

Doug Smith: 0:07

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 am your host, and today's episode is brought to you by my friends at Beratung Advisors. We also recorded this episode live from the new returncom 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're subscribed there as well. And, as always, 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 Podcast or Spotify. That really does help us to grow our audience and reach more leaders, so thank you in advance for that. Well, leader, in today's episode you're going to hear my conversation with my friend, Andrew Reichert. Andrew and I were in a mastermind group together for years and it become great friends, and if you are unfamiliar with Andrew, let me just tell you a little bit about him. Andrew Reichert is the CEO and founder of Birgo Realty Pittsburgh-based a private equity real estate firm with \$270 million in assets under management across 2800 plus multifamily units. Through Bergo Realty, he oversees a team of over 80 employees as they raise capital from investors and purchase and manage multifamily residential real estate. A passionate entrepreneur, Andrew has founded four companies and have been part of several other startups. Additionally, he launched a nonprofit focused on financial literacy and is active in local nonprofits, his . I'll church also mention that his company, Birgo Realty, is a sponsor of the podcast and they allow us to use their podcast studio and they also allow us to use their space to host one of our mastermind groups. I'm extremely grateful for Andrew and his company, and in our conversation you'll hear Andrew talk about real estate, investing, entrepreneurship, leadership, the importance of taking sabbaticals and so much more. You're going to love this interview. 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 B-E-R-A-T-U-N-G-Advisor.scom. Securities and investment products and services offered through LPL Financial member FINRA and SIPC. Beratung Advisors, LPL Financial and L3 Leadership are separate entities. I also want to thank our sponsor, hennie Jewelers. They're a jeweler owned by my friend and mentor, John Henne, and my wife Laura and I got our engagement and wedding rings through Henne Jewelers and 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 help them prepare for marriage, and we

just love that. So if you're in need of a good jeweler, check out HenneJewelers.com. And I also want to thank our new sponsor, reiturn.com, and Leader. Let me just ask you this have you ever had an interest in investing in real estate? Well, now, for as little as \$500, you can become a commercial real estate investor. Just visit Reiturn.com to learn more. That's R-E-I-T-U-R-N.com. Investing involves risk. Please consult the return offering circular if you're interested in investing. And with all that being said, let's dive right in. Here's my conversation with Andrew Reckert. Andrew Reichert, here. We are Long time friends. We've known each other for a long time. I still remember meeting you at one of our Learning to Lead for L3 Leadership or Breakfasts many years ago and we were in the same mastermind together for years and it's been great to call you friend and now you're also a supporter of the podcast, so we're both recording live today from the reiturn.com studios. We're exciting.excited So thank you for your friendship and thank you for opening up the space and, more importantly, thank you for the conversation, for the word about to have.

Andrew Reichert: 3:45

Thank you so much for having me, Doug. I'm thrilled to be here. I love what you're doing with L3. I love the podcast and I'm really excited to be on the show.

Doug Smith: 3:52

Thanks, man. Well, for everyone who may not have context for who you are and what you do, you run an organization that you started called Bergo Realty. Can you give everyone kind of an overview of the scope of what you're doing today?

Andrew Reichert: 4:04

Yeah, absolutely so. I started Birgo back in 2012 working with investors to get them exposure to investing in real estate Came from my experience investing in real estate. I started the hard way doing the work myself, dealing with the tenants in the toilets, and I just realized that there's a lot of people out there that want to invest in real estate but don't want to have the headaches. So, yeah, 2012 launched a fund and started to put together a little private equity real estate funds in 2015, 2018, and then last year we also launched a public REIT last year to help unaccredited investors kind of the everyday investor get exposure to the same product.

Doug Smith: 4:46

Wow, and can you give people an idea of the scope, of just how large your staff is here and how many people you lead?

Andrew Reichert: 4:52

Yeah, sure. So we've raised about 70 million of equity. We've bought about 280 million of real estate with that, so that's about 2,800 units across four states and we've got about a staff of about 90 employees that service those properties.

Doug Smith: 5:10

That's incredible. So a little bit later we're certainly going to dive into lessons you've learned about entrepreneurship and leadership. But, knowing you as I do, people can see what you're doing and what you're accomplishing today and certainly be impressed and inspired. But you didn't start there. You have a wild story. And can you just give us the summary version of your personal story of how you got here, because I think it'll really impact people?

Andrew Reichert: 5:36

Yeah, sure, thanks, Doug. Happy to do it. It's been a wild ride for sure. So I grew up in a family with very little means so we didn't have a lot of financial wherewithal. My parents were divorced at a young age. So between no financial stability, not a ton of stability at home, I found myself as a bit of a rebellious and challenging teenager. That ultimately culminated in me getting expelled from high school. I was fortunate to actually get accepted into college and really start throwing myself into academics and reading a lot and work, but that rebellious teenager wasn't quite ready to retire. So I found myself all the way up to kind of facing jail time and a felony charge and things that I'm not proud of today, but really things that helped to be a catalyst for me turning it around and realizing that I needed something bigger out of my life. I was kind of just drifting and I needed to design and have intentionality around my life. So that's the beginning of it Ups and downs. Actually got diagnosed with cancer the year after we got married, so it was kind of one thing after another, sort of like a game of shoots and ladders. I kept kind of going up the ladder and then I would slip on a shoot and find myself making my way back down to where I started, but that was a bit of my journey.

Doug Smith: 7:02

Yeah, just out of curiosity, because that's quite a turnaround. We have very similar backgrounds and I'm just curious was there a moment or a person or people that you would look back and say that was the start of what really helped me turn my life around, or was it really just kind of a self-awareness that helped?

Andrew Reichert: 7:20

Yeah, a little bit of both. I mean, certainly I've had my fair share of mentors and coaches and counselors through the time. I'm one of the folks I am forever indebted to and grateful for them just pouring into my life. In college I started to read a lot. So I read this book Rich Dad, poor Dad, and that really transformed my life. I realized that I was making bad decisions financially. The seven habits of highly effective people. Stephen

Covey realized I was living an ineffective lifestyle. Then a few of my mentors in college one in particular really kind of had to hammer his end demands that Andrew, stop your behavior. You're better than this. You've got to turn it around.

Doug Smith: 8:03

It was that kind of tough love that I really needed to turn things around, yeah well, I can say personally thank God for that person and thank God for the books that you read. It's been incredible to watch your journey and see what you're doing. Today. I wanted to dive into real estate. I haven't interviewed a ton of people in the real estate field and we live in a world where, if you go on Instagram, there's 10,000 videos of people saying you need to invest in real estate. You should invest, yeah, and I think a lot of people may want to, but they know nothing about it. There's a lot of fear there. I just want to ask a few questions, just at a basic level. Why do you think people should invest in real estate? Or should even ask do you think everyone should invest in real estate?

Andrew Reichert: 8:40

Yeah, yeah, I'm certainly biased, because I have the majority of my net worth in real estate, but yes, I do think people should invest in real estate. The primary reason I would point to is basically risk adjusted return. You're investing in something that is undergirded by a physical asset, and we specifically focus on multifamily workforce housing. For us, the workforce is always going to need to rent properties, and so being a landlord for that provides some stability and some ability to mitigate risk when it comes to that type of investment. That's why I like to invest in real estate.

Doug Smith: 9:22

Yeah and just can you talk about investing in real estate one-on-one? There's so many options. It seems like people can go out and buy their own property and try to do that. They can invest in an organization that owns real estate. Any advice there, or what are people's options?

Andrew Reichert: 9:38

Yeah. So first of all, there are a million options. There's a million ways that you can make money in real estate, and I realized that pretty early on. I was reading every book on real estate and short sales and foreclosures and buying with no money down. I had no money, so I was reading every single book on buying with no money down. Interestingly, my first property I bought the year I graduated from college. I bought a property with no money down, I brought \$0 to the table and I left the closing table with a \$20,000 check. That was 2007 and that was the year before.

Doug Smith: 10:16

How do we sign up for that?

Andrew Reichert: 10:18

Yeah, you can't do that anymore. That was banks getting themselves into the trouble that ultimately led to the crash of 08 and 09. Thank you, but there are just a million ways you can make money in real estate. So real estate is very basic. I mean at least income. Investing in real estate is you know, your rent is the income you pay operating expenses, then you get, at the end of the day, net operating income, pay the mortgage, any capital expenses, and that yields you cash flow. There's three ways we make money in real estate. It's cash flow, paying down on the mortgage and appreciation of the asset. So for us, that's what we've chosen, right. We just we buy real estate, we rent it out and we make money. Those three ways you could flip houses, you could get into office buildings and, you know, retail strip centers. All of those are other ways to make real estate wholesaling. We've picked this one particular path that works well for us.

Doug Smith: 11:14

Yeah, no, I'm thinking about individuals like myself. You know, I personally don't own any real estate at the current time and, like I'm just thinking, I think a lot of times people here real estate investing, it's oh it's passive income. You know, it doesn't require any work. But if you own your own building or property, I mean you're responsible for that property, you're responsible for the tenants. You have to get tenants you have to deal with issues. Any advice? Is it easier for people just to invest in a company that's already investing in real estate, or do you think you know everyone should try to buy their own properties, etc? I'm just curious.

Andrew Reichert: 11:47

Yeah, great question, great question. So I've done it both ways. So I started by being my own landlord, right? So I bought a duplex, so I was working a full-time job during the day, and then I would be doing painting in the evenings, you know, plumbing repairs in the evenings. I'd be leasing on the weekends and I'd be at eviction court, you know, on Wednesday morning or Thursday morning. And it was really hard, right, like I'm working a full-time job and I'm doing all that stuff as well. I think that's the hard way. Now, granted you get, you can get a higher return on your investment if you do it that way. So there's pros and cons each way. Now I would say that that is more of a job than it is an investment, right? I was treating that almost I was getting paid as a job. The other side of the spectrum is what we do today, which is really creating truly passive investments for investors, and you know that's more the mailbox money, right, like you invest in something and then you get dividends from that, and it's totally hands-off experience from the investor side of things and obviously the returns are going to be a little bit less because you're paying companies to do all that work that you would typically do. But I believe that you know there's pros and cons and I've just found that I really like the

second kind of kind, which is more the passive investing, and part of my thinking there, by the way, is I just believe in specialization. So I think that if you're a doctor or you're a lawyer or you're you know, a CEO, you should be doing those things and not learning about real estate. You know, let the real estate people do the real estate.

Doug Smith: 13:35

Yeah, that's always been my fear. I'm like I can't even hang a picture on a wall. Yeah, so I think it would be a disaster if I tried to do it myself. But, as you said, you all have developed a product where people actually can invest in real estate. Can you just briefly just share where people can get more information about that?

Andrew Reichert: 13:52

Yeah, sure thing. So my company is birgo b-i-r-g-o.com, and from there you know if accredited investors which have a certain net worth can learn more about our private funds through there. And then we did launch a REIT that's available to anybody with a low minimum, that it's a public REIT, so unaccredited investors can invest there, and that's called return. So it's spelled R-E-I-T-U-R-N.com and that's. You know, that's an area where folks can just invest with very little down and the same exact product.

Doug Smith: 14:27

Yeah, we'll add all the links to that in the show notes, as we always do. You know one people one reason people want to invest in real estate is obviously to make money, and you've shared earlier just about your personal story. You know, you came from a family who really didn't have much at all and now you've built this large company and you've done quite well for yourself and your wife and your family. I'm just curious, you know, throughout that journey from almost having nothing to you know doing pretty well, what have you learned about money? And just in general, because I think the whole world right now is just everyone wants to be, you know, get rich now. Everyone's retired by the time they're 40. But I'm just curious how do you view money?

Andrew Reichert: 15:05

Yeah, well, it's been. That's such a great question and it's certainly evolved over time. You know, when I was young and didn't have any of it, I think I very much idolized money. You know, I wanted it because I wanted to get out of the situation that I was in. And as I've had some, you know I've learned that it's really not that simple. Like more money creates more problems, as a wise prophet once said. So you know, the reality is here's how I think of money. Money is just a tool, so it's really just a tool. It's about what you do with the money that matters. I think a good example of that is at least an example from the real estate space is the concept of leverage. So you know, when you take out a mortgage on a property, a lever is a tool, right? A lever is a tool that you can, that you can use, and leverage in the real estate space is a tool you can use to amplify

your returns by getting a mortgage on a property. Now it really depends on what you do with that tool, because many people have lost a lot of money by leveraging or even over leveraging their properties. So I think of money the same way on the personal front. It's just a tool that can be used for good or for bad.

Doug Smith: 16:25

And do you have any advice for people who want to build wealth, whether that's personal habits that you've developed, Obviously. You said you read a ton of books just on money. What advice would you give to someone who wants to become wealthy one day?

Andrew Reichert: 16:38

Yeah, great question. I mean, I really think it comes down to every single person has a unique DNA, and I think it comes down to understanding your unique DNA. What are you designed to do and how does that bring value to this world? Too often, I think, people are don't really understand themselves, so they don't understand their who, and then they don't understand their purpose, so they don't understand their why. And I start with understand your who, understand your why, and then you can talk about what you do, when you do it and how you do it. And I've actually created a little system that we use at our company to walk people through those five steps. But I think it starts with who understanding your unique DNA and then why understanding your unique calling or your unique purpose.

Doug Smith: 17:29

So really, what I'm hearing you say is, if you find out you're gifting your passions and you're calling and put those together, the money will come, because you're going to add a unique. You're going to make a unique contribution to the world where a lot of people just say, hey, what career can I make the most money and I want to go to that now, and they end up miserable and they end up wasting their whole lives. But if people just pursue how they're uniquely created, they'd be fine.

Andrew Reichert: 17:51

Yeah, you nailed it, that's exactly it. And again, I see so many people that are just lost. And I used to travel when I was with PNC. I used to travel all the time and I had racked up a bunch of miles so I would get upgraded to first class for free and I would be in first class. You know, I'm a young salesperson and I would be sitting next to a very successful older executive, you know, flying first class, going somewhere important, and they'd be miserable. They would just be absolutely miserable. Right, they're going through a divorce at home. Their kids hate them. Whatever the situation was, they always I mean, I was kind of a talker, so they would like share their story with me and I

just realized like, oh, this person's totally lost, like they've got it all wrong and so you can't let the, the end goal of that money drive you. You have to drive that.

Doug Smith: 18:38

That's so good, and you know you talked about money being a tool. It can also be a tool for great good, and I know you and your wife are very generous as well. What have you learned about generosity when it comes to having wealth as well?

Andrew Reichert: 18:50

Yeah, generosity, it's a great question, you know. Generosity for me just gets back to this broader principle of stewardship. So I think I view myself as a steward of the resources that I have, so I'm not really the owner of them, right? And I think that it's that perspective that really drives my view on generosity. For me, my capital, my children, my spouse, my house, my company all of these things are not really mine. They are things that I'm stewarding in this lifetime, really for as long as I have them, and so when that's true of my money, I don't really think of it as I own this. I think of it as I am a conduit for this money and how can I get it to the place that it needs to go, and so that's really what drives my view of generosity, yeah.

Doug Smith: 19:47

I love that. You've clearly built a great company. I want to talk a little bit about entrepreneurship. Again, just going back to trends in our culture, I think everyone wants to be an entrepreneur. It's the cool thing. It wasn't always at just the basic level. I'm curious. Your thoughts, you know, or entrepreneurs, we do talk about your unique wiring. Have you found that you either have it or you don't? You're either an entrepreneur or you're not, or do you really think anyone can be an entrepreneur today and create and build their own business?

Andrew Reichert: 20:12

Yeah, it's really an interesting question. I've thought about that a lot and I've thought about it for myself a lot. You know, in the early days I wanted to be an entrepreneur, but I kind of had to ask myself the question like, am I wired to be an entrepreneur, you know, do I actually have what it takes? And so I think it really depends on what you mean by the definition of entrepreneur. To me, entrepreneur doesn't necessarily need to mean a person that starts a business. To me, entrepreneurship is kind of a mindset and more than it is a thing that someone does. And I do think you know that understanding that mindset kind of starts with understanding your unique DNA. I mean, one of the things that I think about a lot is people view entrepreneurs as risk takers. I am a risk taker, for sure, but you know there are people that are risk adverse. That could be a small business owner, you know, like, oh no, maybe a Chick-fil-A franchise or something, and I think that that can be thought of as entrepreneurship as well. Right,

it's, you're doing something entrepreneurial, or maybe you work within a big corporation. So when I was at PNC Bank, I was in a small group that was doing something very innovative and very entrepreneurial. So you wouldn't think of PNC Bank as you know, this huge multi-regional, actually national bank today as being entrepreneurial. But we were. You know the small group that was in there was, and so I do think that anybody can be an entrepreneur. I think the kind of entrepreneur really depends on your unique wiring. You know, are you risk taker, are you risk adverse? And that will play into how, you know, folks decide to let that play out with their personal calling.

Doug Smith: 22:01

Yeah, it's really interesting that you found like you were scratching that itch inside of you at PNC. I am curious you know, walk people through the transition? Because I do feel like I talk to a lot of people who are in a corporate job. Some of them love it, some of them hate it, but they may feel inside like, hey, I feel like one day I should start my own thing or I'm going to. Was that? Was that a difficult thing for you to jump? Like, can you walk people through that process and maybe any advice you'd have for people who are considering jumping?

Andrew Reichert: 22:29

Yeah for sure. So it was a difficult decision. It was a very difficult decision for me. I had a really great high paying job at PNC. I was doing really well and honestly, I could have kept doing that like earning a good income. I enjoyed my colleagues, I had a great job and a great boss and again, having grown up without money, like having that stability, was very nice, right. And so it was a very difficult decision and I think well, first of all, in college I had started a business and I was very into this concept of entrepreneurship, and obviously I ended up in an area at PNC that was entrepreneurial as well. So I did kind of always think, hey, someday I will probably be an entrepreneur, like I'll probably actually start a company, but the timing and the transition I didn't know. And so going from a high paying job to making like \$0 an hour was a big risk, and so for me it was all about like, starting small, putting the wheels in motion. I had already started to build a little portfolio of real estate, and so for me it was a blend of yes, I'm a risk taker and I'm doing everything that I can to mitigate and minimize this risk before I jump out on my own putting the wheels in motion of what would it look like to get a real estate license and really understanding all that stuff. I did a lot of research before I made that jump and that was really helpful.

Doug Smith: 24:04

And, just out of curiosity, how much of that risk was mitigated before you actually jumped Like? Were you like getting close to the salary that you had before, or was it just growing to a point where you're like it's time?

Andrew Reichert: 24:15

Oh no, definitely not close to the salary I had before it was it was. It was very much a big risk bet betting on myself. I'll tell you what one piece of advice I got at that time. That was really helpful. One of my mentors said like hey, Andrew, if it doesn't work out like you can just get another job doing kind of what you were doing. Now whether whether PNC would take you back is another question. They may or may not have. But like he was right, right, like the so. So the risk is really only. The risk is only if I fail, and I was betting on myself to not fail. So so I thought that was really good advice that helped me conceptualize here. I could always go back to doing what I was doing if I need to.

Doug Smith: 25:03

Yeah well, fortunately it was a good bet. You're here 11 years later and still doing well. You know it's been I'm sure it's been quite a journey from where you started to now you have 90 plus employees. What advice do you just have for entrepreneurs? Maybe they've already started their business, maybe they're just launching, but you know, what advice would you give them can save them time, pain and suffering that you may have gone through in the last few years.

Andrew Reichert: 25:26

Yeah for sure. Well, I'll tell you what I mean honestly. My first, my first three or four years, I was still figuring out what I wanted to do, like you would have. You would have thought I knew that before I like resigned from my job. But I did so many different things Like earlier I was talking about all the different ways you can make money in real estate. I tried them all, like I was doing some real estate development and I was doing a little bit of kind of the house flipping type thing. I was a real estate agent, so I was just like brokering real estate, right, like I'm doing all these different things. And so my first piece of advice would be insofar as you can figure out your unique abilities and what you wanna do before you make that jump. I think I was a bit naive in terms of thinking that I had it figured out and I honestly just didn't. So I would say figure out your unique abilities, figure out how you're wired, figure out what it is exactly you wanna do before you make the jump. Two, I would say start small. Develop a minimum viable product. If you're developing a product, some kind of proof of concept If you can prove that what you wanna do can be effective on a small scale, then you can scale it up. There's this Jim Collins book where he says fire bullets and then cannonballs. So like, honestly, one of the mistakes I made was just firing cannonballs and everything I could find, and that's just not the right approach. Again, I figured it out I landed on my feet, but it was a lot of years of struggling and pain that I would encourage people to try to avoid if they can. So fire bullets before cannonballs. And then, third, I would say super important to surround yourself with complimentary skills. So I think diversity is so important. Don't surround yourself with people like yourself. The natural tendency is to go out and be an entrepreneur with people that you like right, like people that are like you. Don't do it.

Find people that you kind of don't like because they're not like you and they're different, and that's gonna make you more effective and successful.

Doug Smith: 27:41

That's really really interesting because in theory that sounds really really easy, like you said, but it's not people's natural tendency and it takes an incredible amount of work. And knowing your organization as I do, I know diversity is important. Any tips there? Because I think everyone wants a diverse workforce in every way possible, but it does take work. Any advice there for leaders?

Andrew Reichert: 28:02

It's really hard. I mean, we certainly are intentional about it, but we're not perfect and we're still figuring it out ourselves. I would say one diversity comes in many forms. So, like one of the things we do is a lot of personality assessments, and so we do the predictive index, the strengths finder, the M code, the Colby I'm really big into these, so I have like 15 that I've done.

Doug Smith: 28:27

Does a new employee have to take all of those before day one? Two they only take the predictive index and the strengths finder before they start.

Andrew Reichert: 28:35

But once they've started, we've got them. So then I get them to take the rest, but we don't hire anybody unless they've taken the predictive index and strengths finder, and so predictive index. It's very simple. If you're an independent person, you need people that are more collaborative. If you're social, you need people that are more reserved. If you're more driving, you need people that are gonna be more steady, and if you're more formal, you need people that are more informal. So just understanding how you're wired and then understanding, okay, I need people that are gonna be the opposite of this. If I'm not a big rule follower which I'm not right the guy that got expelled from high school probably not following the rules you need to, it's a rule follower. You need somebody that's gonna make sure that the eyes are dotted and the T's are crossed, and so that's a particular thing I would say. We focus on a lot, and then, obviously, we look at our demographics and we try to get diversity of all shapes and forms as well.

Doug Smith: 29:36

Yeah, also an entrepreneurship. So talk to me just about selling, and I don't necessarily mean selling a product, but selling a vision. You went from betting on yourself, which is great, but you also had to convince now 90 plus people that you're a leader and you

have a vision worth following. What have you? Learned just about selling people on vision.

Andrew Reichert: 29:56

Yeah, I think it's the most important thing. I mean, I think it's the number one driver of culture, and for us I like the term weaponized vision Like you can actually create a vision that can be powerful, almost like a sword that can cut through and figure out the one side from the other side. So I like to kind of think of it almost as a weapon or as a tool, and for us it's all about casting that vision, and that vision will either be like very compelling and attractive to the right people or probably like repulsive and unattractive to the wrong people, and that's kind of the point. Right Like that helps us to figure out when we're hiring, managing, firing, reviewing, rewarding and recognizing. It's all around that vision and around our core values to make sure that we're holding fast then developing a culture full of people that are passionate about the same vision.

Doug Smith: 30:59

Yeah, and now we're starting to get into leadership, and it's one thing to lead yourself and start the company, but now you have 90 plus people that you're responsible for leading. What have you learned about leadership over the last 11 years of leading this company?

Andrew Reichert: 31:11

Oh, so many things, doug. How long do we have here? I've learned so much and honestly again, I was just very immature in those early days, didn't know what I was doing. Surprised that people actually chose to follow me, because at the time I really really wasn't leading the way that I aspire to and try to make sure that I'm leading today. But one of the big things I learned is that you have to be ruthless about not compromising on core values. Really, the core values that define who we are as an organization are non-negotiable and when we're looking at two candidates to hire, for example, it's so easy to look at one that might have this experience. It might be the perfect person that can definitely do the job. But if we see another person that we're like, wow, this is a really strong core values fit, but they're gonna take some time to learn the job, we're generally leaning towards the person that we feel like is definitely a core values fit and will definitely fit in culturally, because that is something that we feel like is more important. We feel like the hard skills can be taught, but it's really hard to change the way that a person is. So I'd say that's probably one of the biggest lessons that I've learned as a leader.

Doug Smith: 32:41

So I love how you were talking about being ruthless around core values, and I think it's so important because you have to build a great culture and if I have any observation of

Bergo, from my view, it's that you guys have an incredible culture. I've talked to your staff. I've been here on days where I've been told hey, it's gonna get really noisy, you might hear a gong going off and you like to ring gongs. So what have you learned about culture boating over the time here?

Andrew Reichert: 33:07

Yeah, no, I do like to ring gongs. In fact, as we record this, it is Friday and pretty soon we are gonna be doing our Fridays are for winners, where we bring the gongs, celebrate wins. Folks will be cracking open a beverage and just hanging out together. So, yeah, I think celebrating wins is huge. I mean, we're always doing the hard grind of the work and to take a step back and celebrate wins is super important and very additive to culture. You know, I'd say, as it relates to culture, there's two big things. One is the core values, which I've already mentioned. So core values are not defined, they are discovered. And I think the key is discovering the core values that are already in the organization, that define the culture. What is the fabric of this organization? The way that it already is. So I think that's one of the keys is discovering those core values and then saying, okay, this is who we are, this is what we stand for, and then that gives you a filter to continue to kind of hire, review, reward, manage when necessary, fire around. And the second I would say is your mission really needs to be about something bigger than just making money, something bigger than just the work that you actually do. Your mission needs to be driven by something bigger than even yourselves, right Like? The mission really needs to get people excited to get out of bed in the morning, and if it doesn't, then you've got the wrong mission, or at least you've got a mission that's not going to be compelling to people.

Doug Smith: 34:50

Yeah, well, I know, leading a company and leadership in general, there's a lot of weight that comes with that. There's a lot of pressure that comes with that. And one thing you did I think it was last year, maybe two years ago now, but you recently took a sabbatical, and not just like a one week sabbatical, you were out for a period of time. Can you just talk about the impact that that sabbatical had on your life? And I guess my question would be would you encourage leaders to take sabbaticals on a consistent basis?

Andrew Reichert: 35:14

Yeah, absolutely. So I took a one month sabbatical last August. It was my first time doing that. You know, I was celebrating 10 years since I started the company and seven years since I launched our first fund, so both of those are like big milestones and I said, hey look, I'm going to take a month off. The reality is, I didn't realize how burnt out I was until I took the sabbatical. It wasn't until I stepped back and took a time to reflect and rest, that I that I realized what rest actually looks like and I just reflected on my own strengths, my own unique abilities, my own purpose, my own calling, and those are just

things that I wouldn't have been able to do if I was just always in the day to day grind. So for me, a sabbatical was absolutely necessary. I would highly recommend it for others, you know, I think I think a lot of organizations are starting to put in place sabbatical policies. You know, maybe every five years you make sure you give the you know the, the individual or the employee like a month off, something like that. But I also think that the concept of sabbatical is almost like a mindset that anybody can take and the key is to not just take a vacation. A lot of people think like a vacation is a sabbatical. There's an article on our blog about how I view them differently and I think just being intentional about taking time off to work on yourself is an absolute necessity.

Doug Smith: 36:45

Yeah, the policy thing is interesting. So is that something? I don't know if you guys have actually put one in place, but is that something you'd recommend for all employees, Say like the five year mark, or is that just for you know, leadership team? I'm just curious how you're processing that. Yeah, I think it's. It's an important aspect of any company particularly.

Andrew Reichert: 37:01

You know companies are trying to attract talent right now and I think that it's it's, you know, harder and harder to differentiate yourself from the competition out there. So I've seen companies do it anywhere from seven years. You know where it's, you know it's a lot of work. Seven years, you know where. Every seven years, every employee gets it. I've seen like every three years, but it's just for the leadership team or maybe director level and above. We founded our company, so we actually have what we call flexible time off, but you might actually call it unlimited time off, so it obviously has to get approved by your manager, but we've actually found that we have to, like, force people to take time off. You would be amazed. I mean, now, granted, one of our core values is rhinoceriality, so we've got a bunch of rhinos that just love charging and love working really hard. But like we have to beg people to take time off, and I think that's that's really where the rubber hits the road. I think it's less about a policy and more about creating a culture where you're encouraging people to take time off because you recognize that they need it. Wow, I love that.

Doug Smith: 38:16

And I would say when you were on sabbatical you had one of the best away messages I've ever read you had why you were taking sabbatical. There were articles, so maybe I'll copy and paste I did the show notes for everyone to read. You're always investing in yourself. That's one thing I've loved about watching your journey. I'm just curious you know, what advice do you have for leaders when it comes to investing in themselves, and I know you've been a part of multiple programs or there are one or two programs

that have been published. Are there one or two programs that have deeply impacted you that you'd recommend?

Andrew Reichert: 38:46

Yeah, definitely. So I am very big on investing in myself. I think an investment in my own capacity is one of the best investments that I can make. So a couple of things I've done. I mean one. I think you want to invest in yourself, kind of in three different spheres. One is you and your company. So you know, if you're an entrepreneur, I like to invest in me and the company. That's primarily where I like to invest my dollars. Two is you and your vocation. So whatever skills you're trying to equip yourself to do the work that you're doing, get better at them. Right, Like, if you want to be the best property manager, how can you figure out how to be the best property manager? Or, you know, if you want to be the best CEO, how can you equip yourself to be a really good CEO? So you and your vocation, investing in that, I think, is important. And then the third is just investing in yourself as a person. You know, as you mentioned, I've done some coaching around that I've gone through Michael Hyatt's coaching program, Dan Sullivan's coaching program and I found that those have been really helpful. Investing in myself as a person. I've also, you know I invested myself that way with books and you know kind of everything else that I can get my hands on to grow myself personally and professionally. So I think those are the three spheres I kind of think of that question in light of, and I make different investments in each of them.

Doug Smith: 40:14

Yeah, I was telling earlier just about the pain and the pressure that comes with leadership, but also just life. You know, I know when you were sharing your story you talked about you know you felt like you were on a chutes and ladders game board. You know, one minute you're up and the next minute you're down. And those down moments when you feel like you know you were at that top of the ladder and you went all the way back to, you know, spacex or whatever. Yeah, how do you, as a leader, deal with those moments and process those and get through them?

Andrew Reichert: 40:41

Yeah, good question. So I would say, like I'm not perfect at this, I'm still getting better. One, I would say, is surround myself with a community. So my wife is incredible, you know. When I'm having a bad day or dealing with a really challenging thing, I can talk to her. I've got amazing colleagues and partners in the company that I can talk to and work through those things with Amazing mentors. You know, my spiritual director, my counselors, things like that. Those are people I can talk to and work through those things, and for me, what I'm really trying to do is stay grounded. The image that I often think of is a tree. That's like blowing in the wind, but its roots are very deep, and so the tree may waver, it may sway back and forth, but it's not going anywhere. And that's the

goal of me as a leader I try to make sure that I'm grounded, that my roots are deep, and so when those you know when the air is blowing and the wind is, you know the storms are coming I feel like I can stay grounded in, you know, in that tree.

Doug Smith: 41:49

Yeah, one thing I also admire about your company is I think you guys are incredible with branding and marketing, and I'm just curious I'll just leave this open-ended Any advice to leaders listening to this on marketing and creating an awesome brand?

Andrew Reichert: 42:02

Yeah, so you know I went to school for marketing, so I was a marketing major in college. So I think that's kind of unique A lot of folks that are doing what I do today, you know, running a private equity real estate company typically went to school for finance or maybe even real estate, and I didn't, like I actually intentionally felt like, huh, I'd actually like to develop the soft skills that I feel like will be helpful in college and then I'll, after college, learn the hard skills, and so marketing for me is really just an opportunity to kind of display who we are right, like, put our core values out on public display, put our mission out on public display. So, because I'm so passionate about our vision and our mission and our purpose, I'm really passionate about marketing and branding. Like, for me, excellence is one of our core values, for example, and I love when branding and marketing just looks excellent, right, like I love when it really conveys the you know, the picture that we're trying to convey or the story that we're trying to tell. So people always kind of laugh internally because I'll be saying, oh, there's a grammar error there, there's an extra space there, or that color is not right, exactly our branding color, or you know that there's, that's a you're one eighth of an inch off on the margin there and, like you know, most CEOs aren't seeing that stuff. They're not caring about that stuff. I just do care, one because it's our core value and two just because I think that that brand is a reflection of who we are.

Doug Smith: 43:41

Yeah, well, if anyone's in the Pittsburgh area, I encourage you. Well, I don't know if you're open for tours but yeah, come on by. Yeah, it's so cool and I literally feel like every square inch of every room speaks something about just your culture and company and so well done there. I have to bring this up because I guess I kind of overlooked it when you mentioned it, but you said one of your values is Ryan Neurostar. I don't even know if I can say it, ryan, you say it, but Right Ryan Neurostarality.

Andrew Reichert: 44:09

Yes, it is a made up word.

Doug Smith: 44:10

Yes, tell, okay, yeah, yeah. Can you just tell people what that is and why it's a value? I just think it's hilarious.

Andrew Reichert: 44:16

Yeah, so I am like obsessed with rhinos. There was a book written like 20 years ago called Rhinoceros Success and it's just a funny book. But he contrasts the rhino to the cow and you know, the rhinos out in the jungle, charging right, thick skin kind of damn the torpedoes mentality right, like just just I can take anything mentality and the cow is kind of like lazy in the grass grazing right, and so it's become a picture for me of the like, drivenness and the life that I want to live when I'm at my best and and honestly, like kind of some of the other side of myself, which is, you know, everybody has a tendency towards maybe laziness or apathy or passive passivity, and for me it's all about being proactive and driving after my goals, setting goals and charging them down, and that's what. That's what rhinoceriality is all about.

Doug Smith: 45:20

I love it. There's no doubt you're a rhino. I won't try to say the word again, but I love it. With a few minutes we have left, I'm with having the lightning round a few questions asked in every interview, and the first one is what is the best advice you've ever received and who gave it to you?

Andrew Reichert: 45:34

Oof. That's the advice I've ever received. Well, I've received a lot of advice and I'll tell you what I needed all of it because, again, I was so, so lost for most of my life and so every person was, you know, that was telling me advice, and pretty good, my early days was right and I needed to hear it. So I think the one out well, one I mentioned already which is, like Andrew, stop being an idiot, like you got to get your life in order, which is advice I needed to hear, but I would say the one that I would pick, which I also mentioned earlier the most important piece of advice was probably look, Andrew, if you leave PNC and you start this business and you fail, you can always go back to doing what you were doing, and that really helped me kind of get over the hump and my my false sense of stability and and and leave and launch my own company if you could put a quote on a billboard for everyone to read, what would it say? a quote on a billboard for everyone to read. I think it would say life is short, live intentionally. Yeah, life, life is short, live intentionally. I think. As I'm getting older, I'm realizing just how short life is and, like so many people myself included in most of my lives, don't live thinking today could be my last day, tomorrow could be my last day and, honestly, just again, having had cancer and having been in a life-threatening situation, that is something that I want everybody to hear and understand. Life is short, live intentionally you've.

Doug Smith: 47:18

You mentioned two books earlier that the made a great impact on you. Rich dad poured out in the seven habits. Are there one or two other books maybe you've read recently that have impacted you deeply you'd recommend oh my gosh.

Andrew Reichert: 47:29

So I read, probably, you know, 20, 30 books a year and and honestly, they, they all impact me. So my general perspective to books is chew up the meat, spit out the bones. So I get something from every book that I read. I never read a book or I was like I was a waste of time. I'm always getting something. I just finished delivering happiness, which is the story of Zappos. I love their culture. I love what they're up to. If I had to make a suggestion for your listeners, I would point to Michael Hyatt's kind of three books which are living forward, free to focus and best year ever, because that that's sort of the system that I, that I used to get my life back on track, and sort of in order you've mentioned all throughout the podcast that you've had, you know, countless mentors, coaches, programs.

Doug Smith: 48:27

I'm curious when you get to spend time with someone that you look up to admire, want to learn from, do you ever go to question or two that you always ask?

Andrew Reichert: 48:35

people that I look up to an admirer. I like to ask people, you know, what, what challenges they faced and how they overcame them. For me, if you look at my motivational patterns, there's a another assessment you can use, called the M code, used to be called the M core. My number one motivational pattern is meet the challenge, meet the challenge. My second is actually overcome. So I love a challenge, I love to meet the challenge, I love to overcome obstacles, and so you know, when I meet people, I like to hear about the obstacles that they faced and how they overcame them so, with that said, this should this will be fun.

Doug Smith: 49:14

I really look forward to hearing your answer on this. What's your biggest leadership pet peeve?

Andrew Reichert: 49:19

pet peeve for, as for me as a leader, or for other leaders?

Doug Smith: 49:24

oh no, for you like what drives you nuts, that you're like yeah outside of like one extra space and something yeah, yeah, that does.

Andrew Reichert: 49:34

That's not a leadership pet peeve. I would say, my leadership pet peeve is Monday morning quarterbacks. So you've probably heard that expression before. But, like you know, the athletes are all working hard on Sunday playing football and then on Monday morning you get the you know the announcers that are telling them what they should have done differently and like that just drives me nuts, for me, the leader. You can't tell that leader what they should have done. You can't tell that CEO or that athlete what they should have done, because you're not in the arena, like you know. I'm sure you've heard the quote, but I just love the person who's in the arena, and so the Monday morning quarterbacks drive me crazy.

Doug Smith: 50:17

I love that. I don't know if you have a natural bucket list or not, but what's something you've done in your life that you think everyone should do before they die?

Andrew Reichert: 50:25

yeah, I do have a bucket list. We travel often. We usually take a one international trip a year, but usually like two or three total trips a year. I'll tell you what international trip wise, something I think everybody should do before they die is take a trip to a poverty stricken area. Right before we got married, my wife and I, along with our church, did a missions trip to Haiti and just saw the poverty that people are living in. And boy, I talk about growing up with no money, which is true, but it doesn't compare to some of the poverty in the world. I mean, we are so privileged as Americans and oftentimes we don't know it, and so for my children, I think of that a lot, like they're gonna grow up privileged, and so how do I make sure they stay grounded? I want to make sure that they see Haiti. I mean, my wife and I also did our honeymoon in Cape Town, south Africa, drove through the townships there, saw how people live and shipping, you know crates, and it's just it's wild to see that, and and I think it's so important to just narrow our perspective on how privileged we really are it's really really good.

Doug Smith: 51:40

Last two questions if you can go back and have coffee with yourself at any age and you would have actually listened to yourself because you probably would what age, Andrew, would you meet with and what would you tell them?

Andrew Reichert: 51:51

yeah, that's so funny because it's true I wouldn't have listened to myself. Well, I'll tell you what I think. I think high school Andrew would not have listened to myself. I think middle school Andrew would not have a missing a listen to myself. I think 5th grade Andrew might have listened to myself and I think 5th grade Andrew is really the turning point that I that I needed that. I didn't get. So I think if I could go back, I would talk to 5th

grade Andrew and I think what I would tell him is like Andrew, you are loved and you are accepted just the way that you are. I think 5th grade Andrew really needed to hear that and having not heard that, I think I went the total opposite direction of trying to seek, you know, love and affection and acceptance in all the wrong places and on the other end of your life.

Doug Smith: 52:43

At the end, what do you want to be remembered for? What do you want your legacy to be?

Andrew Reichert: 52:48

yeah, legacy, it's a. It's an interesting question and an important topic that a lot of, a lot of people talk about. You know, for me, honestly, I don't care if nobody remembers my name when I'm not on this world anymore. My faith is important to me and so for me, as long as I've lived out my calling, like I believe God has put me on this earth to do something and I want to live that out for me it's all about the impact that I leave behind. So, whether that be through my children, through my church, through my spouse, through the company, like I want to leave that impact. Only this world a better place than I found it. If nobody remembers my name, that's totally fine.

Doug Smith: 53:33

I just want, I just really care about the impact that I'm having well, I know you've certainly impacted my life and a lot of people that I know, and so you're making a huge difference in the world. So thank you for that and thank you for the conversation.

Andrew Reichert: 53:44

This was rich yeah, thank you, doug. Thanks for having me on, appreciate it well, leader.

Doug Smith: 53:49

Thank you so much for listening to my conversation with Andrew. 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 [L3 leadership.org](http://L3leadership.org). And, as always, leader. I want to challenge you that if you want to tax or growth this year, then you need either launch or join an L3 leadership mastermind group. Mastermind groups are simply groups of six to 12 leaders that meet together on a consistent basis for at least one year and we're 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. So if you are interested in launching or joining a group, go to l3leadership.org, forward I leave every episode with a quote, and I'm gonna quote Jeannie Mayo today, who is in our last episode. If you haven't gone back and listen to

that, I really encourage you to. It's phenomenal. And she said this to leaders about parenting. She said you'll have your kids when everything else goes away. And leaders. We need to keep that in mind. The most important thing we could ever lead as our family. So never lose sight of that, leader. I hope you enjoyed the episode. I hope you are encouraged. 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.