

Doug Smith ([00:07](#)):

[inaudible]

Doug Smith ([00:07](#)):

Well, Hey, podcast, family, and welcome to episode number 274 of the L3 Leadership podcast, where we are obsessed with helping you grow to your maximum potential and to maximize the impact of your leadership. My name is Doug Smith and I am your host. And this episode is brought to you by my friends at Beratung Advisors. If you're new to the podcast, welcome, we're so glad that you're here. I hope you enjoy the content, and I hope that you will become a subscriber. And if you've been with us for awhile, thank you so much for listening. And it would mean the world to me. If you would leave us a rating and review on whatever app you listened to this, and thank you in advance for that, that really does help us reach more leaders. So thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Well, in today's episode, you're going to hear lessons that I've learned in over 10 years of working on staff at DeicingRescue Mission.

Doug Smith ([00:49](#)):

It's the nonprofit that I serve at here in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and we are a ministry that serves the homeless men, women, and children of our city. And we offer everything from street outreach, where we go out to reach those who are in homeless camps and out on the street all the way up to long-term recovery programs. And I'll share a little bit more about that in the episode, but you're going to hear me talk about leadership. You're going to hear me talk about fundraising, how to have hard conversations, God's heart for the poor and so many other things. And so I really think that you'll get a lot out of this so hard to believe that I've been on staff there for over 10 years. So you're going to love this episode, but before we dive into that, just a few announcements. This episode of the L3 Leadership podcast is sponsored by Beratung Advisors, the financial advisors at Beratung Advisors, help educate and empower clients to make informed financial decisions.

Doug Smith ([01:34](#)):

You can find out how Beratung Advisors can help you develop a customized financial plan for your financial future by visiting their website at beratungeadvisors.com. That's beratungadvisors.com, securities and investment products and services offered through Waddell and Reed, Inc member FINRA, and SIPC Beratung Advisors, Waddell and Reed, and L3 Leadership are separate entities. I also want to thank our sponsor Henne Jewellers, their jeweler owned by my friend and mentor John Henne, my wife, Laura, and I got our engagement and wedding rings at Henne Jewelers. And we just love the entire experience. And what we really love about them is not only do they have great jewelry, but they also invest in their customers. For instance, every couple that comes in for an engagement ring that just got engaged. They actually give a book to, to help them prepare for their marriage.

Doug Smith ([02:19](#)):

And we just love that. So if you're in need of good jeweler, check out Hennejewelers.com and with all that being said, let's dive right into the episode. Here are the lessons that I learned in 10 years of being on staff at Light of Life Rescue Mission. Hey, everyone. Today, I'd like to talk to you on the subject lessons that I've learned in over 10 years of being on staff at Light of Life rescue mission. For those who may not be familiar with Light of Life is a nonprofit ministry here in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. That's been serving our city's homeless men, women, and children's since 1952. And I've been on staff there for 10 years. And it's been a great honor. And let me just tell you a little bit about the organization and then I'll tell you how I got involved and then we'll get into some lessons.

Doug Smith ([02:54](#)):

I believe two things that set our organization apart. One is that we're faith-based. We really do believe that Christ is the answer. Now that doesn't mean you have to be a Christian to serve there or to be served. They will serve anyone who walks through our doors. But faith is extremely important to us. The second thing that makes us stand out is our continuum of care. So no matter where someone is in their homelessness journey, we want to have a next step for them. So we have a street outreach team that goes out to the street, homeless on a daily basis to build relationship and to meet needs and hopes that we can get them to come back and stay with us for a night of shelter or get a meal in hopes that they'll get into some of our longer-term programming. We have a meal ministry that serves hundreds of thousands of meals.

Doug Smith ([03:33](#)):

Each year. We have a food pantry that gives out food to the community. We have our overnight shelter for men, women, and children. So we have 50 beds every night that men, women and children can stay in. And then we have our long-term recovery programs. And so, uh, we have up to 40 men and up to 40 women with children who, uh, who are in both of those programs. And they're a little bit longer term there. They last anywhere from nine months to two years. And the primary focus is to one, help them, the men and women get clean and get their life back together. And then once we do that, we start to focus on education and employment and helping them get the education that they need. And then we work with employers to get them jobs as well. And then the men and women graduate our program, and then hopefully they're able to stay on their feet and they stay connected with the mission.

Doug Smith ([04:19](#)):

We have a large alumni community that stays connected, which is awesome. And so that was a very quick summary of a summary of what we do, but it's incredible work. And so I first heard of Light of Life, over 10 years ago, I used to be on staff at a large church. And our youth ministry had served at Light of Life a few times, and we had a great experience. Um, but didn't really think much about it. And I transitioned from that church. I was actually leaving to help, one of my mentors and heroes Larry Betancourt plan his church. And initially the church plan couldn't pay me. And so I either had to raise my own salary or I had to go get a job. And so I decided to go look for a job. And I was looking in the business world.

Doug Smith ([04:56](#)):

I actually got a job that was lined up, but it wasn't going to start for a few months. And then out of nowhere, a woman that attended the church, I used to be on staff at called me and said, Hey, Doug, I work at Light of Life rescue mission. I knew you had served there once or twice. And I just had a spot on my team open up, and I think it's a role you'd be perfect for. It was a volunteer coordinator role. And she said, I know you're not looking for something long-term because you want to be on staff of the church. Why don't you just come here, work here for a year or until the church plant can pay you and that'll be fine. And so I interviewed for the job and I really felt like it was my next step. And so I took it and just thought, Hey, I'll be here for a year.

Doug Smith ([05:30](#)):

And then I'll transition to the church plan. Cause my dream at the time I, you know, I wanted to be a youth pastor and then I thought I would be a senior pastor, but do you know what they say? You know, if you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans. And so I'm working at Light of Life for about a year

and then something significant happened at the end of that first year, which I'll share a little bit later. Um, but I really felt after a year that God was calling me to be at Light of Life and to stay there. I had fell in love with the ministry that we do. I fell in love with the North side of Pittsburgh. And so I decided to stay there and then fast forward, all of a sudden I've been on staff for 10 years, which is crazy.

Doug Smith ([06:03](#)):

And so I've seen a lot over those 10 years on a personal level. Um, I got engaged during those 10 years. I got married during those 10 years. I had all three of my kids during those 10 years. Um, professionally, I started off as a volunteer coordinator and then I moved into fundraising as the major gift officer. Then I moved into management and then I moved into a director role. And then we launched a \$22 million capital campaign relocation effort. And we just built our brand new emergency shelter that opened here in February of 2021. And we're about to enter phase two of our campaign, which is a renovation of an old school that we purchased. That'll be the home of all of our long-term residential programs. And so needless to say, uh, it's been a wild 10 years and a wild 10 years of growth.

Doug Smith ([06:45](#)):

And I have learned a lot. I really in a lot of ways grew up at Light of Life. And so I'm so excited to share with you some of the top lessons that I've learned over the course of those 10 years. And so without further ado, let's dive right into the lessons. The first lesson that I'll share with you is this, that God loves the poor, the needy, the addicted and the abused. And you should too. I've really learned a lot about God's heart for the poor over the last 10 years. And I think by nature, we all know that we should serve the poor. We should all serve those in need, but to actually have a front row seat for over 10 years of serving those most vulnerable in our community, God has taught me so much. And I'll just share a few thoughts here with you.

Doug Smith ([07:23](#)):

Number one, I share this quote all the time. It's Tim Keller said this. He said, "if you don't love the poor, then you don't know what God has done for you". I'll say that again. "If you don't love the poor, then you don't know what God has done for you." I love that. You know, Romans 5:8 says this that said, "God demonstrated his own love for us. And this that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." My translation to that is while we had nothing to offer God in return, he still died for us and loved us anyway. And I think one of the lessons that God wants to teach us when we serve the poor or those in need is how do you treat people who can do nothing in return for you? And only when you learn to love that way, do you find out the way that God loves you?

Doug Smith ([08:06](#)):

And it's an incredible thing. And so I really want to encourage you. I'm not going to spend a ton of time on this, but if you've never done a study on, on God's heart for the poor, just start to study it out in scripture and see it. I promise you God will do a significant work in your heart. And don't only do a study on it, but do something about it. Find a way to serve and support the most vulnerable in your community. If you're here in Pittsburgh, you can check out Light of Life www.lightoflife.org. We'd love to have you come down and volunteer. I'd love to give you a tour of one of our facilities. If you're in another city, there's a rescue mission in almost every city. Find a way to get involved in serve. God will teach you so much through the simple act of serving those in need.

Doug Smith ([08:44](#)):

The second thing I would talk to you about, uh, when it comes to God's heart for the poor is this. And I learned this in a significant way. I had mentioned that, uh, about a year into my time at Light of Life, something significant happened. And what happened was, my sister. And to give you some background, with me, I used to be a drug dealer in high school and was all into drugs. And then my mom died my senior year of high school, long story, short Christ came back into my life. Through that experience in my life, kind of went one direction. My sister was living in the exact same lifestyle that I was, but when my mom died, she just kept going down the same path. We were both headed prior to that happening. So fast forward, I'm a year into my time at Light of Life, my sister comes to me and she's, she was crying.

Doug Smith ([09:23](#)):

She was five months pregnant with my nephew and she said, Doug, "I need help." And I said, well, what do you mean you need help? And she said, I need help. I'm a heroin addict. And I had, I had done drugs, but I never got into heroin. And I had no idea what to do. And so I reached out to our program director and I just said, can you help me? And for nine years, yes, nine years, our program director, our women and children's team and our staff had Light of Life, walked me, my family and my sister through my sister's addiction. Now twice in that journey, my sister ended up homeless and had nowhere to go. And she ended up in our program three different times that Light of Life. And, um, I'm sharing this with you because if you would've told me prior to working at Light of Life, that I would know someone let alone a family member that would be in need of Light of Life services.

Doug Smith ([10:08](#)):

I would've never believed you. And I would have laughed at you. However, through the experience with my sister and through my experience, interacting with the men and women that we serve on a daily basis, I can tell you that the people that we serve are just like you and they're just like me. They are people. And we are all, all of us listen. All of us are one or two decisions away from being the exact same place that some of the men and women that we serve her in. And I tell people this all the time, you know, if we had to go through a fraction of what some of the men and women that we serve have had to go through, we'd be lucky to be in the same position that they're in. You know, that statistically Mo the average person has one traumatic event in their life before they turn 18.

Doug Smith ([10:49](#)):

The average person who walks through our doors has had three or four traumatic events by the time they reach 18. And the impact on that is absolutely detrimental. And so what I've learned in my heart for those that we serve as this, everyone who walks through our doors, everyone who's in need is somebody's sister it's somebody's brother it's somebody's father it's somebody's, mother it's somebody's husband, it's somebody's wife. And when you start to see people through that lens, it changes everything. Because when I see people come through our doors, I no longer just see a person in need. I see my sister, I see my sister. And if I'm honest with you, that's why I show up to work every day at Light of Life. Because I know that the work I do is impacting people like my sister, who was in need. Now, let me finish the sister, uh, the story about my sister, cause it will also teach you about God's heart.

Doug Smith ([11:35](#)):

For the poor. My sister was in our program three different times. And one time she was doing extremely well. She had 17 months clean. I felt like I had my sister back. It was amazing. It was amazing. And I should mention that she really dedicated her life to Christ through our program. Unfortunately, after the

17 months, she had made a poor decision and relapsed and her life went downhill after that. And I lost my sister to a drug overdose in December of 2019, which was not fun. And I share that because two things, one, the work that we do at Light of Life is messy. It's messy. Now, listen, miracles happen every day. We have stories of lives that have been transformed, uh, stories that didn't end like my sister all the time. And those are the ones. If you support an organization, that's what you hear about.

Doug Smith ([12:21](#)):

Those are the newsletter stories. Those are the graduation stories. And we see those miracles happen every single day, but we also see stories like my sister happened every single day where people lose their battle to addiction or they lose their battle to whatever they're struggling with. It's messy work. And that's why being a faith based organization is so important because here's what I know about my sister. We didn't get the win we wanted in the natural, but spiritually. I know my sister knows Christ and I know my sister is no longer just in my past, she's in my future. And I know that I'll get to see her again one day because of the eternal work that we do at Light of Life. And that is absolutely huge for me, my sisters and my future, not my past, because we led my sister into a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Doug Smith ([13:00](#)):

And that is so important. And so I'll end talking about God's heart for the poor, by saying this, if you're listening to this and you struggle with addiction or are in a tough spot, please get help there. There's organizations in your city that can help please. Don't please just swallow your pride and ask for help. You can't do this journey alone. The second thing I would tell you is if, if you know someone or you have someone in your family, who's struggling with an addiction and you don't know what to do, we're here to help. And there's organizations that can help. I told you Light of Life walked me and my family through my sister's addiction. Extremely helpful reach out to organizations in your city and ask for help, ask for how to set boundaries, ask for how to navigate addiction issues. There are plenty of organizations that will help please ask for help.

Doug Smith ([13:43](#)):

And lastly, this will be my only pitch. If you want to get involved with the Light of Life, just go to the lightoflife.org, or you can email me dougsmith@lightoflife.org, and I'd love to help get you involved. The second subject I want to talk to you about is finding your place and getting promoted. I mentioned that when I came on staff at Light of Life, I started as a volunteer coordinator and then I moved into fundraising and became a major gift officer. Then I got promoted into a development manager role, and then I got promoted into the director of development role. So let me just talk to you a little bit about getting promoted. Just a few thoughts. Number one, when it comes to promotion, God has a bigger plan for your life than you do. And I got that quote from Mike Tomlin, who's the coach of the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Doug Smith ([14:22](#)):

And he said, one time that someone asked him, "how did you become coach of the Steelers?" And he said, "God had a bigger plan for my life than I did. The biggest I could dream was I thought I would be holding the cables for my high school football coach. That was as big as I could dream, but God had a bigger plan." And so let me just tell you this, let God promote you, let God take care. Let God be the architect of your growth and your career plan. He has a bigger plan for your life than you do. The second thing I talk about in promotion is be a great number two, be a great number two. And you might be

number 45 in the organization, but that's okay. See yourself as a number two. I love what Sam Chand said. He said this.

Doug Smith ([14:55](#)):

He said, "if you're not in the first chair, if you're somewhere in the middle, just do a simple thing, contact your leader and ask them, how can I better serve you?" How can I better serve you? It's huge. Serve the leaders you're under find out how you can be as useful as possible to them and the organization. Ask them what your blind spots are asking them, how you can grow and develop. And if you set yourself apart as a great number two, I promise your time of promotion will come. Why? Because you're building a name for yourself and the name that you build matters. And so whether or not you get a promotion, a lot of times has to do with conversations. That will be about you when you're not in the room. So if you have a bad reputation, if you have blind spots and you're not teachable, all of those things are going to hold you back and you're not going to be in the room to defend yourself.

Doug Smith ([15:41](#)):

So just realize you're always building your reputation and be the best number two that you can be. And someday you'll be a number one another thought on the promotion. I say this all the time, but deliver the goods, deliver the goods. There was a sign on a grocery store once. And, and initially the church plan couldn't pay me. And so I either had to raise my own salary or I had to go get a job. And so I decided to go look for a job. And I was looking in the business world. I actually got a job that was lined up, but it wasn't going to start for a few months. And then out of nowhere, next thing on promotion, no that you're going to fail. You're going to fail. I've failed a thousand times in the past 10 years and I've had some major failures major, but when you they'll own it, own it, own it, own it, own it, and get better.

Doug Smith ([16:24](#)):

Never ruin an apology with an excuse ever. Don't come up with a hundred reasons why you failed. Hey, I failed. I own it. I take responsibility and I'm going to get better. It won't happen again, grow. And the last thing that I would tell you when it comes to promotion, pray about opportunities, pray about them. To be honest. One of those promotions that I was talking about, I didn't actually want, and I was on a run one morning and I was praying and I felt like God spoke to me. You need to take the ball and run with it with that, that opportunity to sit in front of you. And so I took it and it was, it was the exact thing I needed for that time for growth in the season that I was in. And so pray about the opportunities and hear from God.

Doug Smith ([17:01](#)):

And when he speaks to you to take it, take it, don't be afraid. He'll equip you and give you everything that you need for that position. The third major lesson that I learned in my time at Light of Life is I have learned how to have hard conversations. Now, this was probably the hardest and most painful lesson that I've learned in my time in Light of Life. But looking back, I can also tell you that it was the most beneficial lesson that I've learned at Light of Life. And unfortunately, I don't have time to unwind the whole lesson and teach you my process for having hard conversations. But I did record an entire episode on that in episode number 204 of the L3 Leadership podcast. It's just called how to have hard conversations. And if that's an area you need to grow in, I would encourage you to go back and listen to that.

Doug Smith ([17:40](#)):

But I would just say this, that prior to me, learning in a very painful situation, how to have hard conversations, I was toxic to everyone around me. I was toxic to my leaders. I was toxic to the organization. Why? Because I was unwilling to have hard conversations. And so what did I do? I held everything inside, all of my anger, all of my frustration. And I would basically just let it out by gossiping to others and rallying other others around me, around whatever issue I was frustrated with. Do you know how that helped the organization? It didn't, it made it worse. Do you know how that helped the leader? I was frustrated with it. Didn't do you know how it helped the people that I was gossiping with? It didn't, it made it worse, everything. If you don't know how to learn, how to have hard conversations, you will be toxic to everyone around you.

Doug Smith ([18:24](#)):

And so I want you to become extremely skilled at this. And so in our organization, we go by Matthew 18, where it says, if you have an issue with someone, go to the issue and have the hard conversation. If that conversation doesn't go well, bring a third party in and have them help. You have a hard conversation. And that's our process. And that's worked extremely well at Light of Life. And so from that moment on, and that was probably five years into my career at Light of Life. When I, it took me five years to learn that lesson the past five years, how have I changed one? I don't shy away from hard conversations. In fact, hard conversations are usually some of the greatest growth conversations for both people involved too. I've determined and I've made a commitment that I will never gossip never now in my perfect or that do I ever slip probably.

Doug Smith ([19:10](#)):

But I do tell people, if you ever hear me, gossiping please call me out. Please make me have a hard conversation. Cause I gossip is toxic, gossip needs to die in every organization. And so I've determined not to gossip. When people come to me and want to gossip about another person, I just say, "that's great. When are you going to have a conversation with them about that?" And oftentimes I'll actually make them schedule it, when I'm with them, because someone made me do that and it was extremely beneficial. And so learn how to have hard conversations. And I'll just say this. And especially if you're a younger leader, um, don't judge the leaders ahead of you. Don't judge the leaders ahead of you. Now, listen, it's, it's fine to make a file of, Hey, when I'm in a leadership position, here's things I'll do.

Doug Smith ([19:50](#)):

And here's things I'll never do based on a leadership experience, but don't judge. Cause until you sit in that seat, you have no idea what the leader is going through. You have no idea how hard their job is. You have no idea what decisions they've had to make, how they had to make those decisions. Leadership is heavy and leadership is tough, which I'll talk about in a minute, but don't judge the leaders ahead of you. Why? Because one day you're going to be in that seat and you know, who's going to be judging you, everyone on your team. And so teach your team not to do that, teach them how to have hard conversations. You know, it was funny. I remember prior to me learning how to have hard conversations, I remember going to conferences and basically in every talk thinking, yep, this leader needs to hear that this, the leader needs to hear that, Hey, my boss needs to hear that.

Doug Smith ([20:30](#)):

And you know, it's funny when I got a leadership role, I took my team to a conference and I actually went to a restroom break, I think. And um, I came back to the talk and two members of my team said, Doug, this entire talk is about you. Like, you need this talk, you need to hear this talk, but you knew

what? I was grateful for it. Instead of sitting there just judging me and saying to each other, Doug needs a sock. They told me, and I said, well, Hey, let's have a conversation. What can I do better? Why do I need this talk? And then we had a conversation and it was great. And so learned to have hard conversations, that will be one of the greatest skills you ever develop in your leadership journey. The fourth significant lesson that I learned at Light of Life is the power of living in community and having a willingness to self-evaluate and community is extremely important to us at Light of Life.

Doug Smith ([21:12](#)):

And so we want our staff to feel like a family. And so there's a few things we do to make that happen. Number one is we do check-ins and a lot of our meetings, and we ask everyone how they're doing on a scale of one to 10 and why, and this allows people to really share how they're actually doing in life. And then if they need prayer, it's a time where we actually pray for them. And then we also give them an opportunity to share celebrations, both personally, professionally, and an opportunity to celebrate each other. And so those three things alone have really done a lot to help create a sense of family. The second thing that we do, that's really powerful is we do what you're called self evaluations. And this is a process that we actually got from a ministry that we partner with called grace network international.

Doug Smith ([21:51](#)):

And so I'm going to be sharing some questions that they share, but I really encourage you to check them out. They have some phenomenal work, self evaluations are simply a tool and a process that we make available to staff to help them process decisions that they've made in the past or decisions that they're going to make in the future. And to process those decisions, we just have them fill out a simple form that asks them questions to reflect on. For instance, for decisions made in the past, here are the questions, what did I choose to do? What did I want? What was I thinking? What were the results of my choice? What effect did my choice have on the environment? What does trusting God look like in this situation? And if necessary, what is my plan to change? Here's the questions for before self evaluation?

Doug Smith ([22:35](#)):

What am I considering doing? What do I want, what am I thinking? If I continue with what I'm doing, what will be the result of my choices? What effect did the permissions I'm giving myself have on the relationships around me? What does trusting God look like in this situation? And then how can I best let you protect me? And once you fill these forms out, you basically open it up to the community and they have an opportunity to ask you questions that get to the heart of the issue of, of the decision. And so questions are so powerful. And literally I'm telling you, this process will transform your life. If you take those questions and process them with any decision that you've made or are going to make, it will be a game changer in your leadership. So self evaluations have been absolutely huge in helping me learn the power of community and the willingness to self evaluate.

Doug Smith ([23:20](#)):

And the last thing that I learned about the power of living in community is that people need three things to change. They need grace, they need truth, and they need time. And this came out of Dr. Henry Cloud's book Changes that Heal. It's a phenomenal book. It changed my life. I really encourage you to go read it and do the workbook, but people need three things to change grace truth and time. So what is grace? Grace is treating people better than they deserve. It's giving them the freedom to fail to themselves. And it's really asking yourself as a leader, you know, is this person going through a hard time? Maybe they need a little grace. Um, did they have a blind spot? And it's just loving them where

they're at. You know, I love that quote this as be kind, because everyone, you know, is fighting a battle and grace realizes that and it gives, and it gives you an opportunity as a leader to give grace to the leaders that you're leading.

Doug Smith ([24:06](#)):

The second thing people need is truth. People need them,

Doug Smith ([24:09](#)):

You hear the truth. The Bible says that that you'll hear the truth and the truth will set you free. And grace and truth are so important. And usually you either find people that are way too heavy on the gray side, that there's no boundaries and people were allowed to do whatever they want and there's no truth, or people are so heavy on the truth side that they condemn people. And there's no grace whatsoever. And so they, they just ruined people's lives because they set unrealistic expectations. But what you need is a proper amount of each. You need grace and truth. And there's one more thing that you need. You need time. Everyone needs time to change. Now, this is interesting because, uh, you know, depending on the situation and especially in the leadership, they may not have the time to grow through what they need to grow through when they're in your organization, but they may have enough time. It really depends. Every situation is different, but I really encourage you to read the book and study grace truth and time. It will really help you in your leadership journey. The fifth lesson I learned at Light of Life was I've learned how to raise money. I want to talk to you just a few minutes about fundraising, because it is what I do for a living. Here's some thoughts on fundraising. I know it's a big fear for people, but here's what I've learned. Number one, people give

Doug Smith ([25:13](#)):

People, period, people give to people,

Doug Smith ([25:15](#)):

Relationships are absolutely huge. You always need to be growing your network. You always need to be connecting with people on a consistent basis. That's true of individual donors. That's true of companies that you have foundations that shoe of government. You can certainly raise some money without relationships, but you'll get, he'll raise a lot more if you have relationships. So always be networking, always be connecting. Number two is you have not because you ask, not ask. You have to make the ask at the end of the day. And so it's scary at first, but eventually you'll get used to it. And eventually it will be no big deal. So you have no, because you asked not, don't be afraid to ask for money. Number three, storytelling is everything. So always be collecting stories from your organization. Obviously the stories of transformation go a big way and so, and share them everywhere.

Doug Smith ([26:00](#)):

You can share them in every one-on-one meeting that you have share them on tours, share them on media. Um, social media newsletters, storytelling really is everything. Number four, direct mail is not dead yet. Now this would be more for organizations who can do direct mail. But we send a lot of mail out from the Light of Life and people actually call us and they say, you send us so much mail. I, I feel like we're wasting money, but we still get a significant return on direct mail. Now, the way things are going online giving is going up and direct mail, but direct mail is still producing at a high level. And so eventually we anticipate the direct mail will start to go down and most giving will be online, but until

we're there, direct mail still works. Uh, the next thing I would say is market your stuff everywhere and put your need out there.

Doug Smith ([26:45](#)):

You never know who's watching. I'll share a story of another mission. In Baltimore, their executive director was telling me that they were in a \$64 million capital campaign and they had sent an email out and a donor reached out to them and said, uh, I want to give you a \$20 million gift towards your capital campaign. And, and they said, I said, did you know this donor? And they said, no, he had, he'd given a few times to the organization, but we didn't know him at all. And, um, and again, he had just been following their organization. So you never know who's watching your ministry. And so don't be afraid to put asks out there and always be story-telling. And, um, just realize that you're always raising money. So put your stuff everywhere on social media, email blasts, everything next is every dollar matters, obviously every dollar matters.

Doug Smith ([27:31](#)):

And so what I love about Light of Life is we have donors that give, you know, thousands and thousands of dollars, but we also have donors that send in literally a, you know, a few quarters in an envelope saying, I just want to provide one meal and help someone. And so I just love that. And the reality is an own nonprofits. Every dollar really does matter. And then lastly, I would just say that financial stewardship and transparency is important. And so I want to tell you just about a great resource. There's a site called charity navigator, and it has actually a third party that rates nonprofits both on financial transparency and stewardship. And so it's a great resource. Um, so I'd really encourage you. We take that very seriously as a, as a mission at Light of Life and, uh, you should do. And so if you're looking for a great resource to check out whether or not the organizations you support are good stewards, check out charity navigator.

Doug Smith ([28:19](#)):

And the last subject that I want to talk to you about today is drum roll, please. Leadership. How do you guess this is a leadership podcast? And it's all I talk about, but a few thoughts on leadership that I've learned at Light of Life. I want to talk to you about the "Room where it happens", and if you've seen Hamilton in this great song, the room where it happens. And let me just say this to emerging leaders, everyone wants to be in the room where it happens. You know, I remember walking past the, the room where the directors met for years and just saying, I want to be in that room. I want to help make decisions. I want to influence the organization. I want to be a leader. I want to be in the room where it happens. And now I'm in the room where it happens, the room where it happens.

Doug Smith ([28:53](#)):

All right, sorry, got a little Hamilton. Now I'm going to go crazy. But I'm in the room where it happens. And here's what I would tell you about being in the room where it happens. Number one, you don't want to be in the room where it happens until God wants you in the room where it happens. I'll say that again. You don't want to be in the room where it happens until God wants you in the room where it happens. And the reality is, everyone thinks they're ready before they're ready. And so when you're ready, God will open up a door for you to be in the room where it happens. And you do not want to be there before. Cause if you're not ready, you're going to mess up the entire opportunity. So let God put you in the room. Don't put yourself in the room.

Doug Smith ([29:28](#)):

I mentioned already that I wanted a too early and I remember a leader that mentors me named Seleme Gabriel. He told me this. He said, Doug, don't desire to be a leader, just serve and leadership opportunities will come. And I think that's great advice for aspiring leaders. Don't desire to be a leader. Don't desire to be in the room where it happens, just serve and let God put you in the room where it happens, because the reality is being in the room where it happens. It's not all it's cracked up to be. In fact, it's a huge responsibility. It's a heavy responsibility. It's tough. I share this quote all the time. In fact, I was sharing this the other day with another mentor, John stalwart and John Maxwell always said this. He said, there's, if you're a leader, there's no such thing as too easy consecutive days in your life.

Doug Smith ([30:11](#)):

And I shared that with John and John said, but there are two consecutive hard days in a leader's life. And I said, that is extremely true. In fact, there are many, many, many, many consecutive hard days in a leader's life. And so, um, if you're just wanting to be a leader and be in the room where it happens, because you'll have a fancy title or people will think something of you, I'm telling you, let God put it in you. And when he does, it's a heavy responsibility and it is hard. Leaders have to make incredibly hard decisions that not everyone will understand and not everyone will have the context. And it's just, it's a, it's a crazy journey. And so one day you'll be in the room where it happens. And when you do lead well and steward that opportunity, the best that you can, but until you're in the room, that it happens, just do everything that you can, um, to serve. And so that's a little bit about what I've learned so far at leadership at light of life. So 10 years at light of life, it's been an absolute joy and an absolute honor, and I've learned so many great lessons. And I hope some of the lessons that I learned added value to you today. So thanks for listening. And I'll talk to you next episode.

Doug Smith ([31:12](#)):

[inaudible]

Doug Smith ([31:12](#)):

Well, Hey leader, thank you so much for listening to the lessons that I learned in 10 years of being on staff at Light of Life. I hope you enjoyed it, and I hope it added value to your life and leadership journey. And if it did, please share your key takeaways on social media or send it to two or three other leaders that you think could benefit. Again, this is how we expand our reach and reach more leaders, which is our mission here. So thank you in advance for that. And if you want to go back and get any of the notes or seeing any of the quotes that I shared, you can check all of those out in the show notes at lthreeleadership.org/274. And as always, I like to end every episode with a quote and today I'll quote Mark Cuban. And he said this, I was listening to him in an interview. He said, "I tell entrepreneurs all the time, fail often. You only have to be right one time until you can laugh your way to the bank and be an overnight success." And I just love that fell off and you only have to be right once. So if you feel like giving up or if you failed, just get back up again and try again. You only have to be right one time. I love that. So until the next episode go lead, well, go make a difference and we'll be back now.

Doug Smith ([32:17](#)):

[inaudible].