



# Empowering Professionals

Volume 9

**Dr. Sydney Scott,**  
Founder of The Alchemist Professors

**“PEOPLE WANT  
TO BE LED”**



***PLUS***

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**The Customer Experience  
with Knowledge & Humor,  
from Barbara Khozam**



# Empowering Professionals Magazine Profile for Dr. Sydney Scott



Studies have shown that 70-80 percent of all workers are disengaged. This disengagement is the result of a crisis in leadership. We need employees who are engaged and leaders who will engage them.

“People want to be led,” says Dr. Sydney Scott, founder of The Alchemist Professors, a coaching and organizational consulting collective specializing in both personal and organizational change. “They want to be inspired. And they want to be inspired by the ‘why.’ If we share a common ‘why,’ you, your values and your thoughts will

support where we're all going as an organization.”

The leader is within you, but it has to be grown, and the answers are hidden in the people you lead.

Dr. Scott uses coaching, consulting and training as a vehicle to educate and transform her clients. With a doctorate degree in leadership and change, Dr. Scott has been a leader in adult education for the past 25 years.

Empowering Professionals spoke with Dr. Sydney Scott to discuss

the magic of leadership and why experimentation is the key to engagement.

EP: What do you mean by “alchemist?”

Dr. Scott: The alchemist has the ability to turn lead into gold. They can find what's holding you back and unharness it and let you shine. In my doctoral research, looking at the development of leaders, the most impactful leaders are alchemists. They're able to find people's gold and develop it.

EP. Like transmutation?

Dr. Scott: Exactly! In order to have effective, healthy, organizational cultures there has to be effective leadership. And a good leader is easy to see. The Alchemist is the highest level of leadership where the people come first. An Alchemist is in constant change in support of others in constant change. They understand the big picture and the small picture and works with people of all levels. They are the most successful leaders.

EP: What was the chronology of your career that you've had all of these experiences?

Dr. Scott: I received my MBA in marketing and finance to get into the business world. I already had been managing and leading before that, and I went into corporate banking. When I had my first son, my university asked me to come and teach, so I went into the university and started leading within the university, but I needed to have a contact always with the business world. I consult and coach in the real world, using that content to teach masters level students leadership and change, and emotional intelligence.

EP: What's prepared you to do this

type of work?

Dr. Scott: Well, to be blunt, try being a woman leader 30 years ago. I was brought into organizations where a woman hadn't been hired for 15 or 20 years. So what I had to do is to prove myself to people: "I'm here to support you. I'm here to make you shine. I'm here to empower you." I had to find a way. I couldn't do the male way and be effective. It's been a journey. I had a dad who was the leader that I wanted to be. I wanted to be a woman and a good leader. I didn't feel that being a woman should compromise that.

EP: What does this leadership look like? What does it mean to lead from a female space and to remain authentic to that?

Dr. Scott: The only way I can contribute to this field is to do all the development work on myself that I possibly can, and then I can present my true self.

EP: Is leadership something that can be taught?

Dr. Scott: Leadership is certainly something you can learn, though I'm not sure there is ever a teaching. I can create openings for you to experiment and learn your own way. I am an academic, but who cares about theory? When I teach it, what part of this registers with you? What part is registering with other people you engage with. We're most impactful when we are ourselves. The journey is to understand your strength in yourself and your shadow.

We all are leaders within our self: some of us are doing good jobs and some are doing not so good jobs. You have to be able to lead yourself first before you can trust yourself to lead others and other people can trust you to lead them. A real leader nurtures the development of others. We do that by empowering people to experiment and find their own way.

EP: You teach people the skills necessary to collaborate in a healthy way?

Dr. Scott: The books are one thing, but businesses are really about the collaborative energy to make miracles happen. Where the leaders have a problem is generating that collaborative energy to make things happen. This is a process of how people go through change, this is what you need to do to support them.

Most of my coaching is about realigning my clients with their gold, their resiliency, where you believe in what you're doing. What I specialize in is getting people's energy aligned so they can shine.

EP: So much of this work is about engagement, isn't it?

Dr. Scott: I don't know about you, but when someone tells me what to do and doesn't tell me the why, I'm disengaged. So it's all about engagement. When you're really absorbed in the problem, you're more productive.

EP: So the key to engagement is

empowerment. You have to give people a sense of why their work matters so they can take ownership over it.

Dr. Scott: It's empowerment with the belief they can do it.

EP: That's why you're the Alchemist Professor. It can seem like magic.

Dr. Scott: Yeah, it's magical. This is the change we need to offer to the world: how can we really be engaged? We have to innovate. How can we improve without innovation? How can we innovate without experimentation? Without that, people can't be authentic. You're not getting 100 percent of a person; you're just getting what they can manage. We've got all these millennials who are disengaged, but all they want to be is involved.

EP: What does empowerment mean to you?

Dr. Scott: Empowerment means allowing you to lead yourself, to be fully engaged and giving your best to what you're doing.

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