

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

Hey leader and welcome to episode number 319 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 as well. So make sure you're subscribed there. And if you've been listening to the podcast for a while, thank you so much. And if it's 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 ([00:46](#)):

So thank you in advance for that. And every week I try to highlight a review from the podcast and this week I'll review Doug Fosters. He said this, he said, "I started listening to the L3 leadership podcast after seeing Doug post about it on Facebook for months, even eventually curiosity got the best of me and I decided to check it out. I started listening from the beginning and found myself knocking out multiple episodes a day. I'm currently listening to the entire series for a second time. Very encouraging, great interviews and actionable tips. I must listen." Well, thank you so much, Doug love and appreciate you. Well, in today's episode, you'll hear my conversation with Dr. John Delony, for those who may be unfamiliar with John. Let me just tell you a little bit about him. John is a mental health expert with two PhDs in counseling, education and supervision and higher ed education administration from Texas tech university prior to joining Ramsey solutions.

Doug Smith ([01:35](#)):

In 2020, John worked as a senior leader, a professor and a researcher at multiple universities. He also spent two decades in crisis response, walking people through severe trauma. And now as a Ramsey personality, he teaches on relationships and emotional wellness. And I was really looking forward to this conversation with John cuz he helps people with a lot of things that I've become passionate about, like anxiety, trauma, grief, et cetera. And that was a lot of the focus of this conversation. You'll hear us talk about his new book called own your past, change your future. We also talk a lot about anxiety, trauma and grief, which are all covered in the book as well. And of course I had to ask him what he's learned from working from Dave Ramsey and Ramsey solutions. And of course we took him through the lightning round as well. And so you're gonna love this conversation, but before we get into the episode, just a few announcements.

Doug Smith ([02:21](#)):

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you're in need of a good jeweler, check out hennejewelers.com. And with all that being said, here's my conversation with Dr. John Delony. Well, Dr. John Delony, it's an honor to have you on the podcast, really looking forward to this conversation. And for those who may not be familiar with you, you are the mental health expert at Ramsey solutions. Tell me a little bit about how that happened and, and what makes you the, the mental health experts?

Dr. John Delony ([03:39](#)):

I still don't know how this happened. I moved to Nashville from Texas to be the chief student affairs officer at Belmont university is my dream job. And I love the university community. I still do. I love my friends there. And somewhere along the way I ran into, I was doing a, a talk for about a thousand parents and students and Dave Ramsey's executive vice president was in the audience dropping her daughter off. And she said, wow, I'm gonna hire that guy. And the, the, the circle back is for about 30 years, you know, you know, Dave Ramsey, somebody how to get outta debt, but he is been telling folks for years, your money problems are 20% math. They're not hard. It's 80% behavior psychology relationship. And that he's been sending people out to counselors for years. And he finally just said, I'm gonna hire my own mental health guy. And so that's how I ended up here. And it's a wild left turn of a career for me. I'm an introvert and I'm a nerd and I had zero followers on social media. Cause I didn't have any social media when I took this job. And here we are, man.

Doug Smith ([04:43](#)):

Yeah. I wanted to dive into the mental health stuff. Well, I guess I'm curious, what was your talk on that you were talking to all the parents about that made them wanna hire you?

Dr. John Delony ([04:51](#)):

Well, that's a whole other story. Man, that's a, that's a mess of a story. The short of it is they asked me to give my vision for the university and I'd worked there for four days and then we had a loss in the family. So we had to go back home and my marriage was a mess and I was just a disaster. And so I sat down at my computer about an hour and a half before, and I let loose in a way that I usually don't, it was relatively UN unrestrained. And so it was, it was as, as honest as I could be. And as funny as I could be, but it was very much, you need to get your life right. And stop sending stupid tweets and parents you're acting like morons. And it was the, it was the best speech I've ever given because I had no filter. I was just telling the truth. And and so it went, it went real well. And I didn't know it was a job interview, of course. I was just trying to connect with the families and here we are.

Doug Smith ([05:47](#)):

Yeah. So it's give us a little bit more on the mental health background, you know, from what I've, when I was researching, you've actually, you played a significant role in helping a lot of people walk through a lot of hard things in their life. Can you give us some background on, on that side of your life?

Dr. John Delony ([06:01](#)):

I mean it starts, my dad was a homicide detective and a SWAT hostage negotiator growing up. So I got to, he, I had a ringside seat to watching him serve and help people in the community in big ways. And then countless behind closed doors weighs. And my back, my, my bedroom backed up to his little bitty closet and he used to drag the corded phone. For those of you who know what that is. We used to have phones connected to the wall. He would drag it into his closet to talk with people in our community who were leaders, who were fancy PS whose lives had fallen apart. So I had a ringside seat when I was 6, 7, 8,

9 years old at these hard conversations and listening, I'd see people on Sunday morning at my church, and then I would know, oh, your life's not as good as their smile showing.

Dr. John Delony ([06:44](#)):

Right. And so and then I ended up working in as Dean of students type roles for almost two decades in colleges and universities. I spent a couple years as a high school teacher. And most of that job was sitting with people when the wheels had fallen off, when they cheated on an exam and got kicked out of a program when they found themselves pregnant, when they found themselves with STIs, when they were intoxicated and beat somebody up or sexually assaulted. Or I was the guy that called parents and said, Hey, your child's in ICU. You need to catch a plane right now. Or your son or daughter may not make the evening. You need to come now. And so I just, I spent a lot of time in hospitals, a lot of time walking, alongside people. And then after I had my own episode I ended up getting a second PhD in counseling.

Dr. John Delony ([07:32](#)):

And man, I, I just got real curious on what's going on in the world. I was the Dean of students at a law school at this time. And my students were incredible. They were brilliant and kind and tough, and they were just melting from the inside out. And so I was too, my marriage was too, my friend's marriages were too, the country was on fire. So it was really a like a Swan dive into it. And then I spent several years working behind closed doors as a crisis responder with the local police department. And so I'd do my Dean of students job during the day and then put my kids down to sleep. And then I'd run the streets at night with, in a patrol car with police officers showing up and doing death notifications and helping with bodies and all kind, whatever you can imagine. So yeah, it's been a wild couple of decades and now I take calls for a living on the radio show and see what people in the mess, see what we can do, what we can do next.

Doug Smith ([08:25](#)):

Yeah. You, you said you had your own episode somewhere in there that kind of laid the foundation for you wanting to do this work. Can you tell us more about what that was? What was that all about?

Dr. John Delony ([08:33](#)):

Yeah, I mean, ultimately it was dude, I was just doing what everybody said I was supposed to do. I was supposed to go to college. So I went to college and I was supposed to get married, got married and supposed to buy a house. I bought one of those. And then I was fortunate. I had parents who believed in education. So I mean, it was, it was, I kind of took it for granted. The expectation was you're probably gonna go to grad school. And so I did that too. And I tell everybody I was married when I was in my master's in first PhD program. And man high school was harder than that because I had somebody else. Right. Grad school was not near as hard as high school was. Hmm. And but the whole time I'm running and running and running, and then I'll take this thing.

Dr. John Delony ([09:16](#)):

I got accepted to a Harvard program. I'll go do that. We teach Sunday school. Sure. I'll knock that out too. Will you read this lead this complication? Sure. Hey, we need somebody to be a professor for a year and I'm like, I'll, I'll take that too. I was trying to achieve my way and get the right title and the right dollar amount and the right seat at the right table. And then I was still showing up in hospitals three nights out of the week. I wasn't sleeping my wife. I wasn't cheating on my wife. I've never done that. But

my marriage was, I was disconnected completely, right. We were two inches apart on the couch, but we were 2000 miles away from each other. Right. We're both sitting there on our new devices. And my body finally said, I'm out, wow, we can't do this.

Dr. John Delony ([09:54](#)):

And I didn't know what that was. I didn't have a, here. I was the mental health guy sitting with people who are having psychiatric breaks and I didn't recognize it in myself. And ultimately one day I was so paranoid and I was spun out. And by the way, there is the big sexy stories of the guys who end up in rehab. And then they put it all together and the person has the mental breakdown all together. That wasn't me. And that's not most of us. Most of us just live our lives with this low burn of anxiety, this low well of depression that never leaves. And we just come to believe this is what life is every year we're gonna, we're gonna gain a few pounds. We're our knees are gonna hurt a little bit more. Back's gonna start stiffing it up on us.

Dr. John Delony ([10:35](#)):

We're gonna watch a little more TV, have a little less sex with our, our spouses. That's just, just the way life goes. And so I was pretty spun out, but I still get my job done. I was still at work. I was a lot to be around. My wife said I was like being married to a taser. But I still got my job done. I'm still getting all the accolades. And then one day I got in a car and drove three hours out of the city to meet a buddy. Who's a medical doctor. I just busted into his office basically and said, Hey man, I'm not okay. And that was the first time I said those words out loud. And that began step one, one of the wobbly wonky journey towards finding help.

Doug Smith ([11:12](#)):

Yeah. And, and you're out with a new book. I own your past change, your future. And you kind of walk people through how to overcome their mental health issues. You know, I'm, I'm curious, and I'll share some of this in the questions I have for you later. But I had my own mental breakdown in the fall of, of 20, 20 Mo darkest season of my life. And I learned all kind of lessons through that, but you know, on the other side, once you said I'm not okay, what did the, what did that next time period look like? Whether there were six months, a year to recovery? What did that look like for you?

Dr. John Delony ([11:43](#)):

I think that's a, I think the idea of quote unquote recovery is a myth that there's a before and after there is when you're using right. There's a before and after. But that's one of the challenges, like one of the challenges with disordered eating, it's one of the challenges of being addicted to work. It's one of the challenges of being addicted to love being codependent is you, you can stop using cocaine forever. You can quit that. You can stop drinking forever. You can't stop eating forever. At some point you have to make peace with it and then move forward. You can't stop working forever. And if you're an addict to the accolades and you're an addict to 24, 7, 365 being plugged in, because that's where you get your value and your esteem and your identity, you can't just stop working. So you gotta make peace with it.

Dr. John Delony ([12:27](#)):

And so yeah, the big Hollywood illusion is I would go have that talk. The music would swell me and my buddy would hug and then I'd come home and tearfully tell my wife, and then it would all be better. That's not how that works. My friend told me you're not okay. And he gave me a phrase and I don't think it's physiologically accurate 10 years later, but it was what I needed to hear at the time. And he

said, if you were running a marathon, you were training for it and you stepped off the curb and broke your ankle. Nobody would tell you to pray it out. Nobody would tell you just run harder, run faster, suck it up. They would say, man, that sucks. You gotta take a break. You gotta sit down and you're gonna have to go see a doctor and you're gonna have to get that reset.

Dr. John Delony ([13:09](#)):

And then you're gonna have to sit in a cast for six months and then you can go to rehab and then you can start walking again and then you can start running and it's gonna be in that order. And he said, you got a broken ankle, just happens to be in your head. And so we're gonna have to be patient with it. And that was the analogy I needed at the time. I don't think that's accurate, but that helped frame it for me. Hey, you're not okay. And there is some solutions here, but the first thing we gotta do is take your foot off the gas. And here's what I did, man. I went home and he gave me some medication that helped turn the alarms down for a season, which was helpful. And I started exercising with my friend slate and I thought the exercise was the key.

Dr. John Delony ([13:47](#)):

It was, but it wasn't. What was the key was I showed up every morning at 5:00 AM with a guy that I knew would be there, whether I showed up or not. And we talked about things, our families being dads, being husbands work the state of things, you know, I had a regular lunch with slate and a guy named Randy who was a monk and a bioethics professor who was brilliant and gentle and quiet. And we did that every every Tuesday for a year. Wow. And then I moved, took another job I had, we took a \$70,000 household income pay to move to another university so that I could work with a smaller group and I could start getting well. Right. And my wife was figuring out what was next for her career wise, but we had to make some big sacrifices and they sucked.

Dr. John Delony ([14:30](#)):

They weren't great. They weren't super fun. And in short time, the pay cut. It, it recaptured itself. It ended up being the greatest thing ever. I ended up going back to grad school to cause I'm a nerd, I'm a nerd at heart and I wanted to know what happened. And so I got another degree to figure out what was going on in my head and my heart, but ultimately was a slow process. And to this day now when my body feels anxious, I know that's just a, it's just a fire alarm, man. It's just a fire alarm in the, in the, in the kitchen going off. And instead of getting mad at the alarm, I'm grateful for it. And now I can stop and say, all right, what's my body trying to tell me, what's my body trying. I'm curious about it. Doesn't it doesn't spin me up anymore. Doesn't bother me. I sleep deeply. Now. I don't take medication. I haven't taken anxiety meds in years and years and years. So wellness now looks like a series of practices as then a Gosky sisters say wellness is a verb. It's not a destination. So it's a series of practices that I have, some of them ebb and flow. Some of them are in cast in stone and it's just a way of life now. And I'm really gentle with my body when it spins up on.

Doug Smith ([15:37](#)):

Yeah. So much. I wanna unpack there. You talked about anxiety, so, and again, I'll relate to this and, and you talk about it in the book, but when it comes to anxiety, you said the body speaks, right? So your body's an alarm system. It's telling you something. When I was going through my breakdown, I remember reading a book called leading on empty by Wayne today. I'm not sure if you've read it. And I don't know, I I'd be interested in your thought on this, but he said that he met with his doctor or someone and he said, Hey, what probably has happened is your body runs on, I believe it's serotonin.

And eventually that starts to burn out. And once you're burned through that, then your body starts to run off of adrenaline. Once you run through adrenaline starts to go through anxiety. And then basically if you just keep pushing through anxiety, you'll eventually have a mental breakdown. And I thought that was so eye opening. I'm just curious when it comes to anxiety in your body, speaking to you, what, what would you tell people who maybe have seasons of anxiety or panic attacks on a consistent basis? You know, what should they do and, and how can they get help?

Dr. John Delony ([16:31](#)):

So I think the, the serotonin depletion idea has been disprove and scientifically. Okay. And here's the important part about that? Doesn't matter to 99.8% of us were just trying to be better dads and just trying to like do a little bit better at our jobs. None of that crap matters. And I think we've gotten too obsessed with it. Right. so you asked me a question on the back end of that. I, I just wanted to get that point out there. What was your question again?

Doug Smith ([16:58](#)):

At the back? Just if you said the body speaks to you?

Dr. John Delony ([17:01](#)):

Oh, there you go.

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

Yeah. If someone's, yeah. If someone's experiencing anxiety going through season of anxiousness, what, what should they do in to pay attention and then actually do something.

Dr. John Delony ([17:09](#)):

Yeah. So instead of getting into the molecule release and serotonin reuptake, and how does dopamine trigger things or how does it work with memory instead of getting into all that, that stuff's fun. And it's really exciting to sit there and learn from Andrew Huberman. It's fun to have academic gymnastics with my friends. I've grown up in higher ed, right? So all my friends are scientists and other fellow nerds. I love those things. They don't help. 99% of the people run through their lives. Here's the better analogy. The trauma lens is the one that has helped the most. So our bodies are designed to see a bear at the front of a cave to see a tiger and to go, oh no, we might die. And so it's got a couple of responses. It can fight that bear, it can run from that bear, or it can just lay down and play that it can freeze.

Dr. John Delony ([17:58](#)):

And there's a couple of other trauma responses or stress responses if you will. But those are the main ones. And in the past, you either picked up a rock and fought that bear or sprinted away from it. Or you laid down in that bear, not off part of your leg. And then it dragged you outta the cave or a pile of leaves and was gonna eat the rest of you tomorrow. And maybe then you could escape. And when that sets off, when that process sets off our body, then you get the cortisol. The adrenaline dumps into our body, cuz it is ready. It's go time. It's ready to fight. It's ready to sprint as fast as you can. That's why we crave sugar and carbohydrates because our body's dying for cheap S for cheap fuel, right? For cheap, quick calories. That's gonna help it during the fight or the, or the, or the sprint.

Dr. John Delony ([18:43](#)):

That's why your sexual appetite goes down. That's why your food appetite goes down. You don't digest food. You don't go to the bathroom as much, cuz your body doesn't wanna waste energy on that stuff. It's trying to not die. And when that our body's designed for a one stop shop, it sees a bear. It solves that problem. Or the bear catches us and eats us in the, the problem solved too. Right? But we sprint and run. We cycle these chemicals through our bodies. We have a ceremony with our community. We eat the bear cuz we all came out and killed it together. And then we go about our day and what's happened over the last couple of hundred years is we've intellectualized this process. And so I sit at work and I've got emails, ding, and I've got Instagram and I've got phones and I've got my wife texting me and my bosses texting me.

Dr. John Delony ([19:27](#)):

Where are you? And I've got the teacher writing about my son at school. Then we've got practice this afternoon and I've gotta go get a haircut, but I didn't make an appointment. And our body's registering, boom bear, bear, bear, bear, bear. And it's not designed to handle that many threats all day long. And so we are pulsing, cortisol and adrenaline through our veins. So stress is good for you. Stress is what you put on your muscles. When you go lift weights. When you go for a run, it's the, it's the chemical process that inspires you to study before that exam or to bathe before that date, stress is good. Toxic stress will kill you. And the, the analogy I love is taking a, a bottle of Drano. If you have a hair clog, once every couple of years in your drain put Drano down there, it's fine.

Dr. John Delony ([20:10](#)):

If you woke up every morning and just dump Drano down your sink in short order, it will melt. It will eat through the pipes and cause a disaster in your, in your bathroom. Same thing with these stress chemicals. And so most of us are running and burning 24 7, 365 and all anxiety is it's just an alarm system letting us know it's the gas gauge on the dashboard. Hey, you're not okay. And as a culture, we've gone to war against the alarm system. Like how do we shut that off? And we can climb up medicine. Medicine takes the batteries outta the smoke detector. It does not solve anxiety. Doesn't doesn't fix it. Addiction like drinking working too much pornography like sleeping with somebody else and somebody else and somebody else that's like taking a pillow and duct taping it over the alarms, right? Either quick, they're quick chemical bandaids, biochemical bandaids, but they don't fix the problem.

Dr. John Delony ([20:59](#)):

The real thing you should do when you feel anxious is go outside in the yard and find out what part of your house is on fire. Ask yourself, where am I disconnected? Where am I out of step with relationships? Where am I not safe? Literally, where am I not safe? And where is my life out of control? Where do I, where do I not have autonomy? Right? And for 99% that that's not a true stat for most of us. That's what anxiety is in many ways. That's, that's where depression ends up, right? There is people with brain lesions and certain psycho and neurological issues that I don't wanna, I don't wanna minimize there, but for most of us struggling, it's our bodies. Just trying to get our attention to say, Hey, we're not okay.

Doug Smith ([21:37](#)):

Yeah. I wanted that more into the trauma. But, and again, this all goes back to the book, but can you just give people an overview of why you, you wrote this book and what you want people to get out of it?

Dr. John Delony ([21:48](#)):

Oh man. It's been a humbling last couple of years, transitioning from higher education to working for Ramsey. Here's why RA Dave, Ramsey's the only CEO that I know of on planet earth. It spends three hours a day with the front end consumer that talks on the, to, on the phone, to hurting people every day. So you can imagine what would the, what would burger king look like if the CEO did the lunch rush every day? It would look very different. The food would be different. The everything would be different. And so here's what I found. I've worked for 20 years with some of the most brilliant, extraordinary minds, wonderful hearts, people trying to solve really hard problems. And when I transitioned here, I realized, oh my gosh, I'm just gonna speak for me. I've spent the last 15, 20 years talking past people cuz there's a single mom with three kids just trying to figure out what the, what am I supposed to do right now?

Dr. John Delony ([22:43](#)):

There's a guy who's an over the road trucker who just wants to be a better dad. And he doesn't like, he doesn't understand cognitive behavioral therapy or reality therapy or R B E B T like, dude, what am I supposed to do? My son is right. And so this book is really, if you sat down across the table for me and you said, Hey, here's, what's going on. I'm 25 and I've got no friends. I'm 36. And my kids would prefer to stare at a screen and talk to me and I don't know what to do. I'm 42 and I've been married for 14 years and I feel like my wife, like she, I, I, I discussed her. She's sick of me and I don't know what to do. It's me sitting down across a table from you and saying, Hey, let me pull all the drama back. Let's just make this as simple as possible. This is a not so complicated approach on how to get whole, how to get well, how to get all on the road to being okay again.

Doug Smith ([23:39](#)):

Yeah. And, and it's in the title, but owning your past and you talk a lot about trauma. Can you define trauma? And you know, I think there's so many people that have had actually, when I was going through therapy myself, I had to do a trauma assessment. It was actually really, really interesting where I had to go, you know, list my life,

Dr. John Delony ([23:55](#)):

Aces, ACEs test.

Doug Smith ([23:56](#)):

I have no idea. Well, no, I don't think someone just encouraged me like, Hey, my therapist said, you know, write zero to five, any traumatic experiences, five to 10. And I kind of walked through my life and I was shocked at how many traumatic experiences I had. You know, I, I had lost my mom when I was young and, and things, but then even just stories that, you know, someone said something to me once and it was, I'm still carrying it 20 years later. Yeah, that's right. Talk to us about trauma and, and how can we actually own the trauma in our past? So it doesn't hold us back from our future.

Dr. John Delony ([24:26](#)):

Well, thanks for sharing that.

Doug Smith ([24:27](#)):

Yeah.

Dr. John Delony ([24:29](#)):

Trauma is when there's an experience, whether it's a, a memory from the past that's reemerged in the present or an actual present experience that exceeds our body's capacity to digest it if you will. And so, and until it kicks off into one of its survival mechanisms, the fight or flight or the freeze response, the fond response, whatever they have to be it's just when our bodies are overwhelmed, when you put a cup underneath the water filter and then the pipe breaks and it dumps, it can only hold so much. And I've been really inspired by Peter Levine's work by Vander Coke's work Judiths Herman's work. And many others we've often think about trauma as the event. The thing that happened, but really trauma is our bodies's interpretation of that event in the past. Now in the present, it's the heartbeat speeding up on us.

Dr. John Delony ([25:25](#)):

It's that warm feeling in your stomach. It's when your head starts hurting, your neck starts getting that thing in it. It's our interpretation of the events that happened in the past. And so there's big tea. And you've talked about that, man, your mom passes away. Everything is different after that, right? There's a before and after the, the sexual assault, the car wreck, the divorce, right? Those are all big T traumas. I like to imagine them as a backpack with, with a cinder block in it, right? Those are big, a heavy traumas. Also the things you should have got that you didn't get the developing child brain needs, adult connection and needs to anchor into something firm. That means it can be traumatic to the physiology of a child. If there's not an adult looking them in the eye saying, I love you. And I'm so glad you're a part of my family, our family, this family doesn't work without you.

Dr. John Delony ([26:15](#)):

And if you didn't get that, if you didn't get human touch, if you didn't get connection, purpose, your physiology starts to solve that problem. It starts trying to backfill that gap, whether it's, I'm going to burn something down, I'm gonna smoke a lot of stuff or I'm gonna go make straight A's. It's doing what it can do in its limited sphere of influence to get somebody, to notice, to get somebody to love me. I'm gonna try to figure out a way to bridge the gap towards love. And that's not a kid's job. That's the adults in the room, right? Yeah. And trauma can also be little T and cumulative. And this is the heavy one, right? This is the one that is the, the, the mom who is, and I've used this example a million times, the mom who's just sitting there scrolling on her cell phone and the little six year old girl is just saying, Hey mom, look at the picture.

Dr. John Delony ([27:02](#)):

I drew, look, look, look, look, look at the dragons. And mom's like, Uhhuh Uhhuh looks be, yeah, great. Not looking at all. The daughter feels that gap. And the daughter doesn't think, Hey, idiot, adult, get off your phone. The daughter thinks something about that. Shiny box is more lovable and important than me has my mom's attention that I can't get in that little girl's body. The physiology, the cortisol, the adrenaline oxytocin. It's gonna be solving that problem forever until you bring your trauma traumatized body into the present, you weren't safe, then you're safe now. And so we have to go back and own those stories so that your body will go all right. Now what? Right. And when you own those stories and you bring 'em into the present, ah, you've been there. It's the worst. Yeah. It's hard, man. To walk through some of these things that we should have got that we didn't get. And it's the only path towards healing.

Doug Smith ([28:00](#)):

Yeah. So when you start to become cognizant of them, you know, while I never realized how much this is impacting me now, 20 years later you know, you can start to own them. There are some other practical things that you would encourage people to overcome. Trauma. I, I work at a homeless shelter and we talk about, you know, the average adult that by the time they reach 18 has had at least one traumatic experience. Most of the men and women walk who walk through our doors have had three or four by the time they're 18 and multiple thereafter. How can people, once they actually recognize and start owning their past trauma over, overcome it, should they go to therapy? Is it journaling? Is it, you know, what does that look like?

Dr. John Delony ([28:38](#)):

Yeah. I, I think the most important place for people to start is human connection. Hmm. And that's the, that's how our bodies are designed and wired, right? We're Cod with other people we're designed to experience life together or as the great grief expert, David Kessler says, grief demands a witness. Sometimes that's in a letter, sometimes you have to acknowledge these things to yourself. And most of us do pretty good job. Our brains do a great job of wallpapering over. Most of those hurts just so we can survive and get to tomorrow and get to tomorrow and get to the next day and get to the next day. Journaling is a great way to speak to yourself, right? I've seen a lot of success with people, writing letters, to people who hurt them. People writing letters to people who died early and they never said the words out loud to their uncle, their caretaker who passed away at a young age, I'm really angry at you for leaving me.

Dr. John Delony ([29:29](#)):

And they didn't even realize that was in there. Writing a letter to, you know, your uncle who passed away and said, I miss you. And here's what you've missed so far. Right? What that is, is that's telling the, the, the hurt part of your body, the fight or flight response that was then and here we are now. And so when I used to show up in crisis scenes, my partner and I here was a hand sign. So if you, if you're listening to this on a podcast, it's, I'm pointing at the base of my neck and I would bring it to the front of my head. And it was something we could do across the room. When we were walking into a situation where someone had just lost their life, someone had just passed away and a loved one just showed up and they go fully limbic.

Dr. John Delony ([30:08](#)):

They go full fight or flight. And when your brain does that, it actually takes the takes your thinking brain for I'm just I'm way, way over simplifying this, but it takes your frontal lobe offline not really your frontal lobe, but it takes things offline. It doesn't want you asking. Is that a nice sweet, cuddly bear? Is that the pet bear? Let's see if that's the hugging bear. It just wants you to run, just run. Right? So it has a vested interest in not stopping to think. And so one of the things we would do across the room is to say, Hey, this person needs to come back to us. This needs, person's not with us yet. And so one of the ways we would do that is we'd go outside. And sometimes I would hold hands. I'd be holding hands of grown men.

Dr. John Delony ([30:46](#)):

I'd be holding hands of mothers. And we would just walk down the street at 2:00 AM and count the cracks in the sidewalk. You weren't, you weren't safe. Then you're safe. Now you're safe now. Right? And so that's what healing from trauma is most often deep trauma work is done in therapy with trained professionals. And it's an extraordinary exhausting, tiring work. And it's beautiful. The goal is can I have

this memory without my body taking off on me? Can I think of the thing when it pops into my head and my body doesn't instantly go back 28 years to when it happened, can I hear this? And then go on about my day? And that's the goal is to reregulate your body.

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

So good. I, I resonate so much with, with so much of what you said. It was funny prior to my breakdown, I actually lost my sister to an overdose.

Dr. John Delony ([31:35](#)):

Oh my gosh. I'm still sorry.

Doug Smith ([31:37](#)):

Yeah, it's okay. Yeah, but it was, it was a wild journey and I had a mentor in my life said, you know, Doug, when you were in, in this gives you a little context from my background. He said, when you were in high school, your mom was sick and you basically watched your mom die slowly over time. And you medicated through drugs and alcohol, which I did. And then, you know, I became a person of faith through my mom, passing away, turned my life around. But then he said, which is great. But he is like, then you basically started medicating through performance. And I never, I, I didn't realize it, but like I thought I had grieved, but I never had. And so I have this breakdown, I started going to therapy and my therapist said, Doug, you can't say goodbye to something you never said hello to.

Doug Smith ([32:13](#)):

And I was the guy that was like, Hey, I don't, I don't need to go to the grave site. Like, they're not there. It's a waste of time. What am I doing? And he encouraged me just like you're saying, he said, you just need to go to the grave sites and, and just write each of the people that you've lost a letter. It was one of the most freeing things that I've never experienced. It, it was crazy. I mean, I started bawling like a baby. Yeah. And the freedom that that brought and, you know, I didn't even know I need it. It was just incredible. So

Dr. John Delony ([32:38](#)):

I love that one. And so thinking about that, that's you walking to the grave side and taking that cinder block out of your backpack and setting it down and the, the letter, the, the people talk about, they feel lighter. Yeah. They, they physically, you physically walk through the world lighter. I remember writing a letter to my 14 year old self and saying, Hey, you should not have seen that. And you should not have experienced what you experienced. And I'm sorry, it's time for you to go back to Jason, trying to get some girl to kiss you and to go back to being silly and playing your old stupid punk rock music. I'm a grown up now I'm back in control. And it was just like letting my 14 year old self go and I got heavy and I've got weepy. Right. But it's that I gotta take that out and set it down, right?

Doug Smith ([33:19](#)):

Yeah. I, I, I am cur so, you know, this is a leadership podcast. Leadership's painful. A lot of times we're responsible for helping other people walk through some of these things. And I'm just curious, it sounds like you've experienced so much, you know, you were talking about, you know, when you're on crime scenes and things like that, what do you do personally, as a, a caretaker, so to speak, to take care of yourself so that the pain and trauma that you see every day doesn't overwhelm you and, and cause you to go off.

Dr. John Delony ([33:44](#)):

Yeah. one of the great gifts I had when I was working with the police department was a supervisor who, every time he knew we were in a, in a messy situation, an uncomfortable situation, a really graphic or gruesome situation, he would call and he'd run us through a series of questions that at the time I thought, I didn't understand that it was the science behind what he was doing. There was a humanity to it that was just beautiful, but he would call us at 2:00 AM on the way home. And he'd say, what'd you see how are the people in there? How are you? And again, it was a, you were just there and your brain either disassociated or when all, whatever. And you're about to have to toggle back into being a dad of two little kids and being a husband to a wife.

Dr. John Delony ([34:28](#)):

Who's half asleep, who's dead asleep and has no idea you left the house. Right. Wow. And how do you slide back into the, into bed at 4:00 AM? And you sleep till six, ready to go to your day job. Right? And so there is a, the, the cornerstone for all leaders is you have to have a process. And for many of us, it looks different. Some of us need to stop on the way home for a cup of coffee for 30 minutes. And I know every leader just said, I don't have time to stop at home. And what I'll tell you is you don't have time not to because you're going home and you're burning out your kids. You're burning out your spouse. You're using your spouse as a garbage dump for all the crap, that experience all day, you're snapping it. Your kids, you're using their performances to backfill your identity, right?

Dr. John Delony ([35:09](#)):

You don't have time go to a coffee shop for 30 minutes, go to the gym for an hour, get home at 6 45 instead of 5 45. And when you get home, be fully at home, right? There's these sometimes it's as simple as <laugh>, I'll drive home and sing as loud as I possibly can. I got a group of guys that I love deeply that have walked with me for years and years and years that I call regularly. I don't see them enough cause I'm on the road all the time. But I'm working to develop a local group of men I can connect with on a regular basis. These are all cornerstone things. And here's a big one that leaders again, I I've spent most of my career working higher ed. I led big giant teams. I had big, I led divisions and I had, or departments and I had a bunch of people reporting up through me.

Dr. John Delony ([35:55](#)):

Here's where we get ourselves in trouble. It feels really good when somebody comes to tell you their big, deep, dark thing to, to, to trust you enough to say, Hey, I'm struggling with this, or I'm broken here. I really screwed up here. I cheated on my spouse again. Like it feels good. And when that happens, the lines between friend and mentor and support network and boss show up and suddenly as a leader, you're in a weird position because that person told you, they were just unfaithful with with their spouse on a, on a weird night. And they're in charge of \$20 million of budget for you. Do I, can I trust them in? Right. So all of a sudden we've just crossed the lines. So one of the greatest things a leader can do is set up systems for people in their organization and their sphere to be well and to have really firm boundaries. And so I, and here, dude, I'm a, I am a addicted, recovering people pleaser, and I'm an addicted, recovering problem solver. I like to jump into the middle of people's lives and like, oh, you should do this dude. I can't, I cannot do that. And show up for my family and show up for my shows and show up for my workplace. I can't do that anymore. So I've had to draw some firm boundaries and say, I can't help you at this time. Here's the number to a professional. You should go see them. Mm-Hmm

Doug Smith ([37:12](#)):

And I guess, would that be your advice to so organizations, I think everyone kind of after COVID is asking, what do we do with all these mental health issues that are popping up everywhere? How can I I'd be a resource to my team without, like you're saying crossing boundaries, you know, if you were to talk to an organization and say, Hey, if you wanna prioritize the mental health of your people, you know, is that open? Hey, I have an open door, come talk to me about every problem you have or is it just making sure that HR is aligned in saying, I know you offer resources as well. What would you tell leaders?

Dr. John Delony ([37:40](#)):

The number one thing a leader can give for, to its staff, to its community in terms of mental healthcare and support is going first being vulnerable, saying the words. I don't know, saying the words I screwed up and I'm sorry, saying the words I'm going through some stuff at home. I'm gonna keep it personal. Because this is between me and my family, but you're gonna notice that on Friday afternoons, I knock off at three 30 to go to some support meetings. And I want everyone to know I'm still running this show. I'm still doing a good job as your leader, but I'm a person like you. And if you all need to step aside a couple hours a week to go see a counselor, to go see a, whatever, to go, get whatever care you need. I want you to talk to your leader, your supervisor, and we're gonna make that available for you.

Dr. John Delony ([38:25](#)):

We don't have an open door policy. It's not safe for you to come in and tell all of your diagnostics and all of your mental health challenges. Cause we're not mental health professionals. What we can do is we can help provide, connect you with partnerships that we have in the community. We can give you some paid time off to go take care. We'll cover the first five sessions for you. And by the way, we're still gonna hold you firmly accountable to the job we need done here. Your mental health challenges are an a context. They're not an excuse. They're an additional layer of challenge you're gonna work through and we're gonna try to be flexible and support you. And I hired you to be a writer. I need the, I need the essay by Friday. And if I can't have it by Friday, I need it by Monday morning at eight o'clock. Cause it's gotta go to press. And if you can't do that, I gotta find somebody who can't right. So we're gonna hold, it's gonna be a both end situation, but it's gonna be vulnerable. You're gonna be human. Tell people what you're going through in your life without oversharing, and then create spaces for people to get the help and care that they need.

Doug Smith ([39:20](#)):

Yeah. And if the leaders listening to this and saying, Hey, I'm, I'm going through one of those seasons where I'm experiencing anxiety or I'm seeing, starting to see signs like that. Obviously we encourage them to, to buy the book which will include links to in the show notes. <Laugh> I believe

Dr. John Delony ([39:32](#)):

You also that will solve everything by the book. Excellent. I love it. Love

Doug Smith ([39:36](#)):

It. <Laugh> I love it. Well, also on the other practical, I believe, you know, if people don't have connections to therapy or next steps, you, you offer a a month full of free therapy. I think through a service called better help. Is that true? Like

Dr. John Delony ([39:49](#)):

What are some, yeah, they as part of the presale to this book, they were incredible and they stepped up, they believed in the book and there's just they're. They were really awesome. So they offered a, what I didn't want someone to do is close this book and say, I'm ready to go talk to a professional. And by the way, most people who read this book, aren't gonna need to go to therapy when it's over. Right. But for those who do like me, I said, I need to go talk to somebody. The wait list in most communities right now is three months, five months, six months, it's, it's a mess or it's cash only. And it's \$150 an hour and people just don't have that kind of budget flexibility. So they stepped up and they do online counseling and they'll, they agree to see you within 48 hours.

Dr. John Delony ([40:27](#)):

And they you'll be talking with a licensed therapist in your state who will come up on zoom or come up on whatever the apparatus is. And you can talk to 'em some, they can even talk to 'em on the phone if you're not comfortable looking at 'em. Right. And if you're an hourly employee and you have to catch a bus and go an hour across town and then spend an hour in therapy and then catch a bus and go back to your office. Nope. You can't afford to do that. That's it's ridiculous. So now you can go out on lunch break and yeah, they offered a free month of online therapy talk therapy even phone therapy for folks who pre-order the book, which is an awesome thing they did.

Doug Smith ([41:00](#)):

Yeah. So you you're, I wanna kind of switch objects now. Now, your Ramsey personality. How long have you been there? Two years?

Dr. John Delony ([41:08](#)):

Over, over two years now.

Doug Smith ([41:09](#)):

Over two years now. So I have to ask, I've asked all the other Ramsey personalities I've interviewed from the time you joined Ramsey, what are two or three lessons? Not just from Dave, but just being a part of the organization that maybe you've learned about life leadership or business that you didn't know prior. I just love some insight there.

Dr. John Delony ([41:26](#)):

Yeah, so I've worked my entire career in nonprofits. I've been in education my whole career. And I had developed a, a strange bias that I didn't know existed against business until I joined this operation. And one of the, the, the number one thing I've learned to lean inside out is it does it. You never make products for you. This none of this is about us. This is about the person you're trying to help with what you are putting into the world at the end of the line. And so your systems, if they're not serving the product that's gonna serve the end consumer fix 'em change. 'em. If you've got an arrogant idiot in your organization that is making the organization about them, they have to go because it's not about us. It's about that dad who needs four tires and he can barely afford them, make sure those tires are of quality, right?

Dr. John Delony ([42:16](#)):

If you're a leader of a, I don't pick any comp, you make, you make paperclips, you're holding together. Somebody's legal brief that if they, it spreads everywhere in courtroom, they're gonna be embarrassed and it's gonna impact the jury, make the greatest paperclip you can and set up systems so that you serve

the end consumer that's price. That's availability, that's support that's boundaries. That's all of it. And the second thing is Dave said this to me when I first started and it was a powerful thing. So I'm a workaholic. I worked 24 7, 365 and I've been on call for the last 17 years, 16, 17 years, 24, 7. And one day I was working rather late and rather late, it was like seven o'clock. It wasn't super late. Everyone was gone. And Dave was walking out of doing an interview or something for media. And he walked by my desk and he said, you will not use the name Ramsey to not be a present father and a present husband.

Dr. John Delony ([43:09](#)):

Wow. And if you're no good there, you will be no good here. Go home. And that was a, that's a cornerstone message here. When I was in the onboarding for the new employee onboarding, I asked them, Hey, how did you put your, your email on the cell phone and all the it, people looked around at each other. And they said, we really don't encourage that here. Wow. When you're in the office from, you can come. If you come visit the office and take a tour through the building, it's like being in a football game. People are bananas between the hours of seven and six. This place is mayhem. And what they say is when you walk in these doors, it is game on, you are a big game hunter and you are in the field. It is on you work your butt off. You put your phone away, you get after it, get after, get after it. And when you are off go home and be present at home. And so those are two important things. If you, if leaders will let their employees have lives, have marriages have parenting have home life. They will show up better at work and to be crafted, they're gonna make you more money. They're gonna be a better employee. They're gonna have better creativity. They're gonna be able to hit your deadline, etcetera, et cetera, make your employees go home and be present.

Doug Smith ([44:18](#)):

So good. And you've also become, well, I guess you were a speaker prior, but you've obviously become an author. I was listening to you on another podcast prepping. And I think you said it's been challenging for you to learn how to sell. I think that's what you said or to sell yourself self promotion. What have you learned about?

Dr. John Delony ([44:31](#)):

I hate it, man. Yeah.

Doug Smith ([44:32](#)):

Well I get that, but yeah. What have you learned about the writing, speaking, you know, promoting business since you've been there?

Dr. John Delony ([44:40](#)):

When it comes to speaking and writing for me, that's another way to sit down and have a conversation. And so if I'm talking to 10,000 people or I'm talking to, you know, a, a group of senior executives at their business and there's 30 of 'em in the room or 15 of them in the room my body position and my body posture is, is usually about the same. I, I'm just having a conversation with people. And I think that works really well on a stage. Cause people are desperate for someone just to tell 'em the truth and be authentic with 'em. Right. I think we're done with the era of fireworks and then pew, pew and laser beat. Like I think we're past all that people are just desperate for, Hey, what do I do next? Right? Yes. And writing is the same way.

Dr. John Delony ([45:19](#)):

It was real important for this book, man, there's a thousand, there's a hundred thousand mental health books that are incredible, that are smart and wonderful. There's a bunch of how to fix your life and change your life books that are great. But all of them are talking at me. They're all telling me things. And it was really important for me in this book that like, dude, I'm just like you and I are sitting at a bar and over chips and Kaso just trying to figure it out. And yeah, this is me walking with you. Cuz I got two kids, man, I'm trying to figure out what we do next. I got an email from a teacher today. I gotta deal with tonight. Like I'm figuring this out. I'm married too. I'm working on a new job. That's out of my comfort zone, right?

Dr. John Delony ([45:55](#)):

So I'm not some expert who's talking at you. I'm just a guy. That's seen a lot of stuff and I've walked it myself and I'm, I would love to walk with you. And so the, the promotion side of it is this, and this is an important thing. Dave has told me as a business person, if you believe enough in your thing that you're putting out into the world, you make the best mower. You make the cheapest mower to help people who don't have a ton of money. You put out the safest, most inexpensive tires, you make toothbrushes, whatever the thing is, you're putting out. If you believe it will help the end consumer, if you believe it's gonna help somebody's day, then you are doing them a disservice. If you don't do whatever you can to let them know that thing exists. And that was a shape shifter for me.

Dr. John Delony ([46:39](#)):

When it comes to selling John, you have, and Dave told me, this book made me cry. This book made me think about my life differently. Wow. And if you don't get out there and sell it, you're taking that from somebody else. Don't do that. Let people know that this thing exists cause it's helpful. And so that's been a great reframe selling right now. If you're selling something you don't believe in, or that's garbage, that would do something else, like your soul is worth more than that, your time is worth more than that. Your heart is worth more than that, right?

Doug Smith ([47:07](#)):

Yeah. Well, with the few minutes we have left and diving, we called the lightning round. Just a bunch of fun questions I ask in every interview. And the first one, what is, what is the best advice you've ever received and who gave it to you?

Dr. John Delony ([47:18](#)):

Woo. Dr. Genre will whew. Dr. John Noel Thompson. One of the most important men of my life called me into his office. One day, he was transitioning to another, another leadership role at another university. And he said, I've always been the youngest guy in the room by about a decade. And he said the, the thing that got you into this room at your age is because you'll say anything to anybody. And he said, the thing that's gonna get, you walked out of this room at this age and never ask back is that you'll say anything to anybody. Your greatest strength will also be your greatest weakness. Be very wise about how you steward your strengths. And that has stayed with me. Right? I tend to think everything's a nail and I'm a hammer cuz I can do a one thing. Good. Well, not everybody needs a speech. Not everybody needs a novel. Some people just need me to show up with a cup of coffee and say, I'm sorry, this sucks. I'll just sit with you and say nothing for the next three hours. And so it's knowing when to use your strengths and when not.

Doug Smith ([48:11](#)):

Wow. So I follow up question on that. So again, you were always the youngest leader in the room, was it literally just, you were willing to say things that other people weren't willing to say that needed to be said, like address the elephant in the room. Is that what you think set you apart on the strength side? I get the weakness side. I'm just curious. What, what allowed you to be in the room where it happened so to speak before,

Dr. John Delony ([48:32](#)):

Before? Yeah. Yeah. I think a lot of it is number one, I've got a couple of parents who modeled what that looks like. Right. So I had a privilege. I had a, I had a picture of what that interaction looks like. The second thing is I wish it was this, this tactic. It was just, I was so naive. When the president of the university and the, in whatever leadership cabinet was there was saying, Hey, we want all, all options on the table. Want everyone to be honest, I've learned now. They don't mean super honest. Right. They mean like, you know, and I was, I would say things like, well, that's the stupidest thing I've ever seen. And <laugh>, you know, and with the right president, which I've been fortunate to have great presidents to work for, they laugh. They love that.

Dr. John Delony ([49:13](#)):

Yeah. And there's gonna be the one I run into that says get out of here and do not come back. Right. Wow. The, the best example is I've never been on the radio. I'd never done anything like this. I had no social media and I joined Dave's company. And so we had an 18 month ramp up plan to co-host the Ramsey show with Dave, the number two radio show in the country. And then 2020 happened. So I got hired in February, 2020 is my first day or the very end of January. And then the mayhem starts and Dave in short order says, Hey man, I hired you to help hurting people. The whole world's hurting. We're gonna figure this out live well, here's the deal. I didn't know that on the Ramsey show on it was the Dave Ramsey show at the time when Dave said something that I disagreed with, I didn't know, you don't just turn and go.

Dr. John Delony ([49:59](#)):

I think that's dumb. I'd do this. <Laugh> and here's the thing. Dave loves that. He loves the interaction. He loves the challenge. He's also savant brilliant. And so it doesn't threaten him in any way. He loves the pushback and it ultimately it altered the dynamic of the show in a positive way. And it's not because <laugh>, I'm arrogant. I'm just an idiot. I didn't know. <Laugh> I didn't know. Yeah. And so it's, it's knowing what <laugh> I've okay. I don't mind saying things to people. My heart rate doesn't get up, but also not everybody needs to be told they're an idiot, right? There's a time and a place for that.

Doug Smith ([50:35](#)):

Beautiful. If you could put a quote on a billboard for everyone to read, what would it say

Dr. John Delony ([50:39](#)):

You were worth being well and you're worth being loved period. Very few of us believe that

Doug Smith ([50:45](#)):

Best purchase you've made in the last year for a hundred dollars or less.

Dr. John Delony ([50:49](#)):

Oh man, dude, I'm kind of a book junkie. So it's probably some, just a couple of books here and there that I've picked up and you know what, a couple of bags of candy in a, in a airport gift shop for my children just to let them know when I get home. Cause I'm on the road a lot speaking to businesses and, and business leaders when I show up and I go home and I can just say, Hey, I was thinking about you guys. And here's some shenanigans, cause I we're pretty militant about what they eat. That spark of yes. Is so great, man. Right. And it's like \$5. Well actually in the airport it's a hundred, a hundred. Those are a couple things.

Doug Smith ([51:28](#)):

Yeah. You mentioned books, you know, outside of your own one are one or two books that have impacted you the most or either recently or all time.

Dr. John Delony ([51:36](#)):

Whew. One of my, all times probably the very top top is I don't wanna talk about it by Terrence real. It's got a terrible subtitle. It's called the secret legacy of male depression. I surely wouldn't have read that book with that subtitle <laugh> but it's a transformative book. I've given so many copies of that book away and it's remarkable. The book burnout by the Naski sisters is a masterpiece. It's written mostly for women leaders. But I've given it to a number of men too. It's extraordinary. And then most recently a master work by Anna Lemke out of Stanford Stanford medical school called dopamine nation is a really extraordinary work too.

Doug Smith ([52:20](#)):

You could spend time with a lot of leaders. I'm curious, do you have, when you get a, a lunch or a dinner with a great leader, you get spend time with Dave, do you have a go-to question or two that you always ask in those, those meetings?

Dr. John Delony ([52:32](#)):

Not really. I go with and probably the most is like, tell me about what's what's tell me about what's making you excited these days. Tell me about yourself. I love hearing people's stories and it's one of my favorite things in the whole world. Exciting. I'm not really a formulaic guy, much to my show. The producer of my show is cha grit. And he's like, can you just say the same thing twice please? And I, I can't.

Doug Smith ([52:57](#)):

Yeah. Well, what's exciting you right now in your life, either at Ramsey or personally,

Dr. John Delony ([53:02](#)):

Oh man. Selling this book, this book's selling like crazy. And so that's been fun. It's validating, right? It feels good. And I'm, I work really hard to place my identity in my, in my marriage and in my being a parent and in my faith and in my friends. But man, I think it feels good to write a book and have people respond to it. So that's been really cool. We're about to hit the road as a company. Again, I've been on the road by myself a lot this past year and it's super fun, but it's lonely. And so Ramsey, when they do live events, they're like heavy metal shows. And so that's a ton of fun. And so we're about to hit the road there and that's exciting. And man, I got a sixth grader and a kindergartner. Wow. And every day is an exciting thing, right.

Dr. John Delony ([53:44](#)):

That's seeing a bumblebee do a thing for the first time to going deer hunting for the first time to everything in between. So nice. That's a really fun thing. And then learning how to the, the great ster Perel, the relationship expert says most adults will have three to four great loves in their adult, adult lifetime. And if you work really, really hard, it will be with the same person. And so my wife and I will celebrate 20 years, this, this summer and great. I am not who I once was four or five times over and I've almost thrown the whole thing into a ditch four or five times over the course of 20 years. And I love the practice of getting to know my wife as she continues to grow and change and and her me, and continue to try to figure out ways to be a more in tune, better husband.

Doug Smith ([54:36](#)):

If you can go back to yourself at any age and have coffee with yourself and, and tell yourself something that would've made a difference in your life, what, what age would that be? And what would you tell them?

Dr. John Delony ([54:45](#)):

Oh dude you, I had the answer until you said, and it would've made a difference cuz I was a hardheaded arrogant moron <laugh> so a lot of people told me a lot of things that I was like, okay, whatever dude that doesn't apply to me and it for sure did. I would love to go back to my 2122 year old self and have a cup of coffee and listen to my rambunctiousness. And then just quietly say chill out. None of your worry and ruminating and job hump, job hopping and relationship hopping. There is no piece here. Chill out work really, really hard. Get to know your industry, get to know people, love people and the world will work out for you. Relax. cause I was a maniac man.

Doug Smith ([55:36](#)):

Anything else you wanna leave leaders with today?

Dr. John Delony ([55:41](#)):

Man, this sounds so cliché, but I'm grateful for you. Like the world's a mess and right now what we need more than anything else, we don't need any more opinions. We don't need more social media posts. We need a group of women and a group of men to stand up and say, I'm gonna love the people in my area. I'm gonna love locally. And I'm going to serve the people in my community with the products and services that I have. And I'm gonna be a person of integrity and person of fairness. I'm gonna love my spouse. I'm gonna love my kids. And I'm going to double down a connection. And so I'll say we need you. We need leaders to step up right now. And not in the year, let's go to the moon. No, no, no. Let's have cups of coffee and say, hi, my name is John. How are you? Let's start there.

Doug Smith ([56:22](#)):

Well, John I've loved this conversation and on behalf of everyone, you've helped students, everyone in your past, everyone that will read this book, listen to this podcast. And that you're hope in the future. Just thank you for the work you do. It matters and it's changing lives all over the world. Appreciate you.

Dr. John Delony ([56:34](#)):

Thank you. My brother, Doug. I'm grateful that you're putting out positive stuff out into the world, man. Let's and telling everybody that this book will save their life. Right? It won't save anything, but it might change it a little bit. Thank you buddy. I appreciate

Doug Smith ([56:45](#)):

You. You got it. Thanks.

Doug Smith ([56:49](#)):

Well, Hey everyone, thank you so much for listening to my conversation with Dr. John Delony. I hope that you enjoyed it as much as I did. You can find ways to connect with him in links to everything that we discussed in the show notes@lthreeleadership.org/319 and leader is always, I wanna challenge you that if you wanna 10 X your growth this year, then you need to either launch or join an L3 Leadership mastermind group. Mastermind groups have been the greatest source of growth in my life over the last seven years. And if you're unfamiliar with what they are, there's simply groups of six to 12 leaders that meet together on a consistent basis for at least one year in order to help each other grow, hold each other accountable and to do life together. So if you're interested in learning more about masterminds, go to [L3 Leadership.org/masterminds](http://L3Leadership.org/masterminds). And as always, I like to end every episode with a quote, an L quote, Craig Grove shell. Today. I love this quote. He said people would rather follow a leader who is always real than one who is always right. So good, well leader. I hope you enjoy this episode. Know that Laura and I love you. We believe in you and remember keep leading. Don't quit. The world needs your leadership. We'll talk to you next episode.