

ALBA-IBRO Diversity Podcast - From Postdoc to PI

Episode 3 - Beyond the bench: building inclusive lab cultures

Transcript

Angeline Dukes | 00:00.236

I think one of the big ones that come to mind immediately is recognizing everyone's differences and knowing that providing the same exact resources to every single person is not equitable. You want to tailor the resources and opportunities and experiences to each person based on what they need. That is being more inclusive and being more equitable and making sure that people have access to what they need. It's not a one size fits all approach.

Jonathan | 00:30.300

Do you dream of being the next group leader but feel overwhelmed by the challenges ahead? Then we've got just what you need.

Renaud | 00:37.308

What if you could learn from scientists all over the world? What if you could listen to them as a guide to what comes next?

Jonathan | 00:44.933

You've come to the right place. I'm Jonathan Weitzman.

Renaud | 00:48.175

And I'm Renaud Pourpre.

Jonathan | 00:49.644

And you're listening to the ALBA-IBRO Diversity Podcast.

Renaud | 00:54.003

Turn up the volume and let's dive into running your own lab.

Jonathan | 01:07.020

Previously, on the Alba Ibro Diversity Podcast, we explored how to set up a lab with limited resources. And we imagined ourselves setting out on a journey with little more than a raft and a dream. But let's be honest, even the best equipped boat won't go far without a strong crew.

Renaud | 01:33.604

Now, as the captain, how do you build a team that rows together, not apart? Because science is not a solo trip. It's a group expedition. And what about your leadership? You know, it is not just about setting the course. It is much more than that. In today's episode, we will talk about one of the less visible skills of being a group leader. We will dive into what it takes to create a cohesive team.

Jonathan | 02:07.323

Because the science you do tomorrow depends on the team you build today. So here's the big question. What kind of captain should you be to ensure that your team doesn't sink?

Renaud | 02:25.069

When people think about academia, they usually think about the science. Lots of energy is focused on experiments, publications, breakthroughs. But here is the question we don't ask enough. What makes some research teams thrive and others fall apart? What if the answer isn't just intelligence or hard work, but something deeper, something more human?

Jonathan | 02:52.151

What if it's about the culture? Not museum culture or pop culture. We're talking about... Academic culture, the unspoken rules, the vibes, the expectations that shape how we live together, how we work together, and whether we feel like we belong. But what does culture actually mean in academia?

Dori Grijseels | 03:15.735

An argument that's being used quite a lot is saying, well, you know, we're scientists here. We should focus only on the science, and we should not like, who cares if you're gay?

Renaud | 03:25.423

This is Dori Hajils. They are a postdoctoral researcher in Alison Barker's lab at the Max Planck Institutes for Brain Research in Frankfurt, Germany. They are the co-lead of the ALBa Network Gender and Sexual Diversity Committee, where they continue promoting queer inclusion among the brain science. What Dory reminds us here is that being just about the science often ignores too much.

Dori Grijseels | 03:54.107

And, of course, that's a good argument. Right. And ideally, that would be the case. The issue with that is that being gay or being queer, depending on the person, obviously does affect your life. You know, so when I'm thinking about myself, for example, I have certain medical needs and I may need to take time off for that. And so that is part of my life as well. And that affects my work. And similarly, when I think of really. Potent example right now is if you're an immigrant in the U.S. And especially a non-white immigrant, part of your brain currently is always occupied by the thought of, is Ice going to take me off the street, right? And this is a very extreme example, but this can be to varying degrees, can affect various people. And so asking people to not take something like that, which is affecting them very greatly into their work. And saying, well, we don't talk about that here. I think is pretty offensive and is also very short-sighted on, you know, you're working with people. Scientists are still people. We all bring things into work. So when you're saying, example, if someone's going through divorced or someone is pregnant, we take that into account. Right. We think about what they're going through and we might accommodate that in some ways. But a lot of those situations are things that we might automatically accommodate for. Now, thinking about pregnancy, obviously, there's still a lot of... Bias and stigma that pregnant scientists face. But I think in most cases, when we see that

someone is pregnant, or we hear someone is pregnant, we immediately think of, oh, They might need certain accommodations. They might not go into the PFA room. I think we need to take all of this into account.

Jonathan | 05:35.644

Behind every pipette and every paper, there are real people with identities, emotions, health, and real life experiences that don't just disappear when they enter the lab. You can't. Ask a member of your crew to put their entire identity on hold, just to do good science. But when it comes to the non-scientific aspects of a lab, who's in charge? What should be the roles of the institution, of the lab, and of the group leader? We asked Angeline Dukes. She's an assistant professor at the University of Minnesota in a unique role, half teaching and half focused on DEI outreach work. She's also the founding president of Black in Europe, an international nonprofit supporting Black scholars in neuroscience.

Angeline Dukes | 06:26.282

I do think that it does need to be, to some extent, a top down approach to where, like, institutions and departments have certain requirements and criteria and like, are checking on, like, the well-being and making sure that labs are not, you know, this like incredibly toxic place for people to be able to do the work that they need to do. And so I do think, like. To some extent, it needs to happen that way. And I do think like the PIS are responsible for saying that. But again, I also do feel like every lab is very different. And like it should be up to that team, like everyone who's in the lab. To also contribute to some of those community guidelines and rules, right? Like to being able to, like, have their own voice heard of. like, I think this is super important, or this is something that would be like, essential for me, right? To be able to thrive here. So it's like a mix of both of those things, right? Like, I do think it needs to come from the institutional department level, but I also think it needs to come from the people who are actually in that space, too.

Renaud | 07:17.382

So what would be an academic culture? We asked Adrienne Liston, a professor of pathology at the University of Cambridge in United Kingdom, and Denise Fitzgerald, a professor of neuroimmunology at Queen's University, Belfast, in Northern Ireland.

Adrian Liston | 07:35.757

So research culture, I mean, it's something that we... All know what a bad culture is when we see it. Everyone who's worked in a lab understands that there are times when the environment gets toxic, the environment drains energy out of you. A positive research culture is often harder to define, and it's often different for different people, But it's the environment that you look forward to going, an environment that energizes you, it's an environment that builds you up to produce more than you would otherwise. And so that's what the research culture is. It's the environment of the lab, building you up or pulling you down. Is it helping you do science or is it hindering you doing science? It's just so critical.

Jonathan | 08:17.459

But recognizing culture isn't always easy, especially early in your career. How do you know what's normal and what's not? Denise shared something that might sound familiar.

Denise Fitzgerald | 08:28.522

From an earlier career stage, I think the recognition is often on reflection. I think at... This career stage, where we're responsible in many cases for setting the culture, it has to be a bit more of a deliberate and regular reflection on how things are taking stock and identifying what's going well and what could be done better. But at that earlier career stage, you know, P.h.D. and postdoc, I think from my own experience, I didn't necessarily know what was positive and negative until I looked back. And I'd agree with Adrian, often the negative is easier to identify than the positive. And that's where I think that the power of reflection really comes in.

Renaud | 09:09.980

So it starts with reflection and with intention, because culture does not just happen. You're building it every day, whether you mean to or not. But here's the twist. A culture does not come from one person. It comes from a whole group.

Adrian Liston | 09:28.761

One of the key things about research culture is that you need to have a reference point. And when you're just starting off your career and you're in one lab, you think that that's how labs work. That is your reference point. And it's as you get more experience and you get more reference points to add to it, that you can start to see that. There were some aspects of that lab that worked really well for you. And there are other aspects that didn't work very well for you. And you pick up these experiences over the course of your career. And at that point, when you're trying to build a culture yourself, you can either be very passive and just let things fall out based on your natural personality, Or you can be deliberative and say, I want to build this particular culture. I'm going to pull this aspect from this lab, this aspect from this other lab, try to fuse them together and build that culture I want. And it's also not just as a lab head. That you're doing this. I think it's really important to mention, as Denise alluded to earlier, that every single person is contributing to the research culture. We contribute in different ways. And so I think you need to have different strategies in terms of how you improve the research culture. But research culture is not something created by the PI and then everyone else has to put up with. It's something that we create together inside a lab.

Jonathan | 10:44.538

You start to see it. Culture in academia isn't just a backdrop. It's the air. Your crew is going to breed. So if it matters this much, can we learn as a captain, why and how you can foster the development of a positive culture?

Renaud | 11:01.209

If we heard in the previous episodes about how much people value equity, diversity, and inclusion, there is one question we can all ask ourselves. In a world where productivity and progress are in high demand as much as rigor, is there a benefit from this?

Dori Grijseels | 11:19.861

Yeah, so this article in cell that came out last year, honestly, I was incredibly privileged and lucky to be part of that. And, you know, all the authors on it are people I've looked up to for ages, are very brilliant scholars. So this was already in this sort of increasingly hostile climate, especially in the U.S., Where trans people are being targeted. The article argues that there is an intrinsic link between inclusivity. In science, and especially for trans scientists, and sort of rigor in science as well. And this links to what I said earlier as well, where we often see that pseudoscience is being used to take rights away from trans people. So as a sort of discipline, standing up to those pseudoclaims and standing up for inclusion is also a way of standing up for the integrity of science. And yeah, it came out a year ago. We're now a year further and I feel like the article is more relevant than it has ever been. So I continue sharing it as well.

Jonathan | 12:22.680

Dory reminds us that standing up for inclusion is also standing up for scientific integrity. That when science becomes exclusive, it threatens one of its core values, intellectual rigor. What if inclusion didn't just protect science, but actually unlocked it? On that point, Angeline picks up this thread and takes us deeper.

Angeline Dukes | 12:46.481

There are so many benefits to having a diverse team. Like, honestly, it makes our science better. And this is proven, right? Like, this is not just me talking, you know, because I just, like, believe that, which I do. But, like, it has been proven that having diverse teams and having, like, diverse perspectives, it makes our science so much better. Mostly because we have such diversity of thought, right? Like, we're not all having the same perspectives and the same viewpoints. It just allows us to see things in a new light. It allows us to have, you know, unique perspectives on things. Secondly, it also allows, like, for future generations to be able to see themselves as scientists, right? To be able to, like, see the work that they do. And, thirdly, it allows for more people to feel more comfortable with research, right? Like, at least here in the U.S. And I know in a lot of other countries, too, there have been longstanding reasons why, in particular, marginalized people and people from impoverished communities do not trust science, right? Like, they do not trust researchers. They do not trust the work that we do. Because historically, harm has been done to them, right? Like, harm has been done to those communities by scientists and researchers and governments, right? And so they're very valid in having this level of mistrust. But when you have scientists and researchers who look like them, who are, you know, talking them through. What exactly the study will entail, like the process of it, what's going to be the outcomes of it, right? There is more trust that can be built with those communities. Whereas, you know. No offense to you, but like, as a white man, right, If you're coming into, like, a low income Black community, they're going to be like, I don't, you know, this is not, I can't trust you, right? Like, I don't know you. You don't have my shared life experiences. I can't trust that the things that you're saying are real. Whereas if I go into one of those communities, it is easier for them to be like, okay, this is someone who grew up like me, who has same experiences as me, who looks like me, And I can be open to hearing more what she has to say. And like, understanding a little bit more about how this process works, instead of it being an immediate no. And so I think there are a lot of different reasons why having, you know,

diverse representation in your lab groups are essential. I just think it's important because every single person deserves the opportunity to thrive in research like they just do.

Renaud | 14:50.994

Inclusion and diversity change the face of research, for us and for the world. But how do we get there? What are the key principles to build inclusive labs?

Denise Fitzgerald | 15:01.807

This needs to be an active process. I think maybe the only exception, if it even could be, is if you get really, really lucky with landing in an absolutely super environment. In terms of, you know, the institution that you're in, we're creating a team that are coming with... The knowledge of how best to develop and continue a positive lab environment. Those are two big ifs. And there's too many points at which that could potentially fail. And I think that's where the leadership of the PI is so important in setting it out. And even more so if it's not such a harmonious environment institutionally, if there are challenges locally that you actively need to overcome. And express your view about how the research culture within your team needs to be. Potentially relative to less positive examples that the team may see around them. So there can sometimes be a mitigation that's required there. And similarly, with ensuring that the lab culture is a team culture, you need to take the time to understand the views of the team members. And as I say, you can hope that you recruit a fantastic team that are all on the same page and see things the same way. And everything is wonderful. But the chances of that are slim. Often, that guidance is needed. And sometimes it's just a naivety, you know, for maybe an earlier stage person to know that. They can speak up and suggest changes to a format of a lab meeting, or how a piece of equipment is run, or how a data is shared, or how they collaborate on particular experiments. Sometimes, the PI really needs to actively engage with individuals that have the potential to help grow that positive research culture, but might not feel empowered to do it. For me, I do think it needs to be acted on.

Jonathan | 16:47.466

Denise reminds us that building a lab culture isn't about luck. It's about intention. And this starts with recruitment.

Angeline Dukes | 16:55.945

I mean, I think what we were talking about earlier, so community guidelines and ground rules, so people feel like they can speak up, right, is one of the things. I think the second thing that comes to mind is to be very intentional about who you are inviting to do science, right? Like, who are you inviting to do the research in your lab? Is your lab all homogenous, right? Like, are we... Having the same type of people who have had the same types of privileges that are in this space? Or are we trying to be intentional with creating space for other people to thrive? And so what I mean by that is, are you going to, you know, undergraduate classes? And like, even like local liberal arts institutions, to talk to students who maybe don't know about research, right? And, like, have never been exposed to it and don't know that it's an opportunity for them. And are you talking with them through, like how to get involved in certain spaces? Are you trying to ensure that there are paid research opportunities. That you can invite students to participate in,

right? Because not everyone has that privilege to be able to just volunteer in a lab. A lot of students have bills and they have things that they need to do to be able to get paid. And so, are you intentional with trying to make sure that they know about different opportunities relating to that, too, right?

Renaud | 18:00.116

And it makes sense. As the captain, you have to reach out to the communities that you want to see represented, build a network that allows you to listen, to understand. And to be part of a community that you are not initially part of. But after that, there is also another thing you should take into account, having an active recognition.

Angeline Dukes | 18:21.122

I think one of the big ones that come to mind immediately is recognizing everyone's differences and knowing that providing the same exact resources to every single person is not equitable, right? Like, that is not what you want to do. You want to tailor the... Resources and opportunities and experiences to each person based on what they need, right? Like, that is being more inclusive and being more equitable and making sure that people have access to what they need. It's not a one size fits all approach, right? And so what I mean by that is that if you have a disabled student who is in your lab, They're obviously going to need different access to things and they're going to have maybe some different constraints on certain things and need more support. In other areas than maybe an able-bodied student, right? And it's not that they will not be as successful as an able-bodied student, but that they, you know, just might need some things that are a little bit different. And the same thing goes for people who come from low-income backgrounds, people who come from just different types of intersections, Students that are immigrants, students that are queer might have, like, certain unique situations that arise, right? Like it just, it spans the spectrum because everybody is so different. It's not saying that I don't see color or I don't see any differences. It's that... We do actually see them, right? And we can acknowledge that there are systemic barriers that face people based on their unique identity intersections. And, you know, we're going to do what we can to help.

Jonathan | 19:45.798

And that kind of intentional care. Doesn't just happen by itself. It starts with how you build your lab from the very beginning. Adrian takes us there to that very first day.

Adrian Liston | 19:57.147

A lot of people start a lab thinking, I want to get the science up and running. And then I'll worry about culture, and I'll worry about these other aspects down the track, because the science is the most important thing. And I think that the problem is, if you go into setting up a lab, unthinking about that culture, it becomes it's very tough. To change a culture once it's set in versus when you're creating it for that first time. And I think of it like this, you know, doing science is tough. It's like pushing a boulder. And if you're creating an environment that's toxic or a negative research environment, you're basically pushing a boulder uphill. You're making it so much harder on yourself. Whereas if you create an environment that is a positive research culture, an environment where people work together, you're pushing a boulder downhill. All you

have to do is just get it rowling, and it's going to go so much further than you could ever do by yourself. So don't wait until afterwards, until the lab is set up, before you set the culture. I actually have sort of three different documents that I give out at different stages. One of them is about expectations. And this is something that I give to everyone the minute they start asking to join my lab. The minute they want to have a conversation about joining a lab, I give them a document about what I think a good team member is. And my expectations for myself as a manager, my expectations for them as a team member. And I put that out there and I tell them, you know, you have to look for multiple different places for your career. You've got to look for what's best for you. This is what my expectations are. Have a look at it. Think about whether or not it matches what you want out of yourself and what you want out of this time here. And don't feel shy to say, you know what, this is not for me. I'm going to go somewhere else. So just putting that out there. It's two pages. And I go through essentially what I think a good academic is, what that means in practice, what I think you need to have in terms of developing a plan for your own career and communicating that to me and working together on outcomes. Then the second document I have is when someone has signed up to join a lab. And it's a little bit about how to prepare, what things to do in advance. Often, people are very raring. To go and they want to get the ball rolling. So it's more of a slow down, take some time off, you know, maybe read a couple of papers, but this is what your first couple of weeks is going to be like. And then the third document is the lab guide. And partly it is logistic about who to contact, for what, but it's also goes through our lab values. And I think putting those values out there is very important because it's easy to get lost in. The details of. This is how to safely use this equipment, this is how to book this particular machine, this is how to process an order. And if you get too lost in the logistics, then you forget to say up front what your values are. What we're trying to do here, what is it that the lab's actually trying to achieve? And so it's a mixture of those, those value statements and also those logistical statements. All

Renaud | 23:02.821

right, let us take a moment to sum this up. Keep in mind that inclusion and diversity are not optional. They make your science stronger and more trustworthy. Be intentional about recruitment. It is the only way to ensure you build a diverse team. Don't just treat everyone the same. Focus on equity by giving people what they need to succeed. Build a positive lab culture from day one. Set clear expectations and share your core values early.

Jonathan | 23:34.967

But if it's one thing to launch a lab culture, it's quite another to nurture it. Despite the best intentions, conflicts and challenges can arise for the team and the team leader alike. How can these conflicts be handled while continuing to grow the team? One first strategy is to create spaces where people feel seen, supported and safe enough to share. And for Dory, it all starts with listening.

Dori Grijseels | 24:04.032

One of the ways to do this is to show a willingness to listen, to show that you're open. To feedback, to discuss these difficult societal issues as well, as well as make sure that you sort of highlight other ways, other pathways that your students or your employees can go if they're

having issues. I think this is a major one. And also promoting this kind of inclusivity in sort of meetings like lab meetings, for example.

Renaud | 24:32.853

But opening ears and doors is unfortunately not enough. On that... Angeline shared with us one key principle, vulnerability.

Angeline Dukes | 24:43.356

And I think one of the best ways to do that is by being open and like, vulnerable and honest. And saying that, you know, I may not make all of the best decisions. Right. But, like, I do care about, like, your well-being as a human. And so like, if I'm doing something that causes any harm? Or if you feel like this is creating an unsafe space for you, like, I really want you to tell me. I want you to be open and to be able to let me know what's going on so I can try to make things better. And I think that vulnerability. Allows people to feel a little bit more comfortable in speaking up. So I mentioned that I direct a couple of different programs. And so during some of those meetings, I try to be very intentional at the beginning. Where we have some time. Where I just ask them, like, what's on your mind, right? Like, what's going on? What are you currently worried about? And I think, you know, spending that 10 to 15 minutes just talking through, like, what are some of your current concerns right now? What is an obstacle you're facing in lab? You can have a lot of different prompts for that. And I think doing that maybe at the beginning of if you have weekly lab meetings, right? And it takes 10 to 15 minutes, But it allows people to really speak up about things that are bothering them. I think it's so important that as the PI, whatever prompt you have, you have an answer to that. And you're like, I'm going to go first. This is something that I'm currently worried about. And it sets the stage for everyone else to feel a little bit more comfortable. Because now you're showing that vulnerability of, like, I don't have everything together. Right. Everything isn't perfect right now. This is what I'm worried about. I think that allows space for other people to also speak up to.

Jonathan | 26:07.542

Vulnerability in leadership isn't weakness. It's the glue that holds trust together. But what if something's wrong and no one's saying it out loud? Denise reminds us that silence can speak volumes.

Denise Fitzgerald | 26:21.733

I think it's a matter of keeping your ear to the ground and being present, not only listening to what's said, but recognizing when something maybe isn't being said, when perhaps an individual or a group of individuals might seem not... To be engaging as much and trying to understand, is there a reason behind that? Do they need some support and some empowerment? But one thing I've noticed in my team over the years is you sometimes have individuals in the team and often they've been with you a long time. Or maybe they're quite experienced and they become a bit of a trust zone for the lab as well. So sometimes somebody might not. Feel as comfortable letting me, the PI, know that they're struggling. Or they have too much on their plate, or they're having a difficulty with a particular colleague, either within our team or externally. These other individuals might give me a little nod to say, you know, that

person, They might be going through a tough time personally and they didn't feel comfortable saying it to me.

Renaud | 27:22.225

Leadership isn't about formal processes. It's about being in tune with your team. Sometimes through trusted intermediaries, what Denise calls touchstones in the lab. And as Adrian points out, there is another indicator of your lab culture, how team members treat each other.

Adrian Liston | 27:42.292

Yeah, I agree with everything that, Denise said. The only thing I would add is that possibly one of the canaries in the coal mine is. How your team members treat other team members, and in particular, how they treat people that they're mentoring. So if you've got a postdoc, look at the interactions the postdoc has with it. A P.h.D. student that they might be teaching, or a P.h.D. student, the interactions that they have with a master's or an undergraduate student that they're supervising. If you see positive interactions rippling out across the team, then that's a very good sign that they're in a positive environment. If you see indications of people placing themselves above, putting themselves in a position of authority, any signs of of bullying or disrespect internally, then they're picking up that. That is an acceptable way to behave. They're picking that up from somewhere. And so that is really a canary in the coal mine situation.

Jonathan | 28:42.673

We are all humans, so conflict can arise. But how can we prevent them from appearing or growing? Angeline offered us some insights and practical advice.

Angeline Dukes | 28:54.610

I think that there are some common themes when it comes to conflict within a lab. One common one is if you have multiple graduate students and their projects are too closely aligned. Right. Get ahead of that would be to have like very clear, distinct projects, having very clear time. And we have very clear projects that we're working on and there's like less competition there. The second thing is to not pit people against each other. I think that PIS can sometimes perpetuate a lot of conflict in competitive environments. If they're like, well, only one person can go to this conference. So whoever has the best data, or whoever can write, the best. Right. Like. That's not healthy. And it makes people not want to talk with each other and collaborate together. Whereas instead being like, well, if both of you work together on creating a really good abstract, or able to, like, get this project done, you both can go. Or, you know, or if you can't afford for both of them to go, this person's going to go this year and then you're going to go next year. And then the third thing that comes to mind with conflict is that sometimes there can be power imbalances within Lab two. So, like when I was a graduate student, right, like, if I had a conflict with the postdoc, that could be. A power imbalance in itself, right? Because now this is like a person that's a level above me. And so if my PI would have, you know, had a meeting with maybe the two of us together, as a graduate student, I would have felt more hesitant to speak up. Because now I have this postdoc and this PI in this room. And so I think the best way to like, handle that would be to have two separate meetings with each of us, right? And then ask each person, what would be your ideal outcome from this conflict? What would be like the best

solution for you? And then maybe do a group meeting together, right, where it's like, OK, now, you know, we have talked to you both individually. And this is like the best solution that I've found from this, as opposed to creating that space where one person feels like they can't speak up.

Renaud | 30:35.300

But if conflicts do arise, Denise and Adrienne have some useful tips. Denise told us to start to resolve conflicts locally.

Denise Fitzgerald | 30:44.605

I guess, if we use an example, if the culture within your team locally is less positive because of some... Between team members, for example, something really, quite basic and likely. We're all different personalities and not everybody works well together. Is it best work this out locally, informally, together, or is it best escalate that straight away? Well, obviously, it depends on the nature of the disagreement. If it's simply different personality types have different ways of working. And there isn't an abuse or bullying, or, you know, something more as severe to worry about. Then a more local and informal approach, conversation or set of conversations together, or even some concrete steps that are agreed between people, might help solve that without it escalating, because the process of dealing with grievances can itself bring quite a negative impact on well-being. So before you go to that level, you've got to determine whether that's necessary. Or is there a simpler way forward that can get the same outcome? I always talk about focusing on the outcome you want, not what makes you feel better in that moment.

Jonathan | 31:51.328

And on this, Adrian dives deeper with more practical tips for conflict resolution.

Adrian Liston | 31:57.894

Yeah, I agree with this. It is really important to focus on, as Sunil says, the outcome that you're after, rather than indulge yourself in responding to a situation that's arisen. For example, you might have a situation between two people in the lab or one person who is behaving in a way that you think is inappropriate. If you're indulging yourself, you can pull them in and call them out. It doesn't give you what you actually want, which is an improvement in the situation. And so I think what I try to start with, with any problem that is coming in, is asking myself, what did I do that allowed this problem to occur? Now, that doesn't mean that every problem that occurs in your lab is your fault. It's not. But it is always helpful to think about what role you had. In creating an environment where it could happen, where it could have been averted, what would you have done differently, knowing what you know now to have this problem not come up? And then you're thinking about what is actionable on your side. And you can talk to the person really with a conversation where you're starting out by saying, you know, I saw this interaction that I'm not happy with, and I wanted to have a discussion with you because I feel like I didn't explain to you. What being a supervisor is. Okay. I saw an interaction between a supervisor and a supervisee that I didn't think was appropriate. And now, rather than me telling you off for not being a good supervisor, I'm saying to you that I feel I haven't explained the role of a supervisor well enough. So why don't I talk to you about what that role is and how we should be doing this

better. And then we can work through this example with you so that you can become a better supervisor. And that takes it away from being a telling off, which is generally ineffective, to you being a good mentor and you're developing someone else's skills. Which is generally better for them and better for the situation. It is tough, though, because it is very easy to just respond emotionally to a situation, go on the attack. Rather than have that introspective aspect of what did I do that wasn't right? And how I can improve the situation? With no thought about my own ego in this.

Renaud | 34:22.609

Let's be honest. Conflict is common. It's part of being a human. And if we try to sum up, here are some take-home messages. Check the vibe. Notice what is said and what is not. Talk early. Talk often. Start meetings with open check-ins. Be the first to share. Set the tone by being honest. Don't feed competition. Design fair processes and clear projects. Mind the power gaps. Separate conversations can help people speak freely. Culture. Is not your next challenge to solve. It is something you take care of.

Jonathan | 35:03.106

We've come to the end of this episode. As you can see, building a cohesive and inclusive team is not an easy task. It's a constant process that needs to be nurtured before and after boarding. This boat, of which you are now the captain, has a beautiful and long mission. But like all great journeys, you and the people who accompany you will be creating a unique culture for your laboratory. So you have to think about how to foster it from the very beginning. In this way, you will build a tradition for your team over time, a tradition where everyone feels they belong and where people can connect with the science and with each other.

Adrian Liston | 35:46.256

The Golden Pipette is an award that I've had running for 10 years now, and it's part of trying to build a tradition. Now, I think it's very... Traditions are very valuable for a lab, because one of the things about science is that it's slow. And when you're doing slow science, it feels like you've come in to do research, to make an impact, And it's been six months and you haven't cured cancer yet. What's wrong with you? In order to understand that actually individuals don't make solo discoveries, individuals don't make a solo difference. It's the team that over time is able to make an impact. We need to have something connecting us. To the people that came before and the people that came after. So I think traditions like the Golden Pipette or the German Hat tradition, these are great traditions. Because it makes us feel like we're part of something bigger.

Renaud | 36:40.355

The quality of your science is a reflection of the people who build it. Your crew. And your crew reflects and feeds off the values you instill in them. At every stage, from recruitment to collaboration, you will welcome each member to ensure that your ship floats and doesn't sink. No one is saying it's easy. In fact, you may even be afraid to stand up for certain values. Fear for your safety and fear for your career.

Jonathan | 37:15.966

The academic system is far from perfect. Toxic environments can emerge or even quietly take over. hold. So how can we, as scientists, deal with the power dynamics?

Renaud | 37:29.987

Thank you for listening to this episode. And we thank our guests, Dory, Angeline, Denise, and Adrian for sharing their stories and tips with us.

Jonathan | 37:41.093

We'll find out more in the next episode. This podcast was brought to you with the support of the International Brain Research Organization, a founding partner of the ALBA Network. The ALBA Network is a division of FENDS and aims to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion to counteract bias and fight discrimination in brain research. For more information on this podcast, visit www.alba.network.