things done.

STAN: Yeah. It's very different. And to set the stage for Christiana, she was coming from higher headquarters. From across the ocean into a part of the bank. And so, there was a certain amount of trepidation on everybody's part. What's this person going to do? They don't know her very well.

When I was a company commander, I replaced an officer who was relieved of command. And he was relieved of command for a lot of good reasons. But I came in and a lot of things in that company had to change, and this is about 150 mechanized infantry men at that point. And we had to change things fundamentally.

So, the first thing you've got on the part of the organization is fear. Because nobody knows where they're going to stand. When the new broom comes in to sweep clean. And they assume that you come in with an idea that you don't trust them, that you're going to replace them, or you're at least going to hammer them into compliance.

And the new leaders simultaneously got the requirement to do a lot of those things. But at the same time, you got to take the force, the people you've got and you've got to shape them and make them effective. So, it's two seemingly contradictory messages. One is, things are going to change and we are going to force you into that. And the second is, I trust you. I want you to be on this team, and we're going to go forward together. And giving those two at the same time is tricky business.

I had the same problem later as a four-star in Afghanistan, because I came in to replace the ISAF commander before me he'd been a great guy, but he'd been removed. And the staff was terrified that this new commander with a reputation is going to come in and he's gonna turn things upside down, inside out. And to a degree, I was going to do that, but I didn't want to do it in a way that couldn't give everybody the opportunity to be part of that effort to contribute to it, not be an opposition to it. And that's, I think Christiana navigated so definitely in Deutsche Bank.

CHRIS: Yeah. And it, you know, as you, as you mentioned, you and I both, we made friends with the CEO that was there before Christiana, who had done the significant phase of that sort of redesign. And then she had to continue and build upon that.

One of the things that I think good change-oriented leaders do is they don't see themselves as a snapshot in time. They see themselves as a chapter in a book, right, for lack of a better analogy. And they understand the story, or they take time to understand the story that was being written by their previous leader.

And they can time and sequence their initiatives based ... cause the people in your organization were part of that previous chapter, but you're, you're stepping in midstream and leaders that push too hard or push the wrong things the wrong time, because they ignore that former story, don't make ground as fast as some of that Christiana has done. So that's, it's impressive to see that for sure.

Another thing that jumped out at me was her description of her earlier career as a strategist, then getting put into, you know, the more banking part of the bank and the challenges that can, that can come with that. I know looking back at my career in the military and certainly seen this on the other side, the military, especially in special operations, I know you saw this as well, can be rife with this bias that well, it's that so-and-so, wasn't that great of a platoon commander. So, can they run this 3000-person unit?

And in my experience like, maybe. I mean, there's a massive disconnect between different leadership skills and when to apply them. And I certainly saw folks that were good enough at a junior level excel at a senior level or vice versa. Right. And so I think for the folks, like, even above Christiana, they're trying to make these decisions thinking about what is the skill set that we need right now? And are we, are we bringing in the right leader and in her case, that's a great example of, no, we don't need a banker. We need somebody who can think at a strategic level, coordinate, communicate amongst these teams, communicate across the ocean. And one of our major priorities, the different parts of the bank. Just a great example of that.

STAN: You know, we sometimes judge people out of context as well. A peer of mine, a classmate of mine from West Point, was commanding part of the US Army Ranger School, many years ago in the early 1990s.

And there was a situation in which a couple of Ranger students died and they died in the swamp and it was very unfortunate and they removed him from command and they found all these flaws in the system down there. But the reality is, most of those faults have been around for decades. Things have been done a certain way. Resourcing levels were a certain way. Well, with the shock of these casualties, suddenly focus when they brought a new commander in, but they also gave him all kinds of new resources and focus and talent.

And so suddenly the new commanders viewed as the savior. And he's a great guy as well, but the previous guy had been in a situation where 99.9 of us would have done exactly what he was doing. And except for the accident that occurred, would have been judged as hugely successful. So, I think sometimes we need to contextualize the time in which a leader is responsible before we get too judgmental.

CHRIS: Yeah. It's... it's a very interesting point and ties to the work you've been doing and the book you have coming out on risk assessment. Looking at it through more, more current lens and any anyone risks ...leading in a high risk environment, whether it's, whether it's high risk trading or military, whatever it is, any new leader can come in and say, well, we shouldn't, that's dangerous. That's dangerous. That's dangerous. You could stop at all, or you certainly, but that doesn't work, right.

You have to hedge your investment of energy because you can only get so much done as, as a leader. And there is, there is a bit of luck and timing and any, any successful leader's journey, especially when they're, they're leading in riskier environments. But it is, it's a, it's a strange tendency of bureaucracy to have those career-ending moments when everybody around knows, you know, that they really couldn't have done that. The captain was sound to ship when they, when they hit the reef. Right. And now her career is over. That's let's think about it.

STAN: Exactly.

CHRIS: Well, great discussion with, with Christiana and, and it's inspiring to see what she's, she's done and will continue to do. And for those... our friends at Deutsche Bank that are listening to this, hopefully hope you're all doing well and enjoying the leadership of Christiana.