

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

Hey leader, and welcome to episode number 317 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'll enjoy our content and become a subscriber, know that you can also watch all of our episodes over on our YouTube channel at L3 Leadership. So make sure that you're subscribed there as well. And if you've been listening to the podcast for a while and has made an impact on your life, it would mean the world to me. If you would leave us a rating and review on apple podcast or Spotify or whatever app you listened to podcast through, that really does help us to grow our audience and reach more leaders, which is our whole mission here at L three.

Doug Smith ([00:51](#)):

So thank you in advance for that. In fact, I like to highlight a recent review every week and I'll highlight KBC who said this, they said, "great content. The podcast is thought provoking and informative. If you want to grow in leadership and get new ideas, Doug has provided a great resource to add value to your leadership." Well, thank you so much KBC for that review. Well, in today's episode, you'll hear my second interview with Ryan Hawk. He was in episode number 279. He's become a friend. He's an incredible leader. And in today's episode, you're gonna hear Ryan and I take a deep dive into his new book, which is called the pursuit of excellence. We covered a ton of ground in this episode that you're gonna love. And for those who may be unfamiliar with Ryan, let me just tell you a little bit about him.

Doug Smith ([01:31](#)):

Ryan is the host of the learning leader show where he's recorded over 475 episodes. Over the past seven years, Forbes called the learning leader show. The most dynamic leadership podcast around Inc magazine said, it's one of the top five podcasts to make you a smarter leader and apple named it at all time bestseller in 2020 and 2021. Ryan is the author of welcome to management. How to grow from top performer to excellent leader, book authority named it the 100 best management audio books of all time Forbes called it the best leadership book of 2020. And now Ryan's second book is called the pursuit of excellence. The uncommon behaviors of the world's most productive achievers, which we go through in this episode. And it's sold through its first printing in eight hours and shot to the top of Amazon rankings. Previously, Ryan worked in corporate America for 12 years.

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

He started as an entry level telephone, a sales rep when worked his way to manager, director and ultimately VP of sales for a multi-billion dollar company. When he is not recording podcasts or writing books, he tries to help leaders to be more effective in some of the ways he does that is through his leadership circles. One-On-One advising and teaching the learning leader academy as well. And Ryan has delivered hundreds of keynote speeches on leadership and performance excellence all over the world. As I said, you're gonna love this episode, but before we dive in 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. You can find out how Beratung Advisors can help you develop a customized financial plan for your financial future by visiting their website@beratungadvisors.com.

Doug Smith ([03:07](#)):

That's [beratingadvisors.com](https://www.beratingadvisors.com) securities and investment products and services offered through LPL financial member, FINRA and S I P C Beratung Advisors, LPL financial and L3 Leadership are separate entities. I also want to thank our sponsor Henne Jewelers that are jeweler owned by my friend and mentor John Henne and my wife, Laura, and I got our engagement and wedding rings through Henny. And we just loved our experience. Not only do they have great jewelry, but they also invest in people. In fact, for every couple who comes in engage to their store, they give them a book to help them prepare for marriage. And we just love that. So if you're in need of a good jeweler, check out, [hennejewelers.com](https://www.hennejewelers.com). And with all that being said, enjoy my conversation with Ryan Hawk. Ryan welcome back to the podcast. It's honored to have you here and a lot's been happening in the learning leader community. And why don't you just catch us up in the past year since it's been since you've been on the podcast what's been happening.

Ryan Hawk ([04:02](#)):

Oh, thank you, Doug. I appreciate you having, I, I mean we, as we were discussing here, before we recorded, I have a new partnership within insight global. I'm doing a ton of work within the company with their, their leadership academy, their IGU insight global university, doing a lot of cool teaching and projects and work with them. As well as the world's kind of opened up now to so we can get back out there and be with people. And I think that's, what's been, so, you know, I, don't know how much experience, like if, if you've got to do this much yet, or if, you're in the middle of it too, but to see the joy within companies or, and conferences of people being together you can tell so many people missed that. I know I did. And it's, it's been so great to, to get back out there a as the world is opening up and, and just be with people.

Doug Smith ([04:55](#)):

Yeah, we have our, we have our One Day Leadership conference next Friday. We have 300 leaders in the room and I cannot wait. It was, it was scheduled two days after the world shut down, you know, the NBA canceled their season. And then Trump made that speech and, and I had all the speakers call me the next day. Hey, what are you doing? And so and then we just haven't been able to reschedule cause of COVID. So yeah, I am beyond pumped and I'm beyond pumped to get a, a makeup event outta the way too, so we can go back to normal there. So I'll probably bring back up inside global later on, but also what's new is you also came out with a new book during the pandemic, the pursuit of excellence, and I read it, it was phenomenal and that's really what I wanna focus on today, but tell, tell leaders, why did you write this book and what do you want leaders to get out of it?

Ryan Hawk ([05:38](#)):

I mean, I think I wrote it cuz I couldn't not write it. I mean, it was the book that I, again, much like welcome to management. The book I wish I had when I was becoming a manager. I think this is what I would've liked to have a little bit earlier in my career of, of how to build the habit, routines, rituals mindset in order to put myself on a better trajectory. I think I had to learn through making mistakes, learn through not really knowing what I was doing and I'm hopeful that I can help others do that. And I hope it hits people in multiple areas of their, of their career, whether they're starting out or whether they've been around for a while, maybe they could feel stagnant or like they're not growing at the rate that they want to grow. So also I found myself probably talking more about this idea of personal excellence than any other topic in my life if given the choice.

Ryan Hawk ([06:29](#)):

So sometimes someone would say, Hey, we'd like you to come up and give a speech and you can talk about whatever you want. And as I'm sitting there with a blank slate, I found myself writing and thinking about, and the stories and the visuals that come to mind and that I'm designing are all about this pursuit of excellence. Literally, that's what I was writing. And so I think I almost backed my way into it because I found that that's what I've been most curious about. That's what I've been writing about. That's what I've been speaking about. And this is almost kind of like the John Maxwell style of writing books, where he goes on the road and does his speeches listens to the Q and A, they take notes on all of that stuff and the books come after the speeches, not the other way around, which I know is backwards for some, but he, he mentioned that to me and I kind of figure out like, this is kind of how this is just organically happening without planning that. So that's kind of how it, it came to be. And I think most good books are written because the author just couldn't help, but wanna write about that topic.

Doug Smith ([07:32](#)):

Yeah. And this was your second book, obviously, and I'm just curious, you know, what lessons did you implement or learn, you know, doing a second book versus the first one? Was it an easier process? Did you do anything differently? Was it harder? What did that look like?

Ryan Hawk ([07:45](#)):

I liked kind of the, the system we put in place for the first one. I mean, I work with multiple, I have a full time writing coach during like book writing season. So I worked with the same coach. He's a former prosecutor for 10 years an amazing legal writer and a very persuasive human being helps me be much more persuasive in the arguments I'm making. And that's what we'd call them arguments much like a lawyer would, the same, the editor that I send it to, that I had before I sent it to, he the same publisher team publishing team at McGraw hill. So I had the same people, the same team in place from book one and book two, because I felt really good about that, that system. I would say it went maybe a little bit quicker. Uh probably because I had just gotten more reps.

Ryan Hawk ([08:32](#)):

I had gotten more practice. I had done it before. It wasn't the first time I was doing it. So I think it was a little bit faster, but still the book writing process is a grind. It's hard. I think the only way, at least for somebody like me to do it well is just to make sure it becomes a, daily process. And so that's, that's how it eventually got done. I think I've said this before, but I, I think I'm a very average first draft writer. One of the differences though, is I'm willing to keep going. I'm willing to send it through multiple editors to pay them, to invest in the work so that when it comes back and I put some of the finishing touches on it, I think I'm a little better. I think I'm a pretty good final draft writer.

Ryan Hawk ([09:14](#)):

The process though, is there's a big gap between that first draft and final draft, and I need a lot of help and I've identified that. I realized that. And so I'm very happy with the final draft, but if you looked at the first drafts, you would say, this guy is terrible. I know I'm not alone writers say that, but that's, that's definitely part of my process. So I have to kind of get over myself and just say, Hey, you gotta get it done. You gotta get it out. You gotta get it to your team that helps kind of clean some of this mess up and organize it a little bit to, to, by the time we get to the final draft, we can, we can make something good. And that's not what we've been able to do a couple of times.

Doug Smith ([09:56](#)):

Yeah. On, on the feedback end and in between draft one and draft two. I, I think I listened to a conversation you had with Liz Wiseman. It sounds like you also sent it out to, to other authors or at least it sounds like you sent it to Liz and it sounded like Liz was extremely helpful. I love that. Can you just talk about how you seek for feedback even beyond the professionals working on, on the book?

Ryan Hawk ([10:15](#)):

Yeah. That's the other thing that's cool about having a podcast is yeah. After I've recorded with a number of these people, like Liz, like Ryan Holiday, like Dan Coil, like the people, Dan Pink, people who have been super helpful is I will ask them, would you be willing to take a look? Would you be willing to provide feedback? That's the only way this gets better. And when you these people who are so busy and have their own things going on, I just, I'm so grateful that they send notes and they, they, they red ink it up. And that has been super helpful for me, cuz they know as writers, it's not helpful to get an email back that says, Hey, it looks great. Great job, man. What's helpful is that it actually is marked up or that they say Ryan holiday, remember on the first book said the most interesting part starts on page seven, delete pages one through six and start on page seven and that's and I just, so that's what I did.

Ryan Hawk ([11:12](#)):

Wow. It's like, things like that, that happen with people like them. Like, and Liz is a massive help. Liz named, I mean she changed the title of my first book. So the, those, those people, I am super indebted to super grateful. I try to pay that forward to others when they have questions, I try to do the same when other people do it. Because I think I asked them like what you're so kind and gracious and nice. Why are you doing this? They're like, Hey, we all, we all do this for each other. This is what we do. We all need to help one another. And so that's really inspiring to me that these people who are heroes of mine have, that are, are willing to invest that time to impact the work so much.

Doug Smith ([11:52](#)):

Yeah. And, and on a similar vein, you know, a theme that I saw throughout the book of the pursuit of excellence is just the impact the coaches have in our lives. Obviously, you know, you talk a lot about athletics for you and all the coaches that have impacted your life. I think it's interesting. I didn't know that you hired a writing coach. Can you talk about that process? What made you wanna go after one? And, and how did you select one? You know, I'm, I'm trying to think, is that person available for, for anyone listening to us and wants to write a book?

Ryan Hawk ([12:14](#)):

Well, he's not necessarily a writing coach. I turned him into that. <Laugh> he was a former prosecutor. He's a, he's a person I've worked with in the past. And I've obviously read a lot of the things that he's written and I've been, I spent time in meetings with him and I've listened to how persuasive and how good he is with language and words. So to me, I remember before my first book, that's when I said, Hey, can you help me? And I kind of li laid out, this is how I want to go. I'm gonna send you my terrible first drafts. Can you look at them and mark them up and help organize my thoughts? And then the other thing is I'm a prompt driven writer. So we would have meetings, whether in person or on zoom, where he would lo the prompts at me, I would type them out, write them down and then I'd go back on my own.

Ryan Hawk ([13:01](#)):

And I would answer all those questions. So you, you know how sometimes like somebody send you an email and you click reply and you can just rattle off the answer to the person like, this is what I'm thinking. Well, we kind of did that just for a full book, right here are the prompts. Let me rattle off my answers. Yeah. They're not like perfectly clean. They don't have all the research in there yet. So I have to go back and add in some of the research or sometimes it starts with the research. And then we build off of that into the story, because my, I like, as you can read in the book, story, science, practical application, right? Story science, practical application. Well, there's three elements to that. The story is the, is the part that grabs you, right? That's like, oh, this is interesting. Let me listen. The science proves it true. And then their practical application answers the question. Well, so what, why should I care? How does this impact me as the reader? So that's, that's what I try to do as, as we're writing it. And it helps to have other people, either supplying me with prompts, cleaning up the mess. That is the first draft challenging me, questioning me all of that's part of that process of having others be a part of of my writing process.

Doug Smith ([14:12](#)):

Yeah. And the book, one of the focuses you have is you talk about the importance of others and your life as a leader and in the pursuit of excellence. And, you know, you talked about how many stories you share. Some of the stories that impacted me the most as I read the book were just the impact that your dad had on you. And I think we talked a little bit about this in, in our first podcast, but I just have a few questions about your dad. You know, you talk about how you went to his retirement party and just the impact that you saw he made. Can you talk about what that retirement party, how that impacted your life as seeing your dad and, and the legacy that you left behind

Ryan Hawk ([14:41](#)):

It is awesome, man. So, I mean, I was one of the speakers at, I was an emotional mess, but it started with Tom Augburn. One of our family, friends, and a guy my dad's worked with for many years was the MC. And, and, and, and he, he calls my dad up on stage and there's, you know, standing room only, there's hundreds of people in this room and, and says, I, if you've been directly, directly impacted by Keith Hawk, will you please stand up? And the entire room stood entire room standing up. Right. And my dad kind of chokes up, like, it's emotional to actually thinking about it right now. And it, it, you look around, you're like, oh my goodness. Like these people like had a personal connection to this guy who led a thousand person sales forces for, for decades. And really was his whole motto was, don't say, no, if you can say yes.

Ryan Hawk ([15:26](#)):

Right. Which is kind of the opposite of what Warren buffet and others would tell you are the most successful people say, no, my dad still believes and lives that mission. And he's much kinder and nicer than I'll ever be <laugh>. But I, I think he is just the embodiment of, of selfless leadership, of serving others of others. First, my grandpa Dean Hawk, who I dedicated my second book to is the exact same way his dad. And so I think that's like, I just feel as you grow up, you don't realize how you, like, they're just your parents, right? You're like, yeah, those are my parents, whatever. Well, then you grow up though, and you meet other people and you hear about other people's parents and you see them and you meet them, then you become a parent yourself and you realize, oh my God, how lucky did I get, how lucky did I get to have these parents?

Ryan Hawk ([16:14](#)):

I didn't do anything to deserve that. Literally I didn't, I did nothing to deserve that. So to me, like that's also part of the juice, part of the, the, the desire for me to impact and do big things to try to help people is because when you're born into a situation that is extremely lucky with amazing parents, two amazing brothers, my like part of my, my desire and my motivation is don't mess this up. Don't waste it, don't waste this amazing opportunity. So I'm really driven by that. Now both as a son of, you know, amazing parents and now as a dad and a husband is to try to be the model and the example as, as now our, our kids are growing up. It's, it's kind of, you had on both ends of, of trying to not waste this amazing opportunity as well as be a model for them to watch and see because they're certainly watching much more than they're listening to what we say.

Doug Smith ([17:10](#)):

That's a fact. Yeah. I have three little ones as well. Can you say more about the don't say no, when you can say yes, cuz all right. If your dad led a thousand people, I guess for me, I'm the same. Like I, I feel like I get asked so many times in my time, I feel constantly torn with everyone and I try to be available and try to be present for people. Did, did he get taken advantage of how did he keep his priorities in line and still raise an awesome family? I, I mean, that's something, I probably, it sounds like similar to you's like I aspire to live like that, but that sounds like very, very challenging and difficult.

Ryan Hawk ([17:42](#)):

Yeah. I mean, maybe he probably did. I think what would happen? He did have an amazing admin. I know who I, who became close family friend of ours because they worked so tight and his schedule was crazy with that. But, but if somebody came and said, well, can we go to lunch or can I meet with you? They, they, he, they said yes, a hundred percent of the time. So it was all about, and she knew that. And so it was all about making sure, like finding a way to make it work. So they're blocking time, whether it was for lunches with employees or like block time on the calendar. This is only for internal people that, that want something so that when somebody would ask, they could slot them in. And that's just how he operated. That was a part of what he did.

Ryan Hawk ([18:21](#)):

I think people just knew that like, that was a part of the deal. Yes. He had to manage up and he had to do all the other stuff that other people do. He had his direct reports, all that, but it was also always about being able to say yes, when people wanted to talk to him and being helpful. And I've written about this and talked about this, but you know, the phone calls, the, this is, you know, we'd be at home, I'd be, you know, whatever ten, eleven, twelve, and the phone would ring before cell phones. And my mom would answer and it would be for my dad. He'd get on the phone and people would, would talk and talk and talk and he'd patiently listen and patiently listen. And then, you know, usually close the call by trying to help them out and he'd hang up. And I, we would say, what's that all about? And so, and so's, you're going through a rough time just trying to help him out. And I think that was just the norm. That was just the way it was. That's the way it still is. I know he still does that. So I think that that part of it was cool too, of this always in a mode to try to help other people. And I think that's ultimately what leaders do. Great ones. They're always in the mode of trying to help other people.

Doug Smith ([19:31](#)):

Yeah. I love that availability. I think I've read some, no, I saw a YouTube video of Tom Peters talking about never waste a lunch. Just made me think of that. I think he said, if you, if you take away weekends, you have 242 lunches you could have with people every day and how many people just

waste their lunch, doing nothing. So interesting. Take of how your dad always took a lunch, something else, you know, one more thing on your dad. You have a whole chapter on confidence which I love, I, I wanna hear you talk about the power of encouragement in your life. You, you know, you shared a story that I think you were about to give a speech and you didn't know how it was gonna go, cuz the audience was kind of distracted and your dad's sent you a text that really, really helped you. Can you share that story and just talk about the power of encouragement in your life, whether it's from your dad or others.

Ryan Hawk ([20:11](#)):

Yeah. I mean, there's also the story of Sasha fierce, which is the alter ego of Beyonce. When Beyonce was coming up in her career, she was quite nervous. Had imposter syndrome, did not think she could do it. And so she had to say it's Sasha fierce time and go on stage as an, almost another person in order to perform. And, and she eventually outgrew her alter ego and, and now is okay. But one of the, my dad's really humble and I, I think he tried to instill that in, in his three boys as well, but there are occasionally times when, when that gets thrown aside. And one of those times is that moment before you're about to go on stage in front of a lot of people. And, and, and first and foremost, your job as he's told me many times is to do whatever you can to be in service of those people.

Ryan Hawk ([21:07](#)):

If that means you gotta bring extra juice, extra energy, be over prepared, do whatever you have to do to be in service of the people in the seats. So that's the first part, the second thing he says to himself and I've said to myself, and he said to me, in this moment, I was in Washington DC for this big speech, hundreds of people, most of them older than me. It was Sunday afternoon, about two o'clock in the afternoon in the fall. And I went early to the location and there was another senior leader up there speaking. And I looked around, there were people with their phone out holding 'em sideways, watching on their phone. And I peeked over a couple of their shoulders. I looked and I noticed it was the NFL red zone channel. The channel that, that bounces from game to game.

Ryan Hawk ([21:51](#)):

So people, it, it really grabs your attention. And I texted my dad and I said, this is, this is terrible, man. I didn't re even think of the fact that I'd be speaking during NFL games. And, and these, these guys are, it was mostly guys in the audience. These guys are watching NFL games. They don't even wanna watch me speak. This is awful. And he, he wrote back, which we've talked about. He said, man, you're the baddest dude in the room, go up on that stage and put on a show. That's what they brought you there for. And it was just a good reminder. You are, you kinda have to talk yourself into being the man in that moment. Hmm. And it's out of character for my dad to be like that. I think it's out of character for me to be like that.

Ryan Hawk ([22:36](#)):

But in that moment, that's what the audience deserves that you have this belief, this confidence in yourself that you are going to perform in a way that's going to change their lives. You have to literally think of it that way. And one of the things that we say is you're the be the baddest dude in the room for that hour, get ready to go and, and, and do not hold back. If you go like 70 to 80% and play it a little bit safe. When you give a speech, it will not be memorable. It will probably be boring. I would rather go for it and maybe have a few people be like, what is up with this guy? But have other people be thoroughly moved by the message. I'd rather have that happen than just be boring and play it safe. And I think that's what being the baddest dude in the room is all about.

Doug Smith ([23:21](#)):

I love that, man. I'm gonna have to remind myself of that next time I speak next weekend. I'll be saying I'm the baddest dude in the room, man. So thank you.

Ryan Hawk ([23:28](#)):

It's just to yourself, right? We don't say it out loud. I say it now because I've written about it. It's not like you're walking around the room, telling people it's, it's like your, your inner monologue as you're getting ready to go up on stage. So that you, you just come up with a little bit more juices.

Doug Smith ([23:43](#)):

Yeah. I, I wanna talk, you talk about the power of asking in the book, which I loved. And, and you shared the story of Steve Jobs. How I think he was like 11 or 12 or however old. And he asked Michael Dell if for some free parts ended up in turning for Dell bill,

Ryan Hawk ([23:55](#)):

Bill Hewitt.

Doug Smith ([23:57](#)):

That's it. Yeah. Yeah. Thank you for the correction. But then you, you shared a story. One last time you were on the podcast, we just talked about your boldness of asking and your follow up with asking for people to be on the podcast. But it was really cool to, to hear about your, your big ask in college as a, as a college quarterback and the response that you got. Are you able to share that story just about and any thoughts you have on the power of asking? And I can go with Drew Brees,

Ryan Hawk ([24:19](#)):

Which Quarterback story?

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

Yeah. Drew Brees. Oh, the drew Brees email. I thought that was awesome. Sorry.

Ryan Hawk ([24:24](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. I'm glad. I'm glad we still had it. So like it, the, the, the email. So take it back. I'm a freshman in college at Miami university. I have obviously no idea what I'm doing. And but I noticed that Drew Bree's email from Purdue university, from, from, from college, we found it I found it and, and sent him an email and basically just said Drew. And this was when he was just running the spread in college and absolutely torching everyone. He was going into his final year and just asked them questions, like, how do you do it? What's your mindset? How do you think about this? What, what, you know, basically, how have you been able to do what you do and how do you approach playing quarterback being a leader, right. I'm a freshman quarterback. I have no idea what I'm doing.

Ryan Hawk ([25:07](#)):

And he wrote back this really thoughtful and kind note about the role of the quarterback and about attitude and about your energy and about moving the chains, like all these really cool things. And it was, it was just this injection of energy and, and, and inspiration and, and belief that this guy who was one of my, my heroes in college wrote me back rather quickly with such thoughtful advice. And it, it really did a

couple of things. One like in the moment, it made me feel good and energetic, but also it was, it, it made me realize when other people do that to you, it's an opportunity for you to help them like he did for me. So like when you're on one side of it and you feel the feeling, you feel as weird as that sounds, but you feel that now you're in the position to potentially do that for others, don't waste those opportunities. Try to be responsive, try to respond to people, try to be thoughtful and helpful and be there for others. That part of it, I think is what I learned when I was 18 as a freshman in college when Drew Brees responded to me when I asked him some questions about how to be a great quarterback.

Doug Smith ([26:22](#)):

So cool. I love that story and this just, just totally random, but I know you're an Ohio, Ohio guy. Are you a Bengals fan or a Browns fan? Who do you cheer for?

Ryan Hawk ([26:31](#)):

So I live in Southwest Ohio, so I live in Dayton and Dayton is, is, is pretty close in Cincinnati. So we grew up with boomer A.S.C.I. lefty quarterback, icky woods, James Brooks were, were, were the guys. And, and I'm a huge Joe Burrow fan. Mainly he, so he grew up in Athens. That's where I graduated college. And his dad was assistant coach at, at where I went to school.

Doug Smith ([26:56](#)):

So you knew his dad?

Ryan Hawk ([26:58](#)):

I don't his dad, his, his staff got there right as we finished. Okay. But that's why Joe moved to Athens. That's why he grew up there. And then, you know, he went to Ohio State and then eventually to LSU. So, I mean, I, I love massive, massive Joe Burrow fan, and I love seeing what he's done for the Bengals.

Doug Smith ([27:17](#)):

Yeah. You guys are gonna have an exciting decade ahead where I'm a Steeler, I'm a Steeler fan. You know, we've obviously had our share of fun for the last decade, but I,

Ryan Hawk ([27:25](#)):

Now it's about them just finding the next guy in the next quarterback. And hopefully they can do that. Cause I love I've rooted, you know, since, since playing with Ben at Miami, I've definitely rooted for him. And it's been so cool to see the career that he put together.

Doug Smith ([27:37](#)):

What do you think a Mitch Trubisky? What what's he gonna do?

Ryan Hawk ([27:40](#)):

I have no idea. I mean, I hope the guy, I dunno. I think it's he's on kind of a proven deal, so hopefully hopefully he does hope hopefully he does. I, I root for all quarterbacks. I know how hard it is. So I hope, I hope he does for, for his sake.

Doug Smith ([27:54](#)):

Yeah. That's awesome. Back to the book, you know, one of the, one of the traits of pursuing excellence is discipline. And I love that. Just the discipline that you shared about in the process of podcasting, obviously you've recorded hundreds of podcasts. You send out a monthly, or I'm sorry, a weekly email to your email list as well. Can you just talk to us about what you've learned about discipline in the pursuit of excellence?

Ryan Hawk ([28:15](#)):

I mean, as Jaco said it first, but I think the discipline is what creates freedom. To me, I think being consistency is, is very important. And I think you have to be disciplined to consistently show up. As you mentioned, I've been publishing up podcast episodes for seven years every Sunday at seven o'clock Eastern. And haven't missed and mindful Mondays for 306 consecutive Mondays without missing. I think consistency is how you build trust. I think you have to be disciplined to do that. I think to consistently show up for the people who choose to invest their most valuable resource with you, obviously their time is a way to build trust. And that means a lot to me. I think that's a huge responsibility. I think there's a lot of things that more talented people can do. But one of the things that seems to be hard for people is to consistently show up.

Ryan Hawk ([29:11](#)):

There's always reasons or excuses or, Hey, I had to stop because I had this other thing going on. And then I have this thing that makes me really busy. Right. Everyone says that all the time. And I think the difference is I'm I'm, I don't have any intentions of stopping. I mainly because I love the process of doing it, but that's what discipline's about. You talk to my wife Miranda, like I have obviously lots of flaws, but one of the things that I think she'd tell you is about, yeah, he is a very regimented discipline person and that's part of what she likes. I think I have to be in order to produce anything of excellence. That's a, that's just a, a trait that I have to possess. I have to focus on because there are other things that more talented people could get away with without being consistent. That I can't. So I, I have to show up and do that work every day. That's just part of my process. And it helps that I, I enjoy that process. I like that process. I like the thought of being disciplined. I've found, I've seen the rewards that come from that. So I, I really enjoy trying to live up to that each day.

Doug Smith ([30:17](#)):

Yeah. And obviously you've been consistent with the podcast. I'm curious outside of just showing up week after week after, week after week and, and building that trust and consistency. Any other advice for podcasters? Have you learned anything else that's been helpful for you in your journey? Podcasting?

Ryan Hawk ([30:31](#)):

Most people don't prep. You, you, you understand this cuz you're super prepped. Maybe as much as anybody I've ever talked to on a podcast. Now that I've done a few hundred with, with a couple of books as you go talk to other podcasts or you go on other podcasts, you'll realize that the difference between the great ones and the not so great ones is preparation. And I think the reason why is the preparations is all, is all the stuff that happens when nobody's watching. It's all the stuff it's boring, right? People think it is boring and they don't read the book. They don't have like you're, you're sitting here hitting passage after passages of the book. Obviously I know you actually read it. Most times I go on podcast. They haven't read the book because it takes a lot of time. It takes work.

Ryan Hawk ([31:17](#)):

So I think the number one thing and Brian Coman just tweeted about this. He's like, do the prep, do the prep work to make it better? And if you have failed to do the prep work, reschedule, reschedule, don't do it say, Hey, I'm sorry, man. I am not prepared for this, reschedule it. And I think that's the difference. And then as you do it more and more, you get more repetitions and you become better at asking questions and asking, follow up questions and building rapport. And the guest starts to really like it. And that's how your show grows. And that's why your show has Liz Weisman and John Gordon and all these amazing people because they're like, oh, Doug does the work. He does the work. Right. Which most people struggle to do. Because again, life's, I'm, I'm, I'm trying to be judgmental, but cuz it life's busy. But if you, if you actually really want to do a good job, I think you cannot skimp on the preparation. Especially if you do an interview show, if it's a solo show, I'm sure there's a whole other world of preparation you gotta do too. But either way I think the prep is, is what sets apart. The, the great ones from the not so great ones.

Doug Smith ([32:21](#)):

Hey, do you have any desire to go solo ever? I mean, I know you do interviews, but would you ever do personal lessons on a consistent basis

Ryan Hawk ([32:28](#)):

On my podcast? Yeah. I would be open to it. I, yeah, I would. I would do. Do you do it?

Doug Smith ([32:35](#)):

Yeah. I try to do it once a month. Just a personal lesson from me. How does it go? Good. So, I mean it's the same thing. Some people actually they say they prefer to listen to just me and they'd like that better. It's been mixed reviews, but

Ryan Hawk ([32:46](#)):

Do you read it or do you just, do you read it or do you have bullet points and riff off the bullet points or how do you do it?

Doug Smith ([32:51](#)):

I just put together a leadership lesson. So if I was giving a talk somewhere, so for me, it helps me think about, okay, well one, it, it helps me create a cadence of, or I guess a list of talks that I could give and allows me to prep those cuz again, people may not go back and listen to them, so that's been helpful and yeah, I just, I just give it like I'd be giving a talk anywhere else. So doesn't

Ryan Hawk ([33:09](#)):

Really, so do you read it or do you read it or no, you just, you riff off the bullet points.

Doug Smith ([33:13](#)):

Yeah. I'll yeah. I'll look down at my bullet points. Again, well, I guess I used to re I guess I used to put a little bit more into it when I was when I didn't do video, but now I'm going to video. I'm just trying to keep it bullet points in and look into the screen. So I remain eye contact with the audience.

Ryan Hawk ([33:29](#)):

Huh? That's cool. So yeah, I like that. I think that is a next step that I think is, is good. I've done Q and a episodes, which is a version of that, but it's still not the same where, you know, they send in the questions and we, we answer. So it's still slow, but it's not exactly the same.

Doug Smith ([33:44](#)):

Yeah. I think it'd be interesting. I love, I would love to hear you. I, I think also would encourage me. I was listening to Gary V and I mean, again, Gary, that's all he does is talk. He does interview for him too, but he basically said 99% of the world. And I, and I don't think this is the case for you obviously, but he said 99% of the world on podcasting interview, other people cuz they're insecure about their own messaging. And he's like, so for me when he started his podcast, he's like, I realized that I'm gonna be in the 1% that's okay with being secure in their own content. And I would set myself apart that way. So that also really challenged me of like, okay, I need to do more of my own content in addition to yeah.

Ryan Hawk ([34:18](#)):

To the interview. Yeah. I mean, I know Gary has to be over the top and that's part of the plan, but I, something similar to that, which Hey respect. Todd Henry gave me this advice early on when I was writing my first book. Do you know, have you had Todd on, do you know Todd?

Doug Smith ([34:31](#)):

Haven't, I know, I know his work.

Ryan Hawk ([34:32](#)):

He's awesome, dude. You gotta have Todd on. I'm happy to connect you if you want, but that'd be great. I love Todd. He lives in Cincinnati actually. So he's close by. Oh wow. I've seen him speak. He he's an amazing speaker. Great writer too. But I was I showed him like very, very early draft of my first book and he was like, you know, dude, it's fine. But cover bands don't change the world. And I was like, what do you mean? And he is like, well, you're, this is kind of a cover bandish type stuff. Basically you're regurgitating a bunch of good stuff and it is good. It's useful, but there's no Ryan in here. And so are you okay? He goes, cover bands by the way, can make a good living. Maybe not a great living, but they can make a solid, good living.

Ryan Hawk ([35:13](#)):

But they also don't change the world. And based on our conversations, I don't think you want to be a cover band, but this is cover band work. And that was, that was like, it changed my life. I've told him this a number of times, but also it, it also made me love the guy because he had the guts to tell me that. Yeah. Wow. But I think it really is in line with what you're saying of similar, I guess, to Gary V of, of kind of like, which, what do you think? What's your message. That's the number one thing my, my publisher McGraw Hill still says is, wait, no, no, we wanna know what you think. I know what these other people think. And yes, you've curated it well. And if you notice though, like the book, I still struggle with this. I, it says it's still something I'm working on. Getting a little bit better, but it, but, but it's still something I have to actively work on is, is not being a cover band.

Doug Smith ([36:06](#)):

Yeah, no, I'm, I'm very similar, you know, for, I think for a decade, I just quoted John Maxwell in that <laugh> that he basically spoke for me, which worked out great, but

Ryan Hawk ([36:15](#)):

Tough, you know, it's pretty, pretty good, but it's funny. Like the thing is, we're all kind of grabbing from others. We're all learning. And we're like regurgitating in our own way. Like even John is too, but they, some people have figured it out more and obviously he's gotten a ton of reps. So I think that's, that's part of, I it's just like in your career, there's these evolutions where initially, even in football, like I just copied the quarterback who played before me exactly. As he did it. And then you get more reps and you kind of become more of your own quarterback and you watch film of others and you take bits and pieces of others. And then you kind of implement it into, with your game. The same thing with interviewing as a podcaster with writing a book or whatever may be. And then as you do it more, you become more and more you, I just think those things take repetition.

Ryan Hawk ([37:00](#)):

They take time and, and, and the mistake that I probably have made, and I don't know if you've made, this is when you compare some of you compare your year two or three to somebody else's year 13, of course. Right. They, you're not comparing it to the years where they're stumbling and trying to figure out. And it's not very good. You're comparing it to a much better place where they're at. And I think that's something too that you have to be careful of that I've, I've messed up and try to remember and, and show a little grace still strive to do excellent work, but show a little bit of grace for the work because you, you, there's not enough reps yet.

Doug Smith ([37:37](#)):

Yeah, no, totally agree. And I actually, in the fall of 2020 had a mental breakdown. At least that's what I would call it. And there was several factors that played into, but one in working with a therapist, he just said, Doug, cuz I was asking him about capacity cuz I was burning out. And he said, usually when I work with performers, it's not always a capacity issue cuz there's people that can sleep four hours a night and go all day and live the seventies and be fine. He's like usually what I find with capacity is it's, it's more of an issue of unrealistic expectations of yourself internally. And I was like, that's it cuz for me, you know, with writing an influence, I'm like, if I'm not John Maxwell, doesn't matter how many followers I have, you know, physically, if I'm not like Tony Horton or Arnold or the rock.

Doug Smith ([38:18](#)):

And literally that was the standard I was holding myself to and every area of my life, which was extremely unhealthy. So I absolutely agree. And I'm just getting really comfortable with me. And if it's affirming to you at all, you know, in prepping for this, I read the book and then I went back through everything that I underlined in the book to come up with the questions. And I would say 90% of what interested me most were, were your stories and your thoughts more than, you know, they were great thoughts from other people. But so I just wanna affirm what everyone else has been telling you. Keep, keep leaning into

Ryan Hawk ([38:46](#)):

That. Well, I appreciate that. That means a lot. And it, it, it is nice to get feedback like that. That's definitely what my publisher says all every time. But part of it too is like, there's so much good stuff out there. Like I kind can't help but wanna share it. You know what I mean? But I think Derek Silvers writes a lot about this. He's like, yes, read it and take it in. But then as, as it kind of comes into your mind, you have to distill it and then share it in your own voice. And I think that's a process, again, that takes repetition. It takes work where you're mashing together, like seven different things that you've read,

distilling it all within yourself and then sharing it in a compelling fashion. You know, there's like the Adam Grants of the world who just do that in one second. <Laugh> most of us, it takes a little bit of time, you know, most of us takes a little bit of time in work to, to get there. And I think that's, that's what we're all working on.

Doug Smith (39:39):

Yeah. When Adam Graham puts out like a tweet or something, I'm like, it would've taken me 20 years to come up with a thought like that. If

Ryan Hawk (39:44):

Ever

Doug Smith (39:45):

Whatever

Ryan Hawk (39:46):

That's like, the dude just wrote it. He just wrote, I mean, I don't know what it's process and maybe there's more to it, but, but yeah, I think, I think that's it comparing yourself to the aliens who are just otherworldly is also probably not helpful,

Doug Smith (39:58):

You know? Yeah. So I guess as we start to close two other things, I guess I'd love to hear about from the book is, you know, again, we already talked about you focused on the power of others and you created learning leader circles. Within the learning leader, we have mastermind groups at L3 Leadership. One, I wanna hear you just talk about the importance of groups like that and why leader should be in them. And then I always ask two questions at once. There was a section in there about what you do with your, your leadership circles and, and just, it was about dinner events. And you actually, you talked about a book called mastermind dinners, which I went out and bought and I'm like, this is amazing. Talk about the importance of dinners within those groups. Jason, Would he be a good interview?

Ryan Hawk (40:36):

Okay. Jason's an awesome dude. I love him was one of my first wait. He is the first. But he also came back on again. Wow. sorry. I, I cut you off. What was the end of the question?

Doug Smith (40:46):

Yeah. Just talk about the importance of dinners within groups like that.

Ryan Hawk (40:50):

Yeah. So the, with the leadership circles, I noticed this I just had one of those meetings today. It was super emotional one actually, just to see one of the, the woman leaders she works at LinkedIn said today, she goes, this just makes me like it, it just makes my heart smile. And I was like, what a cool way to, to talk about, you know, what, that's how I feel too. You know? So I, I love, I love those groups. The first year we were meeting on zoom because everyone lives all over the place for the first nine months. And in the 10th month we had our our, our once a year workshop. It's two days. At that point I did it in

Dayton here where I live. I had 'em all to my house for dinner. Then we worked hard in the meeting rooms.

Ryan Hawk ([41:38](#)):

Some of the group went and ran together and then we had this, this big dinner, like a mastermind talks or mastermind dinner like Jason w writes about in that book with a lot of prompts and questions. And I'm up walking around asking questions. We use a champagne question, which is it's one year from now. We have a bottle of champagne we're celebrating, what are we celebrating? So they gotta share like a one year goal type thing. And some of 'em are wild. Some of 'em are like have a baby, whatever. So the, the difference though, I, I felt that group changed forever. That first group, after that first in person meeting, when I think you have to do a few things together in order to, to come closer, I think you need to do something really hard together. Usually it's physical, but it doesn't have to be so like this most recent, recent trip, we went to Scottsdale Arizona and we climbed a mountain together at sunrise.

Ryan Hawk ([42:26](#)):

Wow. So we did something physically hard together. We even brought a, a video guy. He had his drone, it was really cool. Right? So do something hard together. I think then you have to, you have to learn together, you learn together, you become closer through learning together. And then I think you should break bread. I think you should eat together, share meals. There's a lot of science behind and I write about it in the book, but the, a lot of science behind the importance of sharing long meals together, sometimes there's prompts, there's questions. People kind of lead it. But you do those three things and it's amazing how fast and you can grow really close together. So I'm a massive believer. And we, we, we, as you know, like part of why you had probably had those issues in the fall of 2020, I mean, you, you didn't do any of that.

Ryan Hawk ([43:13](#)):

We didn't do any of that for a while. And I think we realized how much we missed those things when they were taken away from us and how much we value them. And so I, to me I did one of these last week in Atlanta, we climbed a mountain. We learned all day. And then we, we had dinner and even some post dinner festivities. And like that one day of, of meeting all of 'em, this was at insight global that one day of doing that, that group is so tight now is so tight. And before that we were all just meeting on zoom. So I, whenever possible, whenever somebody's running a circle of their own or whatever mastermind group, I, I, my first thing is, get it on the calendar to do those three things together, get it on the calendar. Like, even if it's not, cuz I'm, I'm doing my next one for them in September. And it's, it's, it's, it's on the calendar. And I think that part of it is so critical. If you care to, to bring a group of people, like actually together together is be, be with one another and do something hard together, learn together and break bread together.

Doug Smith ([44:12](#)):

So I, I love the intentionality behind that. I am curious on the, on the dinner prompts or the question prompts in my experience, at least I feel like there's two kind of people. There's people who respond really well to that and love that. And then there's people who are like, dear God, are you kidding me? I just want have dinner. <Laugh> like leave me alone. Yeah.

Ryan Hawk ([44:27](#)):

I'm one, those people

Doug Smith ([44:28](#)):

Those people. Yeah. So, well, yeah. What have you learned about that? You know, and what it sounds like you lean towards, Hey, even though one of those people be intentional. Yeah. How do you deal with that? Because I need to learn that

Ryan Hawk ([44:40](#)):

As well. I, if people seem to rise to the occasion, I, I would fall into that camp. I've been to a number of Jason's dinners where I'm, I'm like, oh no, he's walking around doing the car thing. So like that, that becomes me when I host the dinners, the cards. So I, I bring a set of cards or about this many cards in the deck that I bring and, and the cards have questions on them. So I ask them a champagne question and then I have them choose a random, a random card question. So every person at the dinner gets up and speaks. And it's really cool cuz we follow up on those things of, of kind of the champagne goal questions. And we learn about the person. Sometimes it gets emotional, depending on the question of, we talk about people that you inspire you, that you admire and people talk maybe about their mom or their dad or things like that happen.

Ryan Hawk ([45:21](#)):

So you just grow so much closer and you get to know people at this at the Arizona event. The interesting thing is I actually had them bring if they wanted, not everybody did because of logistics, but they could bring their spouses to this event. And so when we went around at dinner, I was like, spouses are doing it now and now they didn't, they didn't do any of the other parts, but they did come to dinner and I did ask them the questions and it was so neat to see the, the, the spouses becoming closer and they had not met at all. They didn't know each other. So I even kind of incorporated them into that. It, it was a long dinner, don't get me wrong, but I think people really seem to, to enjoy it and have fun. And even the ones who don't typically like doing that, they they're good sports. They pushed outside of their normal comfort zones. And I think they're, they're probably glad that they did.

Doug Smith ([46:08](#)):

Do you do, do you do the questions before or after dinner or?

Ryan Hawk ([46:10](#)):

During I do it between dinner and dessert.

Doug Smith ([46:12](#)):

Oh, interesting.

Ryan Hawk ([46:14](#)):

That's really good. So sometimes they're bringing out dessert as I'm doing it, but that's usually we actually had a birthday this year. So they part that was, there's like a birthday cake too. So I did it right, right. As all that was going on.

Doug Smith ([46:24](#)):

Yeah. Well, it's time to wrap up our, our conversation today. So I'll ask you the question. It seems like you ask everyone 365 days from now, we're having champagne celebrating something, Ryan Hawk's life. What are we celebrating?

Ryan Hawk ([46:35](#)):

I hope I would have the next book sold or or meaning it's, it's bought by a publisher or, or maybe we've decided that we're gonna do it ourselves. Hmm. But I, I'm not there yet. I don't have the full idea fleshed out. I'm in this stage where there's just a billion notes kind of scattered about electronically here. And so I would hope within a year that I have that situation sold or we're, we're in the process of, of writing a book. But it's a little scary to put that out there and say that, but it's I think that's probably good. It's probably good to, to kind of say the thing that scares you that

Doug Smith ([47:14](#)):

Yeah. Well, Ryan, thanks for writing the book. Thank you for pursuing excellence with your life. It's added value to my life and our whole community. So thanks again. And looking forward to the next conversation.

Ryan Hawk ([47:24](#)):

I mean, I, I just wanna say, I really appreciate how much you prepared. It, it makes a massive difference and I, and it makes it so much better. And I know it's the harder route, so just, I really appreciate that, man.

Doug Smith ([47:37](#)):

Oh, well, thank you. Or you inspire me with how well prepared you are as well. So, all right, man.

Ryan Hawk ([47:41](#)):

Thank you.

Doug Smith ([47:43](#)):

Well, Hey everyone, thank you so much for listening to my conversation with Ryan. I hope that you enjoyed it as much as I did. You can find ways to connect with him and links to everything that we discussed in the show notes at [l3leadership.org/317](http://l3leadership.org/317) and leader as always. I want to challenge you that if you want a 10 X your growth this year, then you need to either launch or join in L3 Leadership mastermind group. Mastermind groups have been the greatest source of growth in my life over the last five years. And if you're unfamiliar with what they are, they're just simply groups of six to 12 leaders that meet together for at least one year in order to help each other grow, hold each other accountable and to do life together. If you're interested in learning more, go to [L3 Leadership.org/masterminds](http://L3Leadership.org/masterminds). And as always, I like to end every episode with a quote. And today I'll quote Joe Brooks. This was so good. He said, sometimes leadership is clapping and cheering. Who are you clapping and cheering for from leader? I can tell you today that I am clapping and cheering for, you know, that Laura and I would love you. We believe in you. And as I always say, keep leading the world is desperate for your leadership. We'll talk to you next episode. Well, Hey, everyone.