

Doug Smith ([00:06](#)):

Hey leader, and welcome to episode number 315 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 today's episode is brought to you by my friends at Beratung Advisors. If you're new to the podcast, welcome, I'm so glad that you're here. And I hope that you enjoy our content and become a subscriber, know that you can also watch all of our episodes over on our YouTube channel. So make sure you check out that as well. And to all of you who have been listening to the podcast for a while, thank you so much for being a listener. And if the podcast has made an impact on your life, it would mean the world. To me. If you leave us a rating and review on apple podcast or Spotify or whatever app you listen to podcast through, that really does help us to grow our audience and reach more leaders.

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

In fact, I wanna highlight a recent review that was left by Zoverflow, Zoverflow said this great conversations. I love the L3 Leadership podcast. Doug is a great interviewer and always seems to be able to get great insight outta the leaders. He has come conversations with. If you're hungry to keep leveling up as a leader, this pod is for you. Thank you so much and overflow. And for all of you who may leave a rating and review, thank you in advance for that. While a leader, we just hosted our second annual L3 One Day conference on April 1st. And it was an incredible day. In fact, we'll be posting some of the talks on YouTube and on the podcast and the weeks and months home. So get ready for that. But today we're actually gonna post the first talk from the conference, which was my talk, which was entitled stop leading on empty.

Doug Smith ([01:30](#)):

And in my talk, I actually shared the lessons that I learned in the hardest season of my life, which was the fall of 2020. And when I shared this lesson, after I got down from the stage, I can't tell you how many leaders came up to me. Many of them with tears in their eye saying I'm in the exact same season that you were in. Thank you so much for sharing that. Thank you for being vulnerable. And Hey, can we meet for coffee, cuz I'd love to learn how you got through that season. I had other leaders come up to me and saying, Doug, I feel like I've been leading on empty for a long time. And I feel like I'm about to, to enter into what you entered into. If I don't make some changes, can you help me make some changes? And so leaders, this is it extremely important.

Doug Smith ([02:05](#)):

I don't want any of you to ever have to deal with what I had to go deal with in the fall of 2020. And you can avoid this. And that's my whole goal of the talk. If I can help one person avoid a season like I had in the fall of 2020, then sharing this was an absolute win. And so if there's anything I can ever do for you, if you're listening to this and you're going through hard season, please feel free to reach out to me. I have a huge heart for, for people who are going through tough seasons like this. And I really hope that this talk will lead you to stop leading on empty for the rest of your life and actually fill yourself up, take seasons of rest, et cetera. And so you're gonna enjoy this talk, but before we dive into that, just a few announcements.

Doug Smith ([02:40](#)):

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Doug Smith ([03:52](#)):

Hey everyone. Wow. Bill was incredible. And, and really there's a, there's a man in the, the room that changed my life named Larry Bettoncourt. He's in the background. I see him right now. Larry changed my life as a young man and I interned for him. And one thing he would do was bring in great leaders from around the city, just like bill, to expose us to great leadership. And then he would encourage us, Hey, if bill inspired you or whoever you listened to inspired you, you should ask them out to coffee or get involved with whatever they're doing. Get connected and see what happens. And that's what actually led me to for 10 years straight, I would ask leaders out to coffee every single month and I'd come with a list of questions and just ask them to mentor me. And he, Larry gave me this whole process and it really changed my life.

Doug Smith ([04:34](#)):

And it was really what was the catalyst for starting the podcast. But part of our vision for this conference is to expose you to great leaders, right? I believe the leadership is taught and you're gonna hear a lot of great things, but I believe leadership is more co than taught. And sometimes we just need exposed to the right leaders, which is why it's so important to be in the room. This is so much different than just watching a Ted talk online or something important. So I would encourage you with all the speakers that you're hearing to today. If you feel inspired to get connected, get connected. I mean, I'm not promise you the Bill's gonna go out to coffee with you. It sounds like a schedule. I mean, you were the Dali Alma. I, you know, choices, but, but Hey, dream big and go for it and ask big.

Doug Smith ([05:11](#)):

And so I just wanted to encourage you with that. Today I want to talk to you about, I called my, my, the title of my talk Stop Leading On Empty, Stop Leading On Empty. And we canceled the conference in February or March, I guess, of 20, 20 little did I know that a few months later it was July. I was getting ready for vacation. COVID was everywhere. And I got, I got a cold, I got sick and I had no idea if I had COVID and I was leaving for vacation the upcoming Sunday, my father-in-law was worried at and I was worried. I wasn't gonna be able to go on vacation. He was traveling with us and I thought, oh my gosh, I don't wanna spread COVID on the plane. I don't know if I can go on vacation. I really, really need a vacation right now.

Doug Smith ([05:52](#)):

I'm stressed, I'm burned out. And so I actually was sitting on the couch. I was watching the, the bulls documentary on Netflix. Anyone watched that so good. If you haven't watched it, highly recommend it. But I was watching that and I, all of a sudden, my heart started racing, beating out of my chest. And I

thought like I was gonna die and fortunate. Unfortunately I did recognize what it was. It was a panic attack I had had, I had struggled with two seasons of a panic in my life prior to this at, at different ages of my life. So I had this huge panic attack ended up getting through it and I thought, Hey, it was just the, the result of a bunch of stress got through the panic attack, found out I didn't have COVID one on vacation. I, I said I had the most two relaxing weeks of my life, but looking back, I would wake up at like 5:00 AM on vacation and literally sprint up like a 3000 foot mountain and down, and then hike all day with my kids.

Doug Smith ([06:40](#)):

I'm like, yeah, that probably wasn't rest Doug. But that was my vacation. So I had vacation for two weeks. It was great. I get back. And it was Monday night from vacation, just went back to work. And I was playing with my brother in chess on my phone. And I guess I was multitasking. Everyone would play chess, but I was multitasking. I saw an email that said it was from my aunt. She said, Doug, your cousin, Kathy or Nancy passed away of COVID. And, and that made me sad. I had, I had a relationship with her, but not a deep relationship, but for, some reason that set off anxiety in me again. And that night I had another panic attack and that night led to another night with a panic attack and another night with a panic attack. And pretty much for the entire month of September, I had to deal with anxiety and panic attacks for an entire month straight.

Doug Smith ([07:26](#)):

I was scared to go to bed every single night, cuz I was fear or full of having one. I would sleep two or three hours a night. It, it was a miserable experience. Shortly after that, when we moved into October, I don't know what physic happened in my body, but the anxiety moved from my chest. Like I feel like I'm gonna die here to my brain. And, and I can't really describe the feeling in my brain, but it was the worst, most torturous feeling that I've ever physically had. And, and it started to impair how I was living my everyday life. I remember that we were having a team meeting and we were all on zoom at this point, but I remember I was leading our team meeting and I got to the end. Fortunately I made it through the meeting, but I remember at the end I just felt like everything got drained out of me.

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

And I, actually, I don't know if my team heard me, but I just said, I can't do this. And I got off of zoom and I tried to pull up my email and, and I couldn't even look at an email. I couldn't respond to an email. I tried to, to take a nap and then, you know, go back to, I could not do any work the next day, the same thing. And so I opened up to our, our directors at light of life and I just said, you guys know I've been struggling with something it's getting even worse. I don't know what to do. I, I don't even know if I can work. And, and my executive director was like, well, Hey, you need to take some time off. And that freaked me out cuz I, I like to go hard. I like to do things and it freaked me out.

Doug Smith ([08:42](#)):

And I thought, well, I don't know if I'll ever come back. If I take time off, like if I take a week off, like I may never work again. And then fearful thoughts going through my head were like, I don't know if I have long term disability. I know there's some insurance people in here. Maybe we could talk after. But I, I don't know that I have a long term disability in, in place to take care of my family. If I'm never gonna be able to work again, it was a real fear. And because of whatever, the, the funkiness in my brain was, I literally felt like I was gonna die every single day. I thought at any minute, I'm going to die. My number

one question for my friends and for my wife and, and my Laura could tell you if she, if I asked her once to ask her 10,000 times, am I going to die?

Doug Smith ([09:22](#)):

Am I going to be okay? She was pregnant with my, my son who was born last year. And I literally, I remember crying and screaming at the top of my lungs. Like, I don't know if I'm ever gonna get to see my son again. It was the darkest season in my life. And, and I was, I was desperate. So I looked for information. I was reading every book that I could, I was looking for Ted talks and I'll share a lot about what I learned. And I read this book called Leading on Empty by Wayne Cardeiro. And if you've ever struggled with this, I highly recommended it as a read. But in it he said that he went through a very similar season and his, his doctor basically said, and I'm not a doctor. So I'm not saying this is true, but it made sense to me.

Doug Smith ([09:59](#)):

He said, basically your body runs on serotonin. And once your serotonin gets depleted, your body starts running on adrenaline. And once you start running through adrenaline, your body starts to have panic attacks and you start to run on anxiety. And if you keep going hard, when you're in that season of anxiety, you eventually have a mental, a breakdown. And it was kind of a wake up call to me of, I think I'm pretty far down that road. Very, very scary place. And so what led to this, you know, I, I, I literally was like, it could be a thousand different things, but looking back, I think it was three main things that have boiled down to number one was unprocessed, grief and trauma. What I didn't share with you was just nine months earlier, I have a, a sister. I don't have time to tell her whole story, but I had a sister who was a heroin addict for 15 years and you know, light of life.

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

And my family walked her through that. My sister ended up homeless twice in that period in our programming at light of life, multiple times. And fortunately in December of 2019, we lost my sister to an overdose. Today's actually, my sister's birthday should be 35, but we lost her to an overdose. And I remember getting the call. I'm laying in bed, you know, sleeping, get the phone call 1130 night. My dad says, dad, Doug, Sarah's gone. Sarah's gone. The police just left the house. And he was obviously understandably a mess. And so I, you know, I freaked out, like I gotta go help my dad. So I got in my car and I cried for probably two minutes, got to my dad's house. He was a mess. Took care of my dad, stayed with my dad for pretty much the whole week, put together a message put together, all the funeral arrangements put together a great message to honor my sister's life.

Doug Smith ([11:38](#)):

She has two sons. So I raised a ton of money for my nephews. And then I basically just went back to work and my boss actually said that exact thing he said, did you actually take, like, why don't you take more time? And I'm like, no, I'm good. I'm good. Like, I don't my, I know my sister's in a, a better place. I know. I'll see her again. One day, I know that she had a personal relationship with God. I'm good. And I just pressed on and keep pushing through. Literally I know that I, I never processed that grief and trauma. And I'll talk about that. The second thing that led well, and let me say this about trauma. I did wanna bring this up. I, I realized that I've had a lot more traumatic of experiences in my life than I had thought. I, I lost my sister.

Doug Smith ([12:16](#)):

I lost my mom when I was 17 years old. I lost my mother-in-law. When I was 19 years old, I've lost both of my grandparents. I've had a lot of loss in my life a lot. And in light of life, we talk a lot about trauma informed care. And we say that the average adult, by the time they reach adulthood has had a one traumatic event in their life. The average adult who walks through our doors at the mission has had three or four. By the time they reach 18 and multiple thereafter. And I don't know if you've ever done a trauma assessment of your life, but I'm willing to bet that you've had more trauma in grief in your life than you've probably are willing to admit or even be aware of. It's a big deal. The second thing that led to to the season of my life was just stress, burnout, and unrealistic expectations of myself, internally, stress, burnout, and unrealistic expectations.

Doug Smith ([13:03](#)):

I talked about how I love to go hard. <Laugh> I, and I pride to myself on it and I don't do that anymore, but Hey, I go hard. I do all these things. Look at me, but you I'll talk about all that. But remember I had just become director at light of life. I had management rules before, but I had never led an entire department or sat an executive leadership level. And I was at that level and the amount of pressure that I put on myself, no one put pressure on me. The amount of pressure I put on myself was insane. We had just kicked off a 24 million capital campaign relocation effort. We had decided to rebrand the organization and we decided to switch vendors that I, I actually thought could have a significant positive impact or a significant negative impact and all summer long.

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

I actually remember leading up to this. I would wake up with cold sweats one because the fact that I was reality, my sister was gone. And two, my thinking was if these two decisions, aren't right in light of life of life's not gonna exist and it's gonna be my fault. That's pretty ridiculous. Thank thinking. But that's how I think I'm, I'm an all or nothing person. And, and I put all the weight of these two decisions, which really were not that big of a deal. They're a big deal, but not game changing for an organization. That's gonna shut it down. But the weight of that just crushed me, crushed me. And I had a pastor who, I don't know if he's here yet, but he is coming today, John Newso and he said, Doug is, I've looked over your life. When you were a teenager, you saw your mom get sick.

Doug Smith ([14:24](#)):

And you were basically, she was sick for your teenage years. And you medicated the pain of that through drugs and alcohol. Then you became a person of faith after your mom passed away, which was great. But then you started medicating through performance. You started medicating through performance, and that's what I've done. My whole life. I had such unrealistic expectations because everything I was doing was to prove that I'm something to prove that I'm enough to mask the pain and grief that I never was willing to deal with. The third reason I think I, I, what led to that season was a spiritual battle. Again, this is not a, a faith conference. I am a person of faith. And so I do believe it was a spiritual attack in my life. And I, I listened to a lot of, of sermons during that time. And, and one of the pastors said, something that resonated with me that I thought was worth sharing with you.

Doug Smith ([15:09](#)):

But he just said, the reason that some battles are so tough is that you can't see it in the spiritual, but the enemy is doing his best to squash and acorn become before it becomes a mighty Oak tree, a mighty Oak tree. And, and that really gave me a vision that, Hey, if I can get through this, there's something better. On the other side, I'm gonna be able to help more people. On the other side, I'm gonna be more of who

God wants me to be on the other side of this. I think it was a spiritual tactic. So those three things I think are what led to this season of my life and what I wanna spend the rest of the talk sharing with you is what I learned. And hopefully this will help you as well. So the first thing that I learned through this entire process in healing is that you are not alone.

Doug Smith ([15:50](#)):

And I am a, I should say, I am not alone. And I was not alone. And if you're struggling with these things, you are not alone. Either. It shocked me. When I started opening up to people, the, what I was going through, how many people said they have gone through the exact same thing. It was so freeing. I started reading books like leading on empty and started listening to messages by some of my heat who I look up to. I remember one guy Louis Giglio. He said, he went through a season like this in 2008. He said he could not get off the couch. And when he says he couldn't get off the couch, he said, I couldn't even walk around the, the block. I couldn't go to the grocery store. I never thought I'd get off the couch again. And he said, if you would've told me that I'd be speaking again one day or working again one day, I would've told you, I have a better chance of riding a bicycle on Jupiter.

Doug Smith ([16:35](#)):

Do you know how freeing it was to know that I wasn't the only one dealing with something like this, another mentor I mentor I met with said, Doug, I don't know one leader that I'm friends with, that hasn't gone through something like this. You're gonna be okay. You're gonna be okay. Your body's just simply telling you that what you're doing now, the way you're living is not sustainable. Your body is trying to save your life. That's all that's happening. And so you need to make some changes, but you're not alone. You're not alone. And as leaders, maybe you're not struggling with this, but I would tell you, there's probably people in your organization who are, and are you gonna be the kind of leader and, and create the kind of organizational culture that can actually deal with some of these issues. And actually let people know that it's okay to not be okay, that they're not alone and that you can actually walk them through it.

Doug Smith ([17:24](#)):

I'm glad I was part of an organization like that. The second thing I learned was it's more than okay. To get help. It's more than okay to get help. It's is it immediately again when you're desperate, you'll do anything. So I reached out to a therapist that was recommended to me. It was amazing. I had never gone to therapy before. My thought was, I'm connected with a ton of leaders. I meet with leaders all the time. I'm in mastermind groups. I have tons of community around me. I process with everyone. I'm good. I don't need therapy. I needed it. I wish I would've started it a lot longer. Maybe I would've avoided this whole season. There's a lot in leadership. Sometimes people think therapy is weak. I would tell you that therapy is for the strong, but in therapy. I learned so many helpful things that I think will be practical to you.

Doug Smith ([18:07](#)):

One is just the power of sharing with, as I talked about this already, but if you're going through something, share it with someone don't hold it all inside. You don't have to be tough. Admit that you're going through a hard time and you'll be surprised at what happens when you just allow yourself to express what's happening to you. The second thing that was super helpful was again, I was so worried about not being able to work again. The, so I talked to my therapist and I just said, talk to me about capacity, cuz I liked the capacity that I was, was utilizing. And I wanna be able to do that again. And he

said, Doug, in my experience, what I've learned about capacity is oftentimes it's not a capacity issue. There's people that can sleep three or four hours a night for their entire lives work 16 hour days, and be absolutely fine.

Doug Smith ([18:49](#)):

What I found when it comes to capacity is usually when you burn out, it's a result of unrealistic expectations of yourself internally. This is huge unrealistic expectations of yourself internally. Now I already told you about the expectations that I put on myself for, for light of life. But that's how I was in every area of my life. Literally when it comes to L3 Leadership, like if I don't have the influence and in leadership level skills of John Maxwell, then I feel like I'm doing nothing. This is how I live my life. If I don't have the financial world of a Dave Ramsey, then, then I'm not doing well financially. If I don't look like the rock, which I have that one taken care of. But if I don't look like the rock, I'm not, I'm not, I'm out of shape. I'm I'm we, that is how I live my life in every area of my life constantly comparing myself, constantly putting these expectations that were unrealistic on myself and it led to burnout and stress.

Doug Smith ([19:41](#)):

And so we had to do some work in therapy. And so we did this work around evaluating my beliefs and what we found is, and I don't have to understand the whole process, but my, my enough core belief that was driving all of this was that I'm not enough. I'm not enough. I, I, that pastor told me I've been medicating through performance. Everything I was doing was to prove to myself that I'm enough. And so my therapist said, draw a T chart in your journal. And on the left side, I want you to fill out the evidence that you have, that you're not enough, what evidence you have? And what I wrote down was basically two traumatic experiences that I had with leaders that they spoke something into my life that was negative. And that was still sticking with me to this day.

Doug Smith ([20:24](#)):

And I was trying to prove something to those people. It was an evidence that I'm not enough. It was evidence that I was letting a pain and a trauma from in the past dictate how I live my everyday life. What I realized is there's very little evidence. In fact, there was none that I'm not enough. So then he said, well, on the other side, started writing down evidence that you are enough. So I started writing down some cliché things and he said, no, no, no, no. I want you to make a big list. And I started writing things. I'm grateful for things in my life. My wife, my kids, all these things. I can't, you know, I should, I graduated high school with a 1.6. Like I should not be doing anything that I'm doing today. And I just started crying and I realized I have all the evidence in the world to say that I'm enough all the evidence in the world.

Doug Smith ([21:04](#)):

And that was such a freeing exercise. Now I called my dad and, and I know you guys know my dad, but he's like Pittsburgh dad. He's the best. He's the bus driver. I love my dad. He, he has a saying, he said, I am what I am. And that's all that I am. I'm Johnny, the bus driving, man, like just be comfortable with who you are. Isn't that a great saying? My dad was always secure in who he was, but I wasn't. And so I was sharing him, these feelings that dad, I, I'm processing that. I'm not enough. And that's how I've been living my life. And my dad. I'm a words of affirmation guy. If you know, the five love languages, I love being told that. I'm awesome. So, you know, if you wanna tell me I'm awesome in between, that'd be awesome.

Doug Smith ([21:39](#)):

And awesome. It's basically the only adjective I have in my anyway dictionary, but I was talking to my dad in, and my dad said, Doug, this was over the phone. I was walking. He said, Doug people always come up to me and they say, you must be so proud of your son. Like look at everything he's doing. And my dad said, I am proud of him, but I'd be just as proud of him. If he was cleaning toilet us or doing anything else, like he's my son and man, I'm gonna cry it out. And it was awesome, man. I'm enough. I heard that from my dad. It was so free. And then I, I forget how we got on the subject. I was, I was laying everything on the table. I'm like, man, should I not work at light of life anymore? Should I not work?

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

Should I just take a sabbatical for three months? But I'm like, but what about my, my job? And, and if we got on the subject of titles and I'm like, what if I don't have my current position? And my dad just said like, my dad would always say, he goes, Doug, I don't give us what your title is. And I was like, what? I'm like, that is a chapter in a book one day. Like I don't get and, and do you know what, as a leader, sometimes we take ourselves way too seriously. And we're way too wrapped up in our titles. And you know that no one gives us about your title. Do you know that that was so freeing for me to learn. I'm love for who I am. I'm not love for what I do or what position I hold. I'm enough.

Doug Smith ([22:50](#)):

Evaluate your core beliefs. I learned the power of journaling. Not gonna spend a lot of time here, but if you don't journal, I, I created an entire course on journaling that you can take. I'm a huge proponent of that. I think I feel like three journals more than I normally do in a year through this season. But actually being able to process on paper was huge. I had a safety, this was huge. My therapist gave me a safety plan and it started, it was a 10 step plan. And he said, when you start to get in trouble, just follow this plan. Step one was like, Hey, turn on worship music. Step two was listen to a sermon. Step three was pray. Step four was, go for a walk. Step five was call a friend, step six was call Laura. And I just wanna point out that Laura was step six. I always at the Laura step one. And my Laura was pregnant at the time with my son, right? She's she's also an executive and she was stressed and busy and trying to run our kids while I'm like laying there in bed saying, am I gonna die? Help me, help me, help me. And so I would grab her hand and say, Laura help me. And she would say, have you done the other five steps yet? Leave me alone.

Speaker 2 ([23:47](#)):

<Laugh>

Doug Smith ([23:48](#)):

Very loving wife.

Doug Smith ([23:52](#)):

But, but she did get to a point where she said, I can't be everything to everyone. And I share that because listen, you may not be the one going through a season like that, but you may be married to someone going through a season like that. You may have a coworker that's like that or a team member, and you need to walk them through, but you need to get help for you too. Lauren needed a community to process within a therapist to process with just as much as I did because she was carrying the weight of, of carrying me through a dark season, be willing to get help. And then after that plan was, you know, call the therapist, call resolve, which is a crisis hotline. And then the last it would be go to Western psych, but having a plan to actually go to was so, so helpful and free have a plan. And the last thing I

learned from my therapist is take medication. If you need it, I'm not a doctor. I'm not here to say like you should, but I, I would probably not open to it before that, but I was desperate. And so I was open and I took medication and it was fine. And it helped me be okay with that, do what you need to do to get healthy in the season that you're in

Doug Smith ([24:51](#)):

A few other lessons, take time to grieve your losses, Take time to grieve your losses. And it doesn't just have to be a loss one. Like I lost a bunch of family members. You can grieve a lost relationship. You can grieve a lost job. You can grieve some the thing that someone said to you, I thought I grieved my mom's death. I thought I grieved my sister's death, but I didn't. And my therapist said, Dougie said, you've said goodbye to grief, but you can't say goodbye to something that you never said hello to

Doug Smith ([25:19](#)):

You. Can't say goodbye to something you never said hello to. And so he sent me on this journey. First, he had me have a trauma assessment and on a piece of paper, write to out every five year increment in my life and write down the traumatic experiences that happened over the course of each of those five years. And I already mentioned, I had a lot of trauma specifically around lost, loved ones. He then said, Doug, I want you to go to the grave sites of each person that you lost. And I want you to write them a letter.

Doug Smith ([25:44](#)):

I never went to my mom's grave site. I never went to any grave. I thought it was a waste of time. I'm a leader. I gotta get things done. They're not there. What's the point. Sorry. It's how I process things, man. I went to my sister's grave site with my journal in my hand and I sat down and I wrote dear Saturday and I just started, I lost it. I lost it. Then I went to my mother-in-law. Then I went to my mom. Then I went to my grandparents. It was one of the most freeing exercises of my life. Have you two taking time to grieve the losses in your life? It matters. Keith Anderson said most people don't expect the amount of loss in grief. That surfaces, when you are finally quiet and it took me almost having a mental breakdown to get quiet enough to actually grieve the losses that I've been experiencing for so long. The next thing I would tell you, oh, and let me just say this. No, I'll skip that. The next thing I would tell you to do is you need to invest in deep friendships as a leader, you need to invest in deep friendships.

Doug Smith ([26:39](#)):

When you're in crisis, you call the people that you think will help the most. And that you're closest to Zach Blair's in the room. I called Zach pastor. Larry will host. I, I called the people that, that love me and are great friends. And, and they all took time. They stopped what they were doing in their life. And they said, whatever you need, let's go out to eat. Let's go for a walk. I don't know if they would've called me. If I would've responded the same. I hope I would've. But there's a fear in me that I might have said, well, I, I can't, I have too much going on. And so we went on walks with friends and what I've noticed in, in a pattern in every single walk that I had with a friend is they all said the same thing. They said, Doug, you've been neglecting deep friendships for a long time.

Doug Smith ([27:18](#)):

And see, I, I have thousands of relationships. I have thousands of people that I know. And so I thought I had great relationships and I did, but I don't have deep relationships. Pastor LA said, Doug, who are the people who, who don't care, what you do, who don't know you for all Leadership or light of life. That

just love you for you that know you as Bubba, right? My nickname from three to 27 anyway so invest in deep friendships, you could see pastor Larry, Zach and I. And over the past two years, my I had mentor gave me this exercise said, Doug, you really need to prioritize and determine what roles you wanna live out of and not R O L E S. And I said, that's easy. I wanna be a great a husband. I wanna be a great father, a friend, and a leader. And he said, Doug, that's a great aspiration, but you're not living that way. You're not living that way. You're living the opposite. You're you're trying to be a leader first and that's way above anything else that you're prioritizing again, trying to prove myself. He said, drop the leader thing, focus on being a good husband, a good fit friend and a good father. And I've been perfect at it. But that has been a main focus of mine for the past few years. And it's been extremely freeing. Maybe you need to determine your roles and call a good friend this week.

Doug Smith ([28:23](#)):

The next thing I will learned is that I needed to prune some things out of my life.

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

My pastor said, when he talked to me about medicating performance, he said, you're gonna have to look at everything in your life and prune stuff. The hard part for you, Doug, is that everything you're pursuing is noble L3. Leadership's great light of life is great. It's not like you're, you have all these unhealthy addictions. So it's gonna be really challenging you for do that. But you need to take the time to figure out what to prune in your life and put everything on the table. And he asked a great question. I think I already mentioned it today, but he just said, you have to ask yourself, what does healthy look like in this season? What does healthy look like in this season? Doesn't mean it has to look like this forever, but what does it have to look like in this season? And so for me, these may sound minor things, but they were big things.

Doug Smith ([29:07](#)):

I cut out social media, which was huge for me. I didn't miss it as much as I thought I would. I actually thought it was really freeing. Although now I'm back on the wagon, come on. <Laugh> they got me sucks. Come on. But caught out social media. I got off of coffee, which I usually spend \$1,500 a year at Starbucks. Like I was. Yeah. And I actually, and then I convinced LA buy this really nice coffee maker. And I'm like, Hey, I won't go to Starbucks if we buy this. And then it made like unbelievable coffee, coffee. If you wanna know what it is, it's a JIRA E eight. It's amazing. But we bought it. I got to use it for like three months and now it's a glorified hot water maker. LAR still get to use it for coffee, but I gave up coffee, which was huge.

Doug Smith ([29:41](#)):

And then I gave up working out and not working out consistently, but I would go for a walk rather than do some high intensity thing, which was all of my workouts. And I let myself sleep. Like I, I used to pride myself on waking 4:00 AM and having this awesome morning routine and going hard. And I just let my body rest. And thankfully, that was very helpful in the process season. But what do you need to prune? What does healthy look like in this season for you? And the last thing that I learned is just the power of rest I attended. And, and again, this is talk about one idea, one connection away. I went to a conference called catalyst in 2008 and Rick Warren who's a pastor was speaking and he gave us phrase and it stuck with me ever that I didn't implement it for 13 years, but he said, leaders, you need to rest.

Doug Smith ([30:24](#)):

And he said, every leader needs to divert daily, withdraw weekly and abandon annually, divert daily, withdraw weekly, abandon annually. He said, every day, if you work with your head at night, you need to do something with your hands. Every day, every day, you need to find something to energize yourself every week with withdraw weekly. Every week, you need to take a day off where you do nothing. You turn off your phone, you turn off your email, you disconnect completely. And on our fate circle, we call it the Sabbath. And I'd never taken a Sabbath before this season. And I read an incredible book called the ruthless elimination of hurry. And, and there was a, there was a guy named John, or he was getting mentored by a man named Dallas wood. And he was stressed. And in a season like I was going through, he said, what do I need to do in Dallas said, you must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.

Doug Smith ([31:11](#)):

That's gonna be the battle of my lifetime. I can just tell you that, but you must ruthlessly eliminate. Hurry from your life. Withdraw wiggly, turn off the phone, enjoy your family. The, the thing that told me on Sabbath was pleasure. Stacking. Basically, you just come up with a bunch of fun stuff to do, and you just do that. Sold any, any new gram sevens out there, right? Bucket list. Let's go Sabbath rest. And some new rhythms that, that Laura and I implemented one is I try to sleep as long as I can, at least on weekends. Hey, if that's eight hours great, but let my body rest. We are committed. As long as we are able to, to go two week vacations, cuz for me, it takes me an entire week just to unwind, to even get ready to rest. And then I'm back to work.

Doug Smith ([31:49](#)):

So trying to take extended rests, taking, taking advantage of three day weekends, trying to do consistent overnights with Laura scheduling time with deep friendships on the calendar and just making time for joy, peace and reflection, please, we need to rest or else you're gonna have a mental breakdown like I did rest. So as I close today a few recommended resources. If you're a resource person, I already mentioned leading on empty by Wayne Cero, the ruthless elimination of hurry by John mark comer. Take a day off by Robert Moore, great book. And then a book that really helped me by Dr. Daniel Aman. Who's a brain doctor. He wrote a book called change your brain, change your life. It was really, really incredible and had a lot of practical things relating to these issues. And so why did I share this today? The number one reason I shared this talk is so you don't have to go through what I went through.

Doug Smith ([32:40](#)):

If I can help one person here avoid going. I wouldn't wish what I went through on my worst enemy. That's how bad it was. If I can stop one leader from experience, what I experienced, then this talk was a win for me. I hope that you'll avoid that. The second thing is, and I don't have to tell you this mental health issues are a huge deal right now in our nation student, suicide rates are skyrocketing. The opioid epidemic took over a hundred thousand people's lives. Last year, people were burnt out. Mental health issues are everywhere. And as leaders, we need to be equipped to deal with this in our organizations. I said, you may have, does your team have a plan for dealing with mental health issues? If they don't, you need to get one. I think, yeah, my team's a, there you were like, who hell this people.

Doug Smith ([33:20](#)):

So this is our, our development team at light of life. We were on a developmental retreat. So it's a fun picture, but I'm so grateful that I lived. I work at a place there where people could love me no matter what I was going through. And our team has gone through high highs together and we've gone through low lows together. We've laughed together. We cried together. And when I was at my lowest, these

people walked me through it. They, they stepped up for, I needed help. They gave me grace, what? I couldn't even lead a meeting anymore. I'm so, so grateful that I had a team in an organization like this check in with your team members. Some people on our team are here and they don't like this, but we do. Check-Ins every day in our meetings. We love, I see Colleen laughing. I make everyone tell me how they're doing on scale of one to 10.

Doug Smith ([33:57](#)):

We do it in our mastermind groups, too 10, being the you've ever done. One being, you know, life's not so great. And what if you had a measure like that, where someone could and you had a culture like that, where if someone could say, you know what, I'm a one today. Life's not going too good. And you can all of a sudden stop all the businesses that, how can we help you? Let's walk you through this and leaders. If we'll learn some of the lessons that I had to learn the hard way, I believe that we'll create a better world and think we'll create a better, a more healthier United States, our country. I think we'll create healthier cities, states, organizations, etc, but it all starts with you in taking care of your mental health. Thank you so much. I hope this added value to your life. Thank you.

Doug Smith ([34:39](#)):

Well, Hey leader, thank you so much for listen into my talk from my L3 One Day called Stop Leading On Empty. I hope that it added value to your life and impacted you. And I hope that it'll help you avoid going through a season like I went through. And if you're going through a season like that now, I hope it gave you some practical tips on how you can get out. I hope it gave you hope that you will get out one day and you will lead again and you will do well. So keep going. And if there's anything, as I mentioned that I can do to help you through the season, if you're going through a difficult season, please let me know. And you can find links to everything that I shared in the talk l3leadership.org/315 and leaders always. I wanna challenge you that if you really want to 10 X your growth this year, then you need to either launch or join in L3 Leadership mastermind group.

Doug Smith ([35:18](#)):

Mastermind groups have been the greatest source of growth in my life over the last five years. If you don't know what they are, there's simply groups of six to 12 leaders that meet together for at least one year in order to help each other grow, go after their goals together and to do life together. So if you're interested in learning more about masterminds, go to [L3 Leadership.org/masterminds](https://l3leadership.org/masterminds), and as always leader, I like to end every episode with a quote and I'll quote, one of my heroes, John Maxwell today. He said this. He said, you will never change your life until you change something you do daily. This was huge. I love that quote. I'll share it again. You will never change your life until you change something you do daily. I hope this encouraged you leaders, that Lauren and I love you. We believe in you don't quit. Keep leading the world needs your leadership. We'll talk to you next episode.