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**SPEAKERS**

Tara Arthur, Lucy

**Tara Arthur** 00:10

In recent years, humanitarian responses have been complicated by compounding crises such as climate change, epidemics and pandemics and complex conflicts in an ever changing humanitarian and development space, we ask, what does the security and safety of aid workers look like, and what might it look like in the future? I'm Tara Arthur from the global Interagency Security Forum. In each episode, I'll be speaking to guests about topics such as the localization of aid, the ups and downs of community acceptance, and the role of security in a digital world. Join me as we unpack the evolutions of NGO security risk management. Hi, Lucy, how are you today?

**Lucy** 00:56

Good. How you doing? Tara,

**Tara Arthur** 00:58

Thanks for being with us. It's wonderful to have you on the podcast.

**Lucy** 01:02

Yeah, it's a pleasure.

**Tara Arthur** 01:03

Well, I understand this might be one of the first times you've been on an episode with us, so we're excited to dive into some interesting conversations about leadership and so much more and but before we get down there, it would be great to hear a little bit about yourself.

**Lucy** 01:21

Yeah, this is definitely a blast from the past coming onto this podcast. Since it's been a little while since I've been in this space, but I I started out my career many, many moons ago, and the humanitarian logistics zone, I started out as a supply chain intern with Action Against Hunger USA, you know, figuring out just that their entire cartridge supply and Kinshasa was fake and needed, you know, really some, like, incredible, gnarly problems those early days. But it's funny, the things that get you excited when you're first in your career, but I started out there and went on to do a lot of just several different operations roles, Field Operations roles, shift a buzz head of base in DRC in South Sudan and Pakistan, and was started a family with a SRM professional as well. So I've lived alongside the SRM world very closely. I've been watching, as you know, security incidences occur, and the responses to that and hearing that second hand, but where I am today is very different, and yet there's a lot of overlap, which is, I work now in the space of organizational transformation. Mainly it began with the frustrations I saw when I was in the field, you know, out on the edge of the organization, trying to get things done. And it wasn't usually the constraints on the ground. It was usually Capital office or HQ that really, I was just like, Guys, what are you doing? We, like, vehicles need to run. And I'm in northern Bahr el Ghazal in South Sudan, like, I can't go get my authentic Land Cruiser pots, like, down the street, you know, like, the options are very limited. And I just watched different organizations where some of them had it really figured out, and it was just so much smoother. And that meant that the work could get on and they could do more. And then others where it was like, you want to bang your head against a brick wall trying, just to keep, you know, six vehicles running without busting out the budget line. So that's actually kind of where my passion for organizational design and leadership started. Because I was like, this is the this is the bottom line, if we can't figure this stuff out, like it's kind of a moot point. So years and years later, going through I worked at the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention in the global side, and worked with other health systems and built leadership management, supported the kind of questions around, how do you strengthen those organizations that led me to doing this full time in a company called the ready that I really love, their sort of ethos and approach to this work. So that's how I'm here today and back in the SRM space, which is a real treat.

**Tara Arthur** 04:07

Wow. I think it's so interesting to hear such a amazing background and and a little bit about your journey into where you are now. And I, I think actually the well, there's so many questions I look forward to diving in with you about but let's start with this idea that you you kind of alluded to. You're sitting a little bit outside of the SRM space, but you have quite familiarity with it. How do you see that work that you're doing now with leadership and other work? How do you see that being important to the this community, the security SRM, humanitarian community.

**Lucy** 04:45

It's a great question. I think what comes to mind is an adage that, that we say often, which is that every system produces exactly the results it's designed for. So, as an SRM professional, or frankly, if you know... We see the same thing with like, eight, you know, HR professionals or folks that whose role it is to hold a certain portfolio in the organization. It can be really hard when that's that's sort of in service of something else. And so you're constantly trying to make the case for why and how we need to deal with these things and and it can be difficult to like know how to go about that, but I do believe that almost any role in an organization, the more you can look at the organization with a little bit of an armchair or designer mindset, the more you can have an impact with the portfolio, or the function or the thing that you're supposed to be responsible for. And I just, I love helping people along that journey of being curious about like, you know, we talk about this notion of an operating system that's running in the background of the organization, and that is all your assumptions and beliefs and practices and processes and policies and policies and how we do things around here, it's in the weeds of all of that that you have surface area to make a difference and to get progress in the portfolio that you're holding, which as a security you know, as an SRM professional, that's what your role requires, is all of that influencing So becoming a bit of an armchair org designer, to me, feels like the sort of a piece of the puzzle in order to to effectively play a role like that in a system.

**Tara Arthur** 06:33

That's really interesting, Lucy. I think that what you're saying makes, resonates a lot, and I'm hearing a lot more people talk about that in the in the security community, and there's a lot of efforts, you know, over the last few years, really talking to this point, around leadership and what does that mean, and engaging in the influencing you were just referring to. And I think more work is a is underway in that space. But I think you know what you're just sharing, it'd be really good for you to go deeper with us, if you can on, what do you think are the building blocks of leadership? What? What are some of the things that really create that framework that we should all be looking to?

**Lucy** 07:12

There's a thousand different definitions of leadership, so I think it always helps to just kind of ground in something to start with. But in you know leadership is at its most basic level, just your capacity to influence people and systems to be different from what they are today. You know that can be good or bad or you know, but that's essentially what what it looks like to lead. So not formal titles, not you can put all sorts of wrapping around what you think is good leadership, but essentially, how can you move a system and people and help them get to places they aren't currently everything I'm sharing to I think, is none of it's my own, like it's all just sort of a conglomeration of the other things I've experienced and read and worked with. But you know that first piece is your capacity to influence so understanding the art and science of influence is an ongoing life journey. And I think the other thing to say up front with all of these building blocks is like, they'll serve you in every other part of your life too. The number of times where I'm coaching someone and and they go, that's really smart. Gosh, I should use that at home too with my family. I'm like, yeah. So, you know, like, that's what I love about this work, is that you, you learn something that's useful in one space, and it really, it pays off in all of the rest of your life. So some people see it as like, oh, I don't know you can. You don't need to learn this sort of stuff. You can just kind of grow on the fly. It's like, not true, and you you're going to find it useful in a lot of different realms. So that first thing is a capacity to influence. There's lots of good stuff out there. Books that come to mind for me are influencer, which is written by the Crucial Conversations crowd, hack your bureaucracy is another good one I've enjoyed. There's tons of them, but those are just a couple that come to mind. And then underneath that, the second building block of my opinion, is a little bit what I mentioned in about being the org designer, is you're a system sense maker. So like good leaders are, in my opinion, not just inspiring people. And like they have, they are always trying to sense and understand the system they're in. So that's the people and that they're leading, and the team that they're leading, and the wider organization and the ecosystem that it sits in. So you you have to understand what you are trying and who you're trying to influence, and that that system is never static. And we talk a lot about the ready, about complexity consciousness, which is the idea that often, like complicated problems are things like solving for, you know, fixing a watch that doesn't work, or a car that, you know, you take to the mechanic you there's generally pretty set ways to fix that, and if you have enough expertise, you can fix it. You don't expect a clown to jump out of the engine of your car, you know, like it just, it's not a it's not a scenario that's viable. However, in complex challenges and complex systems, we talk about there not being a very clear causal link between cause and effect. So a six year old is a complex system. A humanitarian...

**Tara Arthur** 10:19

I would agree!

**Lucy** 10:19

Yeah, this complex system, yeah, yeah, a garden is a complex system. Weather patterns, traffic patterns. These things have dispositional, they're dispositional so they kind of trend in certain directions. And you can tend to expect certain things, and then they surprise you. And I think security is a super relevant example of that. And risk management, of, you know, SOPs and best practices only get you so far, because they're all based on the previous experiences we've had. And then something happens we've never seen before, and then we're like, Oh, shoot. What do we do for that you can't fix for it, you're always going to be sensing and navigating and steering, just like you sail a boat, you never just sail directly like a straight line. You're always kind of, so it's, it's getting comfortable with that reality and getting sort of more into this notion of complex systems. And there's a lot of amazing I'm a nerd about it, but, you know, the science around it's really fascinating. And when you take complexity theory and you apply it to the field you're in, it just brings up all sorts of really insightful I think it's sort of a rabbit hole that that's always worth going down almost no matter what you do or what field you work in. And along with that, I'd say another building block is like, you love the problem more than the solution. So I'll say a little bit more about that later. But just, I think I've seen this in security spaces. I've seen it a lot of others. Is like, you know, we all like the idea of buying a thing, like, oh, we'll install these kinds of doors on the building, and we're going to put people through this training, and we're going to give them these kinds of kits and, and you're like, cool. Does it actually work when, like, you know, things go down right? Did it actually use and so really staying obsessed with that problem. And then a couple of other building blocks that come to mind for me is this idea of balancing the fish and the fish bowl, which...

**Tara Arthur** 12:15

Oh! Tell me more about that.

**Lucy** 12:17

We talk about, like, you know, you look at an organization that's got a bunch of problems as an SRM professional, and you're like, oh, you know, leadership just doesn't care, and they don't listen, or, you know, whatever. Or you go, Oh, well, you know, we just don't have the budget or the resources, or the system's not set up to like, support, like, we can't, we can't do it because the system doesn't allow it. So one is the fish is the people, and the other as a fishbowl, as a system, and we often tend to have a side that we prefer to work with, like, Oh, let me just like, you know, kind of massage the relationships with so and so, and kind of get them by, you know, like, just get them behind closed doors. Or we're really into like, Let's build another process. And let's like, put a thing in place. And let's like, put on, you know, you wanting to. You're always moving between both, right? You need to be able to influence the fish and the fish bowl. And then you also, you know, and the fish is that's nurturing trusted relationships and showing empathy, showing you truly understand where the other players are coming from. And on the fishbowl side, it's that system sense making, and it's understanding, again, coming back to that old designer piece of like, how do organizations truly change if you see an organization that moves from being really kind of unprepared for the kinds of security challenges they need to deal with to actually being prepared for it, what is that arc really look like? What actually obviously, it's not going to be a linear pathway. It's not going to be because they gave you $2 million and suddenly you could do everything you wanted to do. It's going to be much, much more nuanced than that. And it's going, where are the stories of where people have actually balanced the fish in the fish bowl and seen that journey take place?

**Tara Arthur** 13:57

So, let me take you there. Let me take you to to that journey of the... who's leading the fishbowl, like you know, if we were, and maybe I got the analogy wrong here, but, but how about where senior leaders sit into that fishbowl space? And I think you were just alluding to that, that relationship in that dynamic, but also the skills required to balance that. So I'm just wondering, you know, what are those examples? What are some of those stories that you've seen in that story arc of a good balance of the fishbowl?

**Lucy** 14:31

That's a really great question. I think obviously, in terms of what I can sort of share really explicitly, I think I can think of an example of a cluster coordinator in South Sudan. This is going back a while, so obviously, and I was at a distance watching this, but to me, it strikes me as an example of fish and fish bowl. You know, this person, and this is a perfect example of, if people like we say, you know, show me what you can do without budget or authority. And I'll show you true leadership. And this is totally a case of that. This person was a intern with a very small, not very well, you know, like an NGO that was not, not one of the big, big Kahunas, if you like, first time in the field. Didn't even have a background in, in that cluster. Like, was just new to everything, but she had this incredible capacity to build relationships and bring people together and make the fish feel like they were part of something that could actually have an impact and was bigger than themselves, and was worth setting aside their specific organizational agendas. And then she learned on the fly, bringing that curiosity, really learned the fishbowl. How do we do this work? You know, how does water and sanitation work? Her curiosity and interest, and all of that was very helped also build that social capital. And I mean, I'd have to check LinkedIn, but, you know, these days, she's a global cluster coordinator of some kind. So the point is, like, there is a way in which you can, you have to sort of read both of them and know your positionality, and know where you sit in the system. And that positionality can sometimes feel frustrating on you know, it's like, oh, well, you know, I'm not going to get as listened to because of X, Y or Z, be that as it may. And you know, we're all here to dismantle like systems that are of oppression and shared voice and all the rest of it. I was listening to the podcast episode with javaria, and she was talking about, you know, the different, like her positionality coming into the security space. And it takes a lot of strength and courage to be like she is and be like, You know what? I know I'm not going to get treated like as I should in the system, as an equal, and yet, I'm going to do the work to manage the emotional labor that's that shouldn't be mine to carry, but I'm going to carry it anyway, because I care about this purpose, and I'm going to consider how I need to look after myself to do that in order to then press in and understand the system that I'm trying to influence and the people that I'm trying to influence. So I think that's where I've seen, sort of back to the same example of the cluster coordinator that I mentioned is like, where we're obsessed with the problem. We don't need to have all the answers, and we do Lean on relationships in order to move things forward. And then we pay attention to the very tactical, operational things that stand in the way, which is when, when you get back to the org designer side of it, the sort of, you know, where you go, Okay, if we look at the, say, operating system of what's behind the scenes, how everything's getting done, it could be some procurement rule that says we're not allowed to, you know, buy this kind of thing from this kind of vendor that's getting in the way of us just Being able to do something really, really critical, you know. And I think if I go back to my very first example of, like, why couldn't we have a supply chain of authentic Land Cruiser parts from Kampala? I watched another NGO set this up from zero to, like, 100 in six weeks. What are we doing at Capital office that's not like making that possible. Why? Like, it's not okay. It's not a reasonable excuse, like, something's amiss. I'm not saying it's gonna be easy. I'm not saying we can do it overnight, but I am saying it's a problem that we need to love and love until it's truly solved, rather than like, oh, well, you know, so that kind of approach I saw in these folks, where they just constantly moving between the fish and the fishbowl, in that way. You're sort of thinking like the senior leaders that an SRM professional is having to interact with, sort of, what's, what's going through their brain?

**Tara Arthur** 18:43

that's really interesting. It's probably going to resonate with a lot of people. And I think something you said earlier about not, the title doesn't necessarily match the strength or the positionality of the leadership and the capacity of those people to be able to lead. And so in thinking about that, I think it's wonderful to hear, hear your reflections. It's it's super interesting and important. And I'm wondering, for those people who are designated as those leaders, do you see them as coming to you challenges, or are there particular challenges that you hear more often from people with those designated roles, and then, you know, how do you encourage them, if at all, to collaborate with those connectors that you were just alluding to? Yes.

**Lucy** 19:41

I mean, I think that there's a few pieces going on there. Again, I would almost say if I was an SRM professional, I would be less interested in what me Lucy is hearing from a leader, though, I'm sure there are some patterns to what you're seeing with your specific executive leaders. That you're sitting with, which is where there's a certain kind of posture that is ideal to have in place, I think, when you're in a position like an SRM professional, which is of partnership rather than hierarchy, you know, and there is a lot of layers that can get in the way of that. But in essence, like, how can I show up, and how, in a way, that this executive leader feels like I am like in a partnership with them, and I am orienting towards what they are sort of leading, as the, you know, the strategy and the most critical things for the organization. How can it? How can it feel like the way I'm addressing or leading the security portfolio is in service of that, and I think, and that also goes like, who is your end user? In a sense, your end user is, frankly, whoever has the purse strings and whoever needs to execute or deliver on the work. And so for an ESRM professional, it's going to be, you know, kind of staff, and so that the auxiliary edges around that of, you know, those that you cooperate with in the field and all the rest, and then the leadership team and by kind of donors around that as well. And so I think the way that we often talk about it is like, what is this? We call it like a cross functional, gnarly cross functional problem that you're trying to solve in the organization, right? And occasionally security might be that gnarly cross functional problem, because something went terribly wrong, and suddenly you're in the spotlight again, and now you've got a chance, but a lot of the time you're not operating from that space. So what is it that as an organization we are, it's not just one project or one country office or one it's like something that stretches across the whole organization that that leader that you are influencing is up at night thinking about, you know, and that may be resourcing. And you know that that feels like sort of too easy. Of it, like resourcing is always, you know, like, that's always a question, right where? And that applies in business and public sector, like, what is it that might be getting in the way of the resourcing that seems to continue to be a challenge. So for example, one of the clients I'm in they, and this is common in the development and humanitarian space. They both have longer term programmatic work, and they have emergency response work, and their ability to move between those two and deploy staff between those two and have their knowledge management kind of track so that when they have to go and do the emergency response somewhere where there's been long term programming, they're not sort of reinventing the wheel. So this is, it's a perennial challenge, and there, that's the kind of thing that then you go, Okay, how does security fit into that? And where is it relevant here? And how can I make it feel as if the contribution the security portfolio makes helps get at that gnarly cross functional problem, rather than like, off in its own silo.

**Tara Arthur** 23:08

So, yeah, speaking of like, cross functional, and just thinking about the relationship between leaders and their teams or units, you know, and in the context of, you know, how you've been outlining it. I'm just wondering, from your vantage point on, like, you know, key skill sets, or, you know, what are? What are some of the the things that you can do from both sides, from both the the leadership side, but also people who are part of a team to kind of cross those bridges together, especially if you're having to do that cross function and you have, you know, different actors in that conversation. What are some of the foundational leadership perspectives that you think you've seen be successful models for people?

**Lucy** 23:58

I think there is two main threads, or kind of buckets come to mind. One is what we would call like ways of working and practices that we learn and use as teams to do the work day in, day out. So we that's the first bucket. And then the second one that I'll talk about is kind of everything around ego work, or what we call the ready like the midnight zone, the stuff inside ourselves, you know?

**Tara Arthur** 24:27

I want to more about that?

**Lucy** 24:29

Yeah, we don't want to talk about , ahhhhhhh, feelings! I'm an SRM professional. I don't have feelings. Ahh Sorry. You really do. A lot of feelings, in fact, but the first one is, is a little bit more approachable often, which is, we call it ways of working. It's like, how do you guys make decisions? How do you run your meetings? How do you communicate asynchronously? How do you structure temporary teams when you need to stand up a team for something? Yeah, you know, for a short period of time, what do you do when you stand up? That team. How do you establish it? What are the kind of practices you move through? How do you share feedback with each other? How do you give feedback? How do you receive it? How do you approach strategy? How do you reflect and learn as an organization like there are very specific practices that you can learn together as a team. We call them containers. They're just then. You're not relying on people to kind of use their interpersonal, emotional labor to have a conversation, not as much as they would otherwise, or to think about, you know, kind of to keep a meeting running. It's like, if we all know that we're, you know, for example, we're going to use the integrative decision making process to get to consent on this complex decision that's high stakes and needs everybody's input, and we can't afford for it to go round and round in circles. Great, once we learn the muscle of doing that process together, it goes from being like a swirly six week, oh my gosh, everyone's up in everyone's business and super annoyed with each other and like all the rest, to we made a $3 million capital decision in 11 minutes, because we all know how the process goes, and we played by the rules of the game, and we got what we needed, and we found something that was safe to try, as we would say. So it's how can you take containers and use them to take the load off your own interpersonal emotional labor?

**Tara Arthur** 26:16

Is this part of the ego work? Is this container concept, part of that ego.

**Lucy** 26:22

The connection between those two is that containers can sometimes feel constricting when people want, like for the ego, they can be constricting because if I say to you, we're going to make a big group decision on a high stakes issue, and I tell you, but you are not allowed to just speak up anytime you want. You're not allowed to take up, like, air time that, like, you have to first ask your clarifying questions, then you need to provide reactions, but you get one chance to do it, and then we're going to, you know, make amendments, and then you are allowed to object. But here are the criteria for a valid objection, if you don't fit that, and then after that, everyone can still consent people, the ego doesn't like it, because I just wanted to be able to harp on about how Bob's idea over here is like a waste of time, and I think it's never going to work. And we tried it two years ago, like that's not a helpful conversation. So containers that that sort of starve off unhealthy and unhelp unhelpful ways of showing up and and kind of feed people into healthier ways of showing up. They're not, they're not a capsule. They're not going to fix everything, obviously. But when there's enough buy into the idea of like using containers rather than relying on personality and influence in an unhealthy way, that definitely shuts down the ego that is looking for, you know, whatever it needs, validation, visibility, yada yada, so and that other bucket of ego work is to understand yourself and do that kind of, I mean, there's 1000 ways you can kind of, you know, do inner work, so to speak. I think one of my favorite, favorite, most basic places to go for that is a book called The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz. It's just it's so basic and yet so powerful when it thinks about kind of setting aside your own ego in this work, and just again, when you love the problem more than the solution and the problem is bigger than just a security problem, that's what drives you to set aside the ego and go, No, it's not here. I'm not here to be a he on a hero's journey like I am not centered in this story. How do I center that challenge that is bigger than myself and bigger than the portfolio that I hold? And what am i, How am I going to contribute to that?

**Tara Arthur** 28:33

So how do you get to that place? Because that sounds very interesting, but practically in thinking about changing teams or changing realities, particularly in the SRM space, you know, how do you have consistency there? And is, are these, you know, competencies that you would envision for security professionals, widely or more, on the leadership angle? And who's the Initiate in that space.

**Lucy** 29:02

Yeah, well, if we start with the question of, like, containers and practices you can use as a team. A lot of these are very, very simple and very like, you can try them today and, like, start using them right away. Like, for example, super simple is what we call a check in round. So the science is really clear that in a team where the biggest predictor of team performance is shared voice, how equally voice is shared across the team. So obviously you can't just kind of wave a wand and be like, everybody speak for five minutes each like, no, you've still got the folks that like to dominate and the people that sit back, but you can do things to nudge towards that reality as a team lead. But you can also do it if you're participating in a senior leadership team. You could say, Hey guys, I've heard the sciences that this practice is really great for helping teams perform better. Would any of you guys be willing to try? Like...

**Tara Arthur** 29:59

You got that, Everyone? You just got a tip if you didn't have that.

**Lucy** 30:05

So it's kind of discovering small practices, like a check in round, which is simply a question up the top of the meeting that could have nothing to do with the work, or it has something to do with the work. And you go round robin, quick verbal response, and everybody's voice is heard before the meeting gets started. There's something about hearing everyone open their mouth that actually transforms the kind of conversation you end up having. It greases the skids and like, you know, it sounds Woo, but it works. It so works. And I've seen this with, you know, a bunch of high level scientists that don't think they have time for that and they just want to get on with the work. And I'm like, All right, well, did you notice a difference when we did it and we didn't? They're like, Oh yeah, that felt good!

**Tara Arthur** 30:47

As a participant, I can say I've felt that I didn't know there was such science behind it. That's very accurate. I can tell you that it feels good when you have that.

**Lucy** 30:58

Totally! Google did a big research project, that the main data comes from the Google project Aristotle, that that discovered that discovered that really made this clear. And again, that's where I would say, you know, you can go on the reddies website, we got podcasts, all sorts of resources for just dozens of small practices like that. There's larger ones too, but there's small things you can try that can help bring a team together in numerous ways. And they do not have to, you do not have to hold a formal role. You don't have to be the team lead of that team to just propose we try something, you know?

**Tara Arthur** 31:32

so on that point actually, you know, as you as you probably well know, trust is such a essential component of the work we do. And I'm just thinking about, do you have other, you know, techniques or other strategies or other science that you think have helped really foster that trust in different ways?

**Lucy** 31:52

Yeah, that's one of the clients we're working with right now. That is one of the three major outcomes of our entire engagement over, you know, 12 to 18 months is trust and transparency. So there's, again, kind of, like, leadership. There's a lot of different ways you can, you know, put definition around it. But I have heard, sort of, you know, trust is there's trust in people's competency, there's trust in people's intent, you know, and there's, there's trust in kind of the system to, like, hold things up, right? Like, can I trust the whole organization to follow through as well? Right? And what I would say is, if we go back to the same kind of containers and ego work, or ways of working practices and ego work on the container side, there's principles that you can kind of keep in mind and then go, Okay, if we're using this principle, how would we be working one of those that can build trust, and has definitely been. There's some really good examples of this in in the US military and in major operations. I think when bin Laden was was tracked down, this principle was used, and it's defaulting to transparency, which sounds very kind of like, you kidding me? Hell no. And but the risk of people not having the information they need to make decisions across the organization and having asymmetry of information both creates suspicion like, well, what are you hiding from me? And it means they make poor decisions because they don't have the information they need, and it's hard to know who's going to need what information. So if we default to transparency, unless we know for sure it's going to do harm or there is a high risk that is going to be unsafe for the organization or someone in it, or, you know, partners, but often the bar of what we think is unsafe to share is, is no one's actually looked at it in 10 years, yeah. And it's not necessarily based on, like, a really good case. So one of, and this is one of the ways where, like, I could see SRM professionals, you know, that that general sort of tussle of, like, oh well, the SRM professionals just trying to stop us from being able to do our job, you know, like no, no. What we're here to do is get explicit about the risk that we're trying to mitigate, and explicit about what residual risk we can't touch that's just going to be there, and then make informed decisions about how we move forward on that basis, in service of the bigger picture that we're here for. And so how can you bring principles like defaulting to transparency, which then, you know, logistically, tactically means, okay, how is our tooling set up if we use Microsoft Teams or slack, who has access to what channels like, you know, there's all the kind of mechanics of it that come afterwards, but it's just one example of a principle that maybe would not be the one you expect to hear from the SRM professional, and so it's another way to build kind of social capital and credibility in the organization, if you, as the SRM professional, are also seen as the innovative and the experimental and the default to transparency and these other kind of. The traits you don't expect. That's a way to get to have influence, to show that you're not kind of a one trick pony, if you like. Oh, you've got a hobby horse that you're standing on the whole time, because you're ultimately still part of the leadership team, and you're still here for the whole picture, even though you bring a certain expertise. So, yeah, that's an example from the container side.

**Tara Arthur** 35:19

that's so interesting. I feel like, you know, that's that's some useful technical insights that you've just shared that I know that, you know, there's probably some security managers who are actively engaged in some of that, but I think, you know, it would be very interesting to hear just a little bit about how someone can work towards those skills, if they they're interested. You know, we have some, some amazing talents in the sector who, you could probably say are in those places already, or they're part of that, that forward change that we're seeing and and I know some of them are even working on on this leadership conversation in the the security space. But for those who might be more junior or just starting out, and they're they're trying to get themselves ready to to be in those more, assume those, those capacities further. Do you have any recommendations for that?

**Lucy** 36:12

I think that at its most core is giving yourself the gift of time to step back and reflect and learn from what you're experiencing and make sense of it with the help of good resources around you. And so I would say that, you know, I mean, obviously I have a great bias of, like, start with, you know, we have a book, brave new work, which is written by our founder, that kind of, if you've never thought about organizational design and systems before, and you want to just kind of dip your feet in and kind of get the flyover, 30,000 foot view. That's a fantastic it's almost like a reference guide. It's a little little dated, but it's still really, really good for the entry level. And really just set aside that time to cultivate that step back and go, Okay, what happened this week, like when I sat in these meetings and in these conversations, how did people show up? What did I notice? What seemed to work, what didn't work? What is it that they are trying to achieve? And get really curious and document that, and then finding spaces where other people are trying to do a similar thing. Maybe it's that you get together once a month with others that are in a similar space to you, professionally, at a similar stage, and you pull up, like, there's a thing called Troika, which is like peer consulting. And you bring you can Google that, or we can put notes in the slide notes. You know, it's peer consulting, of like, what are the challenges you're facing and and just batting around ideas. So combine that with, you know, just a consistent stream of material from, I would say, like, from the org design system side, like, at the ready, we put a lot out there, and then on the leadership side, which we kind of overlap with, there's even just like walking into a bookstore, and just like scanning the shelves pick like there's so many good things out there on leadership, I would, I would hesitate to really recommend anyone in particular, but I think it's about setting aside the time and then, just like building up a collection of whether you're a podcast or an article person or a book reader or however you get your content, is like nourishing your mind constantly with new new stuff in that space. And after a while, you'll start to see, oh yeah, there's parallels between this and that idea and this thing and oh, this is how I'm but it's like taking it in, metabolizing it with reflection and learning and then trying things out and then coming back and reflecting on how you learn. That's the only way we grow over time. I think, especially in the nebulous world of like becoming a more effective leader, is like and obviously in there is like coaching and mentorship, finding mentors that not are in the same field as you necessarily, but who you respect for how they have progressed in their career. I think that's what I would look for and who they are as people. And then coaching, you know, is usually comes with a bit of a price tag, but I think there are still a lot of coaching versus mentoring, two very different things. You know, as soon as you kind of have the resources, coaching can feel like a huge investment, but good coaching goes just a huge long way. And I feel like I have felt the value of that myself, so that can often feel out of reach for some folks, but if the opportunity arises, I would never turn it down. You know?

**Tara Arthur** 39:36

well, that's really, I think, some great tips and food for thought for a lot of us to think about and walk away with. Before we go, I just want to give you an opportunity, if, if there's anything else that you think would be important to leave us with, with this community and you know, maybe even just just your reflections, that. And some really important things that you want to leave us with.

**Lucy** 40:03

Yeah, it feels like we've gone, we've gone to so many different lanes and threads on this conversation, but I think I would just come back to that curiosity and that what we said earlier, of complexity, consciousness of this might sound harsh, but like no one owes us their understanding or appreciation of what we're going to do and what we're trying to achieve. I we feel this as consultants, like no one owes me that, you know, bearing in mind that you have all sorts of kinds of personalities and people that care less or more about security or all the rest of it, like, at the end of the day, it's that influencing role of like, my job is to figure out how I can help this system and these folks move forward towards the overall picture of what we need to do in a way that accounts for the portfolio that sits under my under my watch, rather than like, I need to get them to be security compliant. No, I need it to be in service of the bigger picture, and then that's the answers of how to do that are never the same in every you never step in the same river twice, and it's just always think of it like the six year old. It's you're never quite going to get the same response. And so how do we stay curious and how do we be flexible and low ego when the responses we get aren't the same as we used to get, or aren't or aren't what we expected, and just stay in it for the long game, because none of these systems change overnight. And I have seen up close the investment in readiness and security preparedness, and I have seen when that readiness has saved lives when things really went down, and I think that's what we're here for. So hang in there and have patience too!

**Tara Arthur** 41:49

That says it all that right there, I think is so important, and I couldn't think of a better way for us to hopefully continue that conversation carry a lot of the takeaways you've shared with us forward. Thank you so much, Lucy, it's been fascinating to see the SRM world through the leadership lens a bit today, and we hope that you'll, you know, be able to continue this conversation on leadership in SRM with us in the future. And we hope everyone will have a great day wherever you're listening from.

**Lucy** 42:23

Thanks, this has been great, Tara.

**Tara Arthur** 42:25

It was so good to have you, see you again! The global Interagency Security Forum is a member led NGO, with a global network of over 140 member organizations and affiliates, we are committed to achieving sustainable access for populations in need to improve safety and security for aid workers and operations. GIS, F's, original research collaboration and events drive positive change in security risk management across the humanitarian and development sector. We operate according to humanitarian principles and lead on best practices and innovation by pushing for a collaborative and inclusive approach to security risk management.

43:05