

# PP S3E8 Transcript

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## SPEAKERS

Bernie Mitchell, Suzanne Murdock

### **Suzanne Murdock** 00:00

Hi. I'm Suzanne Murdock, and welcome to series three of powering productivity. Each episode, I explore the energy, that really genuine connections, expertise, and being in your best flexible working environment can bring to you, your business and your whole life. So let's get started. Welcome. I'm your host, Suzanne Murdock. And welcome back to you if you've joined us before a very warm welcome to new listeners out there. Now go easy on me, this is my first episode for a little while. And today we are talking keeping it local, exploring the possibilities of regional working and independent, flexible office workspaces. To assist me with this, I am joined by the lovely Bernie Mitchell, the seasoned expert, who's been around on the co working circuit for as long as I can remember co working being around massive advocates for co working writer podcaster, and coach. And Bernie's a massive champion for a smaller, more local and flexible workplace operators, and very much communities as well. So Benny, we recently spoke on your podcast a little while ago about the importance of inclusive and collaborative, co working communities. And we touched on, I guess, the transformative power of those spaces and how they can really bring or what they can bring to a diverse cohorts, increased productivity, promoting fulfilment, and really that belonging that psychological safety that a lot of us often crave. So I'm keen to follow on from that, and explore I guess the value that the more local, regional and smaller co working spaces can bring. So both remote hybrid workers, but very much to communities as well, the local community. So if you would, Bernie, for those who haven't met you listen to you before, could you give us a quick rundown of who you are and what you do?

### **Bernie Mitchell** 02:02

I, my cue answer to this nowadays is I talk, and I type which I stole from someone I did a podcast with. Because Because that's, that's why I love I love typing and researching and, and doing this and podcasting and having conversations with people. And then a lot of it is about it's not a career, but it's what I do is I find people and I connect them and their ideas. And that's that's what I ended up doing. So you know, people pay me money to give them advice on how to run a co working space. But actually what I do all day long is like, interview people. And I'm just wildly wildly curious about how people do things. And this local community things like a co working local community thing is a conversation I discovered, co working European like 2014. And, you know, I've just never been able to let it go. And it's something that grows and grows and grows and grows and grows and COVID I think

sort of supercharged the acceleration of the future of work, as we like to call it. So now it's even more exciting than ever.

**Suzanne Murdock 03:07**

And there's a lot of spin offs, I guess from co working communities as well. And we're talking the local economy, there's a lot of different avenues and things that feed into the co working community. So you've got, obviously people working in centres themselves, and then they go and talk to shop owners, etc, local businesses, and it's this massive spiral effect. And I think like you said, especially since COVID, it's really blossomed, and it's just evolving massively. And there's something different happening every month.

**Bernie Mitchell 03:37**

There is I got to know co working so one in London because I was in a meetup group called kindred run by a lady called Alex Butler, who had been part of the whole Tech City set up and done if it still is, but it was known as Silicon Roundabout by old street. And back in back in 2010. Here a freelancer it was like secret code for I can't get a job. And she was like, actually no freelancers and independent workers is like a really valid career choice. And, and she knew lots of, you know, freelancers, and would get them all together and a meetup group. And in about that time, there was this thing called co working that I've been around before, obviously, but it was like exploding in London. And she would go to co working spaces and say, Would you like you know, 10 freelancers to come sit in your building, you know, once a week for two hours and meet. So I've got to go to nearly every new every time a new co working space opened, they got in contact with Alex and I got to meet lots of co working spaces as they opened in London. Because I went to a different meetup every day. And that that's how I got into it. And then at that point, all those co working spaces, I actually say like 80% of those co working spaces were in Zone One of London and the other 20% were in zone two and now there's more and more places opening up in. We say this wrong six, five and four. So people have come eating less. And there's a stat which Islington, which is a borough in London are really red hot on local co working and affordable workspace and everything like that. And they have an inclusion department and the inclusion department researched. And this is probably a few years old now. But every time someone spends a pound with a local business, it goes around the local economy four times, but when they go and spend a pound with Marks and Spencers or Sainsbury's or, you know, big global company, it kind of exits the local economy right away. So it's better. It's not a not a new conversation. But spending money with local businesses reinforces the economic strength of that area. Yeah,

**Suzanne Murdock 05:41**

absolutely. And isn't this a stats, it's been around for a while. So it's probably increased a bit. But every coworker and a co worker spend something like seven, eight pounds a day in the local economy. Friend of

**Bernie Mitchell 05:53**

mine, Irene did some research a little bit aside because it's bad karma but a very well known top shelf Margarita type, co working space. And this was 2018 2019. And because of where it was close to a mainline railway station in London, people would come off, buy their food at like Fret or Tesco, go into the co working space, and then leave and not really actually spend any money with the local places

around there. And my gut feeling and sort of what I want to be true is that if I'm, you know, coming to a place like yours, I will be part of the local community rather than commuting in to commute. If I'm a co worker, co worker, commuter, TM, worker commuter, I'll come in and I'll just like sleep, walk into brand names and stuff like that and not really connect with the local area. But if I stay in my home area, and like we were talking before we came on, I think that makes you I know from personal experience, I ended up going to shop locally, rather than just

**Suzanne Murdock 06:59**

commuting. Yeah, no, I love that. And then if you're doing that as well when you go to the likes of conferences in the bigger cities, you've got that culture and you've got that the different experiences cultures etc that you can take into the city hence why I guess they're they're quite cosmopolitan, but I think it's it's a real two way, two way thing. And they can really feed each other you know, your city centric brands, co working spaces, as well as the more peripheral villages in

**Bernie Mitchell 07:28**

wherever it was COVID started to lock down start to subside is always in a place called Work hive in it offered. And probably since 2010. I've been looking for a co working space in Redbridge, which was the borrower I lived in London. And there was never anything, there was some really like horrible, horrible, serviced offices. And they looked like sending out an episode of minder, you know, they were like, really, really terrible. And they're still operating like that. And I'm going to, I wanted a co working space, not an office, and then work hard was started by a guy called Paul and he, he just had a lot of experience in architecture and office design and everything. So he took over this building. And it was a really, really well designed building. It wasn't flashy, it was just very, very well done. I was there for like two years, and I shared an office with another guy who I met in a co working space, we were in together beforehand. And then I would go there every day, I'd walk around, I'd wave to people in the park, I go to all the local restaurants nearby. And then when I needed to go into town, then I'd go into you know, lots of people around coworkers bases in town, and then I go in and that for me. I mean, I don't know if I could have done that for 25 years. But that was great, because I just especially with the Elizabeth line, you can get from Ilford to, you know, probably Ireland now by by the Elizabeth line. So it's like super convenient. You save so much time travelling, and you get more so than the local economy. You get to know people in your local area. Yeah,

**Suzanne Murdock 09:04**

EJ Yeah. And there's so many people who work as well for the bigger companies. So you get all the experiences you get the skill set, there's always something someone that knows something that you don't know or can connect you to someone you know, the whole world is so joined up now. It's so it really is a small world. Bernie, with me talking about these smaller, more local spaces. What do you think the nuances and added valleys are for remote hybrid workers as opposed to commuting into the city centric, bigger brands?

**Bernie Mitchell 09:34**

So I'm gonna look tiny little co working space here. There's 10 people and three or four of those people are in that situation. And they and I'm in this little kind of co working community fairytale because the the where our son goes to school, the co working spaces right by the school, so all the people who run

the co working space and working The co working space are kids who will go to the same school. And there's like no commute. There's this really, really strong sense of community, which is definitely dependent on Chris and subpattern. Who Run who run the co working space. I think I'm going off topic for your question here, but because of who runs it, that has a huge influence, which I'm sure you know, people know. But then there's that there's, there's just that massive lack of commute, there's, there's meeting people outside the, you know, your, your work, and finding other ideas. So quite often, we will sit that we all sit down for lunch together, and we end up chatting about stuff and someone says, oh, like, you know, this thing happened on a website, I'm not quite sure what to do. I'll try this, my mate does this. And then they get into, they get like cross referred. So it's not like a business networking group. It's like an idea exchange. And I all the way through that, like brain draining Future of Work should be going back to the office conversation. Most maybe, because I'm looking for it. But people don't mind going to the office and meeting their team members and stuff like that. It's like, obviously really important, but it's like, sitting on the train from Brentwood, to Liverpool Street, you know, and getting stuck. And all that cost and time is the killer. So there's the added sense of community of being in a in a little co working space, and there's not having to do the commute. And then if you're because you're not having to do the commute, you can go and pick your kid up from school, you can go and run around the local area and stuff like that. It just saves so much time and enhances your life. Yeah.

**Suzanne Murdock 11:38**

And I think for me, it feels a lot more organic, you know that you are networking, but you're naturally networking. You're not putting this for situation. It's more natural environment for different personalities. There's a question later on about introverted personalities, and how can they? How can they help in that situation? But I think co working spaces naturally lend themselves to different environments for different people, different ways of working at different times during the day. So I think, for me, it's a lot more organic. Yeah.

**Bernie Mitchell 12:07**

I've never really known anything different. You know, I've gone to offices in the past and projects I've been working on, but I found particularly I think when we moved from London to Spain, I had to I had to eat my own dog food. Because I've been for years I've been going like, oh coworking such a great way to go native and meet people, everything like that. And it just, and that's actually what happened is I we've been coming to this town for at least a decade before we moved here because my brother in law lived here. So I kept an eye on co working and when we first came, there was one really odd serviced office, there wasn't I wasn't even sure it was a serviced office, but it had the word co working on the website. And I never managed to get in there. And in the last decade, there's probably like, only 20 co working spaces in this town. 20 co working spaces and to Starbucks, which I love. And I've got to know that community. And that's that was how I got connected to the city properly. That's how I arrived here because I've got to know people through co working.

**Suzanne Murdock 13:08**

That's another thing. It's brilliant for signposting. So we've had members here for how old are we 1212 years old br in the hub Nui and our members. Couple of them joined when we started up, kids have grown up together. It's it feels like a family dynamic, if you like, and we've got to know different organisations and tips and tricks, etc. of what to do. Whatever time with the kids, if we're struggling with

certain things at school, etc. There's always someone to bounce ideas off of. So no, it works. It's worked really well for us. And it's certainly well, hopefully well for our members because they're still with us. Creating, I guess a workplace that people really want to belong to, aside from the front load functionality side of things, what drives those members to stay within the membership within that space, just from your experience.

**Bernie Mitchell** 14:04

For me, it's always been about like, an endless sounds really cliché, like it's the connections with people. So when I remember a place called bathtub to boardroom, which is closed now, but it was in London, and the agenda was the CEO, and we're still friends nowadays. And she was just she was super organised, but she was just really, really good at knowing everybody in the building. And going oh, Susan, you know, I noticed you were drinking this particular brand of green tea. I saw Bernie doing that or didn't I see you playing baseball on Instagram? Yeah. Oh, like, you know, Suzanne does that and it's like stitching together. And I think it's not impossible to do that in a bigger branded space. But when there's like, you know, places like you where you and Patrick Carr, you know, see you on Instagram or going out for dinner and stuff like that. It's not you can't do that in a bigger place. But I think that's for me is the difference between co working space and a an office that wants to adopt a co working mindset. Does that make sense? Yeah.

**Suzanne Murdock** 15:06

No, I guess it's more forced in that that instance perhaps, yes,

**Bernie Mitchell** 15:11

I grew up in, in restaurants and hospitality and everything like that. And I work for, you know, the peak of my career, I've worked for pizza. I've worked for Pizza Hut, and TGI Fridays, and InterContinental Hotels, and all that, and those type of things. And it was very well organised and efficient, everything like that. And I definitely definitely learned a lot of stuff there that you wouldn't learn, you know, in an indie restaurant. But then my best times most connected times, were working on working in places where they had one or two or three places, and you were kind of part of the action. And, you know, there was never this. I know, this is just part of business. But there was never like, you know, Derek from head office is coming today. He was like, He's the owner. And that always worked way better. For me, it was more precarious in some stages, you know, like, not enough people are coming to the restaurant that month, and you could see the owner, like, going mad about how he's going to pay everybody and who, you know, but the the the actual, that the feeling of like, being part of something was, was more important to me than it was being part of a, you know, a huge global operation. Yeah, I'm not sure that answered your question.

**Suzanne Murdock** 16:22

No, it does it. So it's those words, being part of that whole, fulfilment coming back to that work community. And I get it all, it's all driven very much by the relationships, on the long term relationships and really getting to know your clients, members, whatever you like to call them, to an extent where you almost can anticipate their needs before they even realise them, you can anticipate the challenges they might have. And you can tell if they're having an off day, and they might need some support, you just pick up on these nuances that are happening. One

**Bernie Mitchell 16:56**

of my greatest stories, is when it was in a place called main yard studios in Hackney. My friend Eleanor used to stand, she didn't work there. She was just part of the core membership. And she was standing in the kitchen in the morning. And she would say, What are you doing today? And for at least the first three weeks, she asked me, I had no idea what I was doing today, I was just like, glad to get in the building. And, and then I started sort of sort of organise myself, Oh, well, you know, I'm, I've got my day plan like this. And just those know, sounds silly, but like those those little interactions of, and it was a particularly dark mental time. So it really helped and she wasn't delivering therapy or anything, but like it was being there and aware and jiggling people over and one of the that's why I always advocate going to a co working space, because I think it's so good for your mental well being and, and even if you haven't got a mental health challenge at the moment, getting out the house and moving and breathing and having to interact with people is really, really important. And we have, I mean, our home office today, and it's just such a luxury to have, you know, stay at home and you know, not have to go out and do stuff, but it's not instead of but as well, as is where I'd like to like direct people.

**Suzanne Murdock 18:17**

Yeah, I think so. And that that word nurture comes to mind in co working spaces as well. I know when when in COVID, where you weren't really allowed to speak to anyone, or you could see someone that you can touch and just knowing that there was someone else in the office next to you and the world know there was someone else in the building, you could shout at them, you know, through the wall. But there was that? Yeah, but it was there was that support there that were at home, you just wouldn't have got that. So in terms of I guess, coming back to that community, nurturing, sustaining the community and that whole environment, then the sense of belonging fulfillments and the whole peace around humanity in the workplace, what does that mean to you? Acts of Service fulfilment bring to mind for me.

**Bernie Mitchell 19:08**

There's been, it's been like, when I've worked for a company, there's been times I've been part of a team. And like, everyone's, everyone's really been all in and cared. And it's been great. It's been like being part of a, it's like, it's like being part of a sports team, versus being part of a, you know, team working on building a car or something, you know, and that, that, that sense of understanding and and this is almost what we just said, but like that sense of understanding and connection and rooting for each other is really, really important. And that's one of the things that has made me veer towards working independently rather than working for a big company because I've had lots of friends. This is a bit of a sideways answer. Sorry, but I've had, but lots of friends that have been one. They've been they've been let go. and unexpectedly, because their branch has been closed down, or the like, you know, the lack of information moving around. So they think they're part of something, and then they're suddenly not part of something. And there's this like machine, they're like cuts off that bit because it's not working. And I always found that quite hard to know, that's just a reality of, you know, huge, huge businesses. But that was a bit I always found unattractive about working in that type of workplace, the lack of agency that comes of being part of something bigger, no matter what position you're in. Yeah.

**Suzanne Murdock 20:34**

And for me, I think it gives it allows that, I guess, we're coming back to coaching talk here. But it allows that almost like a safe space as well, for people to get to know each other to have that awareness, really understand personalities, the best ways of working. But as I mentioned before, that almost like a safe psychological space as well, where you can experiment, you can get curious, you can have that space to really question what you're doing. Question your thinking with possibilities.

**Bernie Mitchell 21:10**

There's two little points that popped into my head there, there's like a, I've read everything ever by Bernie Brown. And you know, that that has really informed like how I work with people, my own self awareness, which is always a work in progress. And, you know, also like how I deal with my family, and specially parenting, there's a whole chunk about that. And in there, she says, you know, she did a TED Talk and became big. And companies would say, oh, you know, come on, let's have Brene, brown, and Christie's the speaker at the moment, and she's been doing all these things. And they say, We don't want to talk about vulnerability, we want to talk about creativity and productivity. And she's like, but vulnerability comes from, you know, I'm trying to think people like certain, obviously, recently talked about inventing things like Thomas Edison, he wasn't he wasn't being productive when he was making light bulbs. He was like trying and trying and trying and messing up and messing up. And it was a very vulnerable space. And it's such a cliché example. I'm sorry, but so, you know, vulnerability is a massive part of like, creativity, and a word I think is overused. But innovation is when you're on the edge of something, you know, even open a co working space in like, renew folks, did, you know, it's like, I've heard this co working thing? Do you think it will work? I don't know. I'm not sure what it is, but we'll do it anyway. Well, Patrick and Susan doing, you know, they should just open a garage and sell crisps, not a co working space, you know, it's like, I'm exaggerating, for effect was like a daring thing to do. So there was a lot of vulnerability and and when you run your own business, there's a huge amount of like, risk and uncertainty and vulnerability there. So operating in that space is really hard. I did have a second example. But it's completely gone. Sorry.

**Suzanne Murdock 22:51**

No worries. Actually, that brings me on nicely to the next topic. In terms of we look at this from the flexible workspace operators perspective. So I mean, that whole job, and you'll you'll know this, I know there says an awful lot that goes with it. And you are very vulnerable, you're constantly having to chase the evolving workplace and what people are looking for their requirements, etc, you've got compliance, you've got the drama community, the relationship building the pricing events, etc. There's an awful lot that comes on to that that umbrella. What about the whole overwhelmed for for operators AND, and burnout, I know you do a lot of coaching around this, are there any tips is

**Bernie Mitchell 23:37**

trying to be everything to everyone. And there's one there's one space I work with, and they want it to be like every, like opening a restaurant and have sold everything on the menu. And, and this was before COVID. And I was amazed at the it's not a labour, you know, they were like a really smart person, I'll say you just if you just serve fish and chips, and maybe a sample boy and a vegetarian thing, that's all you need to do, but they wanted to have like spaghetti and sushi and from bays and lentil students, I just do this, you know, just do that bid really well. And then after you got that working, do this, you know, like introduce burgers or something and like one thing at a time, and if if, if all those

people that wanted all those things all arrived at the same time, you know, you wish you hadn't fought off. And I feel in particularly like owner managed spaces when there's like an owner and a community manager or maybe there's like four people who run the building. If you're a community manager, running all these things, you have to be serving the owner and you have to be serving, I know 50 members and you can get stretched in so many directions. And you need to really, like work out a system that works for where you are. So As Adam, who is a long, long running community manager at Indy Hall, and his answer for everything is asked the community, whereas the printer asked the community, and it's not been like a comfortable to tell you, it's like, if you go and ask the community, like Susan will tell you how to run the printer, and then I won't have to. And then there's all these micro conversations going, and everyone ends up helping each other. And there is a lot of effort. And I don't mean to sound that like a quick fix, you know, flick your pinky fingers, and it will all work. But when you sort of activate people in the community to help each other, it takes a huge burden off yourself. And that's a whole curation. Bear in itself. Yeah. And

**Suzanne Murdock 25:41**

it serves so many different purposes, to get to know each other to get to know what they do the skill sets. And it can spiral in a really positive way. Doing it that way. I think it just makes a lot of sense. And I know, I know, I was reading an article, or maybe it was on your website, you're coaching that you would you do help a lot of operators, for example, simplify our guests the strategy of doing this sort of work. I mean, what what benefit, in your experience is coaching bring to co working operators,

**Bernie Mitchell 26:14**

like acting like being coached or Oh,

**Suzanne Murdock 26:18**

yeah, being accidentally coaching people. I guess both.

**Bernie Mitchell 26:22**

So So with, I've read it somewhere early on, because I just think like,

**Bernie Mitchell 26:31**

I like 15 years ago, when our counts, you know, like, I'm so good, I don't need any help. And then someone said to me, like, people, people sitting on a sofa, eating chips, or chips, fish and chips all day watching movies, don't have a coach, people run in four minute miles and scoring goals consistently do have a coach, and then it was then then that whole kind of like growing out. So now, you know, I've got two people I work with, and, and then sometimes therapists depending on how life is going, and if I didn't go and talk to those people, I would be I know, I don't know what will be going on. And I have like a dyslexic I'm sure I'm ADHD. And I'm like jumping all over the place, I have a million ideas a second. And, you know, like one of them every five years might make it into a thing. But unless I kind of operate within a structure either have a coach. So very often I know, every Monday morning, I speak down Hawkins. And I just save everything up to there and I make a list. And 70% of what's on that list doesn't matter, by the time I get to the meeting. And at least half of that 70% is like complete Berni drama, and the other 35 the other 35% has worked itself out altogether. And I'm not, you know, burdening my wife



with things. And it doesn't mean every interaction I have with my friends is like a semi therapeutic coaching saved my life session. It just, it just kind of brings clarity all the way around.

**Suzanne Murdock 28:04**

It's kind of like a check in accountability session. Yeah,

**Bernie Mitchell 28:08**

the since. I mean, another accountability is that this isn't a coaching thing. But as a book called a 12 week, year, and in our co working space in Houston, we used to run this session for freelancers every Monday called not so manic Monday. And the whole like jokey point of it was people who work independently to actually get out of bed and have to be somewhere by 10 o'clock on Monday. And then, and then a week would start on a Monday at 10 o'clock, not somewhere halfway through Wednesday afternoon. And we follow the two things we did is we followed a guy called John stepper who has a book called working out loud, where you talk about what you're working on and share ideas. And then the 12 week year is part of that is working in three month chunks, or every quarter, you have a set of goals. And then on a Monday or once a week, you have a weekly accountability meeting, which is what made me say this, and every Monday since 2018. Me and Karen no matter where we are in the world have had a weekly accountability meeting. And it's, there's always a fitness goal. And we go up and down. And this is one of the things that kept us alive in or kept us sane in locked down. It's like how are you doing? I don't know. Like, I've got to keep meditating. You know, I've got to keep running. I've got to find a way to do this. And it's huge have an external force help you with your life. And

**Suzanne Murdock 29:30**

it doesn't always give you the answers. It just allows you that space to air what you're thinking. There's no right or wrong answers. It just quite often clarifies thoughts that you might be having.

**Bernie Mitchell 29:45**

Yep. What was it about the shower there? Sorry to interrupt, got all excited, you know? Cuz there's that distinction between coaching and mentoring, like do you want advice, or do you want me to ask you some really sticky, awkward questions that make you do the hard work of thinking. So you work it out for yourself?

**Suzanne Murdock 30:06**

Yeah, and it's not always easy, it can be quite uncomfortable that, you know, there's often silent pauses to allow you that time to think. Yeah. But it works. And you know, this isn't just applicable to co working operators, this, this can be used in all sorts of different avenues. But it really, it's helped me massively. And I've been doing a lot of coaching with other industry leaders really enjoying it. But I think the word clarify, springs to mind for me, and certainly the mentoring is growing massively in the reverse mentoring. So for example, in different businesses, and it's not just top down, it can be bottom up as well. And everyone's bringing that skill set to the table and experiences and that maybe their challenges.

**Bernie Mitchell 30:55**

I mean, I'm seeking out as well, but a lot of stuff I read that is, is about conversations and talking and connection. In a corporate level, and this overwhelm, I'm got an easy thing to cite directly here. But books I've read by very well thought out people and talks I've been to and stuff like that, the more in COVID and locked down and that separation brought a need for working out how to work in a situation like this. So there's Judy Reese, who is just a comment about what her things called recite everything she is she is about it's about coaching around clarity and communication. And her business exploded in COVID. Because all the people at the United Nations were like, Oh, my God, what we're going to do. And someone said, I know Judy, she's really good at like, clarity and communication. And you know, she's she's never been busier. And this need for this kind of need for connection and clarity and communication to not just make better businesses, but like further, personally, and the team and the whole, the whole mission and project is huge. And one of the things I'm the seems to have gone down is this need for like, top down, like, usually one white guy who knows everything and has to tell everyone what to do. And I never even before I knew what that was, I never liked that way of doing stuff when I was at school was some form of democracy and conversation and the ones I just thought I hated, but like I just didn't respond to or get anywhere in well, where there was like, you get to sit in silence be obedient, and you're not quite sure what you're doing. And there was no there's no freedom or agency allowed.

**Suzanne Murdock 32:45**

Yeah, interaction. And and let let let's face it, how often do we get to sit down with someone and actually someone listening really focusing in on on us for more than two minutes at a time. It's quite rare. And I think when it happens to you that these sparks just go off on all these ideas, and then that clarity thing, it's just a different world than they were your time. Bernie, I want to touch on the work that you do with London Assembly. Tell us a little bit about that. London

**Bernie Mitchell 33:16**

co working assembly. So how it came about is in 2014, a load of us went to cowork in Europe in Lisbon. And we there was a thing as a group called COPASS. It used to run a camp at every cowork in Europe. And now we still we do that at different places nowadays. So it's like 40 co working space operators staying in this amazing hostel in Lisbon. And it was it was a riot is one of the best experiences I've ever had in my life. And we all came back from Lisbon. And we're like, Oh, my goodness, you know, some people come back from Burning Man co working. We want to have that here. So we start there was a Facebook group that was started and we started meeting each other and it never had any real structure. And then in 2018, we after years of like, jumping about and doing different things. We said okay, let's just meet once a month in a different co working space and see what happens. And it started as few people around the table having breakfast together chatting, but like a breakfast networking meeting. And then it moved into this thing where like, every month we have a panel on a topic. And it's always we get we call people co creators, which is secret code for sponsor, but people support may give financial support to the co working assembly, which makes it accessible for everybody. Because, you know, I go to conferences and get a lot out of them. But you know, when you run a co working space, you can't send like three community managers to the thing. And then what we found early on was people would say, Oh, if you want to go you can pay for yourself, but you know, like I want to go but I don't want to pay and so by May Making it very accessible to everyone, you know, from local authority people to co workers, but it's mainly co working space operators, and community managers

that go, and then we just work out. Normally, I'd like to be more organised in this. But what happens is we do an event and someone says, oh, we should do this. And then we just do the next one like that. And then in where you're coming at the end of February, on the 27th, and 28th, is the workspace design show in London. And we got to know the workspace design show become the, in the London and Amsterdam, we become like the co working arm of that, of that event. And they provide us with a space to run a to events dedicated to independent co working space owners and the workspace design show is it's a, I don't like exhibitions, but I love this one. Like when I went to I was a bit like, Ah, I don't want to do this. But it is super, super interesting. There's you can look at coffee machines and play with curtains and chairs. And there's really, really good talks. And I'm keen to say that all the people that are doing the talks in the main co worker, I'm sorry, the main workspace design arena, are there by merit. So they don't, it's not like a lot of a lot of whatever industry is a lot of conferences, you pay to be on the stage. And this is people who are, you know, actors and contributors to the industry, sharing the knowledge and the main thing, so you can come to the London co working assembly to breakfast events, and then spend two days I think you have to go home in between, but then they spend two days finding out mainly mainly that is about offices and offices and corporations and companies and you know, HR and how to lay out your offices and design and everything like that. So it's it's, I think it's, it's free to get into, and it's really interesting, and a very good use of time for people to see a lot in a very short space of time.

**Suzanne Murdock** 36:58

Brilliant. Well, I'm looking forward to going. I haven't been there before. Bernie, really good talking to you tell us a little bit about how people can get in touch where they can find out more.

**Bernie Mitchell** 37:07

So you can Google or Bing or whatever you use Bernie J Mitchell. And there's normally a fight between myself and a drywall artist in Canada has the same name as me. And if you go to LinkedIn, there's that's the best place to get me actually. It's just my website is burning gmail.com. But LinkedIn is where I'm most contactable. So feel free to DM me or something there.

**Suzanne Murdock** 37:32

I will put that in the show notes after good stuff. Bernie, thanks so much for your time. Good luck, and I will see you in February.

**Bernie Mitchell** 37:40

Thank you very much. Take care, folks.

**Suzanne Murdock** 37:44

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