

Ali Schultz:

It's so nice to be here with you. I'm really glad that we decided to do this. I'd like to have you introduce yourself a little bit. Um, I'll just say this. And then, you can fill in the gaps.

I will say, um, that you are a dear friend of Reboot. And, um, whenever we get, um, a client who's in a career transition, um, and potentially looking for a new gig, we always think of you. Tell us, tell us just a little bit about who you are and what you do as a little brief introduction.

Keith McAllister:

Thank you for having me. And I'm grateful and, uh, uh, appreciate the introduction. And, uh, as you know, some of my favorite people in the world, uh, are at Reboot. So pleasure to be with you. Tell you about myself, um, let's see.

So I've had kind of three phases of my career, uh, you know, born and raised, child of a a jer- of journalist in New York City in Greenwich Village. So I had no choice in the matter. But I needed to be a journalist. And so I did the traditional kind of small town newspapers and freelancing Central America kind of stuff.

And then, I got my first real job, uh, at a, a weekly newspaper chain outside of Boston, uh, and then, found my way to CNN. And I was at CNN for, you know, nearly 20 years, '86 to... through 2003. And I started entry level, became a field producer and ended up being managing editor and running the national news operation which in those days was the world's largest TV news organization, um, and, uh, very, very proud of that.

And then, after that, I was a CEO of two venture-backed technology companies that sold into the media business, uh, both of which were trying to reinvent aspects of the media business, uh, not terribly successfully, I would add. I also worked for, uh, one of my partners, uh, uh, and ran Thomson Reuters, uh, consumer media business for a number of years. And then, in 2015, I became an executive recruiter, uh, because I was looking for a phase of my career that combined a bunch of interests, both my interest in media and technology and, uh, and business with, uh, what had become, uh, an interest around executive coaching.

I had some fabulous executive coaches including your own Jerry Colonna who had been a board member of mine, invest for mine back in the day. And those executive coaching experiences have been super meaningful to me. And, uh, I was just fascinated by all that. So I was looking to do something that was kind of a, uh, it was, it was about that stuff. And I was having dinner one night with an old pal of mine who I've been a client at his search firm for 10 years and, you know, a long conversation over some really outstanding Pinot Noir in the world led to the idea of me joining him and becoming an executive recruiter. Seven years later, uh, it's been great.

Ali Schultz:

Wow. It's amazing. Um, what were some of the moments that you encountered, uh, in your work transitions? You know, I imagine there were a lot in there.

Keith McAllister:

There were a lot of... Yeah. There were... I've had kind of three phases to my life. Uh, and you... All you have to do is look at my LinkedIn profile, and you really think it's brilliant or, you know, kind of a recurring train wreck, (laughing) uh, to do these things. Um, I've... I am very grateful for all of it, uh, you know, from field journalist, uh, news executive at big companies to startup CEO and so forth.

But big shifts from, you know, being a content guy to being a, a business leader to, uh, now being a, a consultant. And along the way I got, you know, fired twice in what, uh, you know, I would call regime changes, uh, and, you know, the way I... when I talk to, uh, executives, uh, who are in similar situations today, my line is that, you know, if you're not getting shot, pushed out the window, then, you're not trying hard enough.

Um, so I had those experiences. I had great experiences of, you know, success and so forth. And anyway, it all... It's left to, to day where, uh, you know, I feel pretty confident being able to talk to people about these moments that happen in our career whether it's downside experiences or whether you just wake up one morning as I did, you know, in my journalism career and realize actually what I'd rather be doing was running a business, or when I woke up one day, running businesses realizing what I really wanted to do was be more of a coach.

Ali Schultz:

Well I guess I wanted to just kind of highlight that, uh, uh, you of all people know about, uh, what it feels like to be, um, uh, in that in-between space, between, between jobs or secure jobs, we shall say.

Keith McAllister:

Yeah. I, I mean personally, I've had all versions of that, and, and now, that, uh, you know, I've been at the top of the mountain. I've had the feeling of I'm, you know, losing the battle. Uh, but I don't quite know what's going on. And I've had the full-on, uh, you know, thrown-out-the-window experience. And, those i- It... It's helpful to have personally had those experiences. And now, you know, I haven't been a recruiter for a while and having been giving advice on these topics for a long time. I feel like I've got a little bit of a PhD and, and all that stuff.

Ali Schultz:

So the recruiting process... It's not something that I think a lot of clients typically reach out to, at least, at least our, our clients, or that they reach out for, um, or it's not always top of mind. Um, and as I've just loosely begun to learn a, a little bit more about it, um, it's also one of those things where if I was to reach out to a recruiter, I would need to be a little organized, um, in terms of, you know, who I am, what I'm looking for, um, and all of that.

What do people need to know? Um, you know, if they find themselves, uh, either looking for their next role or needing like out of a sense of need, needing to find their next role, um, and they decide to work

with a recruiter like, what... How do they, uh, get themselves ready or position themselves, or what do they need to know?

Keith McAllister:

Yeah. I appreciate that question. So one is just, you know, what's the business model, right? So I get hired by companies to find executives. Sometimes, I get hired by companies to find board members. And so, they're my client. And it- That's fairly straightforward. So when I'm meeting executives who are interested in my advice or help or just meeting me, it's, you know, in the chance that, A, I've got a project that is relevant to them or, B, that, you know, somewhere down the road, I'll have a project that's relevant to them or, C, they're just looking for my advice and help about, um, you know, how to manage that moment in their career and how to do the thing that you just asked me about, Ali, which is, you know, how do I go to market.

As a general rule of thumb, what I would tell people executives, and this is increasingly true, the more senior you are is that recruiters are probably, you know, specifically responsible for the minority of the opportunities that will be real for you. In other words, there may be a recruiter involved. But, uh, probably the more important thing is, is what your network has done for you.

Um, and so, to, to think about the, the... what I advise people is, and this is a big topic is, um, and we can talk about how to do this and how to break it down. But basically, you are going to market just like you would be launching any kind of product in the commercial sense and understanding that you need to sell through channels. And you have to have a bunch of them operating at the same time. But you have to start with getting the product ready for market and the product is you. And that's the hard part.

Ali Schultz:

It's like trying to write your bio for your website. It's like really hard to do it for yourself.

Keith McAllister:

And the reason it's hard is because you're talking about yourself, right, and what's hard about that is it's the act of reduction because what you're trying to do is you're trying to simplify your own story and make your network and make the recruiters out there in the world useful to you. And the only way to make them useful to you is to make you the product comprehensible and easy to act on.

Ali Schultz:

And you have a framework around this which, um, it might be a good, a good moment to dive into a little bit. Um, because you've done this for so long, you kind of know, uh, what to work people through or what to guide them through so that they can start to, um, start this process of refinement and whittling down the essence of, you know, what they're going for and who they are and what they're offering is to this market, right?

Keith McAllister:

Yeah. Yeah. Let me explain that a little bit. So, you know, I started doing this years ago, right, when people just call me for advice, and I did.

Ali Schultz:

Mm-hmm.

Keith McAllister:

I start doing it so much that I turned into a, you know, basically kind of 12-step program. And the idea is to help people simplify because when people think about their career futures or about a job search, it... it's just a big blob to them, right? And it's just hard to imagine, right? What do I do first? And so, the idea is to... is to understand what the, what the program is and what the sequence is.

And so, I developed this framework which is super simple. And the, the fun thing is working with people. And when they begin to realize actually how simple it is, and I will tell you, Ali, that it doesn't... You know, people, uh, need this advice whether they're coming at a, you know, undergraduate or whether they're, you know, 58 years old coming out of the last CEO role.

Everybody's got the same set of challenges. Basically, the way I break it down is you have to do some work on yourself to understand, you know, what... where you wanna be aiming. And we can talk about that. You have to do some work to understand how the market looks at you.

And then, you have to do a bunch of targeting both, you know, in terms of opportunities and, and people, or your network. Then, you gotta get prepared. And again, this is the same thing if you're coming off a CEO gig running a multi-billion dollar company or if you're, you know, coming out of graduate school. It's, it's, it's the same basic, uh, sets of things that needs to happen.

Keith McAllister:

So, you know, your question, Ali, is what should you be, be prepared to do when you either are talking to someone in your network or when you're actually interviewing for a job. And I think it's really important for everybody to keep in mind that this is a very human process, and so that blink reptile brain impression you make in the first 30 seconds, that's a very real thing. So you got to be ready for that moment, right?

That's why rehearsing and role play... I mean I do that with people. I used to do some media training after. And, and, you know, if you, uh, if you do role play on video and you do it three or four times and you get your reps down, that's all you need to do.

So the thing, the thing to be prepared is you come in there. You sort of understand that it's a human thing. And what you're really trying to do particularly with networking is you're trying to help your network contact help you. People wanna help you. They wouldn't be having coffee with you. They wouldn't be having a Zoom with you. They wouldn't have answered your last 20 emails over the last five years if they didn't wanna help you, right?

How do you, how do you help them help you? And how do you judge that networking meeting a success? So success is that person then is introducing you to a few other people, right? You know, the rule of thumb is that every networking meeting should produce two more networking contacts.

And the way you make a successful discussion is to be prepared and have talking points. And basically, the frame is something like I am an X who's done Y and wants to do Z. And you have to be ready for that because particularly the Z part where you talk about what you wanna do, that's gonna be tight. That's got to be 15 to 25 seconds. Otherwise, people are gonna be confused. And they're, they're, they're not really gonna know what to do next. And they need a very specific hook for them to be able to help you. So again, that, that goes to preparation and understanding a moment.

Ali Schultz:

So can you give us an example of, um, what a non-useful Z is in that little equation because coming up with what we want is really hard. Coming up with what we want as a human is, is really hard. Like that refinement, that articulation can be challenging. I think especially for a lot of people who've maybe lost their jobs or find themselves in the panic of a career transition. And they're like, "I'll take anything."

Keith McAllister:

Yeah. Well, the, the way to fix that is long before you get to the interview or long before you get to your networking meeting is doing the work so that you can at least, you know, be your best self in the meeting. You can't fix it in the meeting if you're, if you're in a panic, right? So one way of answering that question, Ali, is it, is it long before you get to that? You have to be ready for those moments even if it's your uncle, right, or your aunt or your cousin or your best friend. Seriously, you have to be ready because you need to simplify the story for them and feel good about it such that they wanna help you, right?

And it's, it's just the nature of the game of, of human beings, you know, what they're looking for in order to, in order to be, uh, supportive. And people wanna do it. So it's about preparation is, is the answer. And then, you know... So if your question is, you know, how do I prepare the answer question about what I wanna do, again, two things. One is you don't actually have to wanna do specifically the thing you're telling that person you wanna do. You're just trying to make it easy for them to help you, right? You're not signing a contract or committing to anything by saying, "You know what? I'd really like to be the marketing officer of a streaming platform, chief marketing officer or streaming platform," right, or something like that. All you're doing is creating a specific frame. So another, uh, you know, cliché, true cliché, is you wanna show and not tell, right?

Ali Schultz:

Mm-hmm.

Keith McAllister:

So when you're having these networking meetings where if you're in a job interview, have story. Be specific about, you know, it's a job like this that does that. But it doesn't have to be exactly that, right? Um, that's important. And, and just the other... The other thing that's really, really important in terms of any kind of discussion you're having with people is to be an interactive listener and don't do monologues. So maybe you and I have talked about it.

Ali Schultz:

Mm-hmm.

Keith McAllister:

Should we talk specifically about when a recruiter calls about how to have that first conversation?

Ali Schultz:

I think so 'cause I think that you just hit on something really important which is that interpersonal... the interpersonal skills. But I mean listening, asking questions, talking about yourself in a clear, concise, confident way.

Keith McAllister:

So if you're having first interview with a recruiter, that's a screening call, right? The recruiter is not gonna talk to you unless they think you're qualified for the project they're working on, right? The reason they're taking that call or they've asked to, to... for that meeting is because on paper, they think you're qualified. So just know that. And so, what they're trying to do in that first call is find out whether you're a good fit, the right style of person, confident, that kind of stuff 'cause they don't know you, right? And so, you're trying to... Again, you, you talk about this before. You try to... You try to meet their reptile brain need to feel confident about you.

So really important. It's a moment to show a lot of EQ. And it's a moment to be prepared and the moment to show a lot of confidence and, uh, you know, be an interactive listener. Don't do monologues. You know, the recruiter has, has taken the, the call with you or has initiated the call with you because they think you're qualified on paper. So you don't need to do a monologue and do a lot of exposition about yourself. That recruiter is gonna have specific things that, that they wanna hear from you or learn about you.

So, uh, you know, let the recruiter play at their own pace. But be ready for those moments when they ask you specific questions such as, you know, "What are you doing now? Why did you leave your last company? What are you looking to do in the future?" If there was a single thing I would tell people in a job process because to get this right, you have to do a bunch of other things, right? It's to basically be able to answer kind of the 10 basic questions that, that, that come up, uh, in every interview section... session, you know. And he questions may be worded differently. But the essences are all the same.

There's the who, the what, and the how, if you will. So the who is you know, what's on your resume in terms of titles and companies and, you know, tenures and stuff like that, right, wherever you work, what jobs that you have, uh, always your scope and scale, uh, and that kind of stuff.

The next category of questions, the, the, the what questions are what did you do in that job, meaning you drove revenue from, you know, 100 million to a billion, or you transformed the consumer experience or whatever you did, right? Sold the company.

Those kinds of things. And then, the third bucket, the, the how part which is what separates the, you know, the average from the great recruiters is, is having insight into how you did something, right? Did you build consensus? Did you, you know, create a red team approach? Did you, um, focus on a particular board member? The... You know, all that kind of stuff.

And so, to be successful in those kinds of conversations, right? You, you... Again, it's show don't tell, right? Tell stories about what you did. But if you think about-

Ali Schultz:

Mm-hmm.

Keith McAllister:

... yourself in that structure and you basically anticipate the questions that fit inside that structure, then, you know, that's, that's, what you need to know.

Ali Schultz:

I have a kind of a random question. But it's, it's, it's top of mind, you know. It seem- How important is the LinkedIn profile and, and resume and, um, especially when it comes, you know, to recruiters kind of finding you? But it... also, you know, in the job search. And then, also like would you recommend that people get help in, in putting that together?

Keith McAllister:

Yeah. The answer is yes. The, the LinkedIn profile and your resume are, are pretty important, um, very important. I work at pretty senior levels. And, and what we're looking for is a simplicity of story, meaning, um, you know, where were you or what period of time? What was your scope and scale? And what did you do in the job?

Ali Schultz

Mm-hmm.

Keith McAllister:

Um, and your LinkedIn profile should probably have about, you know, 50 to 75% of as much detail as your resume does. And I'm talking about anybody from college graduate to kind of mid-market private equity CEO-type, right? So a huge range of junior, senior there. Um, so there's a rule of thumb, thumb that's, that's true and... 'cause what, what the LinkedIn profile does is every recruiting firm regardless of what they say uses LinkedIn as a primary if not the primary database, uh, for finding talent, um, and if they don't already know the talent.

And so, you're doing advanced search in LinkedIn's professional version which is called LinkedIn Recruiter. And you're using that advanced search. And you're using Boolean searches and various things to put together lists of candidates who meet your criteria. And your criteria are organized along things like, uh, sector, function, brand, um, and so forth. And so, you know, your LinkedIn profile is important, uh, even if you're a pretty senior person. If you wanna get noticed by an executive search firm, uh,

making sure that your story is clear and that the right language is in the profile so that gets picked up by the full text, uh, search tool, uh, inside of LinkedIn.

Ali Schultz:

Mm-hmm.

Keith McAllister:

First of all, the sort of subhead under your name and the summary section are opportunities. These are the things, right? If you look at the, at the web page of LinkedIn, these are the things that appear above the fold and which you jump out right away at someone who's reading your profile for the first time. And they are your opportunity to explain yourself and differentiate yourself- differentiate yourself.

And that subhead should be pretty carefully constructed. And the summary should be tight, you know. It shouldn't be six paragraphs. It should be maybe a paragraph and a half maybe. And it needs to be a fairly tight statement about, you know, who you are and, and, you know, what you've done.

Ali Schultz:

You know, some people are kind of repulsed by LinkedIn. And, and some embrace it. And, um, what I'm hearing here is, you know, it's, it's worth embracing it especially in these... in th- those career transition moments or job transition moments.

Keith McAllister:

I mean, it's worth in 90 minutes that it'll take you to get it right.

Ali Schultz:

Mm-hmm. Yeah. I'm glad it's only 90 minutes versus... (laughs) Sometimes, the task feels daunting especially if you're like, "Oh, my god. How do I... how do I talk about myself," which is always like the hardest thing to suss out sometimes.

Keith McAllister:

Yeah. Well that is, you know, that's a big topic there, Ali, which is, is getting some kind of perspective on yourself, right cause again, the hard thing about the job... It's, it's hard enough to, to sort of think about who you are and what you wanna do and how to get that into a tight couple of sentences, right? But trying to understand. And I know this is what you, in the coaching world, do a lot of, is trying to have people understand how the world sees them.

Ali Schultz:

Mm-hmm.

Keith McAllister:

And, um, so when people come to me for advice, I... You know, I'll do my program with people. But I strongly recommend the people, and this is, you know, how we have a relationship with Reboot that they, they find a great executive coach 'cause a great executive coach is gonna do a psychometric on you,



might do a 360 with your, you know, your network. And there's a lot of things you can do, uh, to try to help somebody get feedback so that they can understand how the universe sees them. And that's both in terms of the subjective issues, also kind of what kind of executive they are, right 'cause you need to, you need to understand what the shorthand is gonna be about you from the markets perspective to understand kind of where your best opportunity is and how to kind of sell yourself into that.

Ali Schultz:

Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely. Um, uh, we've known clients who have been in job transitions or who have had 360-degree reviews, and then, you know, within a year or so, um, you know, moved on. And they've taken that 360 with them into you know, uh, these, these meetings with, you know, future, future employers or, or colleagues who are hiring. And they're like, "Oh, here's my 360 if you want the full... You know, I'll just open up the whole curtain, right? Here you go." (laughs)

And those have been like, uh, you know, very brave people. But also, it's been, you know, insightful. And sometimes, it's, you know, when clients meet clients, and they both have 360s, they just swap, right? (laughs)

Keith McAllister:

Right.

Ali Schultz:

So they don't like who they are, and, and who they'll be working with from, you know, from that level which is just always interesting. Um-

Keith McAllister:

No. I think, I think that's right. And, and, yeah. It's interesting. It's, uh... I just did a Hogan, uh, month or so ago. And, you know, it's probably the sixth time, you know, in my career, varied, uh, varied, uh, portions of my career where I've had psychometrics done. And it's... Yeah. I find it always to be valuable. And it's... The search industry is changing too. It's happening as search firms are starting to, um... 'Cause if you think about the history of the search industry, right, in the beginning, prior to LinkedIn and a bunch of things, the value of a executive recruiter in the big firms was that they had the list, right? They knew where the executives were.

And in the last 15 years, that's obviously out the window. And so, there's this kind of evolving question of like where, where does a search firm add value and... 'cause candidate ID isn't necessarily hard anymore, right? And a lot of companies have got good internal TA and executive recruiting functions and stuff like that. So the executive search firm, particularly the better folks, are really thinking about what is the search product. And a lot of folks are baking into the search product assessment and integration and onboarding and, and all that stuff, uh, because a lot of us kind of do it informally and a lot of us do it referring candidates and clients to, to coaches into, into firms like yours, Ali's, and so forth.

But, you know, it's just k- It's an interesting evolution because, really, search is best done when, uh, you know, you're a full partner with your client. And you're, you're... Everyone's invested in not just hiring somebody. But that person being success a year out, two years, five years out, right?

Ali Schultz:

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah. Kind of on that note, you know, um, you know, in, in many ways, I guess, i- that kind of makes, you know, your job as a bit of a guide or a sherpa, you know, to ensure that not only is, is the, the person, um, like well prepared and the right person but also is, is this the best fit for the company and, and really being a, a, a good matchmaker there.

Keith McAllister:

I mean a related issue is vetting, you know, which is not probably all that well understood at their... uh, in the candidate world. And it's not even all that well understood in the hiring side either. If, if recruiters are doing their job, um, particularly folks like me that work on the senior end, um, you're really making sure that that candidate, uh, is gonna be a good fit. And that, that, that doesn't mean just kind of, you know, sniffing out downside issues. Um, that means understanding how people operate and how they have operated and how people think about it so far.

Ali Schultz:

What else do we need to talk about or what else should we touch on?

Keith McAllister:

Well, you know, I think the thing I was talking about before that I, I hope I got across, right, was that when people whether they're in the job and they're thinking about their future or whether they're out of a job in transition and trying to work on their next thing, um, most people who don't have this down yet, they look, they look at this whole thing. And they're... And they just don't know where to start, right?

Ali Schultz:

Yeah.

Keith McAllister:

And my advice... So I do... This is, this is specifically what I do coaching around is, you know, people will call me and ask me what to do. It's really a go-to-market process. And I think people just have to, have to remember that take some pressure off themselves and think about it as, you know, you are the product. You got to figure out how that product compares to other products. You gotta figure out how to talk about it, right? Um, and then, you got to go out there and sell it. And just like you would in any kind of business, you got to think about what channels to sell through and so forth. So, um, you know, I try to take the mystery out of all this for people because, you know, if you're... whether you're 30 years old or 50 years old, um, it, it can be quite daunting.

Ali Schultz:

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So true. I mean every stage of life has its own, um, uh, load of questions and anxieties that come with it, right, whether you're 30 or you're 50 or you're 40, um, or even kids in their 20s, you

know. Uh, clients that I've worked with, you know, who are con- contemplating leaving jobs, it's... There's, there's a lot that comes up in those moments.

Um, something just came to me, um, as you were talking. And I was reflecting on, um, another conversation I was having with, uh, Sally Helgesen who is an author. And she's done a lot of research about women in leadership. But one of the things that she writes about in her... one of her latest books, *How Women Rise*, is that you should always be mindful of your career not just trying to do your job well.

Um, and, um, of course, she says it better than I just kind of summarized there. But, um, but I'm, you know, kind of in thinking about a lot of the things that you've been talking about here, um, I'm, I'm curious about, you know, how... Like when do we start building networks, right? And when do we start paying attention to our LinkedIn page?

And, you know, I'm, I'm thinking of all these clients who suddenly find themselves like "Oh, crap. It's... I've been at this job for 10 years. And, and now, I need to do this. Like I'm, I'm now embarking on the job search again." And, um, you know, it... But weighing in kind of Sally's wisdom, it's getting me thinking like, "Man.," But we're building our networks, you know. Kind of like... I imagine like, you know, your three-stage or three-phase, you know, car- you know, career arc, you know. It's through the whole thing. Um, but I mean, I don't know. What are your thoughts on that?

Keith McAllister :

Well, my hope for people is that they see network building as a opportunity and ki- and a gift. And not everybody feels this way. I mean, there's, there's some people who just don't... aren't interested, don't have a taste for it. And, you know, they're not particularly people pe- people people, if you will. But, you know, if, if you wanna be a leader and if you wanna run something and if you want to, you know, have a long run doing stuff and have some a little bit of control as you move forward (laughs) although no one really has any control, right...

Ali Schultz:

Right.

Keith McAllister:

... you know, the... Your network is the most powerful thing you have. And-

Ali Schultz:

Mm-hmm.

Keith McAllister:

... you know, it keeps you honest. It keeps you informed, um, keeps you humble. It keeps you, you know... It's, it's, it's really, really important. And it's a gift. And, and, you know, as a practical matter, there is no better way to tend your career than by collecting people as, as you go along.

Keith McAllister:

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What's the, what's the thing that, uh, your clients say to you that most vexes them about job transitions?

Ali Schultz:

Well, there's always the decision to leave, right? Um, this isn't working. My body is stressed out. I need to listen to my body. I can't make this work any other way. And then, they decide to, to leave. Um, and they don't always know what's next. I don't know that this is vexing. But it's, it's most common.

Keith McAllister:

Mm-hmm.

Ali Schultz:

And then, they decide to take... They tak- decided to take time to be like... It's like they, they need time to like catch up with themselves somehow. Like they've been, you know, heads down on work for, for so many years, you know, that they finally hit the pause button in a big way, um, to just really rest and gather themselves (laughs) from all times and places, right, and, and to see like what's here for me right now? And, and what do I want? And where do I wanna go?

And who do I wanna work with. And, um, and then, how do I wanna start that process? So, um, it's, it's, it's, it's interesting. I, I mean I, I enjoy working with clients who are faced with the decision like should I stay? Should I go? How do I make this work? This is challenging. Um, but it's, it's tricky too because as soon as they're... they lose their jobs. They kind of lose, uh, funding for the coaching. So then, it's kind of like, you know, uh, you know, just kind of let go of the lifeline a little bit sometimes. But, um-

Keith McAllister

Yeah. I get the parallel question where people come to me. And they say, "Um, you know, am I better off having a job during my job search or would I be better, you know, going clean sheet and spending all my time on it?" And-

Ali Schultz:

Ah-huh.

Keith McAllister:

... my answer to folks is that's actually not the right question. You know what I mean? The, the question is actually what can you do? What are your options, right? Can you afford it?

So I tell people don't worry about it, you know. Either way, you're gonna be fine. You just have to be deliberate and kind of get to work.

Ali Schultz:

It's definitely a big moment in people's lives, I think.

Keith McAllister:

Oh, it's gigantic. I think, one thing that recruiters can do a much better job of doing is understanding the stress levels that their candidates are operating under. I mean we're kind of a tw- We're, you know, we're

actually fairly attuned to our client stress level because client management is, you know, part of almost your commercial activity, (laughs) right? You're, uh, you're always trying-

Ali Schultz:

Mm-hmm.

Keith McAllister:

... to be tech- close to your client and help sell their bombs and so forth. But, uh, I think we often take for granted the emotional states of our, uh, candidates. Um, and I think, um, recruiters can do... And that's true at every level. I mean I'm talking about, you know, public company CEOs, and I'm talking about, you know, VP of marketing and startups, right?

So I mean if I, if I, if I wish for one thing in the industry, it's just we would all just be better at that. And I know in my firm, we've tried. And I certainly try to be mindful of it. But you, you know, you lose the plot sometimes.

Ali Schultz:

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Keith McAllister :

And then... And weird stuff happens. Like one thing I really spend a lot of time on is, is, you know, managing my client's expectations because you think if you go through a process and people are engaged, you get the end of it, you make them a job offer, they're gonna say, "Yes," right? But-

Ali Schultz:

Wow.

Keith McAllister:

... you know, that was a little bit truer... more true prior to COVID. But, uh, it's a very human factors thing, right? And people are under a lot of stress and just stuff happens, you know. Shit happens.

And I've had candidates who have gotten in car accidents. I've had candidates who, uh, you know, dad got cancer, right? Had... Uh, this is like you get the job offer, you accept it verbally on a Friday. And then, on Monday, you're calling me the recruiter. You're saying you can't do it for one of these reasons, right? I had a candidate-

Ali Schultz:

Mm-hmm.

Keith McAllister:

... who was supposed to relocate, uh, uh, cities. And his parents who lived down the block, you know. He accepted the job on a Friday. And on Saturday, the elderly parents lived around the corner, drove to the house, and begged him not to leave. (laughs) So-

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Ali Schultz:

Oh, my gosh.

Keith McAllister:

So, so you're, you know... We're talking about human beings here, right? You can only hope that if you're running a good search process, that you're mindful of that and, uh, trying to bake out some of the uncertainty by the end.

Ali Schultz:

Yeah. In the end uncertainty. Oh, it always wins, doesn't it? (laughing) It always win.

Keith McAllister:

Well, it's a human factors situation as, you know, better than anybody.

Ali Schultz:

Yeah. Well, I just wanna thank you for all of this. It's been really awesome to kind of get, uh, a lens into, uh, what happens from your seat, uh, on the other side of, you know, the, the job search process or the recruiting process. Um, and, uh, I, I, I really hope that, um, a lot of the insights here are, are useful for folks whether they decide to use a recruiter or not.

I just know that, you know, at no matter what level you are, um, when you need to look for a job, like, it, it can feel daunting. So that's one of the reasons why I wanted to, to bring you on and, and have a conversation, um, not only to show your loveliness with everybody. But, um, you have some really wonderful insights, um, you know, o- on this topic and, uh, just kind of from the, the depth of your career. So thank you.

Keith McAllister:

Well, I'm, I'm very grateful that you asked. And I, I really enjoyed the conversation. And, um, hopefully, uh, it's helpful for some people.