



Leading Through Disruption with Seth Kahan

Leading Learning Podcast
Transcript for Episode 457

Celisa Steele: [00:00:03] If you want to grow the reach, revenue, and impact of your learning business, you're in the right place. I'm Celisa Steele.

Jeff Cobb: [00:00:10] I'm Jeff Cobb, and this is the Leading Learning Podcast.

Jeff Cobb: [00:00:17] If you're leading a learning business right now, you're almost certainly navigating uncertainty—political, economic, technological. And, in the face of all that, it can be hard to know how to lead well, plan strategically, and stay responsive without burning out.

Celisa Steele: [00:00:33] Our guest in this episode, number 457, is someone who has spent years helping association leaders. Seth Kahan is the founder of Visionary Leadership and the author of the books *Getting Change Right* and *Getting Innovation Right*. He's also a long-time friend of the show—we've had him on four times before. Jeff, this time around you talked with Seth in June 2025, a moment of volatility in U.S. politics.

Jeff Cobb: [00:01:00] Yes, indeed. And Seth opens with how that's affecting the associations he works with, and he shares what leaders can do to stay effective when the ground keeps shifting.

Celisa Steele: [00:01:11] You and Seth talk about his Disruption Playbook and seven elements he sees as essential for leading in uncertain times. You also talk about the role of learning—for staff, members, boards, and leaders.

Jeff Cobb: [00:01:25] And we get into AI—how Seth is using it personally and professionally as a tool for curiosity, not just efficiency.

Celisa Steele: [00:01:33] If you're looking for ways to think more clearly and lead more intentionally, dear listener, then this conversation is for you. Here's the interview with Seth Kahan.

Jeff Cobb: [00:01:48] Seth, you've been on the podcast several times now—we're up to four at this point. Each conversation has felt very of the moment. There's been something afoot every time it feels like, and there certainly is right now. What's been most on your mind lately in the work that you do with leaders and organizations?

Seth Kahan: [00:02:06] I'm watching the fallout from the new administration. A lot of my clients are really suffering. They're suffering from research being cut, truncated right in the middle of things. That has a huge impact on not just funding but morale, and so many people are in

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survival mode. A lot of my work—in the mental health space, I’m leading a grand challenge called Stop Stigma Together—includes working with organizations like the CDC, and there’s been a lot of uncertainty with people not being allowed to attend meetings, not allowed to contribute professionally. That’s probably the biggest thing of the moment—that we’re waiting to see how far this is going to go.

Jeff Cobb: [00:02:45] We’ve talked in the past about your work with grand challenges, which I think is so interesting in this current environment. Can you say a little bit more about the grand challenges you’re working on? But also is this a time when leaders are open to taking on grand challenges?

Seth Kahan: [00:02:59] I don’t think so. I think a lot of leaders are in survival mode. They’re contracting, and so they’re going back to basics. A grand challenge is something that you do when you’ve got the desire to contribute largely to the world and to work with other partners on a big framework, take on problems that people have shied away from in the past, and a lot of times now organizations are asking, “How do we push through this time and survive? How do we not lose ground in the space that we’re in?” In general, I see people backing off of grand challenges. However, grand challenges are unique. And people who go after them or organizations that go after them, some of them are doing well. There’s still going to be a grand challenge here and there. It’s not going to go away. In general, the appetite is focusing much more on change and innovation. How do we create new products and services? How do we create new value? How do we get our staff to embrace being proactive in an environment that feels like it’s very choppy? And how do we get people to take the good kind of risks? That’s what I’m seeing.

Seth Kahan: [00:04:03] The two grand challenges I’m working on right now—I’ll just do a quick summary, and, if you want to, we can dig in deeper to them. Stop Stigma Together is about eliminating the stigma around mental health and substance use disorders on a national scale—bias and prejudice, trying to get that away, and trying to treat mental health the way we do physical health. A big word that’s used there is “parity.” Mental health should be on parity with physical health, and that comes down to the common understanding of it, so that we don’t look at somebody who has a mental health challenge as having a character flaw, but we see that you can have a mental health challenge just like you can get diabetes. The other aspect of it is laws and compliance—do we reinforce the stigma unintentionally? So that’s Stop Stigma Together. And we’re working with the Ad Council. We have a seven-year campaign called “Love Your Mind.” It’s going very well. I can talk about that. And we’re working with a lot of partnerships. We have about 300 organizations that are working together to eliminate that stigma.

Seth Kahan: [00:05:06] The other grand challenge is working with the American Association of Physicists in Medicine. They were birthed out of radiology, X-rays, physics. And X-rays, oh my God, we could look inside the human body with these things 75 years ago, and that has evolved. There are all kinds of ways of looking inside the human body—medical ultrasound, many different types of radiology now. Then there are therapies, and the therapies are literally putting radioisotopes in pharmaceuticals and delivering them in the body, mostly around

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cancer. Cancer is the number one area. The other area that physicists contribute to in medicine is AI. They are the original creators—the physicists—of the artificial intelligence in terms of code, understanding how to make it safe, large language models, and all of that. There are a lot of physicists in the medical space who are zeroing in on how do we develop AI in medicine?

Seth Kahan: [00:06:04] I was just reading the other day about how, in Europe, they're already using AI to make decisions around, for example, cancer treatment. What's most effective? They've reached a point where they're comfortable relying on it. I don't think Americans are there yet, mostly. We're doing a summit in early 2026, where we're identifying the biggest breakthroughs in physics and medicine over the next ten years. And we're bringing in multiple stakeholders—not just the physicists but the FDA, all the different organizations that need to participate for those breakthroughs to happen.

Jeff Cobb: [00:06:34] We're always following your work with great interest, reading your newsletter, trying to keep up with what you're doing, and it's always great to have you here on the show. What made you pop on our radar screen this time was we noticed in one of your newsletters, not too long ago, you talked about a Disruption Playbook that you had put out, and you were just talking about AI there, which obviously is a disruptor. We were like, "Well, we've been talking about uncertainty. We've been talking about disruption." And the last time you were on the show, we talked about disruption.

Seth Kahan: [00:07:01] Yes, we did. I remember that.

Jeff Cobb: [00:07:03] So it's apropos to have you back again. You put out this playbook for executive leadership in turbulent times, and you've characterized this or said it's "a guide for executives ready to lead with foresight and integrity through political volatility, cultural shifts, and systemic uncertainty," all of which we're certainly feeling right now. What compelled you to say, "A playbook is what we need for this. I'm going to put out a playbook here."? What are you hoping leaders are going to be able to take from this playbook? Which we'll, by the way, link to in the show notes.

Seth Kahan: [00:07:37] It's already being used, so it's been nice to get the response from CEOs, saying, "We're using your playbook." The environment was just so disruptive. First, you had—as we've already spoken about—the truncation of grants, research, people losing their jobs in the federal government, which impacted science, healthcare, and other fields as well—even manufacturing, which I know they're trying to promote, but I'm not sure it's going well. And I saw that the CEOs were scrambling, the ones that I was in touch with. They were getting hit in so many different directions simultaneously. They were a bit in shock, and they weren't sure how to move forward. Of course, this is not the first time that we've been through massive disruption, and so I drew on my experience from the mortgage crisis, from the pandemic, and also the knowledge that I accrued studying disruptions during those disruptions. I thought, "Okay, this would be a great time to put out something that's simple, that's concise. It's not too prescriptive, but it gives you a lot of different ways to look at what's going on and to think about how you should best respond here."

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Jeff Cobb: [00:08:38] You talk about seven elements in the playbook, and these feel pretty perennial to me. As you said, you drew on experience from the past. They're going to apply now. They're going to apply in the future, I'm certain, but I'll tick those off: situational awareness, strategic agility, stakeholder alignment, value-driven decisions, visibility and voice, culture of adaptation, and systemic foresight. Like I said, those all sound like areas that leaders need to be focused on continually and perennially. Do you find that there are ones that CEOs and other executives are struggling the most with right now? Do any of those stand out more than others in what you're seeing?

Seth Kahan: [00:09:21] Yes. I would say that there's a strong commitment in CEOs in general around strategic agility and stakeholder alignment. There is certainly this ongoing desire to make value-driven decisions. Nobody would say that we're making decisions in any other way. Those are three where I think there is strength. They're not super threatened by the current environment that we're in because people are already doing that. But some of the others—situational awareness becomes extremely important right now because things are happening so fast, and they're multidimensional. It's too much for one person to keep track of all that's going on. Having a weekly briefing or convening a diverse round table of people that can say, "Here's what's happening in my space" can all add so that you get a holistic picture, like a hologram. Everybody speaks up in a short period of time, and you start to see a general trend, or you start to see synergies or places where forces are combining in a not good way that could impact your space. Situational awareness, whenever there's a lot of disruption, becomes more intense and requires a shorter periodicity. Whereas before I might convene this group once a month or once a quarter, now weekly briefings might be in order. What are we learning in real time? Or ad hoc briefings.

Seth Kahan: [00:10:38] Strategic agility—most people pledge allegiance to strategic agility, but they've still got their strategy, and they're hunkering down and working on the tactics to execute it. This is a time where you suddenly need to be able to say, "Where should we be pivoting, and what does that look like?" You were asking me—in an e-mail that you sent me—around the difference between agility and speed. Agility is that flexibility to do something that's different. Speed is how fast you respond to it. And you want both, to the best of your ability. But a lot of times speed with what you're currently doing is not too hard to achieve because you get really efficient. You focus in on it. It's like the race car that pulls off the track, and they've got to change the tires and do all the maintenance, and they've got seven seconds to do it in. It's like you can run drills. But agility is different because then you say, "Okay, we're not going to change the tires. We're going to turn this into a tank. Or, "We're going to turn this into a bicycle." It's like, "What?" That's a whole different ball game. So strategic agility becomes important here.

Seth Kahan: [00:11:36] The visibility and voice is an area that requires an increase because your usual communication channels don't suffice when there's a lot of disruption. People get scared, and they want to know now, "What are you doing for me? How are you helping me out?" And there's always a tension. Right now in the mental health work I do, there's a tension between

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where can we work with this administration, or should we work with this administration? There are staff and customers who say, “Take a stand. Tell them we’re not going to do that. Push back.” And then there are others who say, “Let’s be more practical. There must be some place where we can work with them. Let’s just ignore the places where we can’t, and let’s join hands where we can.” That can become a real tension in this day and age.

Seth Kahan: [00:12:17] For example, in the mental health space, I convened the top leaders from 15 major mental health organizations in the United States in April to talk about how we work together under the current administration. Some of those big organizations, like the American Psychiatric Association or Mental Health America, were really about finding where can they shake hands with the administration and where should they stay away from it. But there were organizations like the Human Rights Campaign and Black Girls Smile—much smaller organizations—that have a target on their back with this administration. There’s no place they can work with them. You can see the tension there. “What are you going to do? Are you going to take a stand in my favor? Are you going to protect me? Are you on my side, or are you going to try and work with these people who are trying to take me out?” Visibility and voice is where you say, “This is who we are. This is what we’re doing.” And you stay in touch. You stay in touch with your members, with your customers, with your vendors.

Seth Kahan: [00:13:09] Culture of adaptation—just like what I was talking about before—I talked about agility, but now it’s like, can we really morph what we’ve got? Can we take it to a different place? How do we adjust? Let’s look at all the variables, and which one should we adjust? And the last one I’ll mention before we’re done is systemic foresight. Again, just like the briefings, you want to start engaging more deeply in it because, suddenly, you’ve got dramatic changes with short-time horizons, and that’s a different environment. You have a lot of talk in the press about uncertainty and how much the business world does not like uncertainty. That’s where this stuff comes in, dealing with that, so you’ve got to build your chops.

Jeff Cobb: [00:13:47] Really knowing your situation well, having a grip on it, feels fundamental to having the confidence to be able to be agile, to be able to have that visibility and voice that you may need in this situation. What’s your perspective on that? Often organizations move too fast in saying, “Yes, we understand our situation. It’s this, this, and this, and we’re going to move ahead from here,” when they should dig in and come out of that with strong confidence that “We know what’s going on here, and here’s how we’re going to respond.”

Seth Kahan: [00:14:21] Yes, that’s a great question. What I find in my consulting practice is that, in some ways, you could take a lens and say, “I’m going back to basics.” Rather than doing grand challenges, I’m focusing on change, innovation, and leadership. Those are perennial, to use your word. However, it’s 2025, and all those things are done differently and with greater depth than ever before. For example, you can bring AI into the picture and start using prompts to help you dig down deep and to discover where you’re weak whereas your understanding is not as strong as it is in other places. Are there partners that we should be identifying for future fit that it doesn’t necessarily seem like we would be partners, but maybe there are rising or emerging opportunities that would bring us together? There was a great Pepsi Cola document

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on the Internet about how to develop strategic foresight, and they talk about some of the new products that they were able to come up with using strategic foresight—this is 20 years ago—and they had teams of people doing things that AI can do now. God knows how many hours they put into that, and now it's probably measured in seconds or, at most, minutes that you can get some of that same information. We're in a different world, and we want to make use of all the tools that we have. While you might be doing basics, we're talking about doing it at a whole different level.

Jeff Cobb: [00:15:44] And coming back to that idea of systemic foresight because everybody's looking for some foresight right now to figure out how they're going to adapt, where they're going to take things, how do you help organizations (I'm assuming it's primarily the executives and the board) really get that foresight that they need. And what are the characteristics of the leaders who get that and are able to implement that in their organizations?

Seth Kahan: [00:16:09] The characteristics of the leaders are that they're hungry, they're smart, and they understand strategy. Those are really the characteristics, and those fit many of the leaders on boards and many of the CEOs who are out there. Then you've got to feed them something that operates at the level that they're capable of operating. For example, I was just watching a keynote speech for Inteleos, run by Dale Cyr, who does certification and medical ultrasound and radiology in many areas where we're looking at imagery using technology, and he's bringing in keynote speakers that are at the cutting edge of, for example, AI. In fact, he's got one on his board. He's vibing what's the latest thinking out there? AI is one of those fields that's growing exponentially. It's too fast for any of us to keep up with. So he found experts in AI who are genuinely interested in the future of education and certification. He's really importing that knowledge. That's one of the things that you see CEOs doing. They're out scanning the environment for thought leaders who understand their space, who can help them see, "What does this new emerging opportunity look like for us? What should we be concerned about? And what are some of the things that might be counterintuitive?"

Jeff Cobb: [00:17:22] That's the looking forward part of it, but looking back is also something that you need to do. One of the actions that you recommend, which, again, is a perennial thing—you need to come back and do this on a consistent basis—is identifying a legacy practice or assumption that needs to be questioned. We both do a lot of work in the association and nonprofit worlds. I'd like to focus there. What are some of the most common assumptions that you see associations or nonprofits clinging to? What's the downside of doing that? Why do they need to get rid of those things and jettison them to be able to move forward?

Seth Kahan: [00:18:02] One of the most dangerous things that I see is when you've got an organization that is eminent in its field, and people start to say, "Look, we already know what we're doing. We're number one. Let us do it the way we do it. We know this space." That can be really challenging. If I walk into a market leader, and they're telling me about all the weird stuff that they're looking into that's on the horizon, then I relax. But, if they're telling me that they don't need to go digital or that they can still do things the way they did them ten years ago because that's what got them to where they are, then, to me, that's a major danger sign. We all

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know that being eminent in anything does not ensure your future success. That's a perennial issue too. You can look at Clayton Christensen's work on *The Innovator's Dilemma*—that's what that's all about, in part.

Seth Kahan: [00:18:49] When I'm working in an organization, one of the first things I'll do is go in and start interviewing people. I'm always especially interested in interviewing people who are seen as sticks in the mud or are naysayers, apathetic, antagonistic because often they've got something real to say, and I'm all about finding the gem in that. It's like, "What's going on here? Why is this person holding on so tight to this?" And then sussing out, "What's the issue?" Is the issue that the organization is not looking at something, or is the issue that there's a sacred cow that the organization is not willing to sacrifice? Or is the issue that this person is truly living in an organization 20 years ago? And, mostly, it's not the latter, I find.

Jeff Cobb: [00:19:27] To tie a bow around the Disruption Playbook—and, again, we'll definitely link to this because it's a valuable resource, whether you're an executive or at any level of the organization, looking at what's laid out in the playbook is valuable. But, if you want to get started with that or you want to get better at leading through disruption, what's one thing that a listener could potentially do today to start shifting their mindset or their habits?

Seth Kahan: [00:19:52] You want to shake yourself up in a constructive way, and the way that I always do that with myself is I try and find someone who's talking about the thing that I'm interested in and is pretty far out—but not so far out that their feet leave the ground. It's like I want someone to open up a vista for me that I hadn't been seeing before. I set out to intentionally get shaken up. It can have far-reaching consequences because it can reach into every other thing that you're doing. But that's okay. We've got YouTube now at a whole different level than we've ever had it before, and you can find thought leaders on pretty much anything. You can also ask your buddies about it because I find, in any collection of leaders, CEO communities, a group that goes out to lunch together or that has a distribution list, that you can say, "Who's talking about something that seems extremely exciting to you and far out, and tell me why?" That's one thing that you can do right away.

Jeff Cobb: [00:20:48] I've been engaged in a project myself recently and talking with association CEOs—I know you do a lot of work with association CEOs—and I've been specifically concerned with the value of learning in the association value proposition and how CEOs look at that. Learning broadly, not just formal education and events and things like that, but learning more broadly, how is that driving the value of associations? I'd be interested, particularly since you work with change so much—and change requires learning; learning and change go hand in hand—how do you see association CEOs thinking about learning as part of the value of associations for their membership, for society, thinking about it in strategic terms? I'd love to hear your perspective on that.

Seth Kahan: [00:21:44] There's learning for the staff. There's learning for the members. There's learning for the interrelated sectors that you're operating inside of. There's all of that. So ask yourself, "Where is the value proposition now? Am I having more challenges with my staff? Is

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it with my members? Is it with the people that I'm trying to excel out in the world with?" And, in any one of those areas, if you feel that you're being constrained, then obviously that's an area to focus on. I have an engagement right now with a large organization where the majority of the staff are not taking a proactive view towards learning, and that's a problem, and we need to figure out how to resolve that, how to get it to catch in the organization. You really want it to catch—the traction, buy-in is critical for something like this. It's not something you want to push on someone; you want them to be seeking it out. For one thing, with the evolution of things like ChatGPT, we're all capable of highly customizing our own learning and excelling at it.

Seth Kahan: [00:22:39] For example, some organizations are giving ChatGPT to their staff, and then they can't stop there. You've got to give them at least a couple of classes. They can be short and powerful, but you've got to teach them what's possible out of this thing, and there's a lot that's possible out of it. We want that organization in particular to get hungry for learning because we want them to stay at the head of the pack, which is where they are. So that's staff. Then members—obviously there's a value proposition for learning around members. In fact, I was cautioned about this in a meeting I just came out of, which is that we were looking at things that were way out on the horizon, and the CEO said, "We've got to make sure we don't leave our members behind. They're feeling a sore need right now. We need to create some breakthroughs that they're feeling the pain of. We need to make sure that we're doing that." Then you get into learning and teaching the members about what are the constraints? How do you create a breakthrough? Getting change right—I have a formula for a breakthrough. It's not the only formula, but it is a formula, and you can apply those in the organizations.

Seth Kahan: [00:23:40] And then you get into learning. This gets into stakeholder alignment, ecosystems, learning with your partners, and exploring things together. That's not just you sending them stuff; that's getting into the trenches together and looking together at what's out there? What's possible? How is this going to change our field? Where are the opportunities for us? To me, learning is core right now. In the '90s, it was like a new discovery, the learning organization and all of that. To me, now it feels like it's got to be embedded in the foundation for a healthy organization, and, if it's not, then that needs immediate attention, just like other core issues would.

Jeff Cobb: [00:24:17] One of my perspectives—and, again, I'm biased because I've got a hammer, and everything is a nail with this particular issue. I feel like what we've seen happen over the past five to ten years is workforce development, talent pipeline, lifelong learning, upskilling, reskilling—all of these things have become mainstream, commonplace. You read about them in *The New York Times*, when you never used to ten years or so ago. And associations obviously play an incredibly critical role in supporting people from entry into a particular profession or field and then throughout their career. In your work with association CEOs, do you feel like there's a consciousness of the association playing that role in whatever field or industry they're serving?

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Seth Kahan: [00:25:03] Yes, I do. One of the ways that I see that consciousness manifested is in frustration. For example, having a board that is not looking towards the future. They're more interested in managing the mundane aspects of the organization or more interested in flywheel spending by doing the status quo. When I go into an organization, one of the first things I look at is the relationship between the CEO and the board—that tells me so much. In those organizations where it's really humming, those are the organizations that I see flying and succeeding. I'm trying to suss out are there problems? Are there challenges from the CEO's angle with those board members? And how do you work with difficult board members and all of that? When I see a CEO who's frustrated because his board won't take on something that's going to carry the organization forward, that tells me that there are some learning issues—assuming that the CEO's doing well—with the board, and then we get into how do we create some learning experiences for the board? How do we get them out of their comfort zone? One of my favorite things is something experiential. Let's take a field trip. Let's go to an organization that's got this down. Let's walk in and see what it feels like when you're in an organization where people are excited about the future and actively retooling their minds so that they're more capable, more equipped to deal with what's going on.

Jeff Cobb: [00:26:22] Our conversation has obviously turned to learning, which is appropriate here on the Leading Learning Podcast.

Seth Kahan: [00:26:27] Yes, that's right.

Jeff Cobb: [00:26:27] I would love to hear a little bit about your own learning right now. What's something that you're learning right now, whether it's about leadership, change, or anything else? Because I know you've got wide and varied interests that you're very kind to share with the people who follow you. What are you learning about that you think others should also be thinking about right now?

Seth Kahan: [00:26:48] I'm taking deep dives into my client spaces. You've probably seen my podcast where I'm interviewing people who are physicists in medicine, for example. I just learned about the use of digital twins at a population level, and I got a much deeper introduction to digital twins. A digital twin in the healthcare space is a mirror image of you with all your healthcare information fed into it. Right now, we still talk about the lack of coordination of care. If somebody's got diabetes and they've got congestive heart failure, some human being that's in their family has to take accountability for making sure that those two doctors know what the other one is doing and that they're not issuing contrarian advice and so on and so forth. With the digital twin, you can feed all the information into a computer simulation of a human being, and you can see immediately if there are challenges. How does congestive heart failure interact with diabetes, for example? And it can be a healthy person too. It doesn't have to be someone who's suffering. But you create a digital image that has all of the health information of a human being, and then you can do things to it, and you can watch how the whole system changes.

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Seth Kahan: [00:27:52] Now, all they have is healthcare information, so it may not know what color my eyes are or what kind of clothes I prefer to wear, but it will know what my blood pressure is and things like that and the medication that I'm on. And then extrapolating that... This, by the way, was from a podcast with Dr. Ehsan Samei in North Carolina, who is doing this work, and he'll create copies of these digital twins, so he has entire populations. He could look at 20,000 people who have a lot of different characteristics and ask the question, "If such-and-such a virus were to come loose in this environment, who's likely to catch it? What kind of symptoms are going to be the most severe that we need to treat? Who should we go after first in terms of vaccinations?" Things like that. That's all me doing a deep dive into physics and medicine, and I start learning about digital twins and stuff like that. I love to learn more about the clients that I'm working with, and I do a lot of work, as do you, in science and healthcare, and that continues to feed there.

Seth Kahan: [00:28:48] Of course, I'm studying AI. You can't be alive these days and be operating and not be studying AI. I'm pulling in books. I'm looking for references. I'm following people on LinkedIn. I'm watching videos and trying to understand. And I'm using it myself. That's another thing I should say—everybody in my family is using AI. My daughter, who's in college—she's a freshman in college—said, "Dad, I don't need to use AI." And I said, "Okay, I'm paying for ChatGPT for one month, and I'm coming back to you in 30 days." I came back, and it's, "No, don't take it away. Don't take it away." Everybody should be trying it out and using it. I often hear in the news someone saying, "You have no idea what's really going on in AI. The stuff that you're using was hot six months ago." I want to know, what does that mean? What are you doing? Educate me. Give me an idea. I'm very interested in how organizations and businesses are using AI, what they're relying on it for, how they're relying on it, and how do they keep the human at the helm while they're doing all of this? Those are a couple of areas. I could go into other sectors with my clients, but it's the deep dive with clients and AI, those are areas where I'm learning a lot. Let me turn the tables on you for just a little bit in this. What are you most excited about when it comes to leadership, learning, and AI?

Jeff Cobb: [00:30:07] With AI, where I've been trying to implement it, it's how can I take AI and use it in the business in a variety of different ways, not just from a productivity standpoint, but how does it help me with analysis? How does it help me with brainstorming, strategic foresight, all those things that I need myself just as much as my clients need? Of course, I will bring it to bear. We do a ton of market assessment and things like that, so bringing it to bear, it's like I can have almost a whole team of analysts with me to work through whatever the particular situation is. That's incredibly fascinating. In my personal life, on the side, I'm a musician, and I'm starting to figure out how AI might be instructive there—what I would or wouldn't want AI to help me with in terms of musical production and things like that. What's possible is just truly fascinating.

Seth Kahan: [00:30:58] That's an area that I'm interested in, what you just talked about with your music. With my ChatGPT, which I have a small subscription for, it caches all my stuff. I'm asking it about everything. I might say, "My daughter's a vegan, and I need a recipe for dinner

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tonight." I'm going on a camping trip. I'm trying to figure out are there any bugs or poisonous snakes where I'm going that I should be aware of. I'm a spiritual person, so I'm reading all these sacred texts that I find interesting and doing analysis, and I'll say, "What are the top five copies of the Bhagavad Gita that are written by or that are commented on by someone who's a non-dualist?" It's like getting to the arcane stuff. ChatGPT's got all of that. Of course, there's my business. I'll feed whole conversations into it and say, "I need a summary of this conversation. What were the most important points?" and stuff like that. Then, when I go back to it and ask it some generic question, it draws on all of that, and I'm surprised sometimes. It'll say, "Because you're interested in this, you definitely need to check that out." And those are dots that I would never have connected on my own. There's this holistic element when you utilize it for all the different areas of your life that it brings to the table. And I really like that element of it. I feel like there are often really good surprises in there for me.

Celisa Steele: [00:32:19] You'll find show notes and a transcript for this episode at leadinglearning.com/episode457, along with ways to learn more about the work Seth Kahan does through Visionary Leadership.

Jeff Cobb: [00:32:31] If you found this episode valuable, we'd be grateful if you'd share it with a colleague. That helps more people find the show and supports the work we do.

Celisa Steele: [00:32:39] Jeff, you and Seth covered a lot of ground, from the impact of political disruption on many organizations to practical ways leaders can strengthen their foresight and flexibility.

Jeff Cobb: [00:32:50] I think the elements he covers in his Disruption Playbook highlight how important it is to stay grounded in situational awareness. True, accurate situational awareness is something I've long seen as absolutely foundational for any strategy work.

Celisa Steele: [00:33:07] I appreciated Seth's take on learning as a strategic necessity—learning is core, as he put it.

Jeff Cobb: [00:33:13] And I appreciated Seth's personal take on AI, using it not just for productivity but as a tool for curiosity and exploration in work and family life.

Celisa Steele: [00:33:23] Thanks again for listening—see you next time on the Leading Learning Podcast.

[music for this episode by Moarn]