

**Doug Smith:** 0:08

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 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'd leave us a rating and review on Apple Podcast or Spotify or whatever app you listen to podcast through. That really does help us to grow our audience and reach more leaders, so thank you in advance for that. Well, leader, it is August, and every August, I take a month off of podcasting and replay some of my favorite episodes, and so in today's Encore episode, you're going to hear a talk that was given at our first L3 One Day Conference in 2019 by one of my heroes, Saleem Ghubril, who's the executive director of the Pittsburgh Promise here in Pittsburgh, and he gave a talk entitled Leader Are you For Real? And it was one of the most impactful talks that I've ever heard. I've listened to it a dozen times and you're going to love, love, love this talk and speaking of L3 One Day. We are going to be hosting our L3 One Day Conference in 2024 here in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and it is either going to be on Thursday February 29th or Friday March 1st, and we're going to be announcing the official date and launching registration in October. And we do have our keynote speaker booked. Our keynote speaker this year is going to be Hor Shultz, the founder of the Ritz Carlton. It's going to be an incredible conference, so make sure you stay on the lookout for all the details regarding L3 One Day. And again in today's episode, you're going to hear a talk from our original L3 One Day by Saleem Gubril, called Leader Are you For Real? 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 Baritone Advisors can help you develop a customized financial plan for your financial future by visiting their website at [beratungadvisors.com](http://beratungadvisors.com) that's B-E-R-A-T-U-N-G-Advisors. com. These investment products and services offered through LPL Financial, member of FINRA and Beratung, Advisors, lpl Financial and L3 Leadership are separate entities. I also want to thank our sponsor, Henne Jewelers. They were jewelry earned 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. If you're in need of a good jeweler,

check out [HenneJewelers.com](http://HenneJewelers.com). And I also want to thank our new sponsor, [reiturn.com](http://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](http://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 Saleem Ghubril at L3 One Day with his talk Leader. Are you For Real?

**Saleem Ghubril:** 3:19

Well, hello everybody. You have heard an awful lot of content and you've been sitting in those chairs all day long. You have got to be worn out and tired and you have absorbed about as much as you can absorb and you are preoccupied with what you missed out on today by being here and you've had people kind of tell you not to look at your phones all day long and it's killing you. It's killing you to not know what's happening in the world out there. And thank you for persisting now, until and after this. You are free people. So, yeah, if you don't mind, I'm going to. So I woke up super early this morning, which is not unusual, but this morning I woke up as the news was breaking about the shooting and the synagogues in the mosques in New Zealand and 49 people who showed up to pray this morning were gunned down by a very hateful person. And I just kind of want us, as leaders, to take a moment and just kind of recognize that that's a terrible thing and that is something that is not acceptable anywhere. Like Dr King says, injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. So I want us to take Forgive me for imposing this I want us to take a moment of silence and think about the fact that 49 lives were taken and thousands of lives were touched and affected, and the entire world is different when hatred infiltrates any part of this world. After the moment of silence, I'm going to say God in your mercy, and those of you who are comfortable in saying back you would say here are prayers. Let's take a moment of silence. God in your mercy. Laurie and Doug, I am so thankful for you and so appreciative of the work that you're doing and the bold and daring steps that you are taking, have taken and will continue to take, and the fact that you're kind of sticking your neck out, and I'm very grateful to you for doing that. And thank you for including me in this very important day, the launch of the L3 One Day. I'm trying to get L1 three day, L3 One Day conference and for me it is just like an incredible honor and pure, pure, pure joy to share the stage with dear friends that I love immensely, like Kim Fleming and like John Haney and like Chris Howard and like. Well, I only met the pastor who spoke this morning, this morning, so he was wonderful, but I don't love him like I love them. Okay, so my name is Selim Gubriel. The reason my name is Selim Gubriel is I was born and raised in the Middle East, in Lebanon. I'm an Arab by birth and by place of origin, lived there until I was 16 years old. Arabic is my first language. English is my second language. So any grammatical errors or misuse of certain words that I will commit in the next 20 minutes, I have an excuse. What's yours? My family fled from Lebanon to the US when I was 16 years old and we fled because of

the Civil War and we took some direct hits as a family. Cousins, three cousins and two uncles were killed. My brother was kidnapped from our home at gunpoint. We got my brother back, thank God. House was bombed, car was bombed. My father at that time was working as an accountant for the American Embassy in Beirut Arab civilian but doing accounting for the US government. So when the US government was evacuating American citizens to get them out of the country, way before we were citizens, they snuck us into that convoy out of respect for my dad's service and got us out of the country. That was like one of a series of second chances that my life has received and very grateful for that first one. We settled out of all places and, of course, the first place that immigrants come to when they come to the US Iowa. So I was a 16 year old little Arab boy in Iowa, and Iowans were amazing to me, though I was not amazing to them. I made a bunch of really dumb choices. I got thrown out of the first high school that I attended. I got thrown out of the first college that I attended. After the first high school, I went to another one and there I met a stunningly beautiful Mexican girl who invited me to go out with her At least that's what I thought. She said would you go with me? And that's where my ears stopped listening. She said would you go with me to Bible study? I didn't hear Bible study, I just heard would you go with me? And it could have been to, like I don't know, ukrainian egg art festival, and I would have gone. But then, you know, that was life changing for me. Then I still screwed up when I got to college and got thrown out and then discovered, by the way, that that beautiful Mexican girl was done with me after I showed up at Bible study, stomped on my heart like this However, after getting thrown out of the first college, I showed up at church again and met another girl and she became my wife a year and a half later and her name is Patty. So between Patty and Jesus, my life was transformed One became wife, one became Lord. I try to remember always who's who and not confuse not confuse roles, because I have been the recipient of many second chances and because I've been mentored by maybe a half a dozen very significant people significant in my life people. I made a decision long ago that I will commit my life to serving kids and started doing that 38 years ago. And then, 35 years ago, we started the Pittsburgh project and then, 11 years ago, we started the Pittsburgh project. So I spend my life with kids and what I'm going to do today as we, I spend my life with kids, but also with old people through the work of the Pittsburgh project. So I'm going to tell you some lessons I learned about leadership from two kids and from two senior citizens. There's not going to be like I don't have any PowerPoint slides. I did, but I changed my talk when I heard the news this morning. So no PowerPoint slides and just a couple of stories. You've got enough content today. You don't need to learn anything else, you just maybe need to feel a little bit. So I'm just going to do. I'm going to be the feeling closer. Okay, so I spent a lot of time with kids. I don't want to brag, but I am the most sought after commencement speaker for pre-kindergarten promotion ceremonies. Nobody I mean nobody gets as many invitations to do pre-kindergarten promotion ceremonies as I do, and I love doing those,

and anytime I get an invitation, if my calendar can take it, I do it. Recently I was doing one of those and I gave a brilliant talk. It was a room full of four-year-olds and I was really, really on that day. I was very inspirational, very motivated. I gave them a vision for their futures and for their lives and they were expecting to dream big dreams and work hard to reach those dreams and once they've reached those dreams, they're going to make a commitment to giving back to their I mean these four-year-olds. They were on fire. So one of them raised his hand and I was excited about what he was going to say. I thought he was going to say something like Salim, I wish I had met you before now. I would have been spared so much agony and so many regrettable choices. But his question was why is your head so shiny? To which I replied I'm an Arab. This head produces more oil than Kuwait. He didn't get it. Tells me the quality of education in this country. He said he didn't get it, but I will never forget that in his own sweet, innocent little way, he called me radiant. I radiated light to him. Isn't that what it means for one's head to be shiny? I'm pretty sure that's what it means. So I heard I didn't hear dude, you are bald and your head is greasy. I didn't hear that. I heard you're radiant. And from him I learned a lesson to see the radiance in everybody I encounter. And now the joke is over and that is truth. There is absolute radiance in every single person we encounter, including those who get on our very last nerves. There is radiance in them. That is sometimes it's a little bit like it has a few layers of lackluster stuff on top of it, but the radiance is there. And the radiance can never not be there, because they are created with that radiance by their maker. So to make a commitment as leaders to always see light and to see radiance, and those we lead and those we follow and those we encounter, regardless of who they are, without qualifiers. There's a period at the end of that sentence. There is radiance in every person and there's not any buts or ands or ifs or when, it's just period, all right. Second lesson from a senior citizen. So at my old shop, at the Pittsburgh Project, we fix houses for seniors and we do that through mobilizing young people to do the volunteer service. And in the summer months, which is when we do the majority of this, kids come from all over the country. They live with us at the Pittsburgh Project. We have a 300 bed facility on the north side where kids come and they stay with their youth group leaders and then they work on houses all day long and they do volunteer service throughout the community. But then at the end of the day they come back and we do some youth groupie kinds of things and we play games, we do activities and we sing some songs and we have some discussions that are all designed to help nurture a commitment to a life of service. But on Wednesday night of each week we do something really special, special for us. Wednesday night of each week we invite all of the senior citizens on whose houses we're working to come and join us for dinner and we do a program in their honor and then we put linens on the table, on the dinner tables when they're there, not when it's camp, when we don't serve camp food. When they're there we serve just upgraded camp food for what? Our guests are there. So they come and we fuss and it's just a glorious time. Old and young and

black and white, and rich and poor, and local and out of town, and conservatives and liberals, and just like everybody, it's just we're having this marvelous, marvelous thing. And then we invite the seniors to the auditorium. We have a band. I play the guitar, we sing a few songs, I give a talk, we hand them flowers, we tell them how much we love them and then they go home, all right. So the night is winding down. There are five minutes left and it's my job to kind of wind down, give a short talk and wind down the night. The room is packed and right in front of me in this chair not you in this chair was sitting an older woman who was entirely deaf in one ear and mostly deaf in the other ear, and you know, when you're losing hearing you tend to speak in a much louder volume. Have you been around people losing hearing and then they don't know that they're shouting because they can't hear. They're speaking at a volume that they need in order to hear and they just assume that everybody needs that same volume. Now, in no circumstances that ever disruptive or offensive, except when you're trying to give a talk and there's a person sitting right there and is talking to the person sitting in that chair. So I get up to give my talk and I'm not even like 40 seconds into it. Sitting next to her was one of my staff members and she yells, and by yell I mean yells off the top of her lungs yells to him what time are you gonna start working on my house tomorrow? And he said okay, we'll be there at nine o'clock, but now let's pay attention to Salim. She turns around, she gives me another 30 seconds before she blurts out Now I didn't like the blue paint that you used today. Can you bring a different shade of blue with you tomorrow? He said any blue you want, but let's talk about it later. She gives me another 15 seconds and then she says now it's getting personal. She says I bet you he doesn't know any songs I like because my band had just finished playing. So you know, if you can't beat them, what do you do? You join them. So I said you know I'm not gonna give a talk, there's no talk tonight. But I heard a challenge in her words. You don't know any songs I like. So I went and I grabbed oh look, there's a guitar here. Can I use it? Whose guitar is this? May I use your guitar? Yes, it's my guitar. You're being so generous with other people's property. So I grabbed the guitar and I got down on one knee in front of her and if you know the song, by the way, feel free to start singing with me. It's from her generation. Five foot two. Eyes are blue. Oh, what these five feet can do. Has anybody seen my gal? Turned up nose, turned up hose flapper yes, sir, one of those. Has anybody seen my gal? Now, if you run in two five foot two, covered with fur, diamond rings and all those things, bet your life it isn't her. But could she love, could she woo? Could she? Could she, could she? Who has anybody seen my? Anybody seen my? Anybody seen my gal? So I sang the song. So I sang the song, I put my guitar down, said good night. Everybody, thanks for being here and everybody got up and left one by one. She stayed in her chair and she waited until the room was empty. She stood up. She was four foot nine. I gave her three inches when I called her five foot two. She was four foot nine. I'm six foot and she grabbed my hand and she lowered me down so I could be eyeballed and I could be able to see her. She lowered me down so I could be

eyeball to eyeball with her and she said thanks for noticing me tonight. Like it was possible to miss her. However, those words ring in my ears. Thanks for noticing me tonight, Chris Howard. Dr. Howard, in his talk, told us about the South African greeting I see you, I see you, which is what I notice you, you matter, you're a person of value. In my own little superficial way, I want to do better, but I care about you. Thanks for noticing me. And isn't that really what all of us want at the end of every day to know that somebody noticed. And if we're not there, somebody missed us. Notice the radiance in people. Just notice people. Notice people, pay attention. Life comes at us so fast that we're moving at such a rapid pace. And if your life is like mine. There are so few margins built into my day that sometimes I treat people like they are just in my way, as opposed to wow. What a gift we get to intersect today, Mr. Rogers, Fred Rogers, he also was a Presbyterian minister and he was a friend, and one of the greatest honors of my life was being so. As he was dying, he planned his own memorial service and assigned different responsibilities to different people, and he assigned to me the privilege of giving the homily at his funeral, which could not be a greater honor. But you know, this was before the days of cell phone. Fred always carried a little pocket camera in his coat pocket or sweater pocket, and the reason he did that is because everywhere he went, people wanted to take pictures of him or with him, and he would allow them. But he would always say now would you mind if I took a picture of you? That was his way of saying thank you for noticing me, I also notice you. And on the walls of his office were lined with these strange people's pictures who wanted a picture taken of him. And he thought, yes, thank you for taking a picture of me, and there's a picture of you on the wall of my office. So thank you for noticing me. Okay, back to a kid story. So at the Pittsburgh Promise we have this amazing, amazing privilege of investing in kids' futures. And we do tell kids if you have a dream and your dream requires a post-secondary education, we'll give you \$20,000 over four years. We'll give you \$5,000 a year to invest in your college education and we've had the joy of sending close to 9,000 kids to college over the last 10 years. So and when I say we, I mean Pittsburgh has sent 9,000. Like it's not, I am just the conduit. I ask for money from this person and I give money to this person because this person's money that goes to this kid. So I'm honored to kind of just be simply the conduit. Okay, so I told you, did I tell you that I do a lot of speaking with kids, and two kids I think I told you that now this one was at a high school first day or first week of the school year and I did an assembly and I told the kids at that high school about the promise and about how important this year is and how their futures can be different if they just kind of focus the best to inspire them and keep them focused on their education, despite all of the distractions and all of the challenges that all kids have, that are multiplied and the volumes turned up in many of our urban centers where kids have to worry about things that no kid should ever have to worry about. All right, I gave the talk, I'm done. I'm back to work, go home, go to bed, wake up the next day, get in my car. I'm low on gas, so I stop at a gas station. Now the gas station happens to be

just across the street from this school. I'm just doing my thing pumping gas. Then I hear somebody yell from across the street hey, promise, man Figured must be talking to me. So I'm still pumping gas and I just look up and, being you know the young, hip, cool, relevant person that I am, I said yo, what's up? And then the kid shouted from across the street there were four young men. And then one of them shouted hey man, are you for real? And I shouted back yeah, we're for real. And then he said my little brother missed school yesterday. Tell him what you got for him. And I shouted back you tell them what you, what we got for him. He said he won't believe me. So then I again shouted from my car to across the street hey man, I got 20 G's for you. Now, for those of you who don't know what that is, that's \$20,000. And I'm just going to tell you right now that an Arab should not shout that at four African American young men who are crossing the street. Homeland Security satellites just kind of zoomed in at that intersection. Those words have not stopped ringing in my ear. Are you for real? Are you for real, like you tell me all of the stuff, but can I believe you? So, leaders, you're giving me all of these motivational, inspirational. You have values for the company and you like, but are you for real? I can tell you that those whose lives I know personally, who were on stage earlier today, I know there's nothing that Kim said and there's nothing that John said and there's nothing that Chris said that is not consistent with how they aspire to live their lives. Now they may struggle, meeting those things that they talked about who doesn't, who doesn't? But would you rather have them set low goals and low expectations and hit them, or set high goals and high expectations and meet them on occasion, miss them on other occasions, but never see straying. That's what we'd rather have. Are you for real means? Is your life consistent with your words? Leaders, can I trust your word? And final story now I'm going back to a senior citizen. Back to that same setting, just a different night. It's a Wednesday night. We have all of our kids and all of our seniors in the same space and we're having a grand old time. During dinner, however, one of our kids says come, I want you to meet my homeowner. So I told him I'd be delighted to. And I walk over to meet his homeowner and it was a very short, older man. I asked him how old he was. He said he lost track, but it was more than 90. He wasn't sure. That's kind of got just so cool. And then so I'm making a small talk and we don't know this man's first name. He just went by his title. He's a deacon at his Baptist church in Homewood and his last name is Jenkins. So we just know him as Deacon Jenkins. I'm making a small talk with Deacon Jenkins and then Deacon, out of nowhere, says you know, I can sing. I said Deacon, in a little bit we're going to the auditorium, I have a band. We're going to say would you sing us a song. And he said if you insist. I said I insist, deacon. So we went to the auditorium and I told the audience three 400 high school kids plus some visiting homeowners. I said, ladies and gentlemen, deacon Jenkins is here and Deacon Jenkins can sing. Would you all like to hear Deacon Jenkins sing? And what do you think? The crowd did Not. That I can tell you. It wasn't that the crowd hooped and hollered and clapped and whistled and cheered and

stomped their feet. So, if you don't mind, help me relive that moment. Ladies and gentlemen. Deacon Jenkins is here and Deacon can sing. Would you like to hear Deacon sing? All right, it's more like it. So Deacon is walking up the stage. I helped him up the steps. As I'm helping him up the steps, he whispers in my ear. He says now I'd like you to accompany me on your guitar. He said, deacon, what are you going to sing? He said I don't know. We'll see what comes out of my mouth. So I could hardly wait. So I strut my guitar on and I'm waiting to see what comes out of Deacon's mouth, hoping that it's something I recognize and at least hoping I can find the key that he's singing in Now. Thankfully he started singing a very familiar old gospel spiritual. He's got the whole world in his hands. You all know that song. Anybody not know it? All right. Well, those who know it, which is all of you, sing along. He's got the whole world in his hands. Oh, I forgot to tell you. As soon as Deacon started singing, we all discovered that he could not sing. He's got the whole world in his hands. He's got the whole wide world In his hands. He's got the whole world In his hands. He's got the whole world, and clapping is acceptable. He's got the tiny little baby in his hands. He's got the tiny little baby In his hands. He's got the tiny little baby in his hands. He's got the whole world in his you and me brother. He's got you and me brother. It's sister. He's got you and me, sister In it. Neighbor. He's got a you and me neighbor In his hands. He's got the whole world in his hands. So far, so good. But then Deacon started getting creative and started making up his own verses. Now, larry, you know that some stories are good, but with a tiny bit of embellishment. You've never embellished a story, have you? Okay, this story requires zero embellishment. So Deacon's next verse was he's got the drunken women in his hands. He's got the drunken women in his hands. He's got the drunken women in his hands. He's got the drunken women in his hands. You're not singing oh in his hands. He's got the whole world in his hands. Next verse he's got the short skirted women in his hands. He's got the I think Deacon was going through puberty again Short skirted women in his hands. He's got the short skirted women in his hands. He's got the whole world in his hands. Okay, his grand finale he's got the pimps and the horse in his hands. He's got the pimps and the horse in his hands. He's got the pimps and the horse in his hands. He's got the whole world in his hands. Then, after he finished, and when Deacon finished, just like here, half the room applauded and the other half was like just not sure what they were going to do with that. And then, after Deacon finished, it was my job to get up on stage and wrap up the night. So I got up and I said the following no embellishment, I'm quoting myself. I said you know, maybe, just maybe, deacon knows something that the rest of us need to know. Maybe we've known it at some point and then forgotten it, or maybe we've never known it and we need to learn it. That, and using the vernacular of many of our kids, I said that if God don't got the drunken women and the short skirted women and if God don't got the pimps and the horse, then maybe God don't got the tiny little baby. You and me, brother, because you and me sister, and you and me neighbor, because if God don't got the whole world, then he's got none of it,



and if he's got the whole world in his hands, then he's got all of it. And nobody, nobody, nobody. And who does like nobody leaves out, nobody is left out, nobody is excluded. One of the. But you know, in some companies and in some schools and in some neighborhoods and in some places of business, there are some people who are excluded, if not overtly, sometimes just kind of covertly, if not blatantly. It's kind of disguised or just kind of cushioned or kind of has a little bit of makeup on it. But if leaders are not demonstrating that we believe every life has radiance and we notice people and that we are people of our word, then at the end of the day it's got to be that our net, our safety net, has so few holes in it, if any, but it captures and catches and has room for everybody. One of the words, one of the phrases that has haunted me for a very long time is a prayer that the guy who founded an organization called World Vision it's a world relief and development organization. His line and his prayer was God, break my heart with the things that break your heart. I have no doubt that God's heart is broken today over things that happened in New Zealand, in Ethiopia, in Venezuela, in Syria, in Afghanistan, in Israel, in Lebanon, also in Pittsburgh, in Chicago, in Al-Aqwipah, all of your counties. God's heart is broken over many of those things. And then God called leaders. Regardless of your faith orientation, god has called and God has positioned leaders to be agents of healing and hope and help to use the words of Katie, not chick dug, but chic Words that bring healing and bring hope and bring help Leaders. We are the ones charged with that. I hope that, as a result of today and a restful weekend, monday morning in our places of work will be places that, just my goodness, notice the radiance and see and recognize the beauty and the days where we demonstrate that, yes, what we say we mean, because all of it and all of them matter.

**Doug Smith: 33:37**

Well, leader, thank you so much for listening to Salim's talk. I hope that you enjoyed it as much as I did. You can find ways to connect with him and links to everything that he discussed in the show notes at [L3leadership.org](http://L3leadership.org) or [slash 385](http://slash385). And leaders always, I want to challenge you that if you want to 10x your growth this year, then you need to either launch or join an L3 leadership mastermind group. Mastermind groups are groups of 6 to 12 leaders that meet together on a consistent basis for at least one year in order to help each other grow, hold each other accountable and to do life together. For me personally, mastermind groups have been the greatest source of growth in my life over the last eight years. So if you're interested in learning more about launching or joining a group, go to [l3leadership.org/](http://l3leadership.org/) to [L3leadership.org/masterminds](http://L3leadership.org/masterminds) or email me at Doug Smith at [L3leadership.org](http://L3leadership.org). And, as always, I like to end every episode with a quote, and today I will quote Jim Rohn. He said this recently and I love this. He said one of life's greatest experiences is for your name to appear in other people's testimonies. Somebody says hey, here's the person who found me, here's the person that got me started, here's the person who wouldn't let me quit. Here's the person who gave me

more reasons to stay than to leave. Here's the person who believed in me until I could believe in myself. And then they mentioned your name. Jim said you can't buy that with money and leader. I just want to remind you over and over again you're here to make a difference and make an impact on the lives of others, and make sure that is your focus. Well, leader, I hope you enjoyed the episode. Know that, Laura and I love you. We believe in you and I say it every episode. But don't quit. Keep leading. You desperately need your leadership.