

Doug Smith ([00:05](#)):

Well, Hey leader, and welcome to episode number 330 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 and it's made an impact on your life, it would mean the world. To me. If you'd 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 ([00:45](#)):

So thank you in advance for that. Well, it is August of 2022, and I am taking some time to unplug it and unwind this month. And so, as a result for the entire month of August, we're bringing you an encore episodes, some of our favorite lessons and conversations for over the course of 300 plus episodes. And in today's episode specifically, you'll hear a throwback conversation that I had with Jeff Henderson, who authored a book called Four. And the book was so transformative in my life that I ended up obviously interviewing Jeff, which you're about to listen to. And we actually had Jeff come in and speak at our L3 One Day conference on the subject of Four, and he just blew everyone's minds. And we got a copy of his book for everyone at the conference. And I've continued to get feedback to this day of how impactful that book has been.

Doug Smith ([01:28](#)):

And so if you've never heard Jeff get ready, this is a phenomenal conversation. And you're gonna absolutely love this and fall in love with Jeff as well. And if you haven't read the book for, please go out and get it after this conversation. But before we dive into that, just a few announcements. This episode of the L3 Leadership podcast is sponsored by Beratung Advisors, the financial advisors at Beratung Advisors, help educate and empower clients to make informed financial decisions. You can find out how Beratung Advisors can help you develop a customized financial plan for your financial future by visiting their website at beratungadvisors.com. That's beratungadvisors.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.

Doug Smith ([02:17](#)):

I also wanna thank our sponsor. Henne Jewelers their jeweler owned by my friend and mentor John Henne, my wife, Laura, and I got our engagement and wedding rings at Henne Jewelers . And we had an incredible experience and not only do they have great jewelry, but they also invest in people. In fact, for every couple that comes in engaged, they give them a book to prepare for marriage. And we just love that. So if you're in need of a good jeweler, check out, hennejewelers.com. And with all that being said, let's dive right in. Here's my conversation with Jeff. Thank you so much for being willing to do this interview. And why don't we just start off with you just telling us a little bit about who you are and what you do

Jeff Henderson ([02:51](#)):

Great to be with you and looking forward to being, seeing you soon up at Pittsburgh, but I I'm, I'm currently lead pastor, but one of the things I've learned is you, can you check more than one career box?

So I love talking to entrepreneurs and business leaders. In fact, this morning was with 200 business leaders in Athens, Georgia talking to them about how to grow their business. And so I grew I'm a preacher's kid, but I promised myself I would never, ever work at a church. So here I am working at a church for 16 years now. So never say never, but I really developed an interest in marketing and sports. And did sports marketing started out with the Braves and eventually landed at Chick-fil-A managed all of that. But for the last 16 years, I've launched three churches with NorthPoint ministries in Atlanta, Georgia, and have loved doing that. So spent a number of time number of years in the business world and a number of years in the, in the nonprofit world and have learned a lot during that time.

Doug Smith ([03:42](#)):

Yeah, I am curious, what was that jump like from corporate to the church world? Was that a hard decision and a big transition for you? Or did that just naturally happen?

Jeff Henderson ([03:50](#)):

Yeah, no, it was a three year process, but I was actually, I actually went to a conference Willow Creek leadership conference and the global leadership conference at Willow Creek community church. And that's when I really, it was 20 years ago. That's when I really felt like I was supposed to one day help launch and start a church, but that was a three year process. We just got very involved. I didn't go in and quit from Chick-fil-A. Nobody does that at Chick-fil-A only crazy people like me ever leave Chick-fil-A. And so, but it was over a three year process when being involved at NorthPoint, when it just became clear that there was a need there, and I can probably with my skillset, fill it you know, fairly decently. And so it's been 16 and a half years and I love that, but I've always, I've never really left the business world in the sense.

Jeff Henderson ([04:33](#)):

I don't wanna lose my edge on that because one of the things I discovered Doug is that while it's different, they're actually more similarities than differences. I mean, when I left the business world to go in a nonprofit world, guess what? I found people, and people typically have the same issues, wherever you go, and good things and bad things and challenging things. And there's, there's leadership that's required and creativity and all of that. And while the, what you're doing, the details are different. There's so many similarities that I've really tried to lean in and leverage. And that's why I tell business leaders and told them this morning, there's a lot you can learn from the church world. There's a lot that you, that nonprofit leaders could learn from the, from the business world.

Doug Smith ([05:14](#)):

Yeah. I, I'm just curious, cuz you've been in both worlds. Is there one thing that you wish each would learn from each other?

Jeff Henderson ([05:21](#)):

I think the terminology bothers me a little bit for profit and non, not for profit. And I know why that is for tax reasons, but, but it's as if you've got profit over here and you've got purpose over here, so you can't have purpose with profit, but I don't think that's true. I think where, where we're going is that the thriving businesses of the future will understand that you've gotta bake purpose into the purchase so that with every purchase there's more purpose. And I think thriving organizations will understand that purpose fuels, profit and profit fuels purpose, and you may be a nonprofit leader going well, I'm not in the profit world. Absolutely you are. And here's, here's where, where that comes into play. My hope is

that your future vision for your organization and what you wanna do currently outpaces your current resources.

Jeff Henderson ([06:07](#)):

Well, if you're gonna shrink the gap, you're gonna have to learn how to grow that. In one sense we could say is profit. You need to have more money coming in than money going out. And so I think this idea of saying that purpose and profit have to be separate is a dying idea. And I think the businesses and organizations that understand that you gotta have both, those will be the organizations that thrive in the future. So that's, that's what I've really learned is that you can have profit and you can have purpose. They don't have to be separate.

Doug Smith ([06:37](#)):

That's so good. And you just wrote your first book. You first just released it. It's called Four a growth strategy, or know what you're for a growth strategy for work and an even better strategy for life. And can you just talk about this? Where did this concept four come from and why did you write this book and what do you want people to get from it?

Jeff Henderson ([06:54](#)):

It really came down to trying to figure out what caused growth in the, for profit and the not for profit organizations, if you will. That I worked for, like, I had the opportunity to work for Chick-fil-A in the marketing department and Chick-fil-A is one of the fastest growing companies in America. They will reach over 10 billion of sales this year. Wow. And they've had I think 50 years of consecutive, same store sales growth, which is unheard of. But then I come over to north point ministries and it's one of the largest and fastest growing churches in the country as well. So I thought that was just kind of a blessing, which it is Doug. But I think as I began to think about this over time, I realized it was a stewardship opportunity. For example, I've been on the front row of these two organizations and I feel like I need, I owe it to the rest of you to go, Hey, here's what I learned.

Jeff Henderson ([07:41](#)):

And so I began to ask myself what caused these organizations to grow. And there's a lot of factors, right? I mean, there's a lot of factors that determine growth. But if you were to say Jeff, you could only put it, you know, in a few words, I would say it comes down to two questions and this is what the book really focuses on. And the, in the book, the question number one, and these are, these are questions that again, cause a business or church or nonprofit to grow question, number one is what do you want to be known for? You, can't be known for everything, but you do need to be known for something. So what's your unique niche. What's your unique offering to the world? What, what, what do you wanna be known for? And then the second, second question is what are you known for?

Jeff Henderson ([08:23](#)):

And that's the customer's reflection back to us about what they have experienced with question number one. But when the answers to those two questions match and what you want to be known for is what you are known for. Then you harness the greatest form that advertising the world has ever seen. That's positive word of mouth advertising because customers experience your unique vision and share it with their customers because a business is no longer what it tells customers. It is a business is what customers tell other customers. It is. That's where the game is going, going. And the same is true for church or for nonprofit. So the goal of any organization or leadership team Doug should be to shrink the

gap between those two questions, cuz there is a gap in any organization, there is a gap, but we've gotta close that gap so that customers can experience this unique vision and product or company and then pass it along and healthy growth comes not through investors healthy. The most healthy form of growth comes through customers. And so we try to in the book, I try to unpack how do you do that? How do you how do you create positive word about the advertising and it's really shrinking the gap between those two questions.

Doug Smith ([09:35](#)):

I am curious on, on the first question. So what are we known for? I, I think a lot of leaders listening or organizations would say, oh, we know that I, I don't know as much about Chick-fil-A, but I know you guys are very meticulous on this at NorthPoint. Getting to that being very clear on that. Can you just talk to leaders? How can they get clear on what they wanna be known for? You know, is this a weekend retreat once a year to get very clear or should they just assume they are clear? I'm just curious what your advice would be.

Jeff Henderson ([10:01](#)):

I would never assume. <Laugh> never assume on this issue and, and, and here's, here's what you can do. You can actually just walk around and do a vision inventory and just tell people, Hey, what do you think or, or ask your staff, what do you think we're known for? And if you have five staff members and you have five different answers, there's an issue. Hmm. And, and here's why if there's confusion in the office space, there will be confusion in the marketplace. And it's very dangerous on the part of the leader to assume that there is a consensus on this issue, give you a quick example, a company that will remain anonymous, but I love have huge respect for their leader. Used to walk around and say, Hey, the main thing is keeping the main thing, the main thing, that's the main thing. And so he said that over and over and over again.

Jeff Henderson ([10:49](#)):

And then one time in their leadership team meeting, he said that at the end of the meeting and somebody raised their hand and said, Hey, just quick, quick question to clarify what is the main thing? And then he said, well, it's this. And then somebody else in the other side of the room said, oh, I didn't think that was the main thing I thought the main thing was this. So when there's assumption on this and I can understand this cuz we're all, you know, we're all probably a little insecure or defensive when it comes to stuff like this. But I would say no, push through that and just start taking a vision inventory. There's actually a free resource in the book. That's a re that's a, that's a research document that, that readers can leverage and, and implement to try to get to this. But I would not assume that everybody knows what we're, what, we're, what we're here to do. That's usually a rare, it's usually rare air when it comes to that.

Doug Smith ([11:36](#)):

Yeah. Can you talk about just vision casting for a second? I, I know you talk about this often. It's funny, you know, I recently took on a leadership role in the last year and, and I've realized, you know, you always hear the vision leaks and you need to repeat it over and over again. Like I didn't realize how, how much that was true and how much you have to say it over and over and over again. Can you just, what's your encouragement to leaders on sharing the vision over and over again and, and have you, do you have any systems that you incorporate where maybe it's every meeting you're sharing vision? I'm I'm just curious.

Jeff Henderson ([12:04](#)):

Yeah, actually I gave our, all of our staff a little sticker for their laptops that says, what have I done for Gwinnet today? Our church is called Gwinnett church and I got that from David Saliers, who is my boss at Chick-fil-A. He would ask restaurant operators, this question, what did you do today to build your business? It's a fantastic question. And many times we would sit down with operators, restaurant operators, and they would say, well, you know, last week I did this and next month I'm gonna do this. And David would say, Hey, that's great. That's awesome. But that, wasn't actually the question. The question was, what did you do today to build your business? Because it really is a daily effort. And I think the same is true for vision. So the question I ask myself is what did I do to cast vision today for our organization?

Jeff Henderson ([12:49](#)):

And I, I, I have to let that word today really bother me. And there's a variety of different ways to do that. But for me, I think the, the convicting part of this, for me, we have a lot more Chick-fil-A restaurants in Atlanta than, than you do where you are <laugh>. But I anytime you go into a Chick-fil-A and say, my, you know, thank you, the team member is supposed to say, you're my pleasure instead of your welcome. And I remember when that happened, I, I was at the Chick-fil-A convention. I was working at Chick-fil-A when Truet Cathy, the founder of Chick-fil-A said, Hey, I want us on our teams to save my pleasure because I was at a rich Carlton one day and they said it, and I thought, that's really nice. We should do that in our stores. So he had all of us stand up.

Jeff Henderson ([13:29](#)):

He said, thank you. We all said, my pleasure. We, you know, we got it. And then the convention ends true. It goes back, eventually goes into a restaurant, says, thank you. And the team member says, you're welcome. And he didn't get mad. He didn't get fi he didn't fire anybody. He just said it over and over and over again. And there are videos of him saying this over and over again for about 10 years, just saying it over and over and over again. So anytime I go into a Chick-fil-A dog and I say, thank you. And I hear my pleasure. The question I ask is, am I staying on message as much as true it did for this moment to happen? Wow. And usually the answer is no, I got, I gotta, I gotta ratchet it up some more, because I think as leaders, we, we kind of get tired. Sometimes we've said this a million times, do we really need to say it over and over again? But when you have a compelling sticky phrase that is at the heart of what you do, oh, it's a gift. And that's hard work, first of all, to come up with the right language. But once you have the right language, you gotta repeat it because vision rarely repeated is quickly.

Doug Smith ([14:35](#)):

And so that's vision casting. And then you talk a lot about vision carriers and enabling the leaders around you and your team to be vision carriers. What are some ways that leaders can not only cast vision consistently, but also get people to take that vision and carry it everywhere they go?

Jeff Henderson ([14:49](#)):

Well, that's the really great thing about those two questions is that once people experience your vision, if you've got a compelling one and you're you're, you know, what you're doing is unique, then they're gonna tell others about, about you and those. They become vision carriers. And as they carry that vision, they're casting that vision, which is so compelling. I, I feel like a lot of organizations are missing this opportunity as it relates to social media. Most organizations don't do social media. They do digital media, basically. It's just a digital brochure. Wow. But if you break through what I call the invisible

barrier and actually talk to customers on their platform and in their world, it's especially the larger you are. It's shocking that a large company would actually get a, have a one on one conversation in a proactive way with customers in social media.

Jeff Henderson ([15:35](#)):

And when you do that, they start talking about you. For example, I was sharing this with a friend of mine and she said, oh, she goes, is this what you're talking about? The other I'm a big Starbucks fan. So the other day I took a picture of my Starbucks coffee and I, I put on Instagram and tagged Starbucks and Starbucks commented back to me and said how much they were grateful that I was a customer. And she said, I couldn't believe it gigantic Starbucks actually noticed me. So I took a screenshot of it and sent it to all my friends. And I said, that's exactly what I'm talking about, because here's why when's the last Starbucks, Instagram post that you took a screenshot of and sent to your friends. And she said, oh, I've never done that before. And I said, exactly. So they got real personal with you.

Jeff Henderson ([16:16](#)):

And then the more personable, the more remarkable. And she became a vision carrier at that point saying, Hey, look, look at what Starbucks did for me. And that's, that's competing on purpose. You know, that's not competing on price. And so trying to create those vision carriers. And I talk a lot about that in the book, but creating those kind of vision casting moments where people go, wow, you noticed me. And I love what my, my, my pastor Andy Stanley says do for one, what you wish you could do for everyone, you can't do this for everyone. Starbucks can't comment on everyone's social media post, but they can comment on some and they don't talk themselves out of the fact that they can't comment on every post to prevent them from commenting on some posts. But it's not just one post it's this person telling me. And now I'm telling you, and we're gonna tell your listeners. And that one click of a button Starbucks is getting a huge return on investment.

Doug Smith ([17:14](#)):

So for, for leaders, listening to own organizations, this is a great way to be for your customers. Right. And so I'm, I'm just curious, you talk about this in the book, any other encouragement that you'd have for leaders on being for their customers and engaging in their world?

Jeff Henderson ([17:28](#)):

Yes. I, I think really trying to make sure that your team understands what is your, what is your, for the customer strategy? It's I think there's a difference between customer customer service and customer engagement, customer service is expected nowadays. Lemme just pick on my world the waffle fries need to be hot. If they're not hot, hot, we need that responding as customer service. But customer engagement is where the game is going. I think, I think proactively engaging with customers in trying to notice them as, as, as the FA as, as from one perspective of seeing them as the hero, for example I, I still think this is a great analogy, but for, for a number of years, businesses have been encouraged to create raving fans. The more raving fans you have of the business, the more the business will grow.

Jeff Henderson ([18:19](#)):

I still think that's true. However, I think thriving businesses of the future will understand that it's not enough to be a raving fan to create raving fans. You've gotta become a raving fan of the customer. Wow. And so how can you do that? How can you cheer on your customer? And one of the ways I think a practical way to do that, and this is true in church world as well, but I ask businesses to go and count

their last 10 Instagram posts, for example, and typically nine out of 10, if not 10 out of 10 are about our products, look how great we are. We're so much better than our competitors. So the full spotlight is on the CU. I was on the business, not the customer. And so I tell businesses like, Hey, if you look at this and you see all these 10 posts about how great we are, and we're amazing, look how great our products are. If a business was a person, many businesses would be considered narcissist and, and I think narcissism isn't great for business. So instead, let's start shifting the spotlight to the customer. Let's start talking about them, let's start highlighting them. Let's go on your follower list and just start talking to some of your followers and just say, Hey, I hope you're having a great day today. If you did that for 10 or 15 people every day, that's a far more effective social media strategy than just consistently posting product shots.

Doug Smith ([19:42](#)):

And I I've heard you talk about this, but you actually have times with your team where you intentionally do this together. Correct. So every week you guys schedule time and say, Hey, we're gonna just go and engage. Is that accurate?

Jeff Henderson ([19:57](#)):

Absolutely. Yeah. In fact, we do that every Wednesday. We do that every Wednesday. We just go to, we search hashtag for Gwinnet and we like 10 posts and comment on two. And and, and honestly we need to get better at this because we don't have to wait for staff meeting on Wednesdays to do this. And this is why I think there's a, there's a fundamental mistake that organizations are making when they put social media in the marketing or advertising department. It, it's not, it's not marketing or advertising. If you, if you treat it like that, it will be digital media, not social media. I would create a separate organization or I'm sorry, a separate department that says customer engagement. Wow. And this is what we do because what most organizations are doing right now, they're just treating social media as advertising. And that's a mistake.

Jeff Henderson ([20:43](#)):

Now. I'm not saying you shouldn't ever advertise. I'm not not saying you should not ever post about your products. You certainly should. I'm just saying to truly be for the customer, you're gonna have to balance that out. So I love what chubby has done. Chubby's this men's shorts organization. They just feature customers wearing their products and they just go and they customers take pictures of themselves and tag chubby and chubby just pulls it from there and, and just feeds their Instagram posts with customers, wearing their products. And then when that happens, customers go, oh my goodness. I made the chubby shorts page. And that's a way of turning over the social media feed to customers, which I think is a brilliant way to really, truly do social media.

Doug Smith ([21:26](#)):

Yeah. And I heard you talk about this recently. I, I would love to hear you just share briefly on the, the power of t-shirts. So you guys are really big. You actually have different apparels for different seasons for, for Gwinnet. Can you talk about the power of t-shirts and why they've been so effective for you?

Jeff Henderson ([21:40](#)):

Well, they they're really conversation starters really that that's what they are. And we put signs out around the community that says for Gwinnet and Gwinnet is a county north in Northeast Atlanta. And people look at that and they go for Gwinnett. What does that mean? Cuz I live in Gwinnet and I'm for

Gwinnet, but who is this? And what's behind that. And so when they go into restaurants or ballparks or grocery stores, countless conversations, Doug have happened when people come up and go, Hey, what, what, what does for Gwinnet mean? And for us that this is one of the ways that we answered the two questions. What do you want to be known for and what are you known for? Hmm, because when we started the church, we asked those two questions. That's where this came from eight, eight or nine years ago. And we kind of stumbled upon this truth, that in church world, many people are more familiar with what the church is against rather than what the church is for.

Jeff Henderson ([22:32](#)):

And we thought, wow, that's both true and sad. So within our context, what do we wanna be known for? And we said, well, we wanna be known for being, for Gwinnett kids and students and children and businesses and schools. We wanna be a value add to this community. And so when we kind of sent those t-shirts with that message out, it really resonated with people to the point where it struck up conversations. And we had to equip people for, with what to say, but we just say, when people ask you, what for GT is, you say, well, it's a church and they'll say, well, why is it a church? Why does it say that? And then you say many people are more familiar with what the church is against rather than what the church is for. We wanna be known for what we're for.

Jeff Henderson ([23:10](#)):

So vision carrying vision. Casting's really like carrying a bucket of water. The more words you have in the bucket, the more words spill out. So you have to have just a few words so that people can say it back. And when you do and you, when you create something that customers or attendees can carry forth, when people ask them, it's a powerful combination. Because again, the more vision carriers you have, the more vision casters you have. So for me, those are really not just t-shirts they're they're conversation, starters and vision and, and potential vision, carrying moments.

Doug Smith ([23:44](#)):

I love it. It, and you know, we've been talking about how to be for your customer and as leaders. We can't just think about the customer. We also have to think about our teams. And I know you talk a lot about this. How can leaders before their teams and what are some things they can apply daily?

Jeff Henderson ([23:58](#)):

It's so important though, because here's the deal. The customer is eventually treated like the team is treated that you that's an unquestioned reality of organizational life. And we can say that we have a great customer culture and we love our customers. But if we treat our teams poorly, just given enough time, that will eventually flow to the customer. It's without question, it may take a little while, but you can't have a healthy customer culture with a dysfunctional team culture. It's absolutely impossible. So it's not enough to be for the customer. You really have to start with being for the team. And there all kinds of ways to do that. But as I observed over the years, I have, I observed that if you just do something consistently, I call it designing a for the team culture and you just go over and over. You believe abundantly and you appreciate consistently and you develop intentionally and you listen actively, and then you live repeatedly.

Jeff Henderson ([25:02](#)):

You just go over and over and over again. And there's some specific strategies under all of this. When you do that, you create a culture by design because you know this, you either create your culture by

default or by design. There's no, there's no balance of like, I'll get back to this in about six months. Cause if you get back, quit in six months, it's just a nightmare. And so you gotta have a design. So one of the things I asked leaders and organizations is what is what to show me you, how you are designing your team culture. And the good news is if you don't have one, you can just get one in the book now. But this is just based on things I've learned from other leaders picked up from other leaders, things I've tried and, and, and it really gets to the heart of truly being for your team.

Jeff Henderson ([25:51](#)):

And I love what a friend of mine, Tim Irwin says is that you can be really, really honest with anyone on your team, as long as they, and they'll take it and learn from it. As long as they know that you are genuinely for them and you are pro for them. And once they understand that when you give them feedback, that might be hard to hear. They know it's coming from a person who has their best interest at heart. And when you create that kind of a culture with the team, it will flow to the customer. And I can tell, and you can't too Doug. And any of our listeners today, when you go into a business, you can tell instantly how the, the, how the team is being treated, because it's flowing right to you as the customer. And I can sense that anytime I walk into a business, I mean, take a few minutes. Sometimes it doesn't take a few minutes at all. Like, oh, you guys, aren't being treated well at all around here, are you? And you just can't separate those two. A customer will eventually be treated like the team is treated.

Doug Smith ([26:50](#)):

Yeah. A small way that I've heard that you are for your, your team. And, and this certainly applies beyond team is thank you notes. I, I recently heard you talk about the power of thank yous. Thank you. Notes. You write these consistently. Can you just talk about that? Actually, I was, I was so inspired hearing you talk about it in another interview that I made a daily quota now. And so I just finished my five this morning and wow. So thank you for, for encouraging that, but can you just share your heart for thank you notes.

Jeff Henderson ([27:14](#)):

I think one of the best principles I've ever heard on gratitude comes again from Andy Stanley when he says unexpressed gratitude communicates in gratitude. And so what, he's, what he is trying to get out there. Doug is, Hey, it's not, do you feel grateful? We all feel grateful. I mean, I, I, I feel grateful for the opportunity to be on your podcast, but if I don't circle back and go, Hey, Doug, thanks for letting me be on the podcast. Matt, that's assumed that you, that I think you know that. And so I've just made it a practice to in you're ahead of me, cuz I only do three. Thank you notes today. You're doing five now. <Laugh> so you're too ahead.

Doug Smith ([27:47](#)):

I also just started. We'll see where I

Jeff Henderson ([27:49](#)):

Okay. Alright. Well I gotta, I gotta get head start on you <laugh> but so I try to do three, thank you notes today, five days a week. And I have different systems. Like if you were to see my my office book bag that I carry around with me, I've got thank you notes in there. I've got thank you notes in the club com department in my car. If I'm, you know, at an appointment and somebody shows up a little late, you know, I'm trying to write those notes. I carry a list of people that I need to thank who are contributors to our church. Every Sunday I sent a text, our staff saying, Hey, any, any great stories that I can of

volunteers today that I could write a thank you note to. Wow. But the thing I've observed about thank you notes is that people don't throw them away.

Jeff Henderson ([28:27](#)):

They keep them generally speaking. Yeah. And my hero other than you now, cuz you're too ahead of me, but my hero on, thank you. Note writing is Frank Blake and Frank was the former CEO of Home Depot and he walked into Home Depot in a very difficult situation. They had just, the board had just fired the last CEO and they gave the reins over to Frank and he had never been a CEO before. And he would tell you the turnaround. And there was a massive turnaround when he went, went there, there was a culture turnaround, but he would tell you that one of the primary reasons it turned around is because he wrote thank you notes. Now, when you wanna talk about writing, thank you notes. Frank's like the Michael Jordan of thank you notes. <Laugh> and, and I am referencing Michael Jordan, not LeBron <laugh>.

Jeff Henderson ([29:14](#)):

He did. He did a hundred. Thank you notes a week, a hundred. Thank you notes a week. And he developed a system about how people would get how the different regions would find stories of Home Depot associates that had done great things with customers or great things in the business. And they would send them to Frank. And then Frank would have an appointment with himself and sit down and write these notes. And you think that has to take an extraordinary amount of time, but it was an extraordinary amount of valuable time that he was investing into the culture and the, and the culture turned around and it didn't turn around with one. Thank you. Note it didn't turn around with a hundred. Thank you notes. But it did, did turn around.

Jeff Henderson ([29:58](#)):

And so I, I tell people, you can't just feel grateful. You have to have a gratitude system. Hmm. So what is, what is the G what is your gratitude system? So you have five a day. I have three a day. Frank had a hundred a week, but having a system helps me know, okay, am I ahead? Did I write my three today or not? Okay. If I haven't written my three today, I've gotten until midnight tonight to write them. I just think that is an invaluable thing. And people are just shocked typically when they get thank you note, which is somewhat of an indictment on our culture and our work organization. Right. But I just feel like thank you. And gratitude is such a huge, huge value add for organizations.

Doug Smith ([30:42](#)):

Love it. So we, we talked about how to, before our customers, we talked about how to be for our teams. Can you talk about how individuals, leaders and organizations can be for their city?

Jeff Henderson ([30:52](#)):

Absolutely. I, I think going back to our earlier comment about having a compelling purpose, that if your, if your goal is just to stay in business and to keep the organization afloat, you're not gonna do that for very long. And what we're discovering, especially the younger that we go is that the younger generation millennials and even younger, they don't wanna do business with organizations that aren't having a wider impact on the world. And there's a group called the ho group. And I mentioned them in the book, they do research called a meaningful brand research. And they're asking people, do you think brands and businesses care about you and 75% say no. And only 27% think that brands are having a positive

impact on the world. So for me, there is a gigantic opportunity for us to be for the community and to do good.

Jeff Henderson ([31:49](#)):

And I believe in today's world, doing good is good for business because people are looking for organizations who are making a difference and they will get behind those organizations. And please understand it's, we're not talking the nonprofit world exclusively. You can be a for-profit business and have a compelling purpose and vision. It just has to be, you know, authentic and genuine. What do you wanna do to help change and improve the world? It has to be more than just about you. And so when I see organizations competing on purpose versus price, that will flow to the bottom line because if you compete on price at some point, unless you're Walmart you're, you're gonna ha that's gonna be a tough game to play from the margin standpoint, but when you compete on purpose customers will support you and be happy to pay more if they can support you.

Jeff Henderson ([32:48](#)):

And all the research is trending toward that. And so the sooner a business or organization, and obviously as a, as a nonprofit organization, we have an advantage here. That's really, all we have to sell right. Is purpose. And this is where I think business leaders can learn from nonprofit leaders to think like a nonprofit. What if all you had was purpose to sell? Could you sell it? And could you lead an organization that that's all there was, if you can, and configure that out and have a great product. That's a powerful combination though. I would ask, I would ask leaders to, to get, get with their teams and go, how can we, as I mentioned earlier, how can we bake purpose into every purchase? Wow. Because when that happens with every purchase, you have more purpose and you show the community that you are for them.

Jeff Henderson ([33:40](#)):

And and, and again, I'll go back to, let's start, let's stop talking about ourselves too much and let's start adding value to the community and the people. And I'll give you a real quick example. If for day I would love to be the marketing director for at and T and Verizon and sprint and others because and I think we all would agree that the Verizon and sprint guy has commitment issues, right? <Laugh> we can't figure out which one he likes, but it's all about, Hey, we're better than them. And we're cheaper than them. And our latest product is, you know, is better than them. And it's all about the central focus of this is how good we are. And we're better than our competition. That's old school marketing, and it's still working for a little bit, but I'm telling you every day that goes by, that's becoming less effective.

Jeff Henderson ([34:30](#)):

Here's what I would do if I were them, I would say right now, we're in the midst of the greatest telecommunications change in centuries. One of the things that's happening right now that sociologists are picking up on is that the anxiety and depression level among teenagers is rising at an all time high. It started in 2012. I have, I'm a parent. I would, if I were at and T I would run a massive campaign right now saying, Hey, parents, we're gonna help you understand how to deal with technology. And here's what we're gonna do. And we're gonna do this and that and all these programs, and here's what we're gonna do. We have coaching and all this, and we wanna help you lead your teenager, cuz we still believe technology's very, very important and a huge gift, but we wanna help your teenager leverage it and be introduced to technology in a very helpful way because we are for you.

Jeff Henderson ([35:23](#)):

I'm telling you if you did that, you wouldn't have to talk about Verizon and sprint any of the, of these other guys. Because as a parent, if you're helping me with my kid, I will pay a little bit more to support you because you're, for me, that is, that's what being for the, the community is, is stop looking at yourself and letting the organization be the epicenter of everything and shift the focus and ask, Hey, what problems are people actually having out there? And what can our organization do in a great business way that helps us still make money, but helps us help people. When you think like that, you take your business to a whole different level. And the great thing about this too, Doug, is that when the team understands, that's what you're doing, they stop hitting the snooze button because purpose is waiting for them at work that day.

Jeff Henderson ([36:16](#)):

So I just feel like if an organization can understand what is your greater purpose and communicate that in a compelling way, it's really, really important, but it's really easy to assume that nonprofits understand this, but I'm telling you, it's, it's really easy to miss this even though that's exactly what we're supposed to be doing. So I really think this larger piece of purpose making the world a better place. It's not just a nice thing to do. It's a fantastic business strategy. And I don't think that's anything to apologize for. I think doing good is good for business and that's. And what I talk about in the book are some specific ways that companies are doing that to leverage and lean into communities, to make the world a better place.

Doug Smith ([37:00](#)):

And speaking of the book, where, where can people get it? Where can they connect with you and join this whole four movement?

Jeff Henderson ([37:05](#)):

Yeah. They can just go to Jeff henderson.com and there's free resources right there. It's the, the research document that I mentioned was there. They could leverage to help them shrink the gap between those two questions, kind of see where they are. But the books available at Barnes and noble books, a million in Amazon and just search, know what you're for and they can pick it up there.

Doug Smith ([37:25](#)):

Great. I'll include links to all of that in the show notes. I am curious I was listening again to your interview with Kerry new Hoff, and it sounds like his encouragement greatly impacted you and actually helped cause you to write this book. What did you learn as a first time author launching your own book out there about writing in the publishing process and even having a message in your heart so long and, and getting it out there. I'm just curious what lessons were learned

Jeff Henderson ([37:46](#)):

Years ago. Doug, I read a book by Stephen King where he talked about how his writing process, you know, Stephen King is such a prolific writer. It seems like he's coming out with a movie every other day, you know, or new novel every other day. And he said, well, I have a, I have a trick. I write a thousand words a day, six days a week and I don't wait on inspiration. I work for inspiration. Hmm. And I thought, whoa, that's powerful. Because I think in any creative process, we feel like we have to have, you know, the sun setting and music playing and the hot coffee and all that helps. But if none of that is there, you just gotta work. Hmm. And he said some days he would hit word count and he, he, he would be at 72

words and it felt like it was drudgery on other days he would hit word count and he would go from a thousand to 5,000 words.

Jeff Henderson ([38:38](#)):

So I thought, that's what I'm gonna do, but he's Stephen King. I'm not Stephen King. So I thought I'm gonna do 500 words a day, five days a week. And I just maintained my discipline. And some days were much better than others, but the discipline to show up and do the work, you know, Steven Presfield wrote the book the war of art. And he said, you win. If you show up and do the work, don't worry about if it's good or not. That'll come at a later time. That's that's called editing, but, but show up and do the work. And by showing up and doing the work that gave me a system to know how I was doing. And then I I'm, I just made it a secret goal of mine. That for every deadline that the publisher gave me, I would beat it by a week.

Jeff Henderson ([39:20](#)):

Wow. To show them that I'm serious about this message. But the good news is, is that I've been living this message for years now. So it was, I wouldn't say it was an easy thing to write, but it, it, it was also just something that I'm naturally I just believe in this and it's something I've lived for so long. It just kind of naturally came out. The harder thing was just like picking the book cover and all that kind of stuff. Cause half my friends loved what I, what the current book cover is the other half hated it. So, you know, I feel like I have half my friends that are mad at me cuz you know, I went with the other <laugh> book cover

Doug Smith ([39:59](#)):

And

Jeff Henderson ([40:00](#)):

I caught surprised and I thought, oh my goodness, I, I, the book cover, I didn't think that was gonna be that big of a deal.

Doug Smith ([40:07](#)):

Wow. That's fun. And not only the books available online, but you're also doing a book tour. We mentioned earlier, you are coming to Pittsburgh at the end of October here. Where can people find book dates if you're coming to their city?

Jeff Henderson ([40:18](#)):

Yeah. Just go to Jeff henderson.com and just scroll down and you'll see the, the business breakfast tour. And then you'll just click on your particular city and that'll take you to event bright and you can buy your tickets. It's \$15 and that includes breakfast. You'll get a book and we'll have a great, we're gonna be talking more about what we talked about on the podcast today, but I think it's a great opportunity to bring your, your team or coworkers or friends that wanna learn. We just did our first one today in Athens, Georgia. And it was so fun. I mean, we had a wide variety of people from business, church, nonprofit and some that were just starting and had a, I had an idea. And so it was really, really great. We, we sent them out with a question, Hey, you got some work to do, what do you wanna be known for? Hmm. And a lot of folks haven't thought about it in that way. And so that was, that was really, really fun. And then there's just a kind of an organic networking opportunity. People stayed around forever

just to talk and get to meet different people in the community. So I'm excited about being, being with you all. And it's gonna be a great time

Doug Smith ([41:20](#)):

With the time that we have left. I wanna dive into what I call the lightning round love, taking leaders through these questions, just a bunch of short questions that are fun. So we'll just kick it off with what is the best advice you ever, you have ever received and who gave it to you?

Jeff Henderson ([41:33](#)):

My first business mentor, he said, there's not a limit to what a person can do when he, or she doesn't care who gets the credit. Hmm. And that, that puts your heart in the right place.

Doug Smith ([41:45](#)):

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

Jeff Henderson ([41:49](#)):

Well, the last one I just mentioned was was, was pretty good. You know, as a pastor, I would probably say, God is for you. But if from a, from an organizational standpoint, I would, I think I would say leave things better than when you found them.

Doug Smith ([42:05](#)):

Hmm. What's the best purchase you've made in the last year for a hundred dollars or less.

Jeff Henderson ([42:09](#)):

Thank you notes.

Doug Smith ([42:10](#)):

There we go.

Jeff Henderson ([42:11](#)):

Thank you. Note so cheap, but so worthwhile.

Doug Smith ([42:15](#)):

What are the top one or two books you find yourself giving away most often these days?

Jeff Henderson ([42:21](#)):

Well, honestly right now it's my book. Cause they're, we're giving all the book. But I don't know that that really counts, but everybody gets a book at the, at the the, the business breakfast. I really liked ego is the enemy by Ryan holiday. And I talk about that. I talk about that book quite a bit. And then John Maxwell's, you know, 21 irrefutable laws of leadership that that's just the classic that if you haven't read it, you gotta read it.

Doug Smith ([42:47](#)):

If you listen to podcast, what are the top one or two? You listen to most

Jeff Henderson ([42:53](#)):

Oftens. And I love how I built this. It's the NPR podcast with Guy Rife. And it just interviews people that are saying, Hey, here's, here's my idea I had. And I didn't think it was gonna work. And you go through this journey and you begin to understand, huh? They faced the same challenges that I faced. And I just love that podcast.

Doug Smith ([43:12](#)):

What are you passionate about right now?

Jeff Henderson ([43:15](#)):

Well, I love my family, so I'm very, very passionate about them and focused on them. But I really like this message, this four message. So I'm very excited about that

Doug Smith ([43:24](#)):

As a leader. What do you wish people knew about your journey? That they may not know?

Jeff Henderson ([43:30](#)):

Hmm. That it's not as easy as it looks. I think sometimes we look, I can look at other leaders and think, I wish I was like that, but it, we all have struggles. We all have challenges. We all have insecurities. So I am, I am as insecure and as flawed as, and people come up to me and go, it's just easier for you. And I don't know if it's easier for me. We all have our challenges. We're all flawed individuals. We're all insecure. We're all struggling with a lack of confidence or maybe arrogant sometime, but I may work in progress. And so are you,

Doug Smith ([44:02](#)):

What's your greatest challenge right now?

Jeff Henderson ([44:06](#)):

Greatest challenge is trying to figure out how to lead a church and watch a book all at the same time.

Doug Smith ([44:13](#)):

<Laugh> that's a good one. Do you have a favorite failure that has led to success?

Jeff Henderson ([44:20](#)):

Yeah, I, when I, I had this idea Chick-fil-A years ago where I wanted to put Chick-fil-A to eat more chickens in the cup stadium here for the college football ball game, Chicka people. And I thought it was a great idea, but that during a, a, a play that went against the other team there, fans threw all the cows onto the field. <Laugh> I

Doug Smith ([44:43](#)):

Thought it was,

Jeff Henderson ([44:43](#)):

I thought it was a disaster. And I had to convince that the owner true Cathy at the time to pay for all these 72,000 pounds. Wow. But I'm, I'm sitting up there in the press box and seeing all these cows being thrown in the field, and everybody's asking who is the marketing genius that came up with this idea, right.

Doug Smith ([44:58](#)):

That's beautiful.

Jeff Henderson ([45:00](#)):

But it ended up my boss, David SAS came up to me and he said, Hey, I think there's an idea here. And I called an idea here. This is an awful idea. He said, no, I think I, he goes, first of all, the publicity value we're gonna get outta. This is amazing. Secondly, what if next year we, we thought of another way for the cows to get on the field, but in a, in a, in a more memorable way. So long story short, we decided to put little parachutes on the cows and as the, for the next year's game. And when teams ran on the field, we just literally dumped thousands of parachuting cows onto the field. Well, everybody lost their minds, loved it. And that was 20 years ago. And they've been doing it ever since. And so the parachuting cows have become this, this tradition, but a lot of people don't understand, don't know the story behind that.

Jeff Henderson ([45:49](#)):

They just think, oh cool, parachuting cow. That was a cool idea. Well, that idea in all likelihood would never have been born if it weren't for what was perceived to be a failure at the time. And I, so I tell my kids all the time, Hey, if you think this idea has failed, what that means is is that you just haven't pushed further. You just you've stopped. This might not be a failure. It might lead you to the next thing. And Thomas Edison would tell you, that's why he failed 10,000 times. So that failure actually led to what I thought was the worst day of my marketing career actually ended up being one of my best.

Doug Smith ([46:27](#)):

Wow. That's a great story. You get to spend time with a ton of great leaders and I'm just curious, do you have a go-to question that no matter what you ask every leader.

Jeff Henderson ([46:37](#)):

Yeah. What are you learning? What are you learning right now? Because I think any great leader never stops learning and they never, they never start coasting. So what, what are you learning right now? And then how are you applying what you're learning?

Doug Smith ([46:52](#)):

So that's my next question for you

Jeff Henderson ([46:55](#)):

Right now. I am learning a ton about the publishing industry. So there's that, and it's, I mean, as a rookie author, I'm learning all, all sorts of things. But the other thing I'm learning is to try to test out messages as I go along to see what is most resonant resonating. So I tested out a little bit of a part of this talk that I'm doing, that I'll do in Pittsburgh. And today I got a lot of great feedback on it. Well, I never, would've known that if I didn't have the courage to go, Hey, I'm gonna start the talk this way and see if it resonates with people. So you're gonna have to have courage. And, and, but the thing I'm learning is

that there is my, my hunch has been, and research is playing this out, but my hunch has been in the business world. There is this hope that purpose and profit can't, you can grow both together. And I think, I think sometimes there's skepticism about that and Hey, what's the bottom line, but I think we're starting to see evidence that if you don't do that, it will impact the bottom line in a negative way. So what I'm learning right now is that the, the purpose and the, the purchase can go together as we've been talking about. And but yeah, right now it's all about trying to learn that publishing

Doug Smith ([48:09](#)):

Industry. Wow. as a leader, aside from your family, what's the greatest return of investment on your time

Jeff Henderson ([48:15](#)):

On ironically on me remaining inspired. And that, that may seem odd and it may seem a little self-centered, but if, you know, it's the old, old analogy. When if the plane starts going down and the oxygen mask come down, you breathe in first and then put the oxygen mask on the person next. I really do think that you and I have to remain healthy. We have to remain inspired, and that doesn't happen by accident at a sustainable pace. Right now, I'm not running at a sustainable pace, but I know in a few days I've got a break. And so I've gotta be able to have some systems in my life that can allow me to run at a sustainable pace, cuz here's what I know my life moves to a better place when I move at a sustainable pace. And so that's one of the things that I've gotta do. I've gotta take really, really good care of me. So one of the, one of the best things I can do for the people in my life is to take care of me.

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

If you could go back and have coffee with 20 year old, Jeff, what would you tell him?

Jeff Henderson ([49:23](#)):

I would say be more confident, be more confident and don't be afraid when you fail so that I, I, I just feel like, you know, I had a tendency to be a little bit too timid and just go for it and go further, faster. Try, try things if it fails. Okay. Just keep moving far easier said than done, but if I could talk to me 20 years ago, I would say just, just be more brave.

Doug Smith ([49:54](#)):

And at the end of your life I'm curious, what do you wanna be remembered for?

Jeff Henderson ([50:01](#)):

Well, from there's two things, there's a lot, but I can give you two answers first. I wanna be known for being for the person right in front of me. So right now, that's you Doug and your listeners. I, my hope and prayer is that this will be helpful and some fashion I want you and your listeners to walk away to think Jeff was, for me, he was really focused on me for me as a person of faith, I, I, Jesus had this statement that when I come back to the earth, will I find faith and that verse always stayed with me. And so for me, what I, what do I want to be known for? I wanna be known for being found faithful in all the areas of my life. So if Jesus were to return today and walk up to Wendy, my wife, I want him to say, Hey, was Jeff, you know, faithful to you, not just, you know, from, from, you know, a marriage vow, but just, was he a, was he focused on the marriage? Same thing with my kids, financial steward, leadership, Stu steward, all of that. Am I going to be found faithful? And that's what I wanna be known for that I was found faithful in all the areas and roles of my life.

Doug Smith ([50:59](#)):

Anything else you wanna leave leaders with today?

Jeff Henderson ([51:02](#)):

First of all, thanks for listening to Doug's Doug's podcast. That's awesome. And we hope this has been helpful. And if you're in the Pittsburgh area, come up and see us. And I would love to meet you in person and, and excited about being there. So just honor to be on the podcast, Doug.

Doug Smith ([51:17](#)):

Well, Hey leader, thank you so much for listening to my conversation with Jeff. 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 threeleadership.org/330 and leaders always. I wanna challenge you that if you want to 10 extra growth this year, then you need to either launch or join at L3 Leadership mastermind group. Mastermind groups have been the greatest source of growth in my life over the last seven years. And if you don't know what they are, they're just simply small groups of leaders. Usually six to 12 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 joining or launching a group, go to L3 Leadership.org/masterminds and leaders always thank you so much for listening. My wife, Laura, and I love you. We believe in you and remember, keep leading. Don't quit. The world desperately needs your leadership. We'll talk to you next episode.