

Doug Smith: 0:06

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 Birgo Realty 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. Just make sure that you hit subscribe or follow on whatever app you're listening to this through, and you'll get new episodes delivered to you every single week. In today's episode, you'll hear my conversation with William Vanderbloemen. If you're unfamiliar with William, let me just tell you a little bit about him. William is an entrepreneur, pastor, speaker, author and CEO and founder of Vanderbloemen Search Group, an executive search firm serving churches, ministries and faith-based organizations. In our conversation, we talk all about his new book called *Be the Unicorn 12 Data-Driven Habits that Separate the Best Leaders from the Rest*, and you're going to hear William share the habits that he's discovered and leaders that are consistently the best of the best, after conducting over 30,000 interviews for executive positions. You'll also hear him share why responsiveness is a quality of top leaders. What Bill Clinton did, that you can do as well. That made him so likable, and what you can do to be a unicorn and make sure that you are hiring them. You're going to love this and I'll just tell you this leader you need to get this book and read it. It's unbelievable. But before we dive into the conversation, 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-Advisors. com. 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, Henne 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 with all that being said, let's dive right in. Here's my conversation with William Vanderbloemen. Well, William, welcome to the L3 Leadership podcast, really looking forward to the conversation and excited about everything that you're doing.

William Vanderbloemen: 2:32

Thanks, Doug, I appreciate you having me on today.

Doug Smith: 2:34

Yeah Well, you wrote a brand new book and it's called *Be the Unicorn 12 data driven habits that separate the best leaders from the rest*, and I'm certainly going to dive into that, but before we do, can you give people a little bit of context about who you are and what you do? That made you actually write this book?

William Vanderbloemen: 2:49

Yeah, so I I'm. A long time ago I was a pastor, okay, went into the business world I'll give you the short version and when I was in the business world working for a very large oil and gas company, the CEO set up in here nine and a half years time to get my successor and they hired this thing called a search firm which I'd never heard of. So back in my days of being a pastor, I was a senior pastor most of the time and I was the senior pastor at First Press chain, houston, which is an amazing church, wonderful people,

great city, amazing history. Sam Houston went to church there. I mean, it's pretty cool. They took three years to find me. Wow, I was there six years. They took three years to find the next person.

Doug Smith: 3:42

Okay.

William Vanderbloemen: 3:43

And that's all viewed as like just the way the world is. And this oil and gas company hires this search firm, which I'd never, you know, even thought about as a company, and 90 days later they had their next CEO and I was like, you know, I wonder if we could build something. The original question was could we build something to help churches find their pastors quicker and more thoroughly? Right, it's since spread. I mean, that was 15, 16 years ago, and now we, you know faith based schools, faith based nonprofits, rescue missions and even faith based for profits, like the Chick-fil-A's of the world or the Dave Ramsey's hire us. So it's pretty much anybody who is in a Christian based organization that needs top talent, and we've been privileged to complete over 3000 searches for those folks. Wow, it has led to countless phone interviews, zoom interviews. It's also led to face to face interviews with finalists for a job, and we've now done 30,000 of those. So, yeah. So then this thing happened called the pandemic. I can't yeah, I can't imagine what it's like running a rescue mission during a pandemic, but it was a journey. Yeah Well, nearly every one of our clients were shut down indefinitely for the pandemic right, which frees up your calendar, I guess, is a positive way of saying it but had to figure out our business in the middle of that. And while we were in the lockdown and had some spare time, we started studying those 30,000 interviews. We said do they have anything in common? And this was just going to be like a really selfish study. Because because I wanted to answer this question how can we learn to spot true talent quicker? If I can do that, then I do a better job for our clients. Churches find their pastor quicker. Everything goes better, right. So how can I just identify? You've probably met some of these people. They're within five minutes. You're like winner. Yeah, I can tell, and it doesn't happen very often. But could you find a systematic way to identify those people that make us a better search for them? So we studied these 30,000, do these people have anything in common? And the answer was very, very clear. The answer was yes, and it was not at all what I thought it'd be. And it moved us from selfish research project to book. I thought, doug, that it'd be like well, they're all six feet tall, you know. I mean wait, hey, you want to go? Biblical Saul was head and shoulders above the rest of the body. I mean literally was taller, like maybe it's that, maybe it's they're good looking and you know, maybe it's, maybe it's as simple as he was the quarterback, she was the head cheerleader. Like what do they have in common? And the research didn't show me any of that, because those are all things you're kind of born with or born into. What we found was they were 12 habits that the best of the best we call them the unicorns all seem to share, and their habits that the way they behave, not how they look, not what education they receive, not what level of money, certainly not ethnicity or gender. 12 habits that really centered around how well they treated other human beings, and intentionally. And so you uncover this stuff and I forget who it is. I've got a philosophy minor, which is not super helpful as a businessman, but I remember I think it was Aristotle that said the greatest part of instruction is being reminded of the things you already know. So these 12 habits like you read the 12 habits on a table of contents and you know, you probably look at me and say, duh, william, I could have done that list. That's simple. You know I kid people. We had to kind of cajole the publisher into putting unicorn in the title because they didn't like that word for a while. They like it now, but the alternate title was just huh. I guess mom was right, because the list is like lessons that you know my mother tried to drill into me. And you know, I guess it would be a simplistic book if it were Williams musings on his opinions about what makes top people top people. But that's not what this is. This is 30,000 data points of top performers and they all seem to gravitate toward these 12 habits, and they're simple habits that nearly everyone else does not practice. And so it's now. We've got a roadmap. So when we, when we uncovered this, these 12

habits, it's like these aren't traits, these aren't, they're habits, that things people choose to do. And when we realized these aren't just now, it's not just I can identify that you're great talent. I can actually teach you to become great talent if you will follow this roadmap. And that's when we're like, okay, that was cute to think it'd help us be a better search for him, but now we got a roadmap that could help a lot of people learn how to stand out, whether they're working at a rescue mission, whether they're a high school senior applying to college, whether they're trying to hire people for their own team. So we kind of stumbled across a pretty cool learning that we wanted to share with a lot of people.

Doug Smith: 9:43

And I love that this is data driven and I love how you said you know it was nothing like you thought it would be and why I think this is important for leaders. You know you mentioned sometimes we just meet people and it's like yep, they got it, they're like I know it. But other times it's easy for us to overlook someone because they may not look like what we think as a unicorn. And in researching you, you actually share a funny story with Chris Hodges, who pastors one of the largest churches in America. Can you share that story and how insightful that can be for leaders? So we don't overlook the unicorns as well.

William Vanderbloemen: 10:13

Yeah, yeah, I'm supposed to be the expert on spotting talent and I, you know I well a long time ago, there it is I was at a fundraiser for leadership development in the two thirds world and as John Maxwell event and John has been a good friend for a long time and he said William, come here, come here, I want you to meet my friend. Okay, and so this is Chris. He's getting ready to plant a church in Birmingham. Now I had pastored in Montgomery, Alabama, before Houston, so I knew a little bit about Alabama. And I looked at him and he, you know, very unassuming, humble looking guy, not six feet tall, you know, not all those things that you would think would be what make the best the best. And I just said to him Chris, that's great man, you're going to plant in Alabama. He said yeah. I said, have you ever lived in Alabama? He said Nope. I said, have you got it? You know like family in Alabama? Nope. And you have any friends at all in Alabama? He said Nope, not one. And just smiled at me and I just looked at him and said, well, good luck, buddy. And yeah, that's how smart William is.

Doug Smith: 11:37

But, but I think it's beautiful. I mean, that's what, ultimately why this book is so important, because I think you know I could speak for myself and I'm sure I'm speaking for everyone listening as leaders, we've all done that. We've all interviewed someone who we thought this person is in it, and then we see them go to another organization and they thrive and excel and it's like, ah, I missed them. So frustrating and so my more common miss.

William Vanderbloemen: 11:59

I'm hopelessly extroverted. So, when I meet someone that I really enjoy talking to, like there's a, there's an energy or something, I used to mistake that as a sign that I should hire them. And that's not. That's not what spotting a unicorn is. It's not. Do I like her right now? Like ability is one of the 12 habits. How do I get people to like me and how do I do things for others? But it's not the be all, end all, and I think my more common miss is hiring somebody that I genuinely like be and then finding out that they're no good at the job. Yeah, it's so good.

Doug Smith: 12:39

Yeah, so people leaders need to read this book. I wasn't going to cover it, but you mentioned like ability and I would love to cover all 12, but obviously we don't have time. I would love for you to share about why like ability so important and I heard you share a life hack as I was researching you about Bill Clinton,

specifically about looking people in the eye, the importance of that. Can you talk about like ability and why that's such a critical factor in being a unicorn?

William Vanderbloemen: 13:01

Yeah, well, you know, like ability a lot. These are these 12 habits are distilled. They're also deeply intertwined. Okay, so so it. Authenticity is one of the habits. The authentic, the likable and the authentic really go together. I you know. I think the more authentic you are, the more likable you become, and that means you don't have to be perfect, you just have to be you, right. But the real secret to likability that I mean I would there's just some people I pull for and I don't know why I pull for him. I get some ways. Like ability is such an interesting thing. You watch a you know a bad TV program where you end up pulling for a criminal because they've somehow made the thing like, why am I pulling for the bad guy? Because they're just so darn likable. But you know, as one who has never been called oh William is just so likable. I've been fascinated with how I can do better at this and one lesson I learned is people really like being seen and recognized and noticed. I mean you see it in a rescue mission all the time. You know, homeless people feel unseen. No one will look them in the eye. They love it when people actually you don't have to hand out money, but people love, just recognize me, Okay. So I learned this early on from a lot of leaders. The leaders that I got to be around and the places I served had a whole lot of leaders, the best leaders I knew. I could not get them to talk about themselves. Wow, they were always deflecting the conversation back to me. I had this happen with President Clinton. We ended up doing a funeral together and there was a big rainstorm. So instead of having time outdoors with all his friends from Washington, he ended up holed up in my office with me for a few hours. It was weird, wow, but what a lesson. I mean. He said Doug. He said to me I'm trying to talk to him about him, get him to talk about himself, and you assume politicians are a little egotistical. Nope, he didn't want to do that. So I'm trying to talk to him about him. And he looks over on my desk and he sees a brochure where I'm leading a trip in Greece through the footsteps of Paul and the early church and all, oh, you're going over there. Yeah, yes, sir. Mr President, well, you ought to look up my friend. I don't even remember the title. What basically is the Pope of the Eastern Orthodox Church, like the patriarch or whatever the thing is. I'm like, well, and this was 2006. So think about your technology in 2006. I said, well, mr President, I will just get on one of those search engines and look up his phone number and I'll call him. He said, no, no, no, I'll take care of it. And then, so I'm trying to. Ok, now we're talking about you. You got a yarn bracelet on. Where'd that come from? That's kind of interesting. Oh, it's these children in Bolivia that we are, you know, I met and they make them and they sell them to try and build an economic platform, kind of thing. And I said, that's fascinating, we do some mission work down near there. He said, well, you need to know the ambassador to Bolivia. I'm like, well, I'll just get on one of those search engines and I'll just look. And he said, no, no, no, take it. And this went on and on and on, and not even a week after the funeral I got a. He sent me a copy of his autobiography inscribed to me with a lovely note about the funeral. And then, of course, the call came from whatever the dude's title is, in Greece, you know. And the ambassador, like he totally followed through. He was interested in me, he saw me and he then followed through when he didn't have to. And like we don't vote the same way on a lot of things, but man, I get it, I totally understand why he won. And the other thing that I've noticed and this is me, but I noticed it from him, I noticed it from a lot of other leaders that you talked to they looked me in the eye. It kind of back to the homelessness issue, like I've just heard you. You tell him wrong, but like that's a big deal right, people don't know. Here's a life hack for you. If you want to be more likable, okay, look people directly in one eye. You can't look two places at once and if you stare at somebody here they're not, they don't feel seen at all. Here's a fact, human, biological fact 90% of all humans are right eye dominant. Wow, so that's a pretty safe bet 90% chance you're right. Look them dead in their right eye. Nowhere else, not the left eye. You're dominant eyes.

Where you see things. You're non-dominant is where peripheral comes in. So look them dead in their right eye. I promise you, if you do that, you'll be more likable, because people really want to be seen.

Doug Smith: 18:10

Yeah. So this is so powerful and I want to talk about another one of the habits. You talked about Bill Clinton's ability to follow up and he responded to you, to your conversation. The other one that it seems like it's resonating or at least challenging leaders the most, is fast and this idea of responsiveness and I know for me, I mean that that challenged me the most out of the 12 habits, and you know I've been in fundraising for forever Can you talk a little bit about fast and why this is such a critical habit for for leaders?

William Vanderbloemen: 18:40

Yeah, Well, so so it's the first habit in the book, maybe because it's my favorite, maybe because it's the easiest one to pick up. It does not require a lot of studying, it doesn't require talent, it doesn't it? Just get back to people quickly with an intentional human response, not an AI chatbot response, not the five or six options you get on your iPhone lock screen when you don't want to answer the phone. Sorry, I can't talk right now. No, not that. Get back to people quickly with an intentional human response and you will stand out in the crowd. That does not happen anymore and I can. I can go through. Well, fundraising. I was just reading some research on fundraising right For pastors at churches. This was a study. How do you convert a first time donor into a regular donor, right? This is the question. Okay, this study that I was reading showed that the single, most single, most effective thing you can do as the pastor to convert a first time donor into a long time donor is to text to them on the day of their very first gift. Wow, hey, doug, I saw you were in church today. I saw you made a gift to us. Our record show. It's the first time you've made a gift to us. I just want to thank you for believing in us and trusting us and all done. Regular donor and people don't do that. They don't get back to people. I mean people who are on dating websites take forever to get back to prospects and that's like you're lonely, you're on the website. You should be getting back to people. So I think you know, particularly if it can be an intentional response, this is going to be gold because up until now we've not had auto responses. Now the auto responses we're getting are all written by AI. They're not, they're not human at all. So if you just drop back just a little bit and Say you know, I'm glad Tomlin, stay in one extra year, that's good, you know, for a stealer.

Doug Smith: 20:53

Yeah, huge Tomlin fan.

William Vanderbloemen: 20:55

Yeah. So I Just think, in the middle of all the AI noise that's about to happen and in the middle of a reality where people really don't get back to one another quickly, this is the easiest habit to pick up and and change the way you are. Make an impression in a crowd.

Doug Smith: 21:14

Yeah, and I'll be a little bit vulnerable here, because my understanding is you're maniacal about this personally. You and, and you're good at it. I'm curious. I guess I'll throw a few things out there and just see what sticks for you to respond to. But one you know you work with executives. I'm assuming a lot of them have executive assistants Do their email. What is it? What's your thought on having them respond versus that? And and just how do you keep up as a leader With that? You know leaders are meetings all the time. You know, for me, I've four young kids under seven. I get bombarded and email and text and social and I my heart. I'm a people person like I love relationships, I want to stay up to date with everyone, but it is so hard for me to keep up with the demand. And and I look at leaders, I know leaders like yourself

and I see them respond in seconds. I'm just like how. I don't know if you have any advice for people like me. I want to get better at this, but I'd love to hear it.

William Vanderbloemen: 22:04

I'm learning as I go and I think it's when I was first thinking about doing search. I had a guy from a Big, big firm, biggest search firm in the world cornfury, tell me I should try it out and he's just the best in the world at energy. He can't find CEOs for energy companies like he's the guy. And I'm like Bruce, how in the world do you know if I'm gonna be any good at this? I just heard about this industry and he said now, this is 2008, so the iPhone was not yet born. Okay, so keep that locked. There was a time, long time ago, when there were no iPhones and this this was then. I said Bruce, how do you know if I'll be any good? He said, okay, so let's imagine that you save up your money and you get to take your daughter on a one-on-one ski trip a lifetime memory. You're on the ski lift with her, talking to her and your phone rings. What do you do? Hmm, and I said, well, it depends on who it is. And he said you're gonna be fine. Wow, I said why? He said, first of all, you had your phone. There was a time when you didn't.

Doug Smith: 23:24

That's funny, yeah, you know.

William Vanderbloemen: 23:26

Secondly, you took the time to see who it was and make your decision based on that. It may take you a while to fine-tune it, but just yeah, and that's a pretty good lens to throw things through when people reach out to you. Imagine yourself on that ski lift for the daughter. Would you respond or not? Hmm, and sometimes you have to. I remember as a we were just getting going and I was like the sales, the. I was like I'm gonna go get a drink and I'm gonna go get some Cook, the bottle, washer, the whole, all the things, and we'd saved up all our points and took the kids to Disney and we're like getting on the Dumbo ride after waiting forever. And an email came in from a really important Now client that wasn't a client at the time and I'm answering it and Adrian looked at me and said what in the world? Responding to these kind of emails is what allowed us to afford to get onto the Dumbo ride. So it's just, it's discernment, and I don't get it right all the time and and I will say I am pretty maniacal about it, but I've learned that you have to put up Particularly with the people you work with Some guardrails so you don't have people that are walking on eggshells thinking they have to respond every minute and every. So we have a very clear Protocol at the office. You know, if you, if you email me after hours, I'm supposed to get back to you in 24 hours, whenever I'm doing email, whatever that means. If you, if you slack me after hours on a, you know, slacks of platform for, yeah, I'm just messaging that tells me this is, this is time, so I need to get back to you today as soon as I have a chance. So if I'm bathing a kid, it can wait till after that, but you know we're sitting down to dinner. If you text me after hours, I need to respond right then. Wow, if you call me after hours, it does not matter why I'm picking up, hmm, and we've all had to learn to respect that. You know that means when we're all binge watching. Whatever show is the show of the year, the Ted lasso, or whatever. We can't be on a text string with each other on Sunday night because that kind of blows up the whole. But but I think that if you can Build those rails and we've done it as a company too if it's a potential new client, someone is going to get back to that person within 60 seconds. That's just going to happen or we're not doing our job and and you can spread that around with people. But I Think, just ask yourself that question, doug. I'm on a ski lift With my daughter one-on-one time. Do I need to take this or not?

Doug Smith: 26:10

That's so powerful. I love that, thankful for whoever has shared that with you. Also, I believe when you guys are actually hiring or looking to hire someone, you actually put them through a Responsiveness test, so to speak. Is that correct and can you share?

William Vanderbloemen: 26:23

that, yeah, if you're coming to work here, oh, it usually happens, and now I've told you know a hundred podcasts. Not much of a secret anymore, but it's. It's basically I mean, we we Particularly our sales, marketing and client-facing people like we deal with fairly High stress decisions that organizations are making who's our next exec director? Who's our next headmaster? How are we going to clean up the mess from the train wreck that just happened? And we had to fire our leader. And now I get. So we're, we are gonna be that responsive, and that means when I'm interviewing you, I need to make sure you're cool with that, you know. So if you, if, doug, if you flew here and you interviewed for the day for a position with us, the way this would roll is we'd probably try and send you home that night, so you're with all your kids and your wife, at least in the morning, and Maybe when you land, maybe you get a text from somebody you don't know. Hey, doug, this is Jennifer. I work in the office at Vanderbluen. I heard you were there today. I'm out of town today, sorry. I'd love to catch up with you sometime. That's all. That's a part of our interview. Hmm if you don't respond to Jennifer, you've not lost the job. It's not like you're gonna blow it. Just if you respond to her within 24 hours, you're well above average, and there are a lot of studies in the book that will show you that Average response time for nearly anything is about 42 hours. So if you're under 24, that's pretty good. You get back to me the next day. If, however, you text me, write, text Jennifer, right back, you say, ah, just landed getting ready to go tuck the kids in, how about we get some options out there tomorrow? And you've gotten back to Jennifer the same day. Well, that's, that's pretty interesting. That's not normal. And if you happen to text your back, even in one minute, and just say, love, houston, I'll get back to you tomorrow, just anything within a minute, well, now, now you're the same. You have the same dysfunctional craziness that I have, and that's cool. So because here's the thing people, I've just gotten ripped to shreds on the internet for this test because it got picked up by business insider or something Other. And you know that, man, I people really don't like this. It's so cruel for you to text people on the internet. It's so cruel for you to text people during an interview. You're texting them and I'm not gonna get a job if I don't respond to you. You can just have your job, like okay, fine, but let me ask you which is more kind to ask you to text me back during the interview or to hire you into a job where it's an expectation and it's not how you roll? Wow, that's abusive. Yeah, a good interview shows people what exactly what it's like to work in the organization, and so we try and mimic that. I don't know that. That speed, that responsiveness is something that a lot of people pick up later in life. I think they're either that way or not. Now you've got a roadmap, now you can become one of those people. But yeah, it's, it's. We've had to find. We're kind of a strange group of people and we've had to find ways to make sure we're not hiring someone that's not the same kind of crazy we are.

Doug Smith: 29:53

Yeah, but this is so good and so important. You know it challenged me and I try to be good at this and always get better. I actually have. You'll probably appreciate the story. I have a donor who who basically showed me he keeps a spreadsheet of all the nonprofits that he supports and has all these different columns and basically he tracks who responds. A number one like do you respond at all? He tracks how quickly they responded. And again, for him it's not a matter of a race, of who responded first, etc. The big thing for him is like, is someone responsive? And ultimately, if they're not, you know that could put their they're giving in jeopardy a year. It's like hey, you must not really care that I give and you know I share that with our team constantly of like, hey, everyone of our donors may not actually keep a spreadsheet of

this, but responsive matters. And so I just want to say thank you for sharing that and for challenging all of us to be better in that area.

William Vanderbloemen: 30:41

It's so simple, it's just the simplest thing in the world. When I was 20. How was I 27? Senior pastor of church in Montgomery? They'd called me and they were moving the church in a new location. So they bought land but we didn't have a building and we were going to be homeless because we'd outgrown the little temporary facility we had. So I'm riding around in the car going to lunch with a guy who used to be at the church, got frustrated with the way the church you know politics and that sort of thing had left and I kind of tried to lure him back because he was stellar leader and great human being and he took me out driving to go look for spots where we might, you know, be able to meet on the weekend. And there's a YMCA just across the road from our new property, about 300 yards down. He said you know that YMCA is closed on Sundays. I said really. He said yeah, said I know the board chair. I could give you his phone number, you could call him. I bet he'd let us meet there and then we'd be kind of like right across the street, like cool. So we get back to the office and we're going to sit down to visit a little bit. He gave me the guy's number and then we made chit chat and he just looked at me and he said why haven't you called him yet? And I'm like well, todd, we're sitting here having a conversation Now right. Let me tell you one of the best lessons I learned early in my business career the first chance you have to take care of something is usually going to be the best chance. Wow, come on. So we called him and we got the facility and I drilled it in me. You get back to people. It makes you different.

Doug Smith: 32:25

Yeah, I am curious. Just you've done 30,000 interviews, placed 3000 leaders. Someone may be listening to us and thinking maybe they are a unicorn. Where do you see people blow when they're they're seeking out executive positions? Because I'm sure there's people who who aren't qualified or do have what it takes. But what advice do you have in the whole interviewing process to really stand out out of all the other applicants? That could be great.

William Vanderbloemen: 32:49

Well, I'd focus on these 12 habits because it's going to give you like the roadmap. If you just do these things when you're interfacing with people, interviewing with, it's going to feel very different to them. It's going to feel like, oh, wow, this one's a winner and it's going to be backed up. So you know, my advice would be study these habits Now. Second piece of advice bonus content Make sure you do some homework on the company. Make sure you do some homework on yourself and then show in that interview. First thing here's a line. This line, this line's worth the whole podcast right here. If you're in an interview, make sure you say this sentence I am so excited at the chance to interview for this job today.

Doug Smith: 33:36

Come on, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

William Vanderbloemen: 33:41

People don't say that it's crazy. Yeah, and a lot of the workforce right now is Gen Z and millennials, and I'm a huge fan and believer. But one of the big criticisms is they're apathetic. No, no, we have it. I'm so excited to get to interview for this job today. Now, if you could back it up, here's here it is. Watch this. Let me tell you why I'm excited. You're interviewing me for a marketing position in your new software company that's working with AI, and I think that's pretty amazing. Why do I think it's amazing? Not just because AI is cool, because I work best in these kind of environments. See, you're in a frontier no one's ever been in before and no one really knows what they're doing yet. So you're having to build it as you go

and have to face new challenges and learn on the job, and probably everybody in your company probably has this line in their job description that says other duties as necessary.

Doug Smith: 34:32

You know what.

William Vanderbloemen: 34:33

I've learned about myself. I flourish in those environments. First job I had out of college, I had to build an email list. We didn't even know what an email list was. We had to go find. We started with constant contact and we went to Emma and then we started leveraging social media. All of a sudden, we have 100,000 people on our email list and a click through rate that some believe, and we didn't know how to do that. We just went and figured it out and I thrived in that. And needless to say, three more things that you actually have done that show the type of personality that's needed at that particular company. Now you've shown, oh my gosh, there he studied me and he's interested in me and he's done work that would tell me that he might be able to do that. Wow. And Cherry on top. Sorry, I'm going to share one last one Come on. Come on One more little thing. You just say and here's the thing, doug, if this were for a bookkeeper job, I you would not want to hire me. I'm so bad at doing the same thing every day, I don't get energy from it. I'll do it if I have to, but let me just tell you that is not where I have flourished. So, new challenges, new part I'm a seven on the integrem. I love a new thing, but same routine every single day. There are a lot of really smart people that are good at that. I'm not one of them. Now, you're authentic, you're self aware, you're interested in them, you've done your homework, it's just yeah, there you go, oh it's what I mean and people need to read the book, but basically what you've done the last three minutes is basically.

Doug Smith: 36:10

I think you covered like six of the habits right. And just the way that you communicated, you anticipated, show that you're a problem solver, you're self aware. I don't know if that was you scripted or not, but well done. Thanks, thanks, I'm not sure that's that but I'm not sure that's that, I guess the last one I would just throw out there. As far as interviewing two, you know one of the habits is connected and you know I'm curious what your thoughts are on connected. I'm also curious your thoughts on how important is someone's platform when it comes to giving executive leadership roles today.

William Vanderbloemen: 36:42

Well, I think that depends on what industry. I think that depends on what the job is Like consumer goods. Right now there's 16 year olds on TikTok that are more influential than the best ad agency on Madison Avenue. True Cause, that's consumer goods and it should. I go buy those pair of shoes or the you know the Stanley cup, I mean. Is there a better example of that was my granddad's lunchbox company, you know like it was so you know, there are some where the platform matters. Here's what I'm realizing, though the very best leaders don't really lean on that. It's what happens in the room, and it might be that they also have a social media platform. But I think you got to. You got to ask yourself as fun and attractive as it might seem to have somebody who's got a YouTube channel with two bajillion views, is it going to help them do the job and what are they like in the room? So you know, it might help you get in the door, but not by much. Yeah, the flip side to that, doug, is I've got some leaders who refuse to do social media, refuse to do platforms, and while I might not get super impressed because I'm not seeing them, while I'm doom scrolling, I also never see anything that they've posted that they wish they hadn't.

Doug Smith: 38:14

Hmm, oh, come on.

William Vanderbloemen: 38:16

People with the biggest platforms often have a pretty significant number of things they'd like removed from their digital footprint.

Doug Smith: 38:23

Yeah, it's crazy what people leave on there, wild. Yes, well, William, unfortunately we're running out of time and so thank you so much, and if you're listening to this, you know, please go on by a copy of the book. We'll include a link in the show notes and all those things, but as we wrap up, I'll just leave this really open ended. Any other advice you want to leave leaders with today?

William Vanderbloemen: 38:41

I think it's pretty easy to get discouraged out there. I'm not going to get noticed. There's so many people younger than me in the workforce. They're you know I'm old and irrelevant. Or there's so many older people and I can't seem to break through, or it's just hard, to hard to feel like you're noticed or you stand out. That's always been the case, but it's even more right now. There are five generations in the workforce right now sharing the same space First time's ever happened, and that means it's crowded. And then you throw the noise of social media out there. You throw a sixth generation that we're working with. You know, gen X, gen Y, gen Z Gen. AI is going to change the workforce. Skills are going to get less important. Human, human skills are going to get more important. So if you're feeling a little bit like like it's crowded and you can't stand out, this could be the way for you to say now I know I'm going to stand out and be irreplaceable at work.

Doug Smith: 39:47

Well, thank you so much for all of the nuggets today. So, good. And again game changing book leader. Go out and get it and hopefully we can do this again sometime.

William Vanderbloemen: 39:54

Doug, thanks so much for having me and thanks for what you're doing. Appreciate you and joy to be with you. Thanks so much.

Doug Smith: 40:01

Well, leader, thank you so much for listening to my conversation with William. 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 L3leadership.org. And as always, leader, I like to end every episode of the quote, and I'll quote Aristotle, who said this the greater part of instruction is to be reminded of the things that you already know so good. Well, leader, know that my wife Lauren, I love you, we believe in you and I say it every episode. But don't quit, keep bleeding. The world desperately needs your leadership. We'll talk to you next episode.