

Doug Smith:

Hey leader, and welcome to another episode 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'm your host, and in today's episode is brought to you by my friends at Beratung Advisors. We're also recording live from the new Reiturn.com studio. If you're new to the podcast, welcome. I'm so glad that you're here and I hope that you enjoy our content and become a subscriber. Know that you can also watch all of our episodes over on our YouTube channel, so make sure you subscribe there as well. 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 would leave us a rating and review on Apple Podcasts, Spotify or whatever app you listen to podcasts through. So thank you in advance for that.

Doug Smith:

Well leader. In today's episode, you're gonna hear my conversation with my friend and mentor, John Stalwart. John was on the podcast way back in the day, all the way back in episode number nine. And since then, I've gone through one of his executive coaching programs and have had him personally coach me for a year. And it just so happened that it was during the darkest year of my life. I've sh I've been very open about that on the podcast. Um, but in that dark season, John made a very significant impact in my life, and it's actually the reason I wanted to do this episode. We talk a lot about the role of pain in a leader's life, and John wrote an entire book about this, which we talk about. I really encourage you to get it in. So I think if you're in the middle of a season of pain or if you've been through painful seasons, I think you're gonna get a lot out of this conversation.

Doug Smith:

Well, later in today's episode, you'll hear my conversation with Molly Fletcher. If you're unfamiliar with Molly, let me just tell you a little bit about her. How does a female Jerry Maguire by CNN. Molly Fletcher made a name for herself as one of the first female sports agents during her almost two decade career and as president of CSC. Molly negotiated over \$500 million in contracts and represented over 300 of sport's biggest names, including Hall of Fame pitcher John Smoltz, PGA Tour golfer Matt Kuchar, broadcaster Erin Andrews and basketball championship coaches Tom Izzo and Doc Rivers. As the world's top 50 keynote speaker, she delivers her inspiring message to audiences around the world. She is also author of five books, including The Energy Clock, Fearless at Work and a Witness Guide to Negotiate. Molly is the founder and host of the Game Changers with Molly Fletcher podcast, where she interviews experts and celebrities in every field, including Arthur Blank, Dabo Swinney, John Mackey, Matthew McConaughey, and Simon Sinek. Her insights have been featured in prestigious media outlets, including CNN, ESPN, Forbes Fast Company, InStyle and Sports Illustrated. As the founder of the Molly Fletcher Company, she helps leaders transform workplace complacency with her game changer, negotiation, training and the energized leader programs. And if you've never heard Molly before, get ready. Buckle up. She is incredible. And in the conversation, you're going to hear Molly share the lessons that she's learned from working with some of the world's peak performers as a sports agent. Her thoughts on youth sports, her advice to women in leadership. And, of course, I take her through the lightning round at the end.

Doug Smith:

You're going to love this interview. But before we dive in and just a few announcements, this episode of the L3 Leadership Podcast is sponsored by Barrett Young Advisors. The financial advisors at Beratung Advisors help educate and empower clients to make informed financial decisions. You can find out how

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Doug Smith:

Molly Fletcher Welcome to the L3 Leadership Podcast. I've been looking forward to this for a long time and I just want to give people a little bit of background. I knew you were deemed the female Jerry Maguire and in the sports agency world, and can you just give us a brief history of why you were deemed that and how you got into that industry? You bet.

Molly Fletcher:

Well, I you know, I think there was probably a board journalist one day that that thought, well, this ought to be kind of fun and an easy way to help people understand what this lady does. So I think CNN sort of came up with that and ran with it. But, you know, I got into it. I was a student athlete at Michigan State where I played tennis and I had wanted to stay in the business of sports dog, but I didn't know what that would look like. Right. Really? And so I moved down to Atlanta from Lansing to get a job in sports and did a couple odds and things. And then I got an opportunity with a small agency where I was a marketing coordinator, which was going and getting endorsement deals and appearances for the, you know, half a dozen athletes that we had. We had a couple NBA coaches and a couple of baseball players. And once I had kind of gotten into it and I was bringing these guys appearances and deals and building relationships with them, and then I started to see, gosh, the way we're going to really grow is through getting more athletes and coaches and negotiating more of their primary contracts. And so I put a business plan together for our CEO to say, Hey, let's go get let's go get more baseball players. We got Georgia Tech, the Braves, right. You know, minor league teams. And he blasted and I was sort of off to the races. Now, it took me time to kind of get big league guys, etc.. And then it just really evolved from there pretty organically over about an 18 year period of time. So it was awesome.

Doug Smith:

Well, how old were you when you went to your CEO to put together that plan?

Molly Fletcher:

I was probably Doug about 24. Wow. 24. So I was young. I mean, what happened was I had had driven Lenny Wilkins around. He was the head coach of the dream team, and I'd been his sort of Little League driver, taking him to all of his appearances and various obligations while he was the head coach of the Dream team in Atlanta for the Olympics. And then when that finished, I was sort of wrapping all of that

up, and that had been pretty consuming for the beginning, part of my experience at the agency. And and that was when I thought, how are we going to grow? Right? And, you know, and I'm a big believer, right? You got to ask for what you want. You got to go for it. You got to get out of your comfort zone. And and I was fortunate to be in an environment where he blasted and let me run with it, which I'm super grateful for.

Doug Smith:

It's not every day I get to talk to someone that was in the sports agency field. I'm curious, can you just talk to people? What do you wish people knew about what it's actually like to represent athletes and coaches, etc.?

Molly Fletcher:

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I think probably the biggest you know, it's not about sports, ironically, right? It's it's about business. And whenever I get young people that are like, I just love sports, I know all the stats I'm a fan of, you know, we don't we don't hire fans, right? We hire people who want to help ensure that we can capitalize on a window of time that is remarkably unique for an athlete or a coach. I mean, they do what most of us do in a lifetime, in four years or five years or three years, and maximizing and capitalizing on capitalizing on that on and off the field is imperative. So it's not about the fact that you are a great baseball player. It's about recognizing the business opportunity inside of that sports experience that the athlete is experiencing. Yeah. What did you what did you love about being a sports agent, being around peak performers? I mean, you know, we Doug, were very intentional about the kind of athletes and coaches that we signed and we signed people and worked with good people, right? I mean, it's a 24 seven deal, right? So your phone's ringing all the time. And as I got more established, I mean, I wanted to like on right, Like I wanted to like the guy that was calling me when I was pushing my daughter on a swing on a Saturday morning. Right. I wanted to like him. And so that relationship component was imperative to have and to work with with with good people, with great people. And and we did that. And I'm grateful for that, for sure.

Doug Smith:

Yeah. Is there anything you hated about it?

Molly Fletcher:

What I what I didn't love about it was that it was 24 seven. I mean, the phone by the bed. You know, I had a coach once that was interviewing for a job and it came up on the ticker and it progressed through. And, you know, at 2 a.m. my phone rang and he was hot and lit up. And so that part of it and really you're just always on call, I mean, because at any moment and as my career progressed, I had about 300 athletes and coaches, a team of agents. When you have 300 people, college coaches, NBA coaches, tour players, baseball players, minor league guys, broadcasters who are waking up every day and doing what they do, inevitably they get fired, hired, injured, healthy, traded, released. It's constant. So that part of it, I don't mess in the spirit of as a wife and as a mother who values that deeply. I think that was the part that was the hardest was navigating those moments when I was with my family.

Doug Smith:

Yeah, I'm curious. We're going to be talking about what you learned through performers and all of those things. But were there one or two coaches or anyone that you interacted with over the years that that really taught you valuable life lessons or became a mentor that significantly transformed your life?

Molly Fletcher:

Well, I mean, gosh, 100%. I mean, you know, I would say first and foremost, it's my parents, you know? Absolutely. But from a client perspective, specifically, you know, John Smoltz was a guy. And as a guy who I was always fascinated with his capacity. And what I mean by that, as you know, John would call me on his way to the park on a day he's pitching and the things that he was navigating off the field and maybe even on. Right. Maybe it's an injury. Maybe it's something he's having to compensate for with a shoulder, his elbow or a finger or something. And so the physical component that he was navigating and then then the personal right, like things with this with his children or his his wife or his parents or his and and and the things that he had going on in his life. And then I would watch him pull up to the ballpark, 3:00, walk in, prep for the game, go out and throw seven or eight scoreless innings, sit guys down and lead right and do it with integrity and high character. And he his capacity to perform under pressure and in what the world saw I saw all the other things they saw they saw the guy having to change his arm slot a little bit. They had no idea what he was dealing with off the the field. So when I started in college coaching division, I wanted to go get my alma mater as a Tom Izzo. And so I recruited him and signed him. And and I you know, I so distinctly remember one day flying in to to go to go meet with him and see him. And then I ended up going to a game that night. And I remember before the game and it was like an hour before tipoff and Tom's like, Come with me, I'm going, I got to go do this little. These are some of our big sponsors and donors, whatever, and they've been ticket holders for a long time. And so we like go down under and we go back and he walks into this room with probably 100 people. Most of them were like 85 years old plus. And he gives them this little behind the curtain, Hey, here's what you want to look for. Here's what's going to happen. Here's kind of what I'm thinking. And we leave and I look at him and I was like, Dude, tip offs in 45 met. Like, what do you do that every home game? And he goes, Yeah. And I go, You go do that every home game to that room. And he goes all the time, He goes, Molly, I've been doing it since I started and I can't, I can't stop, I can't let him down now. And I'm like, Wow. So cool, right? So he was, he, he to me what I love about Tom as he hasn't changed, right? Like he's won national championships. He's a legend as as I as a college coach. He's he's had incredible success, but he's never changed and he's always taken care of his community and he loves his players. So much, both when they're serving him. Right. Like, you know, like Dabo Swinney says, Right. Serve their heart, not their talent. He does that all the time. And that's why guys come back and support the program and him and all that. So those are a couple guys that come up for me, but I could go on and on. I mean, I'm grateful for, you know, the Ernie Johnson. Are you kidding me? Ernie Johnson, incredible human being. I mean, you see him on TV, right? You see him bookend Ding, you know, Shaq and Charles and Kenny, and and then what a lot of people didn't see was, you know, he would we would go have lunch and he'd show up in a minivan with his son, Michael, who recently passed away, who was very disabled. And, you know, he'd pull him out and we'd wheel him in. And you know, E.J. would feed him and we'd rub his had he always loved that. And and and I thought, wow. I mean, so I think probably the guys in the gals that didn't change that recognize they had a unique platform and they could use it for good.

Doug Smith:

Yeah. I have to follow up questions first on the John Smoltz story. I'm curious, you just talked about everything going on in their lives. Can you speak to sports fans? Because I think, you know, I mean, if you just hop on Facebook and Google Facebook comments after a game on a particular athlete or a coach, it's it's brutal. And I think sometimes people actually forget these are real people with real feelings. If you could say something to the fans listening about just individuals personal lives, what would you tell them?

Molly Fletcher:

Well, I would say, you know, they well, one thing I would tell you is I told and I tell my guys and most of them don't read it. They don't read it. They don't read it. Their memories, their screens, their wife reads it. But the smart ones, the good ones, the really good, they don't read it. That's why they're good. They don't pay attention to the noise. They just don't. And so, you know, I would say go ahead and write it to their mom and their sister and the wife, because that's who's reading it. And, you know, and I think to your point, there are people and I think the world goes, yeah, but they make a million bucks a month, so that's not normal. So they should hear all these things I have to say about them. The good ones don't listen, because if they did, it would destroy them.

Doug Smith:

Hmm. You also mentioned the good ones don't change. They're not changed by the million dollar paycheck. They're not changed by the the platform that they're given. I'm just curious, in your career, what have what has been the impact of money and fame on people? How have you seen that influence people?

Molly Fletcher:

Well, it certainly does. I mean, I would say the people who are well rooted, whether it be in their faith, in their values, morals, they do fine. The ones that are settled in there before they get there. And those are the ones that I think struggle with what it really is and what negative impact it could potentially have on you. So I think the most important thing, obviously they can't necessarily totally control that the way they were potentially brought up and the and the influence they had relevant to faith and values and morals. But what they can do is work hard to ensure they have people around them that want nothing from them but for them to be the best version of themselves. And unfortunately, what happens when you you know, I used to say to players when they when they'd be a projected first round draft pick and they were going to make 10 million bucks. Right. And they're 18 years old and they come from a middle class family maybe. And I say, you think you're a pretty good looking dude. And they're like, This is where this lady is 40 years old. She has me. You think you're pretty? Look and do. They're like, well, I mean, I guess a little I don't know. I mean, sort of. And I'm like, Yeah, dude, you put 10 million bucks in your bank account and you're smoking hot like this. So. So just remember. And so to me, it's get the people around you who need nothing, who want nothing, who are interested in talking about their relationship with you to their buddies at the country club the way the don't want to manage your money that don't want that is a really big deal in order to keep them rooted and to have people around you that you listen to, you listen to who tell you things you don't want to hear, but you need to hear who tell you that Look, you haven't hit a ball in the big leagues. You haven't thrown a pitch in the big leagues. You haven't done anything. You don't need to buy the girl you've been dating for two months, a mercedes. Let's not do that right now. Right. Even though you can. And that makes you feel good. Don't they need people that will level set them on those things? Because what happens is when your and I watch this happen to some you know, when you're making a million bucks a month, you lose perspective and you think it will happen forever. And it doesn't no matter who you are, it's not going to last. It's going to end. You're going to retire. It's going to go away or you're going to drop into maybe a media career where it's less. So you got to have people around you that that help you make smart, long term decisions. There's nobody else to give me. My husband's wife. Right? So. So. So she kept me kind of squared away in that regard. And I couldn't be more grateful for that. And and I don't know that I would have gone wildly off track leave because I'm grateful for the way that I was raised. And, and, and sort of those values.

Doug Smith:

And I think I've heard you mentioned you mentioned your parents were extremely influential in your life. I think I heard you on another podcast when I was listening researching for this. Your mom has really helped you stay grounded, from what I understand, because you obviously have done well and have had some amazing experiences. Can you talk about your mom's influence in your life when it comes to staying grounded?

Molly Fletcher:

Well, I mean, Dog, you know, she is still I talk to her and my parents. I talk to them every morning, every single morning. I call them from wherever I am, sometimes twice a day. Sometimes I call the third time and they're like, what are you? But at 51, that's probably a little bit odd. But they are, you know, so incredibly they're incredible people. But I would say the biggest thing was there was a lot of moments early in my career where I would call my mom and I would go check this out. We're flying private into Miami or going to a boat, you know, Michael Jordan, Jim McMahon, like whoever. Right. Is coming over or whatever. And she'd listen and then she'd say, Who's got the girls? Because we have three daughters. Who's got them? Are they good? Are they okay? When are you coming back? How long are you going to be gone? Right. She didn't care at all. And so that that was it. You know, kind of always there and always kept me front and center relevant to family and our girls and kept me squared away because I think had I had somebody that was going, awesome, cool. And then what? And then what? And then what? But I always had this tug to get back home as soon as I could because there was no one else who can raise my girls as their mother. There's nobody else to give me. My husband's wife. Right? So. So. So she kept me kind of squared away in that regard. And I couldn't be more grateful for that. And and I don't know that I would have gone wildly off track leave because I'm grateful for the way that I was raised. And, and, and sort of those values. But she kind of helped me do that. And then there was times where I was when I started speaking and traveling and and that sort of started to take off a bit where I was. I was finding myself having to figure out how to navigate that. It was this new arena, if you will, and I was having to navigate my schedule and what to say yes to a no to in the girls. And and and she always kind of helped me with that. Right? Like, I know you love it and I know it's fulfilling and I know that it's but let's, let's bookend it so that you know how many keynotes you can do on a week before it's too much, how much travel you can do in a week before it's too much. Right? And so she's just been a rock for me and always kind of speaks the truth with love. And she can say something like that, that'll it'll level set me pretty quick, as can my husband, which is cool.

Doug Smith:

Oh thank God for both of those people in your life. Just a random question. I'm a father of four. We just had our fourth child in December. A lot of fun. It sounds like you were parenthood. Well, I'm assuming based on the choices in the priorities you've just mentioned that you're parenting with a little while as well. Any any parenting tips for for us as the young ones?

Molly Fletcher:

Well, you know, gosh, man, I mean, yes. I mean, obviously, you know, you probably don't need any. And I'm sure with four. What a gift, man. Are you wrapping that party up?

Doug Smith:

Yeah. Yeah. My wife's made it very, very clear that this is the last time she is doing this.

Molly Fletcher:

That's right. Yeah. You know, I think I remember so often people saying it goes so fast and you're so tired, you're not sleeping, you know, all those things and you're like, And my mom used to say, it's the days that drag. It's the years that fly by. And, you know, it does go fast and soak it all in and enjoy it all because it goes fast and it is the greatest gift. And every stage of it is the best. Our girls now are in college and I talk to them every day as well, which I'm grateful for. They call a lot, which I love, but you know, and then I think the question I get a lot, though, dog is relevant to parents role with kids in sports. And to me, we've got to recognize that kids drive, drive that I think we live in a world now where parents are over indexing on on on the outcomes with their children. And I think what I what I would just pray and ask parents to do is to recognize that there's very few that are really going to make a living doing it. So let's look at sports as a laboratory for life to learn how to be a part of a team, to take feedback, to navigate change and challenges, and to to have to have difficult conversations with a coach. If we're not playing where and when we want to. It's just an incubator for what's to come. And when we when we try to drive that too much, we lose what is such an unbelievable opportunity for our kids to learn and grow. And and I see that from someone who played competitive tennis, growing up with two parents who sometimes couldn't take me to practice. And I'd ride my bike because I loved it, who when I'd split sex with somebody, they had no idea what to coach me on or tell me to do. They just filled up my water bottle and gave me a banana. And because of that, you know, I had the drive and the ambition to want to keep playing. And I played at Michigan State and then competed and then earned a scholarship. And and what mattered to them was that I was learning so many things as a part of the sport of tennis that that I was learning so many things as a as a part of tennis that then could be translated into life. And it has. So I think our role as parents in sports is something we should deeply consider and be highly aware of the impact that we have on our children relevant to fulfillment versus achievement. You know, learning inside of that platform is is such a gift. And as parents, we can't steal that from and let them let them unlock that next level inside of themselves while supporting and loving them, I think. And then I'll stop. And the biggest probably tactical piece of advice I give parents when you get in the car with your child after you leave a sporting event, don't say anything. Just ask them one question Where do you want to go eat?

Doug Smith:

That's when I am curious, just being that you went all in on tennis, did you did you play multiple sports growing up?

Molly Fletcher:

Do you encourage people to do multiple sports and then, you know, pick one as they get into high school? Any advice there? I'm just curious now because I feel like there's so many options with our kids. I'm like, they could do anything that's overwhelming.

Molly Fletcher:

Yeah. Yeah. Well, I did. I played basketball and I swam and then I played tennis. And then when I got to high school and I was a tomboy growing up, I brought my brothers were five years older than me. And were you know, treating me like a little brother. But and all those sports in Michigan, where I grew up were all in the fall. And I had to pick basketball, swimming or tennis. And that tennis was kind of my newest form of interest. And so that was what I leaned into. And I loved it. And I'm glad I, I did. I would say, yes, it's a gift to play lots of different sports. I know we live in a world where that can be hard because of, you know, travel teams and all that kind of stuff. But as long as they want to play a lot of

sports, I'd let them play a lot of sports until for whatever reason, you know, the the sport that they're playing or their love for that sport requires more of them, then maybe you can have that singular focus. But if you look at all stars and Hall of Famers now granted the world's changed a little bit with travel ball in the 20, you know, the seasons are longer than ever, etc. Many of them played a lot of sports. They did or did an instrument. John Smoltz played the accordion, made him and he hated it. But his accordion player and John would have to play the accordion and he hated it. And then he'd run out after he'd play the accordion and go try to throw a baseball against the brick wall of their house, because that's what he really loved. So the the the opportunity for I'm sorry, you can cut this out. I lost my train of thought for a minute. The opportunity to play multiple sports. It makes you stronger.

Doug Smith:

Do you have an experience or two that you're just like, that was unbelievable, I'll never forget that for the rest of my life that you can actually share with everyone?

Molly Fletcher:

I would say probably the coolest was when we had about ten guys ish and we flew from Atlanta over to Augusta to play the National, and that was pretty cool. I mean, that was really, really cool to just have the afternoon to go play. Obviously it's such a special thing and then to be able to do it with, you know, a bunch of really great, great clients and players was super fun. So that would that would be one. And then I would say some of them were, you know, there was a player that I recruited for two years and it took so long, it was so hard. And I love this guy. And and we finally kind of got to where he was ready to lock and load and sign with Awesome. And we flew down to sort of the panhandle of Florida and went out to dinner and then opened a bottle of champagne and he signed and we toasted. And it had just been a culmination of so much hard work to get to that place with him. And then to finally sort of ink it and to bring him inside and be able to work with him officially was just was just awesome. So things like that were were super fun, too.

Doug Smith:

Known, fully loved, fully challenged, and inside the loved means that your humanness does not become a that other people can begin to maneuver to take advantage of you, you know, deep trust. And, um, that is, you know, what we're searching for. Um, I think in life is a place where we're at the table and we can bring what we have to that table, our assets and our needs. And other PE people can bring what they have to the table and we're in full fellowship with one another. I totally agree with.

Doug Smith:

Yeah. Last fun question Before I dive more into what you learned from all of these athletes, do you have do you have sports teams that you actually cheer for that they're like, this is my team? Or if you just cheer for everyone and have an appreciation for all sports?

Molly Fletcher:

Well, I mean, when I was an agent, no, I really didn't. I mean, I obviously have an affinity for Michigan State and you can't really peel that out of me. But but, you know, I really cheer for people probably more than anything less so for a team per se. I with the exception of Michigan State, I'm always I'm always rooting for my for my home team.

Doug Smith:

Okay. Well, let's let's dive into what you actually learned. So you've got to work with performers who, you know, went all the way one championships and then you were I'm sure you worked with people who were thinking they were going to be all that All-Star MVP, etc.. And then they just fizzle out after a year or two. What have you learned about what separates great players from players who don't make it?

Molly Fletcher:

Well to me, it's it's it's really pretty simple. Honestly, dog, I think it's an internal drive to get better every day. So the ones that make it and stay there are the ones that every single day are trying to get a little bit better and who are never complacent. And they have a mindset that is committed to consistent development. And what's interesting about this in a way, is they're not driven to achieve because that's not sustainable. They're driven to get better every day. And to me, that's the irony in it, right? You'd think they wake up every day to achieve, and that is a North star for them. Obviously, they want to win. They want to. But what they actually wake up every day and want to do is to get a little bit better. And part of that as a as a result of that, there are guys and gals right behind the talent, if you will. So so there are players right behind the starting, you know, first baseman for a big league club waiting, trying to take his job every single day. Every single day. They're working their tails off and there's several of them. And so he has to get better every day or he loses his job. Right. And and I saw that all the time. Right. Coaches, they have to win and get better and recruit and continue to sustain it or or they lose their job golfers they're only as good as their last tournament their only unless they've won a major or a or a tournament, they don't have exemptions. So they're they don't have a job next year if they don't perform. And the irony is, Doug, I mean, I lived in that world for so long, I thought the rest of the world operated like this, Right? Like I thought everybody in the world woke up every day and wanted to get a little bit better. But sadly, that's not the case. But I think it's a better way to live your life. I think it's a more fulfilling way to live your life. And I'm not suggesting that it's about going for more or having more or make more. I'm suggesting that living a life of a of a desire and a mindset to get better every day is a more fulfilling way to live your life. I think if you align your values and your goals with your behaviors, then the outcome of that is a better version of you every single day. And that's more fulfilling in other words, I think that if we're if we're aligning our values and our goals with what matters most, it actually offsets burnout. I think the reason that people are so burned out is because the work they're doing isn't aligned with their deepest values. It isn't aligned with what matters most to them. Because, I mean, I would argue that Oprah probably never been burned out, right? Wow. I don't I don't know that Tom Brady's ever been burned out. Right. I don't know that Tiger Woods has ever been burned out. It's what he loves to do. It's what he knows and it's what he it is his calling. At some level, I think he would believe he was given a gift. He certainly capitalized on it with a ton of drive. But, you know, to me, Webster got the definition wrong of drive. I think Webster says the drive is the the desire to achieve. I don't think it is. I think that drive is is an inherent desire to to get better every day and aligning that behavior and that mindset with your values.

Doug Smith:

Yeah, I'm curious. And for those who are listening, if you haven't watched Morley as a phenomenal TED talk that she gave, you can find it anywhere. We'll include links to it in the show notes. But on this subject, I am curious from someone who is always looking for talent. Have you found that drive is something that some people have and some people don't? Or is it a skill that can be developed?

Molly Fletcher:

It's absolutely a skill that can be developed, no question about it. I think that we could have some predisposition to some things, no question about it. But it is something that is inside of all of us, all of us desire to have a deeper purpose, a deeper calling. I think all of us, it's human nature to want to have purpose. You know, you think about the thing and connection with others, right? That's just human. So to me, drive is about aligning our purpose with our behaviors. So I absolutely believe all of us have God given gifts and and, and and in turn all drive to find a way to unlock that. And what we need, though, if we don't necessarily have that as something that's threaded through us deeply, we need to know how to unlock it. We need to know how to unlock the drive that lives in us that we that we know we want more, but we don't know what that is, right? We know that we're burned out or we know that were exhausted or we know that we're not living our best life or we know we're not as fulfilled as we could be, and we don't really know what to do about it. And to me, it's it's things like mindset. It's things like curiosity. It's things like connection. It's it's confidence driven. People are confident people. They're purpose centered. I think super driven people are very intentional about where and what and who they give their energy to more than their time, even at some level. Right. They're very clear on that. So it's it's a muscle, right, that we've got to strengthen and unlock. And we all have it and we all care. And for leaders listening, I think every one of us would say we want to fill our organization with leaders and young potential that has drive. Is that because it sounds like a separate than talent. You can have talent, but if you don't have drive, you ultimately won't reach your potential.

Doug Smith:

Is that something you can just spot? Yep. They got it. Or is it something that you had to kind of like you were talking about mindsets, intentionality. Is that really just, I guess in the business world, more in the interview process of actually asking questions of what is your my you know, I'm just curious, how do you how do you see if someone how do you discern it?

Molly Fletcher:

Right. Yeah. I mean, well, 100%. I mean, I'd hire somebody with Drive who I know that I can teach them a skill set all day long because that that's a wonderful thing and because you want and then if they have a lot of talent, then you want to ask great questions so you can discern if they can understand that that's not enough, talent is not enough. I saw so many unbelievable athletes who had a lot of talent. We've all seen that but never made it right. And you can have great hires or great employees who are really smart and have a lot of talent. But if they don't want it themselves and they're not going to allow you to help them be curious enough about how to unlock it, then to me, that's not that's not somebody that we want to bring into our organization, right? We want to bring in people that are that are insatiably curious, right. That want to understand how they can unlock another version of themselves every day. And like I said, I think that is that is anchored in curiosity. So the biggest thing I always want to make sure of when I'm hiring somebody is do they take feedback and are they curious? Because if they do, those things, I can get them to have drive.

Doug Smith:

That's so good. I want to transition a little bit. Talking about your transition. You got your point. You know where it was 24 seven and you ended up transitioning and now you do speaking. You're an author, you've written five books, you have a podcast. So much going on. I want to start though, and I don't know where this was in your journey, but I love the story you shared in your TED Talk of, you know, my heroes. John Maxwell, It sounds like, you know, for you and your family, it was your dad. Zig Ziglar was the man. So but you actually got a meeting with Zig, which is unbelievable. Can you tell that story? And I am curious, like, was that when you were younger it was that when you were looking to transition?

Molly Fletcher:

Yeah. Yeah. No, that was when I was just coming out of college and I didn't really know what I wanted to do and I blew him up. His secretary in, I mean, everybody until he agreed to give me 20 minutes, which was unbelievable. And that was a result of seeing his books on the, you know, the desk of my dad's office for years and picking them up and reading them. And I thought, wow, this is really neat. Like, I love how this man talks about human behavior and getting better. And so he he was and I never got to spend time with him after I transition into this space, sadly. But I think about him all the time. I have his books, you know, still stacked. And, you know, he he obviously he was the person that I look to when I thought about speaking the way he did it and how he did it was something that I wanted to at some level learn from, potentially emulate, etc.. So that was at about 19, I think maybe 20. I transitioned because I I wrote a book and then I wrote another one and they sort of started getting a little bit of traction. And then companies started saying, Hey, will you come and talk about your book? And so I did a little bit of that. And one day at a keynote, I there was a woman in the back of the room who came up to me and said, You need to do this. And I said, What do you what do you mean? I like 300 and a team of agents. I mean, she was you know, you do this all the time. And I was like, I, I got a job like I can I'm just doing this for fun. Like, so she said, Hey, you know, let's go to lunch. And so I went to lunch with her and really nice lady. And she said, you know, she kind of walk me through what it could look like. And I thought, Wow, this is really cool, because it was feeling so fulfilling to share these stories as a wife and a mother and a woman through the lens of sports. On performance, I was able to connect with men and women, and I thought, Man, this is really filling me up. And that was when I, I it got to a point where the incoming speaking requests were such that I really needed to make a decision. And that was when I jumped in and jumped over to the space, which I'm like so many things in life, right? I sort of probably should have done it a year before I did it. But everything happens in the right timing, so I'm grateful that I did it. Yeah. And what I resonated so much with when you told this story is just I think you asked them like, how do I do what you do? Yeah. And he said, Well, well, go, go do something. So you have something to say, right?

Doug Smith:

Yeah. And I think so many times we live in a world where everyone wants to be an influencer, everyone wants to have a voice, but no one to do anything to actually have something to say. So with the time we have left, I just want to dive into a few topics and just get short answers from you on them. First, I just want to talk about speaking. So one, I'll just leave it open and then deep dive. Any advice for aspiring speakers now that this is something you do full time?

Molly Fletcher:

Go speak. The more you speak, the more you speak, the more you speak, the more you speak. Is is really the biggest piece of advice speak. I mean, I started speaking for free at at universities who wanted me to come in and talk about sports and I did some of that just for fun. But it was great raps and I got experience. And so just start speaking. And then the sooner you can start recording it, nobody's going to hire somebody to speak if they can't see you on a lot of stages in a lot of situations and get some good, solid, longer shorter clips of you because they're getting ready to put you on a stage with some of the most important people in their world, clients, employees in front of them. And they got to know that you're going to deliver in a way that's consistent with any they've got to see you deliver before they're going to put you in that kind of a situation.

Doug Smith:

Yeah, You talked about clearly you have drive. You've had your whole life when you started getting opportunities, you said, you know, you eventually got so many that you had to make a decision. Was that you going out and pursuing those opportunities or was it because of the book or the platform you had?

Molly Fletcher:

Like what? Because I think a lot of speakers like, how do I do? Like, yeah, how do I do that? Well, what happened was I, I gave so I gave a keynote, I gave a couple keynotes in kind for fun. And then there was a guy at Merrill Lynch actually who said, Hey, will you come and do all of our new will you do a keynote for our new Eirs? It was in Atlanta, I think. And so I did. And think I charge like a really small number for that, right? Like, and so I did. And, and after he came up to me and he said, Hey, like I want to book you to do nine of these, you do nine and all these different markets. And I was like, Oh my gosh, like, how am I going to do nine of these? Right? And so I said, okay, I've got this many vacation days. I think I can do it. And when I was doing those, what happened was in the back of the room at financial advisor keynotes, there's, you know, all the people that sell to the advisors, you know, Nationwide Insurance, MassMutual, I mean they're all in the back of the room and often when they're not mingling with the advisors, they step in and listen to the keynotes. So within that window of time of doing those nine in and the people, my phone just started ringing and you know, the guy at Northwestern Mutual and the guy at this and the guy that, Hey, will you come and do it? And that was when it kind of got on a life of its own. And then there was a buddy of mine who was my actually my trainer when I was a student athlete at Michigan State who is now a speaker, speaks on health and fitness stuff. He had a woman that was sourcing and fielding his his keynotes and so I utilized her, paid her just a commission on every keynote that she booked. And she was taking those incoming requests until those got to a point where she was like, Dude, I can't take I get four or 500 a year and do 80, right? And so that was when I brought in. So now I have a team of about five folks and I have a woman that's been beside me for 12 years, really, when I started who takes in all the incoming speaking requests and navigates all those. But it was very organic. It happened naturally. And that's why I say the more you speak, the more you speak. Because if I believe if you deliver a compelling message and you you you do the kinds of things as a speaker that allow you to connect, to add value, to pour in to people in a way that changes them, it doesn't just motivate them to feel better, but it changes them. Your final ring, it'll rain. I mean, we do no outreach at all in. So I would just tell people get really clear. The other piece of advice I'd have is I think sometimes speakers think I've got to have four or five topics. It's hard to be an expert on four or five. Like, what is the one thing that you're uniquely positioned to speak about? Go, go there. Don't try to be all these different things. What's the one thing that you're uniquely positioned to speak about? And then that put on your website and go speak on that?

Doug Smith:

Yeah. I'm curious, what do you how do you think the pricing so I mean, you basically did this for your career. You know, you help people determine their value, what their worth was you negotiated, what would your advice you give? And you have an entire book on negotiation, which I'd recommend. But, you know, what are your thoughts on negotiation and pricing for speaker specifically?

Molly Fletcher:

But I think just anyone with their own business. Well, I mean, the most basic level of supply and demand, right? I mean, when when the demand is getting higher than you want to accommodate, you bump your fee up and you just keep pumping it up. I think the other thing, though, I would say speaking wise, I mean, the speaker bureaus, we get booked by lots of different bureaus, too. And then we book

direct as well. But we call it the same fee out of all of our offices. We do with bureaus, but no bureaus can give you some comps to help you understand. But, you know, the truth is, I mean, there's one price for celebrity and they can be a horrible speaker. But if they're famous, they pull in an audience. So, you know, and that's different than maybe somebody who's out, you know, a John Maxwell who's a content speaker, right. Who you referenced. So I think my advice would be understand the market and what the market will bear. And then you've got to understand, I mean, I know speakers that probably are worth less than they, but they only do one a month. So they quote a high number, they do one a month and they charge maybe two weeks of what they should, but they don't want to do a lot more. So I think you've got to look at your own circumstances and what you really want. And and then that becomes maybe a little bit of a lens by which you can look look through it on. But, you know, to me, we've just continued to to sort of clip up as we go based on supply and demand and and candidly, my bandwidth and interest.

Doug Smith:

Best advice for aspiring authors. You've written five books.

Molly Fletcher:

Well, you know, it's a weird quirky market. Do you have a book dog in the process of writing one? All right. Yeah. So it's weird, it's quirky, it's all those things I would say for a first time author, right. You know, the mistake I made with my first book was I wrote the entire thing, and then I went and begged publishers to try to publish it. And I kind of wallpapered my apartment with rejection letters. And finally I got a yes. I should have just written a really robust proposal, right? Not an entire book, because the publisher is going to have feedback. You know, it's there's two models, right? There's the publisher model where you take a very small percentage, but they do all the lifting, they distribute the book, etc.. Or if you want to self-publish and get into the distribution business and the fulfillment business, which I don't want to be in, then then that's one vehicle. So just, you know, understanding the business, understanding your goals. And you know, my other piece of advice on unboxing is a lot of times I feel like people I meet a lot of people that say, I've got a book, it's half written, you know, you know, I just want to tell people that the the problem is you've got to really consider who's going to buy that book. Has it ever been written? People don't really care about your story unless you're famous, probably. Otherwise they want to know what that book's going to do for them. So I think you have to pull back and say there's a lot of things that a lot of people want to say and they want to write about and they want to tell. But you've got to remember why somebody's got to pay 25 bucks to take a couple hours of their lives and read that book. And what is your promise to the reader? And a publisher told me that once they're like, what is your promise? Like when they pick this up and spend the money and then they put it down? What has changed in their life for the better and get out of what we want to say and get into what problem you're going to solve for somebody and why it's worth their money and their time to read it.

Doug Smith:

Now, with a few minutes we have left, I want to dive in the Lightning Round. Bunch of fun questions I ask readers in every interview. And the first one is what is the best advice you've ever received and who gave it to you?

Molly Fletcher:

My mom. You can have it all. You just can't have it all at once.

Doug Smith:

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

Molly Fletcher:

I would tell people to put their own quote on their own billboard. I would say I mean like for me, it's my purpose statement and so write your purpose statement and then put that on your billboard.

Doug Smith:

I want to ask this earlier, but just for time sake, you know, you were one of the first females in the industry in a male dominated industry. Any advice for women aspiring to leadership or in leadership in or out of sports?

Molly Fletcher:

Yeah. Yeah. Be on yourself. You know, I am. I am absolutely a hard charger. Go for more. Do all those things. But as a mother and a wife, be gentle on yourself. Women try to do too much and we get tired. We have a lot of people pulling on us. Some days you're going to nail it. You do it all. You're not great at work, you're great at harmony. All those things. And some days you're not. And that's okay. Just be gentle on yourself.

Doug Smith:

When you get to spend time with a great leader. Do you ever go through a question or two?

Molly Fletcher:

Like you on my podcast, I do Rapid Fire. I love to ask, What are you reading, watching and what are you reading, watching and listening to right now? Because it's always so interesting to hear what performers are consuming from a content perspective. That's probably one that I love. I love to learn from any leader at any level.

Doug Smith:

So what are you watching, listening to and watching you see right there?

Molly Fletcher:

Man, I like it. You know what a girl that works for me recommended a book called The Naked Mind. And and I just started it. I haven't read it, but it's just really cool around the gosh, what's the best way? It's it's basically a book about alcohol and the lens that the world has created by which we view it and the negative impact of it and that it's at some level really just poison. And it's just a really cool book. And part of what I think makes it really neat and I'm just again into it, but is it it shifts your view in a really cool way and in a significant way. And I think, you know, it always boggled my mind during COVID, like why was everything closed? But the wine and liquor stores, like, why is that? And, and it's money and it's taxes and it's whatever else is inside of that that I don't even know. But as someone who travels a lot and you know, I go into the Sky Club at Delta and the amount of alcohol I'm seeing consumed in the world today is making me nervous and sad. And so it's a really interesting book. It has nothing to do with anything that we've talked about, but that's what I'm reading, to answer your question. No, that interests me for sure. I will check that out.

Doug Smith:

What's something that you've experienced in your life? Maybe was something on your bucket list that you think everyone should experience before they die?

Molly Fletcher:

Oh, my gosh. You know, this is probably going to be a where one maybe, I don't know. But family, I mean, you know, and being a parent, I and maybe it's a parent of not your own kids, but and you you marry into it or you adopt or you whatever the circumstances might be. But the greatest gift and something I hope everybody in life can experience as being having a partner in life that you do life with and then having children that you can share it with.

Doug Smith:

So again, anything else? I'll just leave this open ended. Anything else you want to leave leaders with today?

Molly Fletcher:

Check out my podcast Game Changers with Molly Fletcher. It is. I like yours. So good, so fun. And I'm super grateful to have you know, I've been blessed to interview some really remarkable people and share those conversations with others.

Doug Smith:

Yeah, well, thank you, Molly, for all of your time today. We include links to all of that in the show notes and I encourage people to check out all of your content. It's phenomenal. So thank you so much.

Molly Fletcher:

Thanks, Doug.

Doug Smith:

Well, Leader, thank you so much for listening to my conversation with Molly. I hope that you enjoyed it as much as I did. You can find ways to connect with her and links to everything that we discussed in the show notes and Leader I say it every episode, but if you want a ten-x growth this year, then you need to either launch or join an L3 Leadership Mastermind. Mastermind groups are groups of six or 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. For me personally, mastermind groups have been the greatest source of growth in my life over the last eight years. If you're interested in learning more about launching or joining a group, go to L3Leadership.org Forward slash masterminds or email me at dougsmith@l3leadership.org And as always, I like to end every episode with a quote. And today I'll quote Henry Cloud who said this. He said, You don't have to please everyone in your life and you don't need everyone to like you. And I think every leader on the planet needs to hear that. Well, Leader, I hope you enjoyed the episode. Know that my wife Laura and I love you. We believe in you and I say it every episode, but don't quit. Keep leading the world desperately needs your leadership.