

**Speaker 1: 0:05**

I am really excited today, folks. This is Mark Mitford , um, founder and owner of HR Catalyst Consulting. But I'm truly excited to have a professional colleague and friend that I've known. I'm not even sure Lee, how long we've known each other, but we've known each other for at least 10, probably 15 plus years. Yeah . <laugh>. So thank you so much, Lee , for joining today. But I'd love to start out just for our audience, I'd love to start out with just finding out a little more about you. And so why don't you tell me a little bit about you, and then we'll get into your business and then how you started your business, but really nice to find out a little bit more about just you pro you , just a general overview of you professionally.

**Speaker 2: 0:45**

Sure . To me , uh, first and foremost , uh, you know, we , I , I , I'm , I'm , I'm a dad and a husband like this to me , like , to me, I bring that to, to my, to my work life too. So that's like the most important things in my life. Uh, and , um, we really just, our business is a personal calling for us , uh, to kind of just equip and, and encourage leaders. Um, so we've been in Dallas for 30 some odd years now. Uh, been , uh, have the same lovely bride for 36 years , uh, and

**Speaker 1: 1:12**

Congratulations. Thank

**Speaker 2: 1:13**

You. Uh, she's also been my business partner for 25 years, and she's been the co-author of eight of the books. And so , uh, so we really have a , a , you know, a kind of a partner. I tell people she's my partner in life and sometimes I , I get, and I , I , I think they know what I mean, but sometimes they might think, oh, is he married or not? I was like , she is my wife. She's

**Speaker 1: 1:32**

Also

**Speaker 2: 1:32**

<laugh> a a partner in all aspects of my life. And that's Julie Davis goal . And so I feel really blessed to be able to , uh, kind of share our life passion together and kind of serve in serving others. So , um, uh, we believe our lives are meant to give away. So , uh, we built this business around ways to be able to serve others. And , uh, it's not about getting remuneration at the end of every interaction or opportunity , uh, spend most of our time, honestly , uh, they just helping people out to the best I can. Uh, and, and if we're fortunate enough to get , uh, uh, um, remunerated for some of those , uh, that's wonderful. So , um, that's kind of who we are.

**Speaker 1: 2:06**

Great. Great. So, so if you can remind me one more time, so what was, so with your business, obviously you've had a successful business for a number of years. Um, so what was the driving force behind you actually getting your business started?

**Speaker 2:** 2:20

Yeah , uh, you know, again, it was like a personal calling for, for both Julie and and myself back in 1999. Our whole lives had built up to this phase when we were kids, our roles we played. So we had some leadership roles, whether it was in youth sports or in the community. Uh, and then we just always were like coaching our friends. And then we always loved learning and learning about human behavior and hurt , learning about how our brains worked. And then we got educated in the same areas. And then we got different ma you know, a , a master's and doctoral degrees, like advanced degrees in this , in these areas. And then our professional lives and our leadership roles there, all of that, like, as we look back as kind of , uh, not that I planned it in advance, trust me, but as we look back, it's like a perfectly woven tapestry of a combination of interest experiences and, and, and family experiences and friends and relationships, and then formal education, and then professional training around how to understand , uh, the world of a leader, how to understand their, their minds, but then also how to understand their work environment and the challenges they have. And then it just became a passion for us to be able to kind of equip and encourage those folks with simple how-to models. I'm a pretty simple minded guy, so I know leaders deal with lots of complex issues around execution and engagement and coaching and their own mindset and, and teamwork and all that stuff. Um, and so we try to really , uh, uh, eliminate a lot of the noise and just kind of make it very simple to go from an intention to action. And we do that in the form of really kind of simple, straightforward, we believe intuitive models and tools to help leaders do that.

**Speaker 1:** 3:56

That's, wow, that , that is, that's, that's a lot of information right there. So I know today we're gonna get into that in just a few minutes here with you, but , uh, we're today, you know, we're gonna really focus on leadership and leadership strategy. So a big focus of today, and I know you have written several books mm-hmm . <affirmative> , and it'd be great to share, I know your latest book, which is out there, is around healthy leadership. Yeah . And it'd be really interesting because if you, I know you just told me a couple minutes ago, but first for our audience, if you wouldn't mind just sharing how many books you've written and then what was kind of the whole catalyst behind the, the actual, the creation of , um, of healthy leadership?

**Speaker 2:** 4:37

Sure. So we just, we call Healthy Leadership our Sweet 16. It is our 16th book. Mm . And I never really viewed myself as an author. Uh, just really as, you know, as you go out on your own and you have your own professional services firm, you have to present your point of view and provide some just kind of, some , some value added for folks and some thought leadership. And I happened to write one article one time, and a friend of mine

said, Hey, Lee , this is a great article. You ought to turn it into a book. And I'm thinking it , his name was Tim Dirk . And I was like, dude, Tim, like, that's a thousand words buddy. That's like, that's all I got, you know, <laugh> . And then I always finally found a , a publisher ended up being a good friend and a business author, a a a a co-author and a , and a mentor named David Cottrell and has a mid-size , uh, publishing firm. And he published these kind of thinner, what he called rapid read books, books people could actually finish. So I was able to turn it into that and then just kind of just got rolling after that. So , um, like anything, it's a process. Once you figure it out, it's not so, not so hard, so Right. But we try , we try to, again, in the spirit of kind of viewing our, our , our work as almost like a ministry and to help people out, we try to take the consulting experiences we have and the models we develop for our clients, and then say, Hey, this really worked for them . This helped to elevate their game. Um, how do we share that with a broader audience? So then we would take the model and generally build a book around it with examples and simple tools and stuff that we've already applied and field tested . So our books, again, are very applied , uh, kind of application oriented. So that's really, it's , we don't just write, just to write. It's really a way to share , uh, with a broader audience some of the successes we've had with clients.

**Speaker 1:** 6:09

Oh , that is awesome. Good. That that is so , that's so great, what you just said there. So I'd really like to dive in, because I know it , the , the new, the newest book out there, number 16 is Healthy Leadership. Yeah . It's really interesting because you reference it right there also on the cover of it, you referenced Thriving in the New Way , uh, the New World of Work. Right . And it'd be really, 'cause it's , it's a fascinating, it's fascinating. And being an HR professional like myself too, I'm just fascinated with that. So when you think about so healthy leadership and the , what you're talking about there and thriving in the new way of work, I , I guess the key question there is what is the new, with everything that's gone on in the last co several years within the work environment, what is really the new , um, the new world of work as you see it?

**Speaker 2:** 6:56

Yeah, that's a great question. And it's, it's , it's a million dollar question, right? And so the greatness is, there's been some great research, and we cite this research right up front in chapter one , uh, that Gallup did in about 2017 pre pandemic by the way, that showed that the , the , the focus and the values of the current workforce was starting to shift. So they're starting to shift from wanting a boss to really wanting a coach, right? To focusing on their weaknesses, to focusing on their strengths, to focusing on getting a paycheck, to focusing on , versus the new focus was on what's the purpose? What's my purpose? What's the organization's purpose? Uh, folk in the past, it was about their satisfaction. Now it was more about their development. So all those shifts were occurring pre pandemic and like any good crisis, the pandemic, you know, accelerated those trends. So now we see those in spades, like, wow, that's , they're really evident. And so the real , the real shift was, and the real , the shift was more significant mark in the US than it even was in Europe. In that Europe, the mentality around work was always, you know, we, we

worked to live, right? And the us it was, we lived to work, right? And, and so what we found is that in the US we're starting to shift a little bit more toward that European mindset a little bit more, a little bit more balance there. Uh, and, and you listen, and a lot of old baby boomers like me are thinking, oh man, the new generation doesn't have it. I'm like, you know, who's to say our generation was the best and we had it all figured out, right? So , uh, that , that's kind of the shift that's going on , uh, in this new world of work. So as a leader, some of these things we talk about in the book were like 10 years ago, would really set these leaders apart and make them like superb leaders. Now, in order to be able to address these shifting needs for the worker, like it's table stakes, if you don't address those needs because of the supply and demand, the higher demand for workers, you're dead in the water. Like, it's just table stakes. Like that healthy leadership becomes the kind of the, the , the , the magnets gonna , that's gonna attract people to your organization and then the glue that's gonna keep them. And by the way, if you don't employ some of these principles, if you're kind of stuck saying, I'm , I'm gonna just lead the way I lead, you're just gonna lose pretty quickly because now people have options. I'll just say, Hey, I don't like the way this is going, I'll just go somewhere else. So that really is more of a new leadership mandate to make sure leader, were addressing these shifting worker needs.

**Speaker 1: 9:16**

Right. So what do you think, because like you , you mentioned there just a second ago, Lee , that, that this was pre pre pandemic. Yeah. So what do you think were some of the key drivers? What are , what are some of the key drivers that you've seen in your, in your work that are really driving this new mandate and these new, the value is people look at the value of work and not just about being a paycheck. What do you, right , what do you , what do you, what do you attribute some of those key drivers to now in the workforce?

**Speaker 2: 9:44**

Well , well, one of 'em is that kind of shifting values of the workforce. And listen, I , I can't explain why each generation has, it's almost like any organization has a distinct culture. So does each generation. And we have to also have to be careful not to like, paint it with such a broad brush. Like, oh, all millennials are like this. It's not really like that. But there are some characteristics of any generation that are true. And this, this generation is more purpose-driven, more socially conscious, more attuned with their sense of balance, more attuned with their sense of wellbeing. So the , all of those things combined with, very importantly, the shift in supply and demand for the first time in my entire work life, like the , there , there's much greater demand for today's worker than there is supply. So as the employer, you just can't say, oh, this is the way we are, go find work somewhere else. It's like , uh, the employees are calling the shots in a lot of ways now, now it's leveling off a little bit, but we saw that a couple years ago , uh, really distinctly. So I think those two things, just the generational shifts of a little bit more balance on their work and their life , uh, and then the supply and demand has said as employers, we can't ignore this. We can't let it pass. Like, this is the new normal. We

have this whole, the millennials are the majority of the workforce now. It's only gonna get more. So, so unless we learn how to manage through that and with them around this , um, we're gonna be left behind pretty quickly.

**Speaker 1: 11:04**

Hmm . Interest that is just so fascinating. So one of the other things, you know, the , one of the other thoughts here is for a company that contacts you or you know, they, they might read the book, they contact you as the, with you and Julie as the authors of the book and the , and the study here and the new model. How does a company go about, especially if, because I know that I see a lot of this too, that when you look at the leadership team Yeah . And you look at the C level , senior level positions , uh, quite, quite often, you know, maybe , I don't know, 50, 70% of the time they're , they're, they're with baby boomer , baby boomers are residing in those seats right now, right? That's right. And they, they grew up under a totally different leadership style, leadership mandate, very much more authoritarian type of leadership. How, if they are interested in moving to something like you're espousing and healthy leadership very almost diametrically opposed, how do, what are your first steps in actually having that conversation with them if they come to you a little bit skeptical, because it could be 180 degree , 180 degree shift for them to move into something like you're actually positioning within healthy leadership principles.

**Speaker 2: 12:18**

First, we try to ask them, what are you trying to achieve? And in most cases, the CEO's trying to grow a business in some way, right? And so we, if we get them to understand that and say, if you want to grow the business, this is the only option now, right? Like, so we have to help 'em see, like their old way is just not gonna work with the , with the new, with the new workforce. Um, but the , the most important thing, mark , is that , and , and a mentor of mine, a good friend , um, Ken Blanchard would always say that ego is the biggest derailer of leadership success. So it's really important to be able to just, you have to put that ego in check and humble yourself and say, you know what? My approach, my leadership approach, my leadership values has gotten me here, but in this new world, I have to question everything and be willing to learn from the data, learn from the new worker. And if you can't do that, it's gonna be a , it's gonna be a bit of a , a bit of a , a struggle. And the fact is, the rarely is the leader gonna win. I'll be honest with you. It's , it's one against many, right? So, you know , we , we've seen several buckets here of, of, or organizations of public sector, private sector of , of baby boomer leaders exiting, particularly post pandemic. Like, okay, they realize like it's gonna require a new way of leading. And then they have to personally change from the inside out. We always say leadership's and inside jobs starts in here. And they've said, you know, it's my time to exit. And that that's great, good for them, right? Others have chosen to stay. And then there are two camps there, others that are humbling themselves saying , I've gotta learn and how to survive in this. How do I change and grow with this new world? And then there are others that are digging their heels in and it , it's a struggle for them. So , um, we really just try to help them align on what's important to you and are you willing to

subordinate your own ego and , and humble yourself a little bit to, to make some adjustments and listen and learn how you can be successful in this new world of work.

**Speaker 1:** 14:11

Right? Oh, that's so fascinating, Lee . Know , we are gonna go ahead and actually just take a short break for about about a minute or two, and then I'm gonna, we're gonna be coming back and continuing this really fascinating conversation with Lee .

**Speaker 3:** 14:23

You want to grow your business, but people issues are getting in the way, managing the people side of your business is complex and can feel overwhelming. Does this sound familiar at hr Catalyst People strategy is our business. We create and implement a people strategy with you. So you can give back to growing your business. HR Catalyst was founded in 2013 with the goal of bringing the best in class HR practices to small and middle market companies. We are your outsourced strategic people, experts. We help you solve the people issues in your business that are slowing you down. If you have HR concerns, you can schedule a complimentary call on our website@hrcatalystconsulting.com. And

**Speaker 1:** 15:06

I know we could , we we're just, we're just touching on the surface right now, <laugh> . So, but we'll be great to hear because we've heard conceptually about the model with within that underpins healthy leadership. It'd be great to hear from in your words , uh, why don't you explain the model for our audience, so then get an idea. And then ideally too, we'll be able to put a visual up too when you explain it to really give, give our audience a really good , um, op opportunity to take a look at what the model looks like itself.

**Speaker 2:** 15:35

Cool. Yeah. Terrific. So it's , it's fairly straightforward. There are three elements on the top. Picture a circle, three elements on the top, three elements on the bottom. And so on the top it's the principles of healthy leadership, also known as the mindset. Consider 'em healthy leadership mindset and just the mindsets of love, positivity, and growth. And before you think, oh my gosh, this guy's so soft, gimme a break. Love in the workforce, right ? So by the way, love is the most talked about sung about, written about topic in the world. So why doesn't it belong the board ? But lemme just define each for you. So, so our , so we have the mindset on the top and the skillset or the , or the practices on the bottom. We'll, we'll talk about those in a minute, but we always say, you've gotta get your mind right before you can get your team, right? So in order to achieve the , the out the , the promised outcomes of healthy leadership, we have to have these mindsets of love, positivity, and growth. So love is simply defined as doing what's in the best interest of others. That's all it is . There's a lot underneath that. But that's fundamentally what it's, it's getting yourself out of your own ego, your own needs, and figure out how do I best serve this employee? How do I help that employee thrive? How do I understand

who the human being is behind the employee? Very important underpinning of the, the principle of love. Second one is positivity. And again, before you think it's like, oh, Pollyanna, oh, just all smiles and bubble gum, <laugh>. This is really about a lot of brain science here. And there's, I always tell people there's no rocket science and the stuff that we put together, 'cause it's based on human needs, but there is tons of science behind it. So we try to cite without getting too heavy, the science behind all this. So, uh, Julie is one of only 1300, uh, certified practitioners in the world for the Flourishing Institute. So she understands a lot of this brain science and brings that to the table. So positivity is really managing your negative emotions and optimizing your positive emotions, because our brain has a natural negative bias. It's understanding how our brain works to be able to manage it well and bring our, the best version ourselves to the table. So, and then growth is really about how we seek new insights, learnings, and improvements for ourselves and then ultimately for others. But those top three, if you can get those right, love, positivity and growth, you'll thrive not just in the workplace, but personally. And that's our goal. Almost all the models and the principles we put forth in any of our, in any of our books, particularly this one, are really about how do you, how do you bring the best version of yourself to life in your family, in the community, and, and certainly into your organization. So if you get those right, you're golden. So that's the positive, uh, the healthy leadership mindset, the principles on the top and on the bottom, they're supported by the healthy leadership practices. You can also call it the skillset, the mindset, and the skillset. And those practices are to clarify, connect, and coach. So it's clarifying your vision, your values, your expectations. It's connecting with something that's bigger than yourself. It's connecting with your team, and it's connecting to a sense of appreciation for what bring others are bringing to the table and their differences. And coaching is about coach, identifying people's, uh, untapped potential, um, and coaching to their strengths and, and coaching with questions. In fact, uh, uh, the quote I love that kind of summarizes the, the, the coaching section is from Marcus Buckingham, who, who wrote First Break All the Rules. And his more recent book is called Love and Work. And he said years ago, our job as leaders is not to put in what God left out, but it's to draw out what God left in. Great. In other words, the natural gifts that people have. And we've asked literally tens of thousands of leaders over the years, tell us about the best leader you ever had. And by far the most common response is that leader that saw something in me that I didn't see myself. In other words, they saw potential in me that I didn't even know I had. And they helped me realize that. So really we believe as a coach, that's the number one thing you need to be able to see is see the potential and then draw it out and focus on their strengths. So interesting stat around that is that strengths based coaching Mark yields a 36% improvement in performance, whereas weakness based coaching yields a 26% decrease in performance. So that's a over a 60 plus percent spread by simply focusing on strengths instead of weaknesses. We're not being Pollyanna about it. We're not saying ignore weaknesses, but very rarely by focusing on a weakness, you're, you're very rarely, if ever gonna turn it into a natural gift or a strength. You might, you may, we need to focus on weaknesses to get into a reasonably competent level, but the best return for our invested time as a leader is to identify those



natural gifted areas and find ways to help that employee thrive within your organization in those areas.

**Speaker 1:** 20:16

Right? How fast , geez , that you, you , you packed, you know, that was, that was an hour long conversation compressed into <laugh> into a couple minutes, which is so great. So do you finally, is uh , is, you know, the , the healthy leadership principles and the model itself are , is it a, is it a system, is it a process? Is it, is it both or something totally different than that?

**Speaker 2:** 20:43

Yeah, we , um, I , I , I fundamentally, and , and Julie and I agree on this, it's a process more than a system. It's more organic , organic and more iterative than a system that just says go step by step by step , right? So , um, you know, you could start anywhere you want. We always recommend if there's one place to start, start at the top with the mindset. 'cause as we said before, you gotta get your mind right, before you get your team right. But other than that , um, you know, there's an old saying, as you know, in organizational development , uh, when you're trying to create some change, you just gotta jump on the horse, whichever way it's going already. Like, so if there's already momentum somewhere, like just jump on and go with it. So if you already have some momentum and maybe your organizational values or your naturally giftedness as a leader is you're really great about , um, about growth, or you're really positive or, or, or you really demonstrate a , you know, love in your workforce. Those are the kind of things, leverage those things and then work on the others. Uh, but definitely more of a process , uh, that's iterative. Uh , and , and you're , you'll learn from it and grow from it all the time, more than just a system, which to me infers like a methodical step-by-step process.

**Speaker 1:** 21:49

Right. Great. That's so helpful. So, so what are successes? So what have you found, Lee , when you've helped a company actually in , um, you know, with implementation? What are some of the key successes that really, that really need to happen within the first month or two to have a successful , um, implementation in your , um, in your opinion? Yeah,

**Speaker 2:** 22:11

I think part of it is engaging your team around this and saying, Hey, we need your help to help us grow and help the organization grow. Growing people create growing organizations. So you can't just say, okay, we're gonna just figure this out. It's like a, it's a private endeavor, you know, so you have to be humble enough to say, we're gonna work on this, we're not gonna get it. All right, we're moving in this direction to kind of lead this way. So to the extent that you can kinda humble yourself so that you can engage your team and have them help you grow, I think is, is really important. And also setting it up as , uh, as a process kind of a journey. We're not just like checking , oh , we're gonna do this



workshop, we're having Lee and Julie come and do a workshop and we call it the sheep dip approach. You're gonna dunk us in and we'll be all better, right? Doesn't work like that. So, you know, take taking the long view, knowing that you're gonna grow along the way and it's gonna look like an , it's gonna look like the stock stock market over the past a hundred years. It's gonna look up and down, up and down, up and down, up and down, up and down, up and down. You know, we , we did some improvements, we step back, improvements , step back, but what's key is, is the regression line going up ? That's what we want, right ? And so we have to be able to focus, step back, look at the long term , knowing that we're gonna be learning improving along the way. So I don't think there's a perfect, like we have to have this thing perfectly mapped out. It's not about that. It's really about a journey that you're lowing growing from and learning with , uh, your team along the way.

**Speaker 1:** 23:29

Right. So with that too, just out of interest, so, so what are some of the things with within implementation that you found? What are some indicators that show that is possibly, you know, the biggest indicators they'll show perhaps the, the implementation is going to derail or fail. What is, what are some of those initial warning signs or warning signals that are gonna be popping up there?

**Speaker 2:** 23:54

Yeah. First one is that people don't have the right mindset. They're thinking if they're pointing their finger out as the leader saying, we've gotta get our team to embrace this, versus I've gotta figure out a way to embrace this and, and demonstrate it, you're , you're dead in the water, right? 'cause , because we'll always tell people, you can save a lot of money on change management consultants. If you just live out the principles and the practices that you wanna see, live 'em out, people are gonna naturally model them . You don't have to have this amazingly orchestrated change management, how we push it down the organization that's just, that just doesn't work anymore. Frankly, it never did work. Plenty of research and said that really didn't create sustainable results. Uh, so , um, it , it's really about getting our mind right around this is the , the vision that we have for our ourselves as leaders more than just as the business. So are people identifying with healthy leadership personally? If they're doing that, then it's gonna emanate out to the business. If they're looking at as at it as more of an organizational initiative, this is something we need to implement. The latest, greatest flavor, probably not a great , uh, a great warning sign . Mm-hmm .

**Speaker 1:** 24:59

<affirmative> . Right. Interesting. So how about just with, with your experience in , in , in working through this with different clients , um, any, do you, do you just know initially are there any certain types of companies or industries where it is truly just gonna be a little more of an uphill climb to get them a hundred percent , um, to, to be able to get them to have a hundred percent ownership? With this?

**Speaker 2:** 25:24

No, because humans are humans. <laugh> . So in every organization, whether , uh, industries, cultures, generations, it doesn't matter. Um, humans are humans . So if the leaders embrace this, people want to feel seen and heard universally. So these principles of this whole, all the principles and practices of healthy leadership are fundamentally founded in the fact that it's, it's, it's a human process, right? It people want to be seen and heard regardless of where they work, the kind of work that they do. So , um, I don't think it's any easier or harder in any particular, or , or type of organization or industry. People , uh, wanna be seen and heard. So , um, we , we haven't seen that listen, different, you have manufacturing workers, you have it workers, very different environments, but we've seen the same kind of successes if leaders embrace the healthy leadership principles and practices in each of those settings.

**Speaker 1:** 26:20

Right. Oh , that's great. So , um, so last couple of, it's a couple of questions here as we, we get ready to wrap up with you, but I could, I could literally, I could talk to you for another couple of hours on this. It's so fascinating. But , um, so why would you say, what are, if you're talking to a , a a , you know, you're talking to an interesting , um, company about this, you're talking to a leader about this, what are the top reasons? And they seem like they're really hesitant to put a toe in the water or jump in Yeah. Entirely. What are the top three reasons you would say you've gotta get, you know, you , you need to get started today and not, not kind of worry about it too much, if they've been dangling, you know, they've been having dancing with you for a couple of months now, what would you say are the top three reasons why they just need to go ahead and get , just get , just get started?

**Speaker 2:** 27:06

Yeah. Well , well, first and foremost, it , um, if you invest in your leaders and you create not just a great place to work, but a great place to grow, right ? First of all, you're gonna start seeing improvements in your recruiting capabilities and then also in your retention. So, I don't know about you, but every one of our clients, it's their number one issue. How do we attract and retain talent, right? So if you want to , if you wanna be able to do that, you have to, if you do this, you're gonna see direct benefits to that . Those are two huge, huge things for organizations, particularly in maybe smaller middle market organizations. We would say that this is gonna enable you to work on your business versus in your business because you're gonna be building the next generation of leaders and have more of that capability. The other thing is for these , maybe some of these , uh, smaller mid-size companies, is that this really creates more value for your organization. 'cause it shows that you have a sustainable organization and, and increases the value and investor interest if you have, if it's more than just you running the show. And that's it. Right? So a lot of times people like I , I , I'm , I'm , I'm at the point where I want , wanna be considering selling the business or getting other investors. They want to know that there's a bench there that can, that can do this. But regardless of where you are in terms of size, I don't care if it's small mid-market or Fortune, fortune 500, the number one

benefit is that you're gonna significantly increase your ability, the magnetism with which people are gonna be drawn to your organization when they see you trying to apply healthy leadership principles. And they're gonna have that, that glue that's gonna actually keep them there and help retain them two huge things for any business and has direct financial impact.

**Speaker 1:** 28:44

That's great. Yeah. Thank you. Yeah, that, that was really a, a great, um, great response there. So, so we are, this has been very insightfully to say the least. So, um, any final thoughts you wanna share with the audience before we have a couple of little, little kind of rapid fire fun things with you to get to know you a little bit better, but any, any final thoughts regarding healthy leadership? Yeah, and just some golden nuggets you wanted to leave with our audience today.

**Speaker 2:** 29:10

I would just say, again, leadership's an inside job. It starts from the inside out. So you really have to kinda get your heart right and your mind right first, right? And so that, that's most importantly. And then from a, the employee perspective, again, I've said it a few times already, but bears repeating. People wanna be seen and heard. So as a leader, you have to be willing and naturally interested in understanding who the human being is behind the employee and connect with them at that level. Very selfishly, you're gonna get more discretionary effort from someone that really feels that you really want to know and see them. So those are like the fun fundamental things that kinda un-dergird healthy leadership.

**Speaker 1:** 29:52

Great. No, that, that's really, really good. Thank, and again, thank you so much. We're actually gonna, we always try to finish up our podcast with a, with a couple of a little fun things for you, Lee. So I'm just gonna, gonna wrap up with that, but appreciate your insight so much. But I wanted to find out, 'cause it's fascinating and, and it's like, so kind of getting inside you as a person, but what are, what are, what are three books you'd recommend to our audience and why would you recommend those three different books? And if you wanna choose a couple that you've helped author with your wife, Julie, feel free to do so. <laugh>.

**Speaker 2:** 30:24

Well, lemme start with one that's, that's related, what we're talking about. It's called, um, leadership and Self-Deception by the Arbinger Institute. And I just think that's really powerful. 'cause whether it's in business or really just personally, it really shows how our mind works, how our kind of filters work in our mind to protect our own ego. And, and it's really powerful to understand that and gain that self-awareness, I think is huge and, and goes a long way to have more functional relationships at home and certainly at the workplace. So leadership and self deception, another one that's a classic that, again, these are focused on like the personal side, but, but also I think the best leader, the, the

best books get to like simple truths and simple truths are timely and timeless. So this is the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey, an old classic, but it's about how do you, how do you, how can you be personally more effective? Again, that's a great example to set that for people so that they can kind of see that as a model and then that emanates out through your organization. Uh, and and the last one I'll be self-serving just because I think it's very pragmatic in today's workforce and understanding how you could thrive in today's workforce would , would be healthy leadership. And again, not just because it's a leadership book. I think that if you, if you apply these really simple principles and the tools we put in there, you can really help all of your relationships thrive in the community and your family, and then certainly , uh, in the workplace.

**Speaker 1:** 31:45

That's great. So how about , so question number two for you is , um, so what are two podcasts that you're currently listening to that you'd recommend for our audience?

**Speaker 2:** 31:56

Sure. One is called the , the Hidden Brain, which is really cool. It's really about how our brain works and how, just, just really interesting stuff. I can't even describe it, but <laugh> , it's really just understanding the inner workings of the brain and how it manifests, how that manifests in different biases and decision , uh, just decision processes , uh, that we have. So I really love that one. And then also , uh, the TED Radio Hour does a great job of kind of, of , of kind of just curating , uh, different Ted talks under themes. So like, it could be , um, uh, one thing I remember was how things spread. It could be how ideas spread, how diseases spread, how other things spread, but like, they kind of take what looks like disparate topics and then create kind of a common theme around it and then pull in different snippets , uh, from the , the various TED Talks. Really, it's kind of very stimulating. I like that one.

**Speaker 1:** 32:49

Great . Wow. So that is so great. So , um, and last lastly this, this is kind of a little bit of an introspective question for you, but how, what advice would you give to your 16 year old self today?

**Speaker 2:** 33:02

Yeah, I would say just to , uh, keep the faith. Everything will work out, right. It doesn't mean everything's gonna be smooth sailing, right, or, or easy in life. No one's ever promised that. But I think sometimes we , uh, we just sweat the small stuff a lot when we talk about , oh my God, what college am I gonna do? What all , like, every decision when you're younger feels like it's the biggest decision of your life appropriately. So , uh, but if I could rewind it, I would just say make the best decision at the time and trust yourself that you're gonna kind of be able to thrive in whatever that situation is.

**Speaker 1:** 33:31

That's great. So, and the last thing we're gonna ask you, so how can listeners, how can they find you online? How can they connect with you to, to find out more about the , uh, some of the things you're, you know, the thought leadership you have and the books you've written and things like that?

**Speaker 2:** 33:45

Lots of free resources and stuff out@leadershipexperts.com. Uh, we have blogs and, and self-assessments and manifestos and just lots of tools out there. Again, our mission is to help equip and encourage leaders. Uh, so they could go out there, they could , we have a newsletter that there's no selling involved, they could sign up for where, you know, they'll , they'll get just some practical tips and tools they could share with their teams, uplift their own personal life and maybe their business life. So they can go to leadershipexperts.com.

**Speaker 1:** 34:13

Great. Okay. Thank you so much, Lee . Thanks for joining us today. My pleasure. This has really been , um, I was excited to have you today as a, as a guest, so , um, I'm

**Speaker 2:** 34:22

Excited to be here. I appreciate you, bud.

**Speaker 1:** 34:24

Awesome. So, alrighty . Great. Have a blessed evening and we'll talk soon. Thanks so much, Lee . Bye bye-Bye.