

# CONNECT, INSPIRE, AND LEAD



**Who She Is – [Vanessa Blacknall-Jamison](#), is a Change Management Advisor and Leadership Coach with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA); an Adjunct Professor at Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology, and Chairwoman to the Board of Advisors of the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals (OBAP.) Vanessa’s expansive career in the aviation industry includes focusing on how people can grow and empower themselves. She commenced her career with United Airlines and segued into her role with the FAA. She consistently contributes to the well-being and growth of her community having held leadership positions with OBAP and the Civil Air Patrol.**

**[Why You Should Listen to Her](#)** – Vanessa is known for her grace in addressing the hard things that we MUST do to move ourselves forward and the sound of her soulful voice places you at ease, even when she is sharing difficult news. She spoke at IAWA’s 2020 Annual conference and organized OBAP’s multipart Courageous Conversations as a way to constructively open mindsets on the importance of addressing the need for greater diversity in the aviation industry. Her personal journey, like many of ours, is not linear and it is profoundly relatable. Without formal mentors, sponsors, or champions, her resilience and belief in herself is a reminder to all of us that we cannot grow without self-confidence and belief in ourselves becoming the two cornerstones of our foundation.

In our podcast, Vanessa describes her journey and how being a leader means being an advocate for your people, which involves listening so that you can motivate and engage those who work for you. With that engagement, you can tap into your team’s strengths and support their growth. We speak about the abstract concept of being a visionary leader and what that means in practical terms as well as our mutual appreciation for Ted Lasso (and its real-life inspiration) that recognizes the value in people, which leads to deep wins. We further talk about her intentionality in selecting her personal board members and that sometimes the best self-care we can offer ourselves is the power of “no.” We further talk about taking risks, which is another term for opportunities, and the power of diversity in our ability to make impactful decisions.

**How You Can Apply Her Wisdom To Your Career** – A few of the take-aways to contemplate:

- How are you using the power of listening to motivate and empower your team?
- What concrete elements of visionary leadership are applying to your own definition of leadership to create impact?
- How are you intentionally and transparently adding people to your personal board of directors?
- When do you identify risks as opportunities and act upon them?
- How are you tapping into your curiosity to create diversity?

