

**LIDIA:** I always had this idea that business is business and personal is personal, and I realized that I have to be, you know, I really allowed myself to be vulnerable and let them in. And by doing that, it really created a better connection, and that was really an important lesson, that, you know, has really changed who I am.

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

**ANNA:** Technology played a critical role during the COVID-19 pandemic. Pharmaceutical companies had to work faster than ever before, producing breakthrough, life-saving technologies as they raced against a virus that spread across the globe.

Meet Lidia Fonseca, an executive who sits at the center of both technology and the pharmaceutical industries. Lidia is the Executive Vice President, Chief Digital and Technology Officer at Pfizer, and is responsible for the company's technology, data, and digital efforts. Her team was critical in developing the Pfizer vaccine - one that has given citizens everywhere hope after COVID-19.

Lidia came to Pfizer after serving as the Chief Information Officer at Quest Diagnostics, and has worked at Pfizer to improve clinical trials, automate processes, focus on developing the firm's digital strategy.

Stan and Chris speak to Lidia about how Pfizer and healthcare will be different after the pandemic, why it's important to focus on outcomes, rather than activities, and how her leadership has changed after bringing Pfizer through COVID-19. Lidia and her team have helped our nation tremendously in developing the vaccine - and amidst her very busy schedules, we thank her and team for the time.

Now, over to Stan.

**STAN:** Well, Lidia, let me start by thanking you for spending time with us today. And let me tell you why Chris and I were so excited to talk to you today because you have an intersection. Of course, we have an intersection interest in what your boys are going to do, and I'm hopeful that they'll end up in the service, because I think that would be great for the nation and good for them.

But probably more important for all our listeners is you have two interesting things going on. One, you're a chief technology and innovation officer, which every organization is thinking about. And two, you're doing it for Pfizer and there is probably not an organization in the world that has a more important place over the last 18 months - more important placement for society than Pfizer. And so, we're gonna look at that intersection a little bit and then look how you got there and what that means.

So, I'm going to start first is... you already had a history with digital and innovation and you were brought into Pfizer as a change agent. Now, when you're invited in as a change agent, what does that mean? And what's the reception like?

**LIDIA:** Stan, Chris, thank you very much for hosting me. I'm happy to be here and looking forward to this conversation. As I mentioned, right, I remember our first meeting a few years ago when a group of CIOs visited the McChrystal Group offices. And you told us your story. I still recall how inspirational and relevant your story was, and you know, more recently we spoke about my twin 16-year-old sons who are both very interested in, in the military service.

To your question, you know, I'm passionate about applying digital data and technology to improve health outcomes. And this has been a hallmark of my career. That was also a big driver for joining Pfizer. You know, the tremendous impact that we have on the health of patients around the globe, Albert Bourla, our CEO, was looking for someone to lead the company on a digital transformation journey, that from his perspective and the mandate that he gave me was he wants digital to impact every aspect of our business.

As you say, I'm a change agent by nature, and this was an exciting mission for me to take on. And I can tell you at the time, the two and a half years that I have been with Pfizer, we have leveraged digital data and technology to enhance everything that we do at Pfizer, from how we discuss and develop breakthrough medicines and vaccines, to how we enhance patient and physician experiences to improve health outcomes, and also inside the company as well. How we make our work faster and easier through digital and automation.

I can tell you, I feel very privileged and fortunate to have been here at this critical time for Pfizer.

**LIDIA:** Let pull a little bit more on change agent, because obviously I'm older than you, and I remember the time when they thought of "Chainsaw Al" Dunlap, if you remember, he came in, he was a CEO, went into Sunbeam and he was a change agent.

What he did was he cut thousands of jobs and he, he wrestled them back to profitability. But I don't think that's the kind of mandate that you got going into Pfizer. So, put a little bit more detail on what a digital or innovation change agent would, would actually do.

**LIDIA:** Yeah, I think, you know, that's a good point, right? I always, I always say you cannot squeeze yourself into prosperity. Right. You got to... so to us, it's really looking at what are the most important initiatives and critical, you know, priorities for us as a company. And our belief is: it's not that you take something that you do... the analogy I would use is that it's not that you take something that do in the physical world, and then you, you know, kind of recreate it in the virtual world. Our belief is that you take a digital-first approach.

That means that you actually think about how can you leverage digital to engage in a different way. So, for example, in our science, right, we have scientists that are, you know, really

interrogating and figuring out how a molecule will behave. They're looking at biomarkers, whether those are genetic biomarkers or molecular biomarkers, our approach is that you leverage artificial intelligence and machine learning to actually accelerate and be able to predict how that molecule will behave and that can speed up discoveries right of potentially a new medicine or a new vaccine.

So, for us, it's really more about how do you fundamentally take the, the, you know, the characteristics and the, and the capabilities that technology and digital and analytics can offer to actually either completely rethink the way you do something or you will significantly accelerate it.

On the clinical trials front, you know, our chief development officer, one of the bold ideas that he set out is we want to reduce the cycle time of clinical trials by 50%. 50%. And so, you know, you cannot achieve 50%, that's not incremental, unless you completely rethink. And you look at your workflows, you look at your data flows and then you digitalize those so that you can be in a position to achieve the 50%.

And you know, the other thing that I would say is, it's not just the workflows, it's not just the data flows. The other key part that digital really brings is the experience. So, you lead with experience, you look at it from the point of view of that participant in the clinical trial and say, how do you make it easier? You know, how do you save them time? How do you make it so that participating in research in a clinical trial is easy, convenient, and accessible to them? And digital really enables that, rather than traditionally, you know, traveling 50 to 200 miles to a clinical trials site, to be able to, you know, do the visit in, you know, the steps that you need to participate in those. Just, those are just a couple of examples.

**CHRIS:** Lidia, they're great examples. And can we talk for a minute about, as a senior leader, this is something that many people learn the hard way. You know, you're gonna, you get pulled in, in your case, as a change agent, to drive digital transformation, and every leader at a certain level, they get brought in and they have a certain playbook in their mind and they get hit by the other variables.

You got hit by a massive one, as we all did, with the arrival of COVID, obviously particularly, invasive inside of your organization, in the way you needed to react, but you still are focused on all those other things that you just mentioned. So, you're executing your play while helping the organization react to this unforeseen black swan event that was obviously massively disruptive for you all.

Can you talk a little bit about as a leader, how you framed that up in your, in your mind? How do I react to the near-term crisis, and keep my long-term strategy in play?

**LIDIA:** It's a good point, Chris. Right? We saw a couple of things happen, right? COVID happened to all of us, and it happened to all of us around the world, right. And what we immediately saw, and you can say necessity is the mother of invention, right? The world became increasingly reliant on technology during the COVID-19 pandemic. And I can tell you, we felt

that, and we took it on, right. There was an expectation of pharmaceutical companies to develop solutions to a pandemic. As you mentioned, right, it is important to know that before the pandemic, we had been going through a transformation to become a leaner, more science-driven and patient-focused organization. And in 2019, to drive that transition, we embarked on a digital transformation journey and we did three really important things in 2019.

One is we shored up the digital foundation. You know, I know that when I come on board, I'm going to be really accelerating innovation. And so, I always look to ensure that we, that we have a strong, you know, digital foundation, that we can then innovate on. We implemented a new operating model. You know, one of my observations coming in is that we tended to really be very vertically focused, focused on brands, focused on business units, focused on functions, and I switch our operating model in digital to be more horizontal, where we focus on the customer, we focus on the patient, and then we look at how do we horizontally look at the patient's journey so that we can serve them better and drive more innovation?

And then really kicked it up in 2019, where to drive innovative and industry-first digital solutions to support our strategy. So, when the pandemic hit very early on, Albert gave us a clear and inspiring mandate that we were going to find a solution to the pandemic in that year. And I recall him saying to us, if not us, then who? And what followed was an incredible effort across all of Pfizer. There were significant challenges for the digital team and also significant expectations.

The fact that, you know, we had already been undergoing our transformation, actually set us up well coming into 2020 to respond to the pandemic. So, we did things that we had never done before, including inventing entirely new processes. And I'm definitely proud of the central role that our team played in enabling Pfizer to develop our vaccine, being able to bring a COVID-19 vaccine to the world in record time. It's a phenomenal expression of the power of collaboration, innovation, and science, um, and what together they can do.

**CHRIS:** A quick follow-up on that would be... you raise a great point, and we talk to leaders all about, all the time about you know, in calm seas, you need to be showing up for the next, next crisis cause it's around the corner. And it sounds like you were doing that and you, you had mentioned, I think a few examples in there of: here's the things that were in place that allowed us to weather the last 18 months. Can you go a little bit deeper there? It sounds like that there was a mind shift and a cultural shift, putting the patient first and, and understanding that horizontal journey, some technology and the way you were leveraging tech and evolving there. Are those the key areas that, that allowed you, you know, looking back, well, I'm glad we had this in place, sort of thinking?

**LIDIA:** You know, I think it was timing and I, you know, timeliness, you know, it definitely contributes right to how you respond and what you do. Albert became CEO in January of 2019. That's also the day that I'd started. You know, um, and we actually worked in, in 2019, especially in the first half of 2019, we refined our purpose as a company to breakthroughs that change patient's lives. And we laid out as an, as a leadership team, what we call our blueprint.

Our purpose blueprint. And so, we really doubled down on, not only our, our purpose of delivering breakthroughs that change patient's lives, and we actually created the five bold moves that became our strategies. So, we really drove a focus around five bold moves. We deployed that year in the middle, I remember because I went to Beijing, in the middle, like in June, we unveiled our, our core values and we have four values in the company as part of this work and that's courage, excellence, equity, enjoying.

And then as part of those values, we also... you know, those are big words, right? So, we actually not only, you know, unveiled our values, but also under each value, there are three behaviors that we specified that were our expectations of all of our colleagues behind the values.

So, when we think courage, is about thinking big, it's about speaking up, right? So, we were also specific about our values. So, when you take all of that, you know, a clear purpose, a clear ambition, five bold moves, and under each bold move, we identified three big ideas because we really wanted to drive a focus and we wanted the entire organization to really focus on the things that matter the most.

And then we, the cultural aspect, were the values and behaviors that we deployed in, again, all of this happened in that first half of 2019. So, I feel like definitely us being put in that direction with a purpose blueprint and the clarity of that, could, you know, if you think about it, it really prepared us from a mindset and from a ... you know, in terms of, you know, both the mind and the heart, here's what we're about.

And then we come into 2020, right. And into a pandemic. So I absolutely believe that, that clarity of our purpose and our strategies and our values really prepared us well. In parallel, we were also, you know, driving a digital transformation and I believe that it's not just about innovation, you also have to change the way that you work, and you know, to me, they, you know, innovation really reinforce your priorities in your, in your strategies and, and how you want to serve, you know, customers.

So, I would say it's really the combination of those things that prepared us as an organization. And it didn't surprise me then when, you know, we, when we said, "we will find a solution to this pandemic" and when we galvanized around science will win, science has to win. And that's how we went into that. So hopefully that, that gives you a little bit more of what was happening at Pfizer the year before, you know, we came into 2020.

**Stan:** Lidia, that's fascinating. I'm going to pull on it a little bit more, but I'm going to start by saying, I might be sitting here today because of the work you and Pfizer have done because of the Pfizer vaccine, which I took about six weeks ago. Someone that my wife and I love very much, only a year younger than she and I, did not get vaccinated by choice, had a stroke that the doctors have diagnosed as being related to the fact he had just caught COVID, and it's a very serious stroke and he will be affected for the rest of his life, along with all the people who love him.

And so, from my opinion, I can't prove it, the vaccine that I got that Pfizer made possible, allows me to be around my wife, my grandkids, and all the people I care about. So that success being the payoff, I want to back up, because I think you've said something for listeners, which is extraordinarily important.

You know, we sometimes focus on when the football player scores a touchdown, or when some big breakthrough is made, but you've really gone back and you said that Pfizer was building the road, laying the track, whatever analogy we want to do, by starting with value, starting with clear direction from Albert, starting with bringing the right talent in, starting that understanding that digital innovation was going to be critical to this. And then it intersected with the fact COVID-19 appeared. But, but my sense is you're telling us all of the things that happened after COVID appearing might not have played out the same way. Had those foundational steps not been taken as they were. Am I interpreting that right?

**LIDIA:** You know, we'd like to say that, you know, luck doesn't come to the unprepared. Right. And we had been, you know, Albert has been at Pfizer for 26 years.

He, even prior to becoming CEO had introduced this really important element for us, that patients, you know, "patients first." And what he did is when he stepped in and became CEO, was really, you know, double down on that patients first and the purpose. And he really was looking for us to... not that we had a crystal ball or could anticipate, but he really believes that by focusing on the patient and always remember that that's the reason that we're here, and then we can, you know, you focus your efforts, you focus your, your activities, then, you know, then you will bring our purpose and we're living our purpose of delivering those fractals that change patients' lives.

So, the example, you know, that was a big motivation for us is how do we help, you know, families be able to come together again? How do we help, you know, governments and businesses and individuals, you know, be able to get back to normal and do the, the things that frankly we all took for granted before that? Right. So, you're absolutely right. We felt that all the steps that we took, and it, and, you know, they came even before 2019, but 2019, we really cranked up a number of cultural elements that I believe need to be in place so that you can weather a crisis or a pandemic, even it's a once-in-a-century type of pandemic.

**STAN:** Lidia, you and I first met and we talked about the JSOC story during Special Operations Command story that, that Chris and I shared, and we had spent years literally more than two decades preparing that force in the basics. But when we got into the actual fight, we had to change an awful lot of things. It changed us. Now, I would argue that the basics allowed us to survive that, that reality and come out better, but we were still different. How will Pfizer, and maybe wider healthcare in America, be different after COVID-19 and the digital revolution we're going through?

**LIDIA:** Look, I, I do think that I can tell you, and I can share the perspective, you know, from Pfizer, you know, then can certainly share what I think.... I think wider, you know, beyond, you know, us. I think that there were a couple of things that we learned, that we learned through the

pandemic. And, and I think, let me dive a little bit into that because I think that will help to kind of think about, you know, how do we bottle that in?

And we certainly are taking that into the future with us. So, some of those elements that we knew we needed to be in a place for us to be successful, I talked about the first one, uh, hyper-focused on the customer, the patients that rely on our medicines and vaccines and the healthcare providers who care for them.

Driving horizontal thinking, right, aligning ourselves to what the patient is experiencing. Their journey is not vertical - their journey's horizontal. Our processes tend to be more vertical in nature, right. Another big lesson that we learned is... to work in parallel rather than sequentially, that was a big change for us.

You know, because of the nature of scientific discovery, there was a very specific approach. We really learnt to work in parallel. We leverage agile ways of working so that we could be more flexible and respond to patient needs and deliver those outcomes. And that's another thing, right? Foster a strong emphasis on outcomes versus activity.

I think sometimes, you know, and I've seen this with other companies as well. You focus on the activities, whereas when you focus on the outcomes, it just brings an incoming clarity of, oh, you know, where to focus your energies in and what you're looking to achieve. We also empowered our teams to have the courage, to think big, be creative and work differently.

And I think, you know, overall, we needed thousands of people to believe that we could do the impossible. And so, you know, when, to your specific question, I don't think that we're going back. Right. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital in, in my opinion, has rewired the healthcare landscape and the entire patient journey from where care is provided, to how care is delivered and reimbursed. And I think we're moving from a traditional physician office setting to increased virtual engagement. And I'm seeing more payers are reimbursing digital or virtual visits and services because they see it as a way to improve access software, convenience, and track the patient over time.

I think we're also accelerating a shift from volume to value. And the way I like to tell it to my team is it's not enough to prescribe medications. You have to show that, that they have the intended outcome. I think on the technology front, there's increased receptivity to digital engagement, you know, new, new gene therapies and digital therapeutics that are approved than reimbursable. We're seeing more real-world analytics, wearables, and other kind of key technologies. And we're seeing also some new disruptors. Right? So, think about the tech companies like Amazon PillPack and Amazon Care and distribution is being reshaped, right, with more online and retail pharmacies and new intermediaries.

I do think that COVID accelerated these trends. And, you know, the interesting thing, and I think this is an important point, it's not that these are new technologies. The difference is that we're actually applying them at scale. Right. And when, when companies had to shift to virtual, working in critical mass, then, you know, and, and it's been a prolonged period of time, we'd

learn how to work in that new way. Right. And I think that's one of the biggest shifts. And then as far as the future, I do think that we've learned the convenience of being able to work virtually, that we are able to do our work virtually. And, you know, I think that's also going to be a big shift as well. So I'm, I'm expecting more hybrid type of future of work compared to before the pandemic.

**STAN:** Really interesting. Lidia, I'm going to go back to something you talked about earlier. You mentioned timing and the speed of clinical trials. About two months before COVID-19 emerged, a colleague, friend of mine, and I had, started a new book on risk and we ended up studying COVID-19 in a fair amount of detail because it became one of the critical storylines in the book.

And I remember a quote from a North Italy bureaucrat, and he said, "the virus is faster than our bureaucracy." And then I think back to Chris and my experience in combat, and there are two correlating factors to whether a wounded soldier comes out well. The first is the ability of their buddy to provide immediate and effective first aid.

And so we, years ago we implemented what we call combat lifesaver training in that way changing, and then the other was the golden hour and that refers to statistically, if you can medically evacuate a wounded soldier to a surgically capable hospital within an hour, the probabilities of a successful outcome, just skyrocket.

And so, we positioned helicopters, we did a number of things to increase our opportunity to do that. This, the digital things, which, you've been putting in place in Pfizer and we've been experienced and then this COVID-19, how is it going to affect timing on things like a pandemic of the future or other challenges?

**LIDIA:** Yeah, I mean, look, what you just described is exactly right. You know, I think, let me start by saying that we always, sometimes we, we kinda think about innovations like artificial intelligence and machine learning, you know, these advanced analytics. And I always remind everybody that, that the reason why we are applying, you know, artificial intelligence and machine learning, is so that we can drive faster, more informed decisions to our stakeholders. And we should never lose sight of that because I think from a timing standpoint, yeah. being able to make a timely, more informed decision saves lives. It really makes a difference. Right.

I will tell you the creation of the COVID-19 vaccine was a medical miracle. We created a vaccine in nine months without sacrificing safety or efficacy. And, you know, I can tell you that digital played a key role in allowing us to work at that speed, both quickly and effectively. And, you know, I can tell you when the pandemic hit, we had to shift gears very, very quickly. Practically overnight, we transitioned 80% of our workforce to remote work and so that they could on the one hand stay safe, but also continuing to deliver those critical medic medicines that our patients rely on us for.

We drove innovation at record speed. Right. And let me share a few examples because I think you'll see some of the themes that you described, right, in terms of those very important

moments where you take action and you drive the decision. So, we help their scientists more quickly analyze clinical trial data. And just to give you the example before, you know, we have patients in a clinical trial and they come for their visits, and we may be able to see that data a few weeks later, you know, and then we look at it, we analyze it. We completely changed that paradigm and we were providing the ability to look at data every four, every six hours, that's completely, completely different then the operating rhythm that we had before this.

And by doing that, it really provided critical real time and predictive insights into the clinical trial so that we could be able to move fast, but always data driven and fact-certain. Right. In fact, we leverage augmented reality to diagnose and repair equipment in our labs and our manufacturing plants. Our people in our manufacturing plants, and a lot of our people in our labs, they're essential workers. They cannot replicate their work at home. So, they've been coming to work. Throughout this entire 18-month period. So, we needed to have a way that we could diagnose and repair equipment, but also keep them safe. Right. We have the social distancing that we had to maintain, so we leverage augmented reality to diagnose and repair equipment without, you know, keeping our colleagues safe and without having people traveling to the sites. We enabled patients to more quickly and easily report adverse events. That's really important, right, through the trial? We enabled our commercial team to engage virtually so that the conversation, that video and audio conversation that we can have, they could have with all of our customers throughout this period.

And in the manufacturing side, we enable cold chain capabilities. Throughout the entire supply chain and real-time monitoring of shipments and temperatures for every single one of our COVID-19 doses, anywhere in the world. All of that is really, really important because it drives not only action or first decisions and actions so that we could, you know, very quickly, as soon as we were able to be able to, you know, drive the vaccine into the arms of, of people around the world.

I'll tell you, our chief scientific officer likes to say, you know, "science will win and digital will help us do it faster." And that to me, is the connection.

**CHRIS:** Lidia, back on that point, how would you call it a, just a miracle of development that short time period just never happened before. One of the things that happen inside the, and Stan alluded to this, inside our generation in the military, was a recognition that traditional ways of collaboration, just, they won't get there fast enough, right. That this threat moves too quickly on the battlefield. So we're going to have to look at the rulebook and say, no, some of this just doesn't make sense anymore. I have to be able to send this message to this between these ground units, without checking in with headquarters. Or, the problem will advance faster than we can keep up with. Countless examples like that in this sort of teaming model that was put over top of it, was acceptable at the time, because it was similar to this last year.

No one knew what to do. So, if anything will work, we were, we were given sort of informal authorities to keep experimenting. As a national security focused person, on the side, I'm still concerned that coming out of this, as we return to a more traditional type of near peer competitive stuff, that the rule book's going to come back and be more hardened.

Right. And not because there's evil people, I'd probably do the same thing if I was still in government, you just, you, you, you play into what makes sense at the time and you forget all the advances you made in a, in a certain window. Are there things that you think are solidified enough in that sort of collaboration?

I mean, all the biopharm companies coming together and solving this as a collective team, will some of that be routinized into the system, or do you think we're going to regress back to the mean, too quickly?

**LIDIA:** No, I do believe that... I fundamentally believe that we're not going back. And I think that there's an opportunity, first of all, I think there's an opportunity to apply, you know, the Team of Teams approach to everyday scenarios while the crisis, you know, really fostered I think, and I kind of remember, you know, when it was probably end of January and we started to see what was happening in China. And I remember thinking at the time, "Wow, this is going to spread. This is going to be big."

And I remember Albert and I sitting together, and we looked at each other and we said, we had the same thought, which is, "Hey, let's use this as a giant pilot for all these principles, agile principles of working, this horizontal thinking, you know, this you know, focus on the, on the patient and, and on the, on the customer. And, and we went into it like, we're going to use this as a giant pilot. I think the fact that the pandemic, continuing for a protracted time, an extended time, it really started to solidify not only behaviors, but also the, you know, the outcomes of those behaviors and also the expectations.

And so I, you know, so I think that's an important piece, right? Because I think what we learned is working in parallel, instead of sequentially for speed, you know, all those things I can tell you that this was the vaccines group, right? Because we were working on a vaccine, I can tell you that we're applying, we call it "Lightspeed." That was the code name for the way we, you know, we approached the vaccine, where we now have other Lightspeed programs, because the other teams are like, "Hey, I want some of that. I want that same kind of focus and speed." You know, the speed of innovation and, and so, I do think that it will be really important for us to, you know, bottle the learnings and take them, take them into a future.

But I also think that our own colleagues are having an expectation now, right, of that speed and agility. And so I do think that, will there be face-to-face meetings in the future? Of course there will be. So, if I take the example of our commercial engagements with, with doctors, we have set targets, going, just going forward that, you know, 50% of our engagements are going to be virtual.

Now, what that will do is that when we do have a face-to-face meeting, not only the quality of that meeting will be different, but a lot of the content and, and, you know, kind of data sharing can happen virtually, so that when you do have that conversation with a physician, what you're talking about, I think is going to be more strategic. It's going to be more, you know, a bigger conversation than probably what we've done before. So, I do see us not going back. I think we have experienced an access and a convenience and a speed and also a gratification that, you

know what, we can do things differently and we deliver out, you know, more meaningful outcomes.

And I think I wouldn't underestimate the convenience aspect that saving me time and, and being able to, you know, complete activities virtually so that the things that I do choose to do, you know, more, in person I think are going to be different. Right. And so that's my perspective on that and I'm seeing it already, certainly with us.

So, for example, we have updated our policy, uh, where we actually have what we call login for your date, where we're comfortable, that colleagues, especially the colleagues, which are about 50% of our colleague base, we considered in that flexible, kind of category of colleague. We're comfortable with them, you know, working virtually, two to three days a week, and then being on site two things a week. That is a big change. We were not like that before the pandemic. The expectation was very much, you know, you show up in person to your location. That was a big shift because we recognize that, that flexibility. There is that balance of flexibility and productivity.

And, you know, if a colleague is going to spend an hour and a half on a commute each way, and they're coming in and they're going to be, you know, on, phone calls for, you know, in a WebEx. We kind of read it, we assess that, and say it and said, no, let's, you know, let's rethink the way that we work. And we've been doing that across the board, right? The way that we approach, you know, initiatives, applying the agile methodology. In fact, Stan, when you told us your story, I remember, you know, thinking now, right, at Pfizer, one of my responsibilities is that, I'm deploying agile across the entire company.

So, you know, we started agile and in the digital dimension and the leadership team and Albert were so pleased with the results that they saw, that Albert actually asked me to do that for the entire company. So, we have been actually shifting towards agile ways of working and, you know, these cross functional empower teams that, you know, go and have, you know, the, the support and the permission to rethink how we do things, and work in an agile way with their stand-ups, but the daily standups, you know, with delivering capability in sprints of two or three weeks so that we deliver value sooner, that, you know, that's part of our way of operating now. And so, I don't see us going back and I think it's going to be really important for all of us to ensure that we take what we've learned and bring it into the future. And I think that's going to have to be a concerted effort, you know, from everybody, whether it's governments, whether it's, you know, in the healthcare industries, and the good news is that on the digital front, the capabilities are there. So, I think it's a matter of, you know, just really continuing and taking the, the things that we really appreciated and learn, bringing them with us into a future.

So that's, that's my perspective on that and, and I'm certainly living that at Pfizer.

**STAN:** Wow. Lidia, I'm going to finish with one question and I'll apologize in advance. I'm going to be very personal on this question. Both Chris and I were raised in the military and you're taught leadership, you practice leadership, and then if fate causes you to lead in combat, when you come out of that, you are a different leader.

It affects you in some way. Now, you've just had a critical role in I would argue a global war for survival of the species. Had you failed, we could have a very different future. You are necessarily impacted by this leadership experience, which you are just coming out of. How were you as a leader different now?

**LIDIA:** You know, it's... I've had a chance to think about that a little bit, you know? I think a couple of things. I think one, I've always been a change agent by nature and I've never been afraid to take on, you know, what Jim Collins has always referred to as the BHAS, the big, hairy, audacious goals. And, you know, and then this one was absolutely a big, hairy, audacious goal. And I think as leader, one of the biggest learnings in, and I've become much more aware of this... There are two big lessons for me.

One is that the more senior you become and you know, you grow in your leadership is not about you anymore. It's about working effectively through others. And, you know, when, when your team is all remote and you're going to see each other through a screen, which on the one hand can feel more impersonal, finding ways to ensure that I checked in on them and, you know, because the world changed, right. It wasn't like, you know, I recognize that a lot of my colleagues, a lot of the people in my division and across Pfizer, they were not only working in a different way and virtually, but also they had kids that were doing distance learning. So, what they had to navigate and what they had to deal with at home was also different, right? They'd have kids that were doing distance learning, and so you have that, you have, you could be looking after a family member and so appreciating, right, that we're not just work people. But that there's a whole other side to us and then how to stay connected.

I always find that humans that are, you know, can be very creative. You know, so maintaining that connection was really, really important because that's the second lesson, right? Besides that it's not about you anymore. And it's about working effectively through others. It's also that people want to connect with you. So, one thing that has changed me as a leader is actually being more vulnerable in letting them in. And I always had this idea that business is business and personal is personal. And one of the things that I, that coming out of this experience was... I realized that I had to be, you know, I really allowed myself to be vulnerable and let them in. And by doing that, it really created a better connection, and that was really an important lesson, that, you know, has really changed who I am. Right.

And then I think as a change agent, I, there's kind of an opportunity. You know, I kinda, it really enabled me to bring, you know, it's almost like I've been building up to this point, all the different experiences, all the different mission impossibles, and BHAGs that I've had in the past while they were, I remember them being in my mind, mission impossibles and, and big, hairy, audacious goals, paled in comparison to the, you know what we were feeling as our duty as our, you know, as our mission here, and that was also, you know, something that solidified for me that my role as a change agent was very key as we were dealing with a lot of unknowns in and ultimately we needed thousands of people to believe that we could do the impossible.

And so those are some of the, kind of the key lessons and how I feel I've emerged out of this experience.

**CHRIS:** Well, we are all of us grateful and, and in debt to you and your teams for the amazing work over the last year and a half. And, this has been a fascinating discussion. I hope you're able to come up for air a bit now that things are slowly settling down, but I can only imagine the pace that you and your teams have been running at. So, thanks for, for all of the effort and thanks for spending time with us here today.

**LIDIA:** Thank you both. And, really appreciate, you know, the, the conversation. And, I look forward to continuing to work with you and the McChrystal Group. I think, I think the work that you're doing and the leadership and, you know, the, what you bring from your experience are so applicable and so relevant to business. Because it's about leadership, it's about mobilizing, it's about inspiring, and ultimately, it's about protecting and it's about bringing solutions. So, thank you. Thank you for all that you do. And you know, everything that you've done for our country as well.

**STAN:** Thanks so much, Lidia. Talk soon.

**LIDIA:** Take care.

**STAN:** Bye-bye.

**LIDIA:** Bye.

**CHRIS:** Yeah, so really, really impressive leader. It's been a few years since I've seen Lidia, I know you've spoken with her more times on-and-off as her sons navigate their desire to enter the military. When I've met her, he couldn't imagine what was right around the corner for her, I can only appreciate from afar or how intense the last 18 months must've been for everyone at Pfizer and others, big pharma. And what they've done for the world is, is truly impressive. And, and the, the humility that she talks about it, through is, is really jumps out in my, in my view.

**STAN:** Yeah. What comes to my mind is what if she and the CEO, Albert, had not been there? What if you'd had to less effective, less innovative people? Because as she mentioned, they took over in January of 2019, a little less than a year before COVID emerged in China. And suddenly they are at the epicenter of an effective response to something that was ravaging, not just United States, but the world.

And so had you not had the kinds of preparatory actions that they went through and then the kind of response that they made, history can be very different. You know, we could be in a, in a very difficult place right now. And yet my, my fear is that we're going to take it for granted. We're going to say some, you know, scientists somewhere, pull a rabbit out of a hat. No problem. And they'll do it again next time, but that's not what happened. An entire organization changed the way they did business to make it possible for not only the development, but the delivery of vaccines at scale.

**CHRIS:** Yeah. It will be interesting for sure, to see how, you know, the, the, the movie that captures this year, as that sort of gets popularized or captured. I agree with you. My fear is, and

you know, those sorts of narratives can end up capturing the history and it's going to be over simplified. It's going to boil down to this brilliant person talked to this brilliant person and the next thing, and it's going to forget this sort of the systems level stuff that she was discussing.

I thought it was really fascinating and interesting to you and I obviously cause our, our teams do so much work with big organizations on getting that baseline, correct. What we would call the sort of “north star” of the organization, what are the values? What's your intent? And then you can cascade that down into execution.

And when we, but that's a sticking point for a lot of leaders, cause they just want to get to what they think is the, the money-making action in the business. Right. So when I asked her like what go deeper on the foundations that were built in 2019, honestly expected her being, given her position, especially, to say, “well, we had transitioned this part of a research up into this cloud-based server and allowed us to move faster” or some sort of regulatory change that was well timed. And she didn't, she talked about: we knew our values. We had established where we wanted to go. We changed our thinking to put customers first and that set the foundation to deal with the crisis.

**STAN:** If you think and make a political crossover to politics in the United States right now, what you have is a misalignment on values and a misalignment on desired outcomes. We have different groups, not just two. We have more than that across the spectrum who are clearly not sharing the same values and their desired outcomes are so different that obviously the processes, we have no longer support getting there.

Now that can happen in any big organization. And she, she very definitely described it in Pfizer, which is a monstrous thing, you know, it's got different tribes inside it. But that same lesson is applicable for so many things in our lives. You know, giving first things first, strategic alignment on what you're about, and what you're trying to do. And then what is the outcome that's achievable and desirable?

**CHRIS:** I'd be curious, your thoughts on how... I was very happy to hear her optimism about, the changes in how quickly that big pharma can move based on these lessons. And obviously she, she feels optimistic that it won't go away. I certainly hope that's true. Most organizations in my view will, you know, will all sort of lazy go to the easiest solution and when the world seems stable, bureaucracy can, can take over, but I hope we've learned, to, to defeat that in this case.

**STAN:** Yeah, it's interesting because we worked healthcare together long enough now to know that there are some basic disconnects in the American healthcare system, at least, in that, fee for service causes a different set of actions than fee for outcome. And we have not linked those two together. So, I think the entire industry is in evolution. But I'm hopeful, particularly upon her description, that this will speed up. There'll be some forces that force it, virtual meetings, efficiency costs, and all those kinds of things. In this case, cost was not the driver, it was timing and efficacy. We had to get an outcome faster, and I'd like to believe that that those same forces will stay at work.

**CHRIS:** Does it ever – this is totally different – but does it ever surprise you when you meet a leader at that level... a critical mandate inside, obviously a critical organization for the world of the last 18 months, that is so grounded and down-to-earth.

**STAN:** It is... I don't want to say surprising, but it is very heartening because Lidia, both her feet are absolutely on the ground, all the time at the same time, so as she described, she's not scared to reach for things that seem unattainable. The idea that she would digitally transform Pfizer, you know, if you or I were given that task, we'd stand in front of Mount Everest and just sort of be mesmerized for a bit and go, where do you start? But she very, you know, definitely describes, okay, you have to make sure the capability's there and then you just gotta do it one step at a time.

**CHRIS:** Yeah. I'd probably start with like an inventory of laptops or something. I don't know what that would mean, right? No, she's, she's an impressive person and, you know, to, to your point during the discussion, we're all lucky to have had leaders like that over the last year and a half, pull out all of our behalves,

**STAN:** You know, what's interesting and fun. We just interviewed Lidia, but we didn't describe her as a healthcare leader, a digital leader, a female leader. Because that what, none of those were the important things. It was the fact that she is a leader that took on a big task.

**CHRIS:** Yeah, That's absolutely right. And we're grateful to her and her team for her setting this up and spending the time with us here today.