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Zack Blair: 0:10

Because, as you know it, took me a while.

Doug Smith: 0:13

["the L3 Leadership Podcast"]. 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 and fair tongue advisors. We also recorded this live from the new Bergo 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. 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 the podcast has made an impact on your life and you've been listening for a while, it would mean the world to me if you would leave us a rating and review on Apple Podcast or Spotify or wherever you listen to podcasts through. 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 gonna be hearing me be interviewed by my good friend, Zack Blair, who is the pastor of Hill City Church here in Pittsburgh, and we have been doing life and ministry together for over 20 years, and that's what made this conversation that much more interesting. You're gonna hear us talk about so many things. We talk about mental health, we talk about parenting, we talk about how to become good with people and we talk about why friendships and relationships are so important, and so much more. I think this is gonna add a ton of value to your life. But before we dive in, 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 wanna 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. 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 Zack Blair. Zack Blair.

Zack Blair: 2:26

Hey everybody, I'm here with one of my very best friends in the world, Doug Smith. He's with L3, with Light of Life, with so many other things. We talked today about parenting, about leadership, about investing in deep relationships, about mental health Dude, we talked about it all. It was awesome. This is one of the best ones I've ever done, simply because this is one of the best guys I know. So I know you're in for a treat today. I've never said that before, but you are. So we both were under Pastor Larry Bettencourt, who completely changed our lives right, and we both call ourselves basically children of him. So, super cool man. But over the last 20 years, man, I've appreciated your friendship more than I could express and just a few short words here, like you really mean a lot to me. You do so much for not only me and Lauren, and you and Laura do so much for me and Lauren, but you've done so much for the church,

you've done so much for just. You've always championed me and believed in me. Like, just appreciate you, dude Still do man?

Doug Smith: 3:24

Yeah, extremely grateful for your friendship as well. Again, you've been there in the darkest times of my life, the highest points of my life, cheering me on and been a constant source of encouragement. So it's been quite a journey, man. And hey, our best days are still ahead. We're still young. Yeah, we're still young. We haven't hit 40 yet. We're hanging on to our 30s.

Zack Blair: 3:39

That's 20 years of relationship, man. You know we were both boneheads when we first came to Christ, right, we were both kind of like all over the place and you know. But Pastor Larry believed in us and you know we grew close and I remember, yeah, it's been cool because, like, we have been there for each other in the best of times and the worst of times, and that's what friendship is.

Doug Smith: 3:58

Yeah, I still remember when I met you the week we were at Jack 2023, I think it was the last day I came in. We were just laying on the floor and you were like, hey, man, I had to share my story with you and that was the beginning. And so it's been a lot of fun man, got to be in your wedding, got to see you have kids. I still we were just talking about this other day. I still remember being in the backyard of our townhouses and that season and you tell me, no, it was going to be born man. It's just been a blast.

Zack Blair: 4:18

Yeah, I think that was the first time I ever grilled a steak too. I don't know, did I get to try it?

Doug Smith: 4:23

I waited a long time. Yeah, I made you steak.

Zack Blair: 4:25

I was like this is like really dry, Like I had no clue what I was doing.

Doug Smith: 4:27

I guess it wasn't my fault. I was going to make you a steak, yeah, no, that's good, that's good, but I'm sure you've grown in your steak.

Zack Blair: 4:32

Yeah, oh, I'm smoking. Now I'm doing some fun stuff, yeah, yeah, man. So, dude, just for everyone's context, doing L3, you're doing light of life. I mean, man, there's so much that's going on in your world and I appreciate you taking time today, man.

Doug Smith: 4:49

Yeah, I'm honored to be here, man.

Zack Blair: 4:50

Yeah. So what's been going on in your world? What's the Lord been teaching you?

Doug Smith: 4:54

Yeah, for me and you've been along for the whole journey I feel like over the past three years God's really taken me from a place of being a young, insecure leader and I'll just pause there. The young leader thing. I know we always looked around all the things that we heard around being a 20-something and we're not really getting into leadership, but I was a light of life. Yeah, I guess it was three years ago now and I didn't get invited to a meeting that was for emerging leaders and I was like this is weird. I'm always in those meetings and I went to our executive director and I just said hey, why wasn't I in that meeting? He's like it's 35 and under man.

Zack Blair: 5:29

And I've been in my heart. So I guess I'm like this is a revelation, like I am not a young leader anymore.

Doug Smith: 5:34

I made it.

Zack Blair: 5:35

I'm pretty adjusted.

Doug Smith: 5:38

But I would just say from that time Still at the film-o though right yeah, it wasn't, I wouldn't say it was like. At that point I started growing in confidence. But I do feel like for the first 15 years of my leadership journey and even my Christian walk, man, so much insecurity, so much striving to prove myself and really just operating out of everything I was doing to perform and prove that I was enough, and I feel like around 35, 36, God just started showing me the value that I have and that, man, I don't have to strive, and a lot of that came through a mental breakdown I had, which we can talk about, but coming out of that I just feel like God's really taken me into a place where I know who I am. I know who I am. Even more importantly, I know how I'm gifted and wired. I know how I value to the world. I don't need all the accolades, I don't need all the pats on the back. I'm just very, very confident and very focused on what I believe God's called me to do, and that is a huge shift for me. I'm no longer going into meetings or meeting with people and saying I feel less than or I hope in this meeting I can prove that I'm a great leader to everyone. I just show up as I am and do my best, and it's been so freeing To get out of that stage and really just step into confidence and hopefully I can help younger leaders get there a lot quicker than I did.

Zack Blair: 6:50

Because, as you know it, took me a while. What's the root of that? What's the root of the lack of confidence In your life, maybe in the common life?

Doug Smith: 6:57

Yeah, I mean you know my story. So I grew up really heavy kids, so there's insecurities around body image. Never did well in school. I think I had a 1.6 GPA when I graduated.

Zack Blair: 7:08

What was that attributed to what? Why didn't you do well in school? Because you're really smart.

Doug Smith: 7:12

Oh, I didn't try yeah.

Zack Blair: 7:14

How many books a year do you read? Oh, I have no idea.

Doug Smith: 7:16

Probably 20 to 40. Yeah, 20 to 40.

Zack Blair: 7:18

A lot of podcasts.

Doug Smith: 7:19

Yeah, it's interesting. But I think for me and I've learned this from you, actually when we were in youth ministry you have kids that will act out or maybe aren't living up to their potential and we see the potential, but they may not. And it's people like you Pastor Larry Bettencourt, my high school principal, my father-in-law, Mike Stadel those were the first seeds of hope that were planted in me that maybe I am smart, maybe I do have leadership abilities, maybe I can grow and develop. And I never received that as a young person. And so when I started getting around all of those things, I basically in middle school determined that I would never amount to anything. And my dad's a bus driver and there's nothing wrong with being a bus driver. But I just thought, hey, I don't have to try in school to be a bus driver, so I'll just party, live it up and jump into that world afterwards. But when I started getting those seeds of hope in me, it's like, oh my gosh, I can actually do something. That's when everything changed. And then my senior year of high school gave my life to Christ after my mom died. And really getting around people like I mentioned Larry, my father-in-law, et cetera that's what really helped turn my life around and helped me to focus on my potential, and I think so many people listening to this that struggle with insecurity. Man, they just need to be told who they are and what they're capable of, and they do have hope for our future and they can do great things, and I think our culture and our world is desperately crying for that.

Zack Blair: 8:36

Yeah, I feel like discipleship is rejecting the lie, locating the lie, rejecting the lie, replacing it with truth, and that's what a lot of therapists, counselors, also do for me. I remember the lack of confidence started to come in when I had an authority figure telling me that I was stupid and I wouldn't amount to anything, and did that happen to you at all?

Doug Smith: 8:56

Oh, yeah, yeah yeah, I remember my ninth grade teacher.

Zack Blair: 8:58

I can't remember exactly.

Doug Smith: 9:00

He would always tell us like you're going to work at a gas station.

Zack Blair: 9:02

Oh same thing, 6-grade.

Doug Smith: 9:03

It's so funny. It's like who? Looking back, I'm like who? Who is this guy's boss? Let me go talk to them. Right, but like yeah, who are you to say that to a kid, and literally I mean you think about the ceiling that creates in kids' lives.

Zack Blair: 9:14

They believe it.

Doug Smith: 9:15

You believe it Because, again, you think these people know what they're talking about.

Zack Blair: 9:19

Yeah, I remember that. I remember that was the day that I stopped trying. Wow, like well, if I'm stupid like he says I am, why would I even try?

Doug Smith: 9:26

Yeah, so when did the light?

Zack Blair: 9:27

bulb turn for you? That's a great question. I don't think it ever. I think I pretended that it did. I'm speaking like just kind of from, you know, without processing it. I think I pretended like it did. But I always carried that root of insecurity with me and there was a moment that we were going through the land deal and I was meeting with an attorney and I felt like this need to continually over-prepare. So I prepared these legal documents. Why would I prepare legal documents when I'm paying an attorney, right? To prepare legal documents, for he's like who did this? And I said I did. And he's like what? He's like you're really smart. I was like oh, because Lauren would tell me I was smart.

Doug Smith: 10:09

Yeah, but I'm like you have to tell me that You're my wife, true.

Zack Blair: 10:15

She's not to say that you know.

Doug Smith: 10:16

Yeah, but it's so good man I remember you telling me I forget what study this was, but like the number one way kids in situations that they shouldn't be in. The only way that they really get out is if someone else shows them another way.

Zack Blair: 10:29

Different way.

Doug Smith: 10:29

yeah, I mean that's always impacted me, Because the reality is, the only reason I got out was I gave my life to Christ and I had three or four leaders. Show me a different way. You're talking about discipleship. Like I think you know and especially if people are more mature listening to this the opportunity you have to show people another way. I think people grossly underestimate their opportunities to do this If they have kids. You have kids coming to your house every day who probably need you to speak into their life and speak out over them. They may not be getting that at home. Your work, I mean literally look around

and I promise you there's a need that you could help me and help deal with this insecurity epidemic that we're facing in our world.

Zack Blair: 11:04

Yeah, yeah, but dude, even man, I love that. I love that, and I'm just watching you and I'm listening to you talk and I'm hearing the. It's natural, the intelligence, the ability that you have to relate with people and that's one of the more genius things I think that you have is your ability to relate with people. I cannot picture you as a kid, somebody not liking you. Yeah, was that always the case? People love you. Yeah, I would say. I mean, you're lovable man. Yes, like you really are.

Doug Smith: 11:30

Yeah, and again, just back to the confidence Like I do feel like God's always given me the ability to relate with all people. So I've always been able to connect with people younger than me, same age as me, older than me, which was great. But you could be good with people and have no purpose and be going in the wrong direction and have no one tell you that. I always think this is going to the friend example, but I had all the friends in the world in high school and when I first started walking with God, the most difficult thing I ever did was walk away from my old friends. And it happened because we have a mutual friend. But I was having a party in my house with all my high school friends. They were all getting drunk and high. My house was a party house because my mom wasn't there, my dad always was working and this kid from church wanted to come over and I had him over and I told my friends I'm like, hey, this kid comes over, I'm church dug, I don't do anything, but as soon as he leaves, it's on We'll party. We came over, saw my friends doing what they were doing, literally grabbed me by the shirt, pulled me into another room, slapped me in the face physically and said what are you doing? And I said what do you mean? What am I doing? And he said what are you doing? And I said well, those are just my friends. He goes, I know what you're doing, I know the lifestyle you're living, and he knew I was interning at the church and he said you have three days to tell Pastor Larry, and if you don't I will. And I wanted to kill this kid because all of a sudden we were talking back about those seeds of hope that were planted in me. For the first time in my life, at 18 years old, I felt like there may have been another way of life that I didn't have to keep going down the path. I was on my way to being an alcoholic, I was on my way to being an addict All these different things and not doing anything with my life. And all of a sudden I started hanging around the church and Pastor Larry, you and I'm like maybe I can do something with my life, and I thought all that was gonna be over. And you know, when you wanna talk about the power of encouraging word, I cried for three days, so afraid, because I knew I had to have a conversation with Pastor Larry, who's overseeing the internship. Yeah, and what I was anticipating was for him to look at me and say get out, you're done, sorry. And I went in. I couldn't even look in the eye. I still remember the conversation. I'm looking down, I'm crying my eyes. I'll tell him what I've been doing. And I looked up and expected him, you know, pointing his finger at me, and he had, of course, larry. He had a huge smile on his face. He wasn't surprised, he knew. And he said bubba, which is my nickname. He said Doug, I love you and I believe in you. And the Bible says that a righteous man falls down seven times but gets back up again. Get back up again. But then he qualified and he said but I can't continue to let you lead and live the lifestyle that you're living, so what are you gonna do? And that was, I think, what a great conversation.

Zack Blair: 13:54

Oh well, I guess I'll just take it here. You know, it's grace and truth grace and truth.

Doug Smith: 13:59

You want to talk about people being loved, like I think, for people to change. We talk about this in our mastermind groups. We want everyone to be fully known, fully loved and fully challenged in that moment.

What does that mean? Fully known? I was able, because I knew that Larry loved me, to actually confess a lifestyle I've been living that I wasn't proud of. I was able to be fully known in that, even though it wasn't something I was proud of. Then, fully loved man, he didn't condemn me. He had a huge smile on my on his face, and he basically just said it's gonna be okay, but then, fully challenged, he didn't let me stay where I was. And I think this is where you know, being great, good with people is great, but you need people who are gonna fully challenge you in your life. Yeah, and he said I can't let you lead like this. What are you gonna do? And that led me to walking away from all my friends having conversations. I want, by the way, talk about fully loved, known, known, loved and challenged. Going back to that kid, they slapped me in the face and grabbed me. I had a conversation with him and he said Doug, let me tell you something about friends. He said friends love you the way that you are, but real friends love you enough not to let you stay where you are. Yeah, and that's when I realized that, like you could have all the friends in the world, but if they're not challenging you to be better, they can love you and know you right. All my friends that weren't walking with God knew me, love me Even though I was on my way to be an alcoholic, doing nothing with my life, etc. And I had one friend, one person that I had a good relationship with, that loved me enough to literally, physically in this case Slap me in the face. And so you know we can talk more about relational skills, but when I think about it's great to be loved by all, but you need you know we talked about this we need deep friendships in our lives, with people who will fully know us, fully love us and fully challenge us. And you can be as great as you are with people, but if you don't have that, you're never gonna develop to your potential.

Zack Blair: 15:34

Yeah, yeah. So where did you get your emotional intelligence? How did you develop that?

Doug Smith: 15:37

I think I was just wired. You know my parents they were. They certainly were perfect parents. But I tell people all the time my mom was always the life of the party. So you know, when I think about my personality, I remember growing up We'd have oldie nights you know, this is very you know on 3ws, and so we would call in and we would just dance and sing all night. I just have a blast. My mom was always in the school volunteering, and so she was just a life of the party. So I tell people you know where I got my love for life is from my mom and then my dad. He's more introverted, more reserved, but I've never met someone who loves people so well. He would do anything for anyone and he'll serve anyone and why say anyone? I mean anyone, and he's. He always modeled that and he never Talked to me about it. He never said, hey, watch this. This is why I'm doing that. It's just his heart, and so you know part of it. I think it's the way God wired me. But to, I think, just that mix of knowing how to love and serve people and making it not about you, but then also being a blast to be around and trying to you know, have fun. I think it was a combination of those and then just a lot of up and down lessons along the way.

Zack Blair: 16:39

Yeah, are you trying to teach your kids that purpose?

Doug Smith: 16:41

only yeah.

Zack Blair: 16:42

Oh, for sure, man, yeah, how do you teach your kids that, like I'm working on that some are more naturally emotionally intelligent. I feel like the younger they get, the more they're starting to think of. In psychology there's this Term called the theory of mind. It's really, it's really fascinating, okay. So theory of mind is basically I can, I can bet what that other person is thinking right now. Right, I can put myself in

their shoes and I can, I can think if I were in their shoes, this is what I'd be thinking. There's actually a higher rate of autism with. If you have less theory of mind, you have more propensity to having autism, which is fascinating. And a lot of first-borns have a lower theory of mind because you know they're kind of cared for okay, too much, probably For today, right, but I don't know. I've just been kind of ruminating on that and and I thought New Lawrence, not autistic children for a long time I was actually thinking, and how many of those were first-born children and more, and said 90% of them were first-born children. And think about the autistic children that you know they're Mainly first-borns, which is really interesting, yeah, so the younger is there and they're wondering what the other people are thinking, naturally, right, so we have to teach that to the older's a little bit more emotional intelligence like the first-born is like hey, come into the room and just tell the truth. I'm just gonna tell the truth so, and so is doing this right now. I'm gonna like okay, you know, like let's not start the pot, that's natural. You know how do you teach that? I'm working through that.

Doug Smith: 18:04

Yeah, I mean one. You're ahead of me, so I learned from you. I remember just a sign for a funny story, Larry we talked about past your Larry being a mentor yeah, to both of us. And I remember when I first started having kids I'm like, hey, past your Larry, give me some, give me some advice on parenting. And you just look, he's like, talk to Zach and Lauren. They have more modern techniques.

Zack Blair: 18:33

But I would just to say for me people might not think that's about parenting, but how to be a parent.

Doug Smith: 18:38

That's a laze, yeah. So for me, the way we're training our kids doing the best that we know how is right now. What's working is so we have our Saturday night. We call it a Shabbat dinner, but it's a family dinner and after every Saturday night dinner we basically get the Bible, we pull out a few scriptures whatever's on my heart and then now the kids are getting older and they're learning to read. They'll read the scripture or I'll read it, and then we really just talk about it. Yeah, and so that's been really really helpful. And then after that we basically do what we call manner lessons, and the kids love this, for whatever reason manner lessons, but we literally practice. So we'll get up and we'll just think through different skills. When we learn, say like, hey, like this past weekend we were doing it, someone. Someone rings the doorbell and answers the door. Show me how you.

Zack Blair: 19:21

Would actually open the door and answer it.

Doug Smith: 19:22

Yeah, hey okay one, I'm someone you know and love your grandpa.

Zack Blair: 19:25

Oh, we love you. You know hugs and say hey.

Doug Smith: 19:27

I'm a stranger, there's someone at the door that you don't know. How do you interact? What do you say to them? And so we just role play back and forth different situations, and then, hey, like the kids just went and delivered some things to neighbors today and we had them do it on their own, so actually throwing them in situations, and then it's just a matter of coaching in real life.

Zack Blair: 19:45

So, doc, this would be brilliant to do for our foster girls. I never thought about this. I don't know how I never thought about it, but because they came into our world. Sometimes they can think okay, well, anybody that's that that knows that can learn. They're obviously safe, so they'll run to them and hug them right. But we're like, wait, if you don't know them like we had to teach what one you just don't hug everybody. You don't ask them to just pick you up and carry you everywhere. I don't know everybody. That is that that might know my name.

Doug Smith: 20:12

Yeah, no, that's so good and especially, I think, just with the platform, is that God's given both of us, especially.

Zack Blair: 20:17

You know people are listening to this and that's not it, so arrogant in it I'm like I don't know everybody that knows my name. No, no, I mean.

Doug Smith: 20:23

I mean in a genuine way, though, yeah again when you're I know I mean you're a church it's like hundreds of people know you and and I think you actually talked about this one point Like, yeah, if you're on social media and even have posted like one picture of your family, Everyone on social media you know. You told me like thinks they know everything about your kids. I mean you can talk more about that. But that kind of like had me in the mentality of like oh, people are gonna start talking to my kids and they don't even know who they are and they know things about them.

Zack Blair: 20:49

Like I'd be yeah, yeah. Well, I told my kids, like, if you don't know somebody, if you you don't have and they know things about you, you don't have to talk to them. So it's like the opposite of manners. Yeah, it's like if you feel like I want them to be okay with the feeling of discomfort, like so, if somebody comes up to them and they're like hey, noah, how are you? And he looks at them, he's like I don't recognize this person. Hey, judah, how are you? I don't recognize this person, just say hi, kindly. But you don't have to answer any questions. You don't have to. You know, yeah, you don't have to. You don't have to go any further than that.

Doug Smith: 21:19

That's so good, yeah, and I think what you're saying is true, like going back to. So we do formal training, but then it's just a matter of coaching, right? And so I think we had our friend Matt Keller in the other month and he just talked about there's two different kinds of coaching. One is us sitting across from each other, me telling you what to do and what was wrong with what you did, and the others me coming Around the side of you, putting my arm around you and explaining like, hey, what do you think that person felt? Or, and so, even just little things. I'm thinking with you. Know my two older girls, I'll hear them interact with either adults or you know other people, and all they do is they'll start telling them stuff about their life and you know hey, I'm doing this, we're doing this at home, or hey, we have this, and it's like that's not you know, and really just sitting down with them and saying you didn't ask them anything about them, and like we shouldn't start conversations ever with us, like we should be more curious about other people. Yeah, and you want to talk back about me? I think I'm also naturally wired like this, but I think one of the best ways to be good with people is to genuinely become more interested in them than you are in yourself. Yeah, and if you do that and always put others first. You know you'll be and I think that's what we're trying to teach our kids of like hey, it's not about you, like you don't have to tell them everything you're doing.

Like become naturally curious about other people and that'll go a long way, but it's just coaching when they, when they, do something they shouldn't.

Zack Blair: 22:32

It's just you got to get on that and right, do it over, and it's what you're saying is it expands beyond parenting. It expands to just people our age, even above right. Yeah, learning emotional intelligence is one of the best things. Angela Madden, one of her pastors said it you're good with people and because you're good with people, you're gonna be good at anything that you do, and that's what I see in you. You know I really love that about you. You and Lauren. I have that similar wiring when you're with people. Yeah, and I. You know you're one of the people I've watched for a long time like okay, so how does Doug interact with people? That's probably how I should interact with people, because I was more of a firstborn only child. You know, to me and kind of to myself a little bit more in my own thoughts, I love being, obviously, with people, but the asking questions was not something that I learned at a young age, and so Lauren said, said to me one time I'll never get this. She said she's exactly. You know, there's one thing that people really always love to talk about, and what's that themselves so she's like just ask people questions you know, but on on your side of it, because you probably are so natural at asking questions, you feel sometimes overlooked in conversations because you're making it about other people all the time.

Doug Smith: 23:39

No, but it's probably because I've always done it. The interesting thing is, like I have a podcast as well and I always ask for feedback because I always want to get better and I would say, pretty consistent feedback is like hey, I want to hear more of your voice. Yeah, like I want to hear your thoughts and opinion. And going back to even what we talked about in the beginning of, like confidence, I think I actually insecure out of insecurity, like I would actually hide behind questions sometimes. Oh, okay, so like hey, you, you know, you don't need to hear anything that I'm going to say like I'm not and I think I'm starting to Reverse that. But that's really helped me, like when I have people I'm interviewing saying like, hey, tell me your opinion? And I think I was so insecure and afraid of like what if I say the wrong thing, what if I say something dumb, or and all I all it really was was I'm afraid of what the other person thinks of me when I'm Trying to be in. My friend said something the other day, again just losing confidence. I did an interview with him and I asked him for feedback, because I'm not usually on this side of interviewing and he said Doug, you don't have to apologize for like your voice or anything you say. He's like I hope you know that pretty much everything you say is going to be awesome and so just be secure in that. And of course, can I say something dumb or it doesn't, yes, but hearing that, I'm like what if we all operate out of this? everyone, I shouldn't say everyone- If we were confident in saying like man, I do have something to say, and usually what I do say it's gonna add value to people. I think we'd all be in a lot better place.

Zack Blair: 24:58

I think the difference that we might be speaking of is you've, you've, you've done a consistent job of filling your heart with great things for so long that it's like gushers, you know. You know where your kids gushers you squeeze up what's on the inside is gonna come out when you squeeze that gusher. You know times of pressure reveal You're gonna lead well in times of pressure. You know if you have something to say in a situation. I want to know genuinely what you have to say in situations like you know, even receiving correction from a board level, like what do I need to do better here? Like I genuinely respect your voice, but it's it's because of the nature, your heart for people, but it's also because I know that you're a man of growth. You know, I remember one time we were sitting down at Eaton Park and you were like well, what's your growth plan? I'm like what's a growth plan? What are you talking about? What's a growth

plan? You know, yeah. And so you've, dude, you did a EOS with your family, yeah, just recently, yeah, your family.

Doug Smith: 25:46

Before we move into that, we can. I do want to ask you a question, because you talked about how you know you wouldn't have said that you were. Your natural strength of yours would have been being good with people, and then you need to grow. I remember those conversations early on in our relationship, and one I just want to celebrate you like to see. You know I don't think people have any idea like to see where you were in 2005 interacting with people, and correct me if I'm wrong, but I think I remember you saying, like man, if I preach a message, like you would immediately jet like into your office Because you were afraid, not afraid, but maybe didn't want to talk to people and to see how far you've come.

Zack Blair: 26:20

And actually, sometimes you forget about that man. Yeah, oh, you got me in the feels there. I forgot about that, oh, oh, it's been beautiful now, yeah oh, and it's interesting.

Doug Smith: 26:27

Man like and again, I don't know how familiar people are with the predictive index, but people can look at personalities like me or Lauren and be like, wow, they must be so good with people and I would say we are to a point. But people like you are actually more wired. Introverted people are more wired to actually be better at relationships, because I don't. This sounds bad, but you'll actually take the time to listen and go deep with people where more my personality Like I just want to high five, everyone vote influence. Now five, you want to one. Great, but a compliment that I've heard about you over and over again is man, I've never met someone like Zach when who makes me feel like when I'm sitting across from I'm the only person in the world, that means the world to me, oh man, I've heard this at least 10 to 20 times probably in the last two years about you specifically. So to Remember you and the running to your office days to now people are saying Zach's probably the best relational leader I know. I mean teach me like what. I and I guess for the audience, like how have you? You talked about learning how to ask questions, but how else do you feel like you've grown in that ability? And like what have you learned about being great with people? Because clearly you know it's been exponential growth.

Zack Blair: 27:35

You know, I was overwhelmed by the amount of people in a room right and Touching and remembering everybody's name, and so I air on the side of going to the one and being with them. You, you call that out perfectly. You know, sometimes I'll have regret. I'm like oh man, I didn't even say hi to anybody else. I just talked to so-and-so this week at church and we talked before church, we talked after church and I didn't even get to say hi to really anybody else.

Doug Smith: 27:59

You know, and investing in that, you know, I just want the Lord did everybody. You're right, yeah, that's covered anyway.

Zack Blair: 28:08

Yeah, and, and Lauren's dad, Lawrence. So I just there was a moment where I realized one of the deepest pains that I had would revolved around friendship and I wanted to just be a good friend and the Lord began to really deal with my heart, specifically about, you know just how important people are and how important relationships are and specific, and so I Just fell in love with the individual you know and

Fell out of love with a, with a crowd, so to speak. Yeah, just all about the person. I just I don't know, it's just a hard thing, and Lauren taught me how to be, you know a little bit better.

Doug Smith: 28:48

You know our wives dignify us in certain areas 10,000, you know yeah, and you know you talk about deep friendship. So you know we haven't gone into it yet, but I had a mental breakdown 2020, mid-darkest season in my life. Didn't know if I'd ever be able to work again. And so who did I reach out to? I reached out to what I consider like my deepest, closest friends. Yeah, which would be you. You know partial area, a few other people and literally Connected with you all individually, separately. But you all basically said the same thing to me, given my personality. You said, doug, you've been neglecting deep friendship for a long time. And I was kind of like at first. I was like, really, because my personality, I'm like I have tons of friendships, like I don't feel like community is a lack in my life. And I remember past your Larry saying, like Doug, like who are the people that don't know you as Doug Smith from light of life or L3, or like man? They just know you as Doug and like they're literally just your friend. And I was like man, there's probably like a handful of those. He's like man, don't neglect those. And like go deep. And I certainly have not been perfected that, but it's something I've been trying to go in like do you have any systems for keeping close with I Basically just being keeping and investing in deep friendship, because I think you're you're really good at this.

Zack Blair: 29:53

The way that I, the way that I kind of frame it is, in every season You're gonna have three to five really close friends, you know, and then you invest in those relationships, right, and everyone else like you can, you can connect with, but there's three to five. You have to have that three to five. You know, if I counsel somebody and like you got to have a brother, you got to have a pastor and you have to have a counselor during this, you know, during this time, if it's a really difficult time, but like a brother and I'm talking about, you know, not a physical brother, but like, but a friend that sticks closer than a brother, you know, yeah, so I try to. I try to just focus on a couple, a couple relationships at a time. It's difficult for me to like remember everything and try to text everybody, but I do at least once a month. Just, I keep a log in my phone to people I'm praying for. You know, I keep a log in my phone of, of of friends that I want to make sure that I follow up with. You might be going through grief or different things like that and I just kind of follow. You know, like somebody pops up on my heart and I've been thinking about him Especially two or three times. Man, I'll shoot him a text right away. You know, I'm like, hey, I've been thinking about you and it's funny, the dog, because like lately, I feel like the Lord has really specifically been leading me to pray for people, and in very, in very specific manners. You know, and I'll let them know about that, you know, my friend, my friend Juan, I just I actually prayed over a voice text and he was like you had no clue how much that meant to me, wow, and so like, when I'm in prayer, if somebody pops up on my heart, I'll just put a voice message on and you know, and just pray for him there.

Doug Smith: 31:21

I love that yeah the other thing again now, turning this in my podcast. The other thing, man, I would just say that that I've really admired and learned from you in the area of relationships we're talking about being good with people. When I went through that hard time, you, you pass your layer and all those people, man, when I needed you, it at least my observation was like you guys dropped everything, whatever you were doing, your agenda, and, man, you showed up like you and Lauren showed up at our house, took care of our kids. You and I went out, we had fun, yeah, and you dropped everything. And the unfortunate revelation I had in that I'm like man, I'm so busy so often and I'm like if Zach would have called me and had the same need, would have I done the same thing? Is a challenging question for all of us. But from that time on and again not been perfect with it, I've really and I think you may even say I

would love to hear you speak about this like showing up for people when, like they need it most. Man, over the past two or three years it's been since then, I feel like there's probably been 10 to 20 opportunities where people call me and men like they were going through it and I want to say I was like what would Zach do? But man, that example you provided for me, man, I showed up and it's just like man, that was a divine appointment that person's life that they'll never forget. And yeah, was I so busy? Like what do I literally have on my calendar? That couldn't be cancer. It's so important that I can't show up. For anyway, I would love to hear you talk about this from a relational standpoint. So good it okay so.

Zack Blair: 32:40

So I do think that some of that is from Professionally being exposed to very difficult times with people like my job as a pastor is to be there for people in the best times and worst times. If I Define my job as anything else, if it's about preaching, if it's about this, it's wrong. It's about being there for people in the best times and worst times. So of course, I use that to inspire what community to, so that community can be there for people in the best times and worst times. That's all I'm doing, right. And so Pastor Jim taught me this principle and I just, I just love it. It encapsulated so many of my feelings and learnings through the years. You know, going into the hospital room, being there for people when they lost a teenager. You know I'm gonna get emotional even thinking about some of them. So I gotta, you know, but we can get tissue. Yeah, we got some somewhere. But people remember two things when you're there for them, when you're not. When I left youth ministry I didn't have many kids say this message changed my life. But I had a lot of kids who said you were there for me when my dad died and I'll never forget that. You know you're there for me. You came to my game. Why did you come to my game? You know all these kids. You came to my game. Like that is what changes people's lives and what I started to realize, like there was a shift in me that I started. It started to take place when we had a. This was like a god moment in my life. You know, when we started in ministry, doug, you know I don't know if I got it in it, for I didn't get in for all the wrong reasons. There's a part of me that was codependent. I wanted to fix everybody's problems and I felt like good. When I fix problems, you know, to me, yeah, part of that is on health, growing up and all that stuff. You just figure it out. But you know we all see the masses in our mind, right? And I'll never forget Jill Wyndham praying over me and saying you know, you're a father to many, and that I felt like that dropped in my heart. I'm like, no, that's who I am. So much so that it began to change my life. And I was also reading a book about, just essentially the the orphan spirit. You know that we all carry about around. And there was a young girl in our youth ministry, there was a young boy in our youth ministry and there were several others, but those two in particular, who didn't have a father in their life and their lives were just in shambles. And the Lord called me and Lauren to them. And the Lord spoke to me like you're them spiritually, wow. And so I had to open up and receive the love of the Father in order to learn to be a Father, and that completely changed my life. Wow, yeah. And so it became then less about how many people came to the ministry and more about like man, if one person has helped, great, yeah, that's all that matters to me.

Doug Smith: 35:29

Oh, it's interesting, man, and even just talking to people, man, and again, I'm all about wide impact too.

Zack Blair: 35:35

Like man, let's reach as many people as possible.

Doug Smith: 35:37

But in the little experience and I don't have this huge wide thing, but even talking to leaders with huge wide impacts, it does seem like nothing. Wide impact is not even close to the comparison, fulfillment wise, of deep impact. Yes, and when leaders, even if they've led, you know 50,000 people, what they remember

and they talk about, you know post career-wise, is man. Here are the 12 people that I really poured into and look what they're doing now and they get way more excited about the deep impact than wide. And I think our culture, just we live in this culture that's obsessed with the wide and the wide is great and again, some people are called to it, but I think if we all focused a lot more on deep, we'd make a lot bigger impact.

Zack Blair: 36:12

And we'd be a lot more fulfilled. Is that maturity, like, is that okay? So if I put it this way, for me it might've been maturity. Is it maturity, like, if I care about the wide, am I thinking about me? Am I thinking about if I'm thinking about the deep, am I thinking about them? Like Jesus cared about the masses, the multitudes, obviously, and then he cared about the individuals. You know, yeah, yeah, I mean I mean that's maturity. Or if it's just to be a both and or- yeah, on the motivation.

Doug Smith: 36:39

I mean you know I always joke, I wanna be a mega church pastor in my twenties. Like I'm like, oh man, if I just let a church like this, it would be the greatest thing ever. You know, this is my natural progression, it's the only thing I had in my mind. And then, like, I left the church world and I ended up working in a nonprofit serving the homeless and I had a conversation with you. I was having an identity crisis for like six months Cause all of a sudden, oh my gosh, how am I ever gonna have a wide impact and reach thousands? And it's just so funny, man, it's like you know, one of our mentors, John News, always said never put a period where God puts a comma.

Zack Blair: 37:10

And never just and then you put a period at the end of that sentence. I'm just kidding, pastor John, I love you. Yes, I'm sorry, I'm just kidding.

Doug Smith: 37:16

But man, I was so focused and I put a period I'm gonna be a mega church pastor.

Zack Blair: 37:20

Yeah, yeah.

Doug Smith: 37:21

And now I've been at the rescue mission for 13 years which I would have never imagined and really God fulfilled all the desires in my heart to have that impact. It was just interesting in a way that I just never thought possible and I think you know you talked about motivation, getting into ministry Like for me, it's like whatever drew us in great and I think I get it.

Zack Blair: 37:39

It's a good way to put it.

Doug Smith: 37:40

Yeah, as God matures us more. You know, when Jesus in the beginning of his ministry, he said like come and see man, wide impact, like see the scope of this. But as the disciples grew, he eventually said come and die right. And like require a praise and say like man, I want you to give your life to this. And it was more about deep impact. So yeah, I don't really have an answer, but I think as you grow and mature, you

care less and less about wide and you just care more and more about man. How am I gonna change a few people's lives forever?

Zack Blair: 38:05

Yeah, this might be too deep of a question, doug. Okay, I don't know if I've ever asked you this Like do you ever regret it all? Do you care to regret about not being a pastor on staff at a church? Like, is there ever a moment where that happens? Cause from the outside I don't see why you ever would, but I also see that you could. You know.

Doug Smith: 38:22

Yeah, this might be the period of the comma, you think too. So, like right now, where I'm at, I'm like what I love, and this was just me personally, and I'll just speak to you cause I think a lot of I think there's a problem in the church that at least people that get into ministry. I think to your point on motivation. A lot of us could have impure motivations when we're in our 20s. We see people on platforms and we aspire to that and maybe that's what got us into ministry. But, as you know, once you start getting into ministry and seeing what it's really all about, or maybe you get into ministry or you plant a church or something and it's not blowing up like you thought it would like, you have to deal with the reality that a lot of people get wounded, a lot of people get hurt by that cause. They didn't hit their expectation and they leave ministry, they leave God and all of these things, and I just think, man, they just need to follow. I know it sounds like really simple, but, man, just follow the plan that God has for you and let him write a beautiful story and stop getting so focused on an outcome. So I think for me, as I moved into nonprofit world right now, the way I'm wired we talk about a wide impact. I think all I really wanted and when I wanted to be a major church pastor was to help people. In the way I'm wired I'm more of a kingdom person, like big picture, like wanna see what's going on, and the interesting thing is that light of life we're connected to 300 churches in the Pittsburgh area and I feel like daily I get an eagle eye view of what God is doing in the body of Christ in every church and for me that is so beautiful and so I tell people now, like man, if God wants me to be a pastor at a church or lead a church, like I would have to hear from him directly, like the way. But I never think like oh, I say that's why I said the period thing. I'm like I wonder if I do close myself off sometimes cause I'm so fulfilled in the season I am in. But I would just say there's no regret, like I just have come really comfortable with where God has brought me to and really happy with the story he's written, versus the story and narrative that I wanted for myself.

Zack Blair: 40:09

Yeah, yeah, no, I totally go with what you're saying. Like there's a scripture where Paul says Godliness plus contentment is great game. That's the only scripture I hated. You know, like I don't agree with that. You know, contentment, how could I ever be content? Like just more, more, more, you know? But like man, there's a fulfillment that comes when we can actually be present. But there in present, over here, right now, where we are, we love, where we are, we're waiting direction for the next season, whatever that looks like. If it's stay, stay. If it's go here, go. Whatever God does.

Doug Smith: 40:39

Yeah and I would say like I'm still super driven Like the contentment thing, like I'm always wanting more, which I guess I have to guard myself for so and I think that's good. I would just say, on the contentment, though, I have a piece of my heart with where I am.

Zack Blair: 40:51

That's exactly what it is.

Doug Smith: 40:53

And if I never get to the more that I see, I'm okay with that.

Zack Blair: 40:56

Like I remember, that's the best way to put it I've ever heard. Okay, I'm not even joking, I'm thinking about it because Paul said you know, he worked harder than all of his brothers, so he wasn't lazy by any means. Nevertheless, you know not about the grace of God in me. So he worked hard along with the grace of God, and so contentment doesn't mean laziness, and I think that I might have, but it's contentment is I'm good, no matter what, yeah, no matter the outcome.

Doug Smith: 41:19

And like my job is. Like you know, I quote John Maxx all the time, like his definition of success, I think is just so beautiful. Success in life is knowing my purpose in life. What did God call me to do? It's growing to my maximum potential. Hey, we have a part to play. You said Paul worked as hard as he could, like we should do, and work as hard as we can to do what God's called us to do, and work as though it depends on us, but pray as though it depends on God. Then the last one is just so seeds the benefit others Like just make a difference in the lives of others. And I remember a mentor telling me once he said Doug well, actually, John Maxx all told him this. He said, Doug, if God wants to make you a name, let him do that. Man, that was life changing. If God wants you to have a major chart, let him do that. If God wants you to have a wide impact, let him do that. Yeah, do it. Be faithful with what he puts in your hand. That's your only job. Be faithful, be faithful, be faithful. And another story that really helped me and I might butcher this, but JR Tolkien. He's the guy who wrote Lord of the Rings. He wrote an essay about a tree. I'm not gonna remember this. Tim Keller shares a story, but it was about a painter and he was trying to paint this painting of a beautiful tree his whole life and he ended up dying and the tree was only half finished and when he died he went to heaven. And when he went to heaven, the first thing he saw was a completed picture of the tree and I think for me it was just hey, our ultimate completion is in Christ, and I don't think we have any idea of the impact we're actually making and how God is using us, and I think when we try to define how God's using us and measure it, we just miss out on the beautiful thing that God's created, the one day we're gonna see and when we get to heaven and hear. Well done, my good and faithful servant.

Zack Blair: 42:47

Yeah, yeah, so JR Tolkien, yeah, jr Tolkien, what was that called?

Doug Smith: 42:51

Something with a tree.

Zack Blair: 42:51

This is where Something with a tree. Okay, my details, just Tim Keller Tolkien tree. You should find it. It's beautiful, it's hilarious. Yeah, did you read a lot of Timothy Keller?

Doug Smith: 43:02

I got exposed as work through the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation, which you're part of right. What do?

Zack Blair: 43:07

you do with PLF?

Doug Smith: 43:08

We help lead, I help lead their emerging leaders collaboratively creature.

Zack Blair: 43:12

So we have leadership collaborators. So you're not a emerging leader, but you're leading the emerging leaders. I now lead the emerging leaders.

Doug Smith: 43:17

I'm in that season.

Zack Blair: 43:18

Yes.

Doug Smith: 43:21

But when I went through the collaborative it was under different leadership and it was my first exposure to Tim Keller and that actually really helped me navigate. The like do I regret with pastors, cause I was still kind of in that identity regret phase or phase of like what am I doing? And basically the whole premise is just like all work is ministry. Like that revelation Bruce Bickel said ministry is not a job, ministry is who you are, where you are. That quote changed my life Cause I realized I don't have to be a pastor, I don't have to have, like man, whatever God called me to do. That's my ministry. Like period.

Zack Blair: 43:55

That was life changing for me.

Doug Smith: 43:56

So I would say the greatest like impact that Tim Keller had on me was that revelation.

Zack Blair: 44:01

Yeah, his work on work, evan, every good endeavor. Yeah, evan Adams did a great podcast with us here.

Doug Smith: 44:08

Yeah, listen to that, because Evan is brilliant he really is.

Zack Blair: 44:11

I mean, he probably read that book in three minutes. He knows he's like oh, I had some extra time, this 400 page? You know, I have this good friend of mine. How do you do that? There's no way you. You know he's speed reads.

Doug Smith: 44:21

Well, he's funny man he told me which is inspired. I actually just tried this, evan, if you're watching, he's like man. I was the kid when I was seven years old. He's like my dad and I think he was adopted. His dad started giving him personal growth books at seven years old. He's like I read see you with the top, isaac Ziggler. I read think and grow rich. So the other day, you know I want to pay my kids for growth. So I gave Livium like live, this is the 25 ways to win with people. Which on Maxwell, and she started reading the first chapter and she asked me what five words meant. I'm like this, I'm done.

Zack Blair: 44:48

We're not ready for this yet. So, even, you're just an anomaly prodigal. He's a little different man. It was really good though.

Doug Smith: 44:54

Like it was.

Zack Blair: 44:55

It was really good. Have you interviewed him on your podcast?

Doug Smith: 44:57

It's been probably 10 years, but yeah. He was one of the early episodes.

Zack Blair: 45:01

Just his understanding of kingdom and work and how that places the glory of God. And you know we're doing the classical high school together. We're starting that. It's been really fun. He's a really fun relationship, specifically when we talk about like books, like that. So, it's not people, not a lot of people want to talk about CS Lewis. Abolition of man is like one of my favorite books and I talked to somebody else who was on the board and she's like I didn't understand a word and Evan and I are like oh, it's so good. It's like I don't know, maybe I'm just more wired to read stuff like that. This person is genius and trust me in like amazing ways too. That's cool. So, plf, what are you doing with that? You're leading emergency emergency leader of merging leader collaborative.

Doug Smith: 45:45

They have collaborative for senior leaders and for emerging leaders.

Zack Blair: 45:48

Okay, and so then you're also with L3, you lead the Pastor Mind group. We call it right. How many guys do we have in that group?

Doug Smith: 45:54

I always say 15.

Zack Blair: 45:55

I think 12 or 13, yeah, it was, you know, maybe 15. It might be going up whatever, but with that, you're doing a lot of work with leaders here in Pittsburgh. What are you noticing? What are the trends that you're starting to see?

Doug Smith: 46:07

I would just say, the thing I'm the most excited about with L3 is our Pastor Mind group. So and again, man, for me you have two groups, two Pastor Mind groups.

Zack Blair: 46:17

No, I didn't launch the second one because I have no capacity.

Doug Smith: 46:19

But if anyone's watching this and would like to become president and run L3, let me know Seriously. But yeah, so for me, like unity is always really important to me and then to his longevity, like I want the. I

remember a pastor telling me that he believes only about 2% of Christian leaders make it to their finish line intact and fulfilling what God called them to do.

Zack Blair: 46:39

And like I'm like.

Doug Smith: 46:40

I have to do something to change that. You said that to you, pastor John.

Zack Blair: 46:42

Yeah, I figured that was awesome, so good. Yeah, it's true, though.

Doug Smith: 46:46

Yeah, and so for me, I'm like what can I do to unite the body of Christ and leaders Cause I feel like God's place is special call in my life for leaders and bring these people together and so they could be fully known, loved and challenged? And to bring these pastors and ministry leaders together and now, two years later, hearing them just say things, you know, in tears, sometimes saying I didn't know how bad I needed this, and when you ask them, what did you need? It's like so simple, it's like friendship, and you know this isn't necessarily all leaders listening to this, but leadership can be lonely, and I remember Henry Cloud saying that he believes there's some data point that 80% of executives or CEOs don't have a single person that they can name, that they can confide in, and so I think this is a huge epidemic. I think every leader needs to be in a mastermind group with people in which they're fully known, loved and challenged, and I think our group has been part of that. And to see these guys come together, pray together, man, go through issues together, collaborate on just kingdom objectives for the city, it's just been awesome man, yeah, yeah, and to have healthy conversations.

Zack Blair: 47:49

And I remember going into that and feeling just a little skeptical because in the church world sometimes it's like how many people you running? You know it's like a Southern thing and I'm like, is it really about that? Like, if we're going to be talking about, like you know, here's all the glory that I'm experiencing who's going to beat it? You know, in the conversation, like I'm just not into that. I'd rather develop some friendships and learn from these guys and have each other's backs and what's happened for me in being a part of that group. People will come from different churches a lot of times. You know and we know this Like I wish I would have known this as a church planner that when somebody comes into the church and they're bashing another church, they're going to leave the church the same way they left the prior church. Came in talking about the other church. You know, it's just a principle. You know, unless God gets ahold of them and I'm sure that that happens, it's just. I just haven't seen it too much, you know. But when people come in, I'm like, hey, that's my friend. Yeah, we get together once a month. We prayed together just the other day, you know, and that's been special, so thank you for that gift, yeah and I think this is so important.

Doug Smith: 48:49

you know, as I've gotten to know ministry leaders and leaders in general, a lot of people are part of collaboratives or groups like that nationally. So, hey, I got friends in New York, I got friends in this state, this state, this state, but locally you never see this happening.

Zack Blair: 49:02

And so again, I think that's the whole point.

Doug Smith: 49:03

It's like people have preconceived notions. People think they're judging each other. They hear things from different people. Well, I'm like when's the last time you had coffee together and so again the unity part, and if you're a pastor listening to this or watching this, I really encourage you. If you want to talk, like I would need someone to lead it, but like you need a group like this that can hold you accountable, and so everyone needs to be.

Zack Blair: 49:22

I fully agree with that. Are you skeptical of pastors who don't have friends real close by? I would say Skeptical might be a strong word, huh.

Doug Smith: 49:32

Yeah, skeptical is probably not the wrong word. My heart just breaks for them.

Zack Blair: 49:34

Because I know how bad they need it.

Doug Smith: 49:35

I've been a mastermind group now for 10 years and I can't imagine doing my life a leadership. And where do you get correction Like, hey, where do you have a safe place? Yes, we pray for each other when we're friends, but one of the beautiful things, I think, is the hot seat. So hot seat's just an opportunity to troubleshoot issues. So, hey guys, here's what I'm going through, here's an issue I'm going through in my organization, and then you have 12 other people who do similar things to you that can pour into you and talk to you about that and may have wisdom and insight that you don't Like if a leader doesn't have that and they're trying to figure it out on their own, good luck. And again, the friendship piece like leadership is tough.

Zack Blair: 50:08

It's so beneficial, I think, from understanding the backgrounds of each of the guys. Everybody has a completely different background. You know, one person grew up in Baltimore. You know another person was all over the place like am I really going to be in ministry? And then all of a sudden takes over a church and is just unbelievable, you know, doing a great job. Another person is just. You know, I just respect everybody, but everybody has different backgrounds. So when we approach a situation, they're speaking to it from their perspective and background, where you and I had some very specific training in our background. So we might approach something the same way with Pastor Larry and Pastor John being our spiritual fathers. You know, yeah, it's been really fun.

Doug Smith: 50:46

Yeah, having different perspectives is huge. I remember when I came to Light of Life, we're very diverse as an organization and I remember I would just say stuff out loud. That for me was, you know, abc's Common Sense, and people were like, what are you talking about? And like they would start to challenge me pull me in a room, can you? give me an example of that no, but based on, what I want to express to people is do you have people around you that think differently to you, completely different? Like one of my old boss I affectionately by the time we ended working together. I called her the other side and literally it was a joke, but it was serious. Like no matter what I believed, she believed the exact opposite. Oh, wow, and so like if I ever needed to know, like hey, you know, here's my belief, or like thought on this, like

what's the opposite side of this man? I had someone and we look at our culture today. It's crazy. Everyone just only talks to people who talk like them, think like them, look like, et cetera. It's like man, when is the last time you're in a room with people different than you that can challenge your positions and actually help you grow and intellect in every other area of your life? Because even if you don't end up agreeing, you're going to be better for the conversation.

Zack Blair: 51:48

Was it hard for you to receive correction? No Younger leader, or what?

Doug Smith: 51:56

yeah, I've, it's funny. Oh, this is one criticism of me from one person, but I think it's funny, so I share it. But he said, like I, actually he's like you're probably the only person on the planet that I could say this to, but like you're too teachable I'm like so yeah, I mean literally in every one-on-one I have in every meeting that I have, every podcast that I do. After this conversation I'm gonna say what. Something that makes me better, but my view on that.

Zack Blair: 52:20

One I would rather lean on the teachable side than not teachable.

Doug Smith: 52:24

I can tell you that. But imagine if you ask that, like Laura and I have our weekly family team meeting every week. Hey, what are three things that that you saw in me as a spouse that I do well with, that you love Specific. And then what's one thing that annoyed you that I could do better? Imagine getting 1% better in your marriage every single week. Imagine being able to grow in your profession every week. And if you don't ask for it, two things like if you want feedback and make a teachable, if you don't ask for it, I'd say 90% of the time You'll never receive it. Yeah, you know blind spots. And then you'll be blindsided when people actually come to you with feedback, because it's usually Because it's come to a point where you're in trouble. Yeah and then two how do you react when people give you feedback like all you should basically say, even if you don't fully agree or take all of it is thank you.

Zack Blair: 53:07

Mm-hmm.

Doug Smith: 53:08

That's it, thank you, and then take it home, chew on it and say, okay, you know, we always the Bible school Dr Phil Richards always say have enough senses a cow, eat the sticks, or eat the hay, spit the sticks. So okay, hey, what do I need to approve? But or apply? But if you do that every day and in every year of your life, like you talk about part of your purpose being growing to your maximum potential. I don't know a much better way to get there.

Zack Blair: 53:31

Yeah, so I'm gonna press on you. Yeah, press on you personally. So like if somebody comes with a correction and they have no relationship with you, does that bother you? No, that doesn't bother you at all.

Doug Smith: 53:40

No, okay, I mean, I guess, I guess it depends on what it is Okay.

Zack Blair: 53:44

No, I certainly like take that into account.

Doug Smith: 53:47

I I heard different you said that so quick.

Zack Blair: 53:50

No, it doesn't bother me.

Doug Smith: 53:50

Okay, so that's because I'm like God spoke through donkey's, like why couldn't he speak through? You know, I remember Keith Moore, who I listen to all the time. He was just talking about correction and you know, a prayer that I took from him, that I literally pray almost every day, is God, develop me as quickly and as solidly as possible. And if that's really my prayer and I pray that because one, I want to grow to my maximum potential as fast as I can, but solidly. Man, I don't want to be so fast that I outgrow my character and I can't sustain the growth, so pray that God's gonna answer it, and he may not always answer in ways that you want him to. Sometimes He'll put you in situations or experiences that you would rather not go through, but it's what's needed to develop your character. Other times, who have someone call you out on something and Out of the blue, I don't know, it's actually been funny because I feel like, because I've been teachable like this, I was just texting, oh, I was texting someone yesterday and they gave me a piece of feedback on something coming up and I was like that's brilliant, thank you so much for the feedback. And they said that's such a Doug Smith thing to say, but man, I just feel like we would all be better. And if someone doesn't know me, like if I think it's a dumb criticism, I'll probably bring it to other people who do know me well and say, like, is there any truth in this, or do you see this like, oh value that makes a lot of sense. I don't accept all feedback. Okay, if that's what you're asking yeah, so you know.

Zack Blair: 55:03

Oh, yeah, you know you.

Doug Smith: 55:04

You said I'm a horrible husband. Okay, like you have.

Zack Blair: 55:06

No, you have no idea what goes in my four walls Like yeah, let's ask Laura that yeah you know.

Doug Smith: 55:11

So if it's something crazy like that, but if someone's like hey, the way you said that in that meaning, or the way you talk to that person, or when you said this, you could have said it a different way, or you didn't take into account this audience, I'll eat that up all day.

Zack Blair: 55:24

Yeah, make me better. Yeah, okay, I think I was saying I was thinking refer, referring to, maybe, moments that you could have been in, when somebody says you said this. Therefore, this is what that's telling me about you. You need to work on this because it's a hard issue. You're like what are you talking about? Like that's way too deep here. Yeah, just give me the feedback so you create purposefully spaces for

feedback and then you evaluate it by asking other people hey, what do you think about this? Is this something? A lot of times?

Doug Smith: 55:49

If I feel like it needs to go to other people a lot of times I'll just evaluate it internally. I might throw by Laura, but you know that's. That's way more rare than the times I just say okay.

Zack Blair: 55:59

Here's what's going on. I work with a leader who's not teachable in your estimation, fire them.

Doug Smith: 56:06

I mean basically, Henry Cloud did this great talk and you can. I don't know if you have show notes, but you can link to it.

Zack Blair: 56:12

I'm not thinking of anybody when I ask that question, I'm just yeah, it's a good question.

Doug Smith: 56:16

No, there's a. There's a video Henry Cloud did a teaching called the good. I think it's called like the good. The wise, the evil do good the wise and yeah yeah. And it's basically like what do you do when light comes? Wise people when light comes, or correction or feedback, we'll take it and basically do what we were just been talking about the receive it. I think, oh, foolish, foolish people, don't Evil people, they're never gonna hear it. And that's where he said basically, like for the people who are never gonna hear it, or dangerous, like you need guns, lawyers, etc. There are people like that. But for the foolish, sometimes you just have to understand, like one, they may have never been trained. Like again, why do I receive feedback? Because I've listened to enough and had a lot of Mentors in my life tell me to do that. So you have to determine, like, why isn't this person teachable or why are they hearing it? And sometimes it may just be the way that you're saying it. So a question that Henry asks in that is saying hey, what do I need to do? Or how do I need to communicate to you in a way that you actually like hear this?

Zack Blair: 57:15

And they may say you can ask that question straight up. Yeah, that's great.

Doug Smith: 57:18

Just ask it and they may say well, like the way you said that, or you know when you're going, you know, and it could be you, to be honest. Yeah they may not be receiving because you're not good at giving it. Yeah, and so do they know you care for them. Do they know you love them? Because, yeah, I would say that I'm rare in that case, that I don't care about it like that as much. Yes, but, most people won't listen to you if they don't feel cared for and loved, etc.

Zack Blair: 57:38

So Okay so I'm just gonna apply that okay real quick to things that I've been noticing lately. I do a lot of marriage counseling and the concerns like that concern can be viewed as criticism from the other you know, and so we've been teaching people like, say hey, this is a concern that I have. It's not a criticism, because what I've noticed is if you somebody grows up with a, a critical parent, you know somebody who's just always look at you know you're never good enough. You did this wrong, you did this wrong. You look at the five things you did wrong instead of the the one big thing they did Right. They become then they hear that voice with them all their life. So then when they get married they bring that criticism

into their marriage and so now they're their own inward critic and anything that you say that could be interpreted as remotely negative is automatically viewed as this person is criticizing me, this person's tearing me down. So I've been in in times with people where a husband has raised a concern, but it is I could see it in the wife's eyes, or vice versa the wife has raised a concern, I see it in the husband's eyes, where he's taking it as a straight-up criticism, but all she's saying is I love you and I see more in you. Or all he's saying is I love you and I see more in you. You know, and that man that's fantastic asking the question how can I say this in a way that you can hear?

Doug Smith: 58:56

yeah, well, and in that situation, another one that's really helpful, that we use at light of life all the time and having hard conversations, is, if we're having a conversation right now, if we're having conflict or we have an issue with each other, basically it's like a Zach, here's my thoughts on this, or whatever. Can you repeat back to me what you heard me say? Yes, before you respond, yeah, one, you're gonna make sure that they actually listen to you, but oftentimes, like to your point, like you, you may have think you communicated like hey, I just need you to grow in this area. And they could be like well, I'm a terrible husband, I'm a terrible father, I'm terrible at my job, and you can. And at that point, that's when you can correct and ask that question of like how can I say this in way like I didn't mean it, oh, you're a great husband, you're great like all I really. And then a great question, like in most conversations, is what do you want? Like, what do you want for you, what do you want for the other person and what do you want for other parties involved? If you can both get on the same page about that and listen to each other and do that back and forth. And then they respond. You say hey, what I heard you say was boom boom, boom boom. I just you'll have much better conversations and you'll come to much better solutions much quicker. Yeah, and if you make that a habit, you're yeah, you'll be going.

Zack Blair: 1:00:04

Yeah, except for life that that approach saves me big time. We you helped me in a situation, approach a person that I needed to, I needed to confront in a healthy way, and you were there as a mediator. And when, when I said something, I said it wrong because I was nervous and I didn't want them to misinterpret and it was like I was so nervous. I didn't want them to misinterpret the way that I said it. It came out completely wrong and you're like, hey, what did you hear here? And it was the exact opposite.

Doug Smith: 1:00:32

No, that's not what I meant.

Zack Blair: 1:00:34

No, this is what I meant. That's brilliant, it's absolutely brilliant.

Doug Smith: 1:00:37

Well, it's your point, and again, I guess we're on hard conversations now. But yeah, if you, if conversations aren't going well, bring in a third party like bringing someone in who is good at facilitating those things and just hashtag out and then, once you see their example or learn how to have them, then you're you're set to have them on your own.

Zack Blair: 1:00:51

Yeah, yeah. And so are there every time where you're just like, okay, I'm not gonna have a tough conversation with this person because they are evil. How do you tell that?

Doug Smith: 1:00:59

Oh, I haven't had to deal with a ton of evil.

Zack Blair: 1:01:05

Ask a question that I have to answer. Well, there was an individual that I wanted to tell. I wanted to tell to this person's face that they were demon possessed and Ben said no, you're not, you're not gonna do, don't do that.

Doug Smith: 1:01:20

You have to have. You know. Yes, Lauren as well.

Zack Blair: 1:01:22

I was like. They were like what are you gonna say? I'm gonna tell them, a demon possess this one man. So yeah, but yeah.

Doug Smith: 1:01:34

I would say, if they're even, don't even have a conversation, right.

Zack Blair: 1:01:37

Well, and when it comes to, when it's comes to garden culture within the church and that was a context of that conversation, you know this is. You know Mark Epper said when I, when I see division, I call it what it is. It's demonic, you know, and so we see that we have to protect that. I was very hard on this scripture as well, like it took me a lot, a lot of awareness, but when, when you have a divisive person, you warn them once and then, after that, have nothing to do with them, and I was like no way, like I want to give people a chance, but they made their choice to be divisive and there that route of division is gonna, is gonna bite you. You got to deal with the littles, or the littles eventually become big, you know, and if they continue that divisive behavior, you have to, you have to, you have to deal with that. And so there's various ways of doing so. You know, and I think each different way might, might, and each, each different scenario might necessitate a different approach.

Doug Smith: 1:02:29

Yeah well, that and that's with evil people, but that's probably the majority people is not their norm. The norm is probably just gossip. Man, you have an issue with someone, yeah and again. The reason I've been able to get skilled at this is I had a basically had a co-worker that I didn't get along with and I tried to get that person fired and it blew up in my face and I was passive, aggressive, I gossiped all the time. I let all the gossip come to me yeah and basically I was forced without going to the whole story, I was forced to have a hard conversation with them first time I ever had to have one of my life. Took an hour to get through, but from that moment on I made the commitment I'm never gonna gossip again. Wow, and my perfect no right. But I'm never gonna gossip again. If anyone comes to me, I will do what my mentor did me and say take out your phone right now, call Zach and say Zach, I have to have a conversation with you and you, as a leader in your organization, you have to nip that about. Like Dave Ramsey, I haven't been this extreme, but he has the no gossip role. Like you get caught gossiping twice, you're fired. Yeah, like there's something to that. When it comes to maintaining a healthy culture, you really, really have to keep an eye on this and train people. Matthew 18 just said if you have a problem with someone, go to them and have a conversation. If that doesn't work, bring someone in. Like we should be way more skilled than we are as individuals at having hard conversations.

Zack Blair: 1:03:39

Yeah, and sometimes it feels justifiable. You know, if you see somebody who's taking advantage of somebody, you know, and you're like, oh my goodness, I can't. People, I can't believe people don't see this. Or you know the situation like that. I remember there was a situation that was popping up and it's when you're, when you have a relational staff, when you love each other and you're doing life together, it's easy to let things fly. As a leader. Yeah, remember the Lord dealing with my heart. Like, hey, pray for this. Like this is a family member who's gone off the deep end. Don't talk about this person, but pray for them. You know, and I had to apologize to the staff and I didn't say anything that was like, you know, earthshattering bad.

Doug Smith: 1:04:14

I just gave, I laughed you know, like this is crazy, you know like normal conversation.

Zack Blair: 1:04:19

Yeah, but I had to apologize and same, you know well, kudos you for doing a man.

Doug Smith: 1:04:23

And again, just on the correction part, hey, man, I mean gods are greatest corrector like if God prompts you something in your heart, again it's listening to those little corrections. If you start to, if you would have just ignored that man, that could be the start of a path of you just justifying and overlooking one thing after another. And I know so. My Encursion would just be like if God's prompting you have a conversation or to confess sin or whatever, yeah, don't ignore that, because you want to talk about correction and teach ability and growing your life. Like that God should be. Someone told me said Doug, let God be the architect of your growth. And if you'll do that and be open to God's correction and teaching, whether it's through Spirit or people, let's go.

Zack Blair: 1:04:58

Yeah, yeah, so good man, that's so good, so real quick. I know that we've jumped around, but, Doug you, you helped me in a season where you know you had gone through you alluded to this earlier. You went through a difficult time crisis, you know, with mental health and you know I think we all go through this time. So I mean, it was, it was a dark season for me. You know, in 2020, you know we're booted out of our, our place. We don't know what to do. You know the word lays this like he lays this this meeting house. You know houses and we couldn't afford to meet every week up on the hill but like, and who wants to do that anyways? Kids are bringing snakes in. You know it's a true story, like somebody's like when a kid grabs a snake and was like look, you know, like, oh, we're that church now.

Doug Smith: 1:05:43

Yeah, like that's right.

Zack Blair: 1:05:45

But like it was just such a tough season and thank God for Ben coming in right at that season too and just the things that we had to endure, you know there was. You know there were issues, people were upset about things. A guy accused me of being a part of Antifa at that time because I was praying with just for the sake of the context of the conversation, I was praying with a man with brown skin in the city and he had a mask on. So somebody was like I don't know what you're doing at that Antifa rally. I'm like, hey, no, no, we were just praying, you know, and that was. That was what we were going through. Man, it started to break me down, though you know some things, even personally against our character, that were not true, and you were there for me in those times, you know so earlier you were talking about would I ever? Would I be there Like dude? You were. You've proven that time again. But at the end of that man, I felt

like a shell of myself. You know. I felt like I just like dumped every, every neurological, inspirational, chemical out of my brain.

Doug Smith: 1:06:45

You know, and I can't move.

Zack Blair: 1:06:47

You know, and I probably did but you gave me the book *Leading on Empty* by Wayne Cordero. I downed that thing. I did not want to, I did not want to. At that point I just kind of wanted to lay on a couch, pretend, open up my mouth for a while, you know, and watch, binge, watch Netflix, you know. But man, you really helped me in that time, you know. But you went through it too. And *Leading on Empty*, how did that book really impact your life?

Doug Smith: 1:07:11

Yeah, just I mean for a quick context, the fall of 2020, I started having anxiety attacks and basically what happened with what was? One anxiety attack led to anxiety attack every night, which led to a season of anxiety for an entire month, which led to me ultimately being in a meeting for work and I remember finishing *Leading the meeting* and I just said I can't do this and I shut my screen, try to sit down for like a half hour, bounce back, open my computer and I couldn't even read an email. I couldn't respond to an email and I'm like there's something terribly wrong with me. I called my executive director and basically just said something's wrong. I don't know if I can work. And then he's like, why don't you take two or three weeks off? And then I started freaking out. I'm like there's something wrong with me. I don't know if I have disability, like am I gonna be able to take care of my family? And the anxiety from my heart basically went to my head and it felt like someone was squeezing my brain like 24 hours. I don't know how else to describe it. To people, you know, I say mental breakdown. Is that the actual scientific Like I have no idea, but something was terribly wrong, but when you're desperate you'll do anything necessary to get help. And so, again, going back to the teachability, I'm like, whatever I have to do to get through this, I'm willing to do it. So I literally did everything. I connected with a local therapist that you connected me with. He was life changing. I met with all my friends, which we talked about, the neglecting deep friendship. I read all the books I can. You know you talked about *Lead on Empty*. One of the things that helped me the most in the season was recognizing that I wasn't the only person on the planet that ever experienced this and went through it. When I read Wayne Cadero I think it's in the first chapter he said, hey, I had my doctor basically tell me Wayne and again, I don't know the scientific stuff behind this, but he said, wayne, you basically run off serotonin. When your body gets depleted of serotonin, you start running off adrenaline, which that was me. Then when you stop running on adrenaline, you start having anxiety attacks and start running on anxiety and if you keep going hard against anxiety, you're eventually gonna have a mental breakdown. And that's where Wayne had gotten and he walked through his experience and the whole book is basically what he learned and things that he now has in place to never go back to that. So it was him. I remember reading Brian I think it was Brian Johnson.

Zack Blair: 1:09:16

Yeah, Johnson, when God becomes real. It's one of the best books, I feel like from a spiritual perspective toward anxiety.

Doug Smith: 1:09:21

Yeah it's like, here's another spiritual giant that went through this. Lou Giglio had a three month season where he couldn't get off the couch and he said if you would have told me I would ever be, he's like, when I tell you how to get off the couch, like I did not leave my house for three months. He said, if you would

have told me that I would ever preach again, I would have told you, literally, that I had a better chance of riding a bicycle on Jupiter. Like, literally how he felt. I met with another pastor, mentor, and he said Doug, I can't name a leader, friend that I know who hasn't gone through what you're going through Like. And I said am I gonna be okay in tears? And he said you're gonna be okay, you're gonna get through this. So knowing that I wasn't alone was really big. And then just dealing with a lot of junk. Like nine months prior I had lost my sister to a heroin overdose and working through therapy. You know, as a Christian one, I thought I grieved. Right, like the Bible says, we don't grieve like those without hope. And when I lost my mom, my mother-in-law, it made my sister like. I thought I grieved because it's like, hey, they're my future, not in my past, like I get it. It's sad they're gone, but I saw them suffer a lot and so I thought I was fine until I wasn't. And my therapist said, doug, like you keep talking about grief Like you never. He said you can't say goodbye to something you never said hello to. And he said I don't think you've ever grieved any of the losses in your life. And he encouraged me to go to all the grave sites of all of those I lost and basically spend time with God and write in my journal letters to each of them, and that was so healing for me. I ended up getting on medication again, doing whatever it takes and I can continue to go down the list. And another one was just recognizing my negative core beliefs that I wasn't enough, and so it was really probably, you know, immediate. It was probably a six month journey before I started feeling like I was getting out of that, and it took about two years for me to get off medication and kind of feel like completely back to normal again.

Zack Blair: 1:11:04

Yeah, and what did you do?

Doug Smith: 1:11:05

you have caffeine at all, yeah, so one of the great questions in that season was there's Pastor John. He said Doug, and you have to ask in every season what does healthy look like for me in this season?

Zack Blair: 1:11:15

Okay, that's a great question, and so beautiful.

Doug Smith: 1:11:17

So I got off coffee, like coffee was a big thing in my life and basically I've been on tea since. I had one week where I had coffee recently, which was cool, but it only lasted a week. But I've been on tea for a period of time. Like I work out six to seven days a week, pretty intense workouts for, I think, two or three months. I just walked, I let myself sleep in. Rest has become really important to me.

Zack Blair: 1:11:39

So I remember taking a really nice hike with you.

Doug Smith: 1:11:41

Yeah, yeah.

Zack Blair: 1:11:42

Up in Porterville or wherever that was. It was awesome. We need to do that again.

Doug Smith: 1:11:46

Yeah, and we don't take time to, I mean, just walk. And it's funny because I'm like, oh, I'm going to make this part of my life now from now on. Now I'm back into my like normal drive, but I'm like, man, there was

so power and taking an hour and a half walk in my neighborhood with a friend and I missed that. To be honest with you, I need to get back to that.

Zack Blair: 1:12:00

But what does?

Doug Smith: 1:12:00

healthy look like in this season Like great question to ask in every season. And if you start feeling those warning signs, maybe you're having anxiety attacks. That's when it's time to stop everything, like don't keep driving into that, because that's what ultimately led me into the situation I was in.

Zack Blair: 1:12:15

Yeah, is there a difference between? You don't have to answer this. Is there a difference between like clinical depression and then like man? I don't want to say I brought this on myself, but like I've opened myself up to way too much here.

Doug Smith: 1:12:26

Yeah, because people ask me about this. Like I know other people have experienced, like I didn't have depression through this.

Zack Blair: 1:12:32

So like I, still it was anxiety.

Doug Smith: 1:12:33

Yeah, it was a physical. It was a physical anxiety in my heart. And when I say like, it physically went to my brain, I never was suicidal of like, oh, I can't live like. But there were times where I'm like, whatever is physically going on my body, I don't know if I can live like this forever, like I don't. And that's where, like my number one question, I'm really vulnerable. But like, for like three or four months, I remember asking you like am I going to be okay? Is this ever? And I didn't know, am I ever going to get on the other side of this? But again, the encouragement of friends and people of saying like, yes, you will, that was crucial.

Zack Blair: 1:13:07

I remember you asking me that and I just like from my, from the outside, I remember thinking, yeah, man, you're going to be totally fine. And even asking you you got a lot of scans in your body, right?

Doug Smith: 1:13:17

You got everything checked and everything you're.

Zack Blair: 1:13:20

you're in tip-top shape, you know. But like, did that help at all, or yes?

Doug Smith: 1:13:24

Cause your mind goes crazy of like, what could this be? Yeah, so yeah, I got MRIs on my brain, I basically any test that I could do. I'm like maybe I have cancer. Anyway, there's one so I won't share. But yeah, it's scary cause it's like man, what can I do to stop this? Is there something in my body that shouldn't be there? So I'm all for like exploring all options, but when you find something's wrong, it's like, okay, maybe there's something in me and so, and again, it's like I had to do the hard work. Again the

negative core belief like my. My pastor told me, pastor John. He said, doug, like in middle school and high school, like you, basically watched your mom die slowly over time and you medicated through the pain through drugs and alcohol. Then you got saved, which is great. But then you've been medicating your pain through performance for the last 20 years.

Zack Blair: 1:14:09

And that hit.

Doug Smith: 1:14:10

And then it's like well, why am I doing that? Well, it's because I'm trying to prove that I'm enough, cause I don't believe I am. How do I deal with that? And so I really had to wrestle through going back to even the beginning of our conversation and confidence man, I had to get to the point where it's like there's no evidence that I'm not enough, like I have all the evidence to the world that I'm enough. I just don't actually believe it. And so I don't have to be John Maxwell or Dave Ramsey or Craig Rochelle or the rock or Arnold Schwarzenegger, like I can just be me and I'll just share it, cause maybe it's impacted people when I share it. I remember calling my dad and I'm a words of affirmation guy in the love languages Like I just tell me I'm awesome, I'm good. And I remember telling and my dad never told me he was proud of me growing up, et cetera. I always wanted him to, but his love language is acts of service. So, he'd always open the fridge and say, Doug, look at all the food I got.

Zack Blair: 1:14:54

I'm like great, I'm not, I'm not, I'm not. Same dad, yeah, same, yeah, my dad's the same.

Doug Smith: 1:14:59

And now, looking back, I'm like man. My dad told me he loved me and he's proud of me every day. But I call him and I said, dad, you know, I don't know if I'm going to be a work again, I don't know if I'm going to be able to be the development director at light of life anymore. And he said, doug, you know, people come up to me all the time and they say, man, you must be so proud of your son. And he said, yeah, I'm proud of my son, but I'd be just as proud of him if he was cleaning toilets, like he's my son.

Zack Blair: 1:15:20

And he goes, doug, I don't give us what your title is Wow.

Doug Smith: 1:15:24

And dude, I lost it.

Zack Blair: 1:15:25

Oh, I'm like it was such healing. And he didn't say that cause he knew like the psychology behind it, or like it was real.

Doug Smith: 1:15:34

And I felt like that was just God's like icing on the cake of like man, stop operating out of this place of lack and insecurity. And you're not enough Like yeah, I love you even more than that. What a good man. Oh, my dad's the best Shoot.

Zack Blair: 1:15:47

Well, was there a correlation between the age you were whenever you were having those those anxiety attacks and the age your mother was whenever you started to see her suffering? Was that?

Doug Smith: 1:16:01

I don't think so.

Zack Blair: 1:16:02

Also.

Doug Smith: 1:16:03

Yeah, I mean, when I look back on it, on like the warning signs, one is like, yeah, I didn't take time to grieve my sister, you know for anyone who's lost anyone if you're a fixture like me, or we were talking about being codependent, wanting to control and fix everything, basically my sister. I got a call at 1130 a night from my dad and he basically said Sarah's gone. And so I basically was like I have to go save my dad. So I started driving over to his house. I cried for 30 seconds and said, sarah, come on. And then my dad was a mess when I got there, took care of him, stayed up all night, slept at his house for three nights, planned the funeral, put together a message, put together two fundraisers for my nephews, raised tons of money and, as my executive director told me, he's like you basically just went back to work, taking no time. And, man, I just jumped in. And so, man, like that, I never stopped then. And then just the drive. It was the first time I was in a leadership position, significant, leading a significant department with high demands, high pressure, reporting to a board. I had just blown my first board meeting, which is the whole nother story, which was hilarious. But man, I was having cold sweats every night, one, waking up saying like my sister's gone, she's gone. And then two was I was making two pretty significant decisions within our organization, not as significant as I thought they were. But I'm like if these two decisions are wrong light, of life's gonna go under and it's not gonna exist and I'm gonna be on the front page of the post-Cazette and it's gonna say this is the man that took it down Like, which is so outrageous to think about now it was like changing a vendor or something like that. Yeah, it was changing a vendor and we were rebranding our organization, which, like again, could have been anyway. Without going to the deals of that, it really wasn't that big of a deal. But I think you know the reality is and I remember a leader telling me when I was younger that's a seasoned leader. He said, yeah, like if I leave my organization it burns to the ground, like I don't care. And he wasn't. He didn't mean that in an unhealthy way, of course he cares, but he was just saying I'm not gonna let that weigh on me and ruin me. And so that was a change in my leadership where I basically you know, when I got healthy like when I say I don't care, it's like I'm not gonna allow the weight of any work responsibilities I have to come home with me and take away from my family time to make me lose sleep. Like my father-in-law said, doug, like there's very few things to lose sleep over, you know, and nothing's as bad when you go to sleep as it is like in the middle of the night, like when you wake up again. That's so true. Like just go to bed, get a good night's sleep and you'll be, fine and man operating like that the past couple of years, like where something else would have crippled me in fear. Now I just show up and say we're gonna do our best and forget the rest and have fun.

Zack Blair: 1:18:28

That's what we tell the kids all the time. Yeah, do the best, forget the rest and have fun. I love it. Do you have a nighttime routine so that you get proper sleep?

Doug Smith: 1:18:37

No, I would say I'm a pretty good sleeper. I try to get. Seven to eight hours is my ideal, but I fall asleep like large jokes. We try to watch movies every Saturday night with the kids and I usually last literally three minutes and I'm out of cold Like I just fall asleep really easily.

Zack Blair: 1:18:52

Oh man, I don't know how you people do it. I love it. But I mean like I'm two nights in a row five hours of sleep. I get so tired about seven or eight o'clock at night I'm like, oh, I'm gonna sleep good tonight, and then like, go to bed, can't sleep, just hello everybody.

Doug Smith: 1:19:05

That's crazy. Yeah, I hate it, and you've experimented and tried a bunch of stuff. Yeah, it works for a season.

Zack Blair: 1:19:09

It works for a season, you know, like if I take I was taking magnesium, three and eight with apigenin and L-theanine and man that put me out. It was great and I'd wake up the next day not groggy, you know cause it's not a sedative like a benadryl or a nyquil or something like that, so I would do that and it's all natural. It's just amino acids, protein or magnesium and amino acids. So I was like no, this is good, this is healthy. It worked for like two months, you know.

Doug Smith: 1:19:39

No one's like hey, you know.

Zack Blair: 1:19:41

So I have my vitamin D as well on top of that, and I slept for another good two months, and now I'm back to the pattern of five hours of sleep, and that's it. We were also foster parents and the kids had a very hard time, you know so that started to interrupt the circadian, rather than a little bit, you know.

Doug Smith: 1:19:58

That's frustrating.

Zack Blair: 1:19:58

It's just a season, yeah, yeah, yeah, you know they're getting so much better as they feel safe and they feel you know, cared for, and they also learned they can pull blanket up over top of their you know, over top of their shoulders. They don't need to scream for us to get that, you know. But hey, it's an honor, you know it's an honor to do that for them and to teach them. Here's how you do it, baby. You know, like, okay, gonna go back to bed now. But man, that's Doug. I really appreciate your friendship. You are just. You mean so much to so many people.

Doug Smith: 1:20:29

Well, thanks man yeah.

Zack Blair: 1:20:31

I'm just really happy for where you are in life. I'm proud of you. I'm happy for you in so many ways.

Doug Smith: 1:20:35

Thank you, man, right back at you.

Zack Blair: 1:20:37

Any last words before we cut her off?

Doug Smith: 1:20:39

No, that's a great conversation, man. We covered, I think, everything. Just again grateful for your friendship. This was super fun. I mean, just given the history. You're going back to relationships, so invest in deep relationships. Let's just leave it that this is the outcome of deep relationships we had fully known, fully loved, fully challenged, and lots of laughs and fun memories that a lot of times we can't share. On this yeah, yeah.

Zack Blair: 1:20:59

Yes, dude, that was a blast, so thanks so much for being with us today. Honour man, you did great Table talks.

Doug Smith: 1:21:04

Well, leader, thank you so much for listening to my conversation with Zach. I hope it added value to your life. Again, you can find ways to connect with me and Zach and links to everything that we discussed in the show notes at L3leadership.org forward slash 412. And as always, leader, I like to end every episode with a quote, and today I'll quote John Quincy Adams, who said this if your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader. Keep leading. Well, leaders, I say it every episode, but know that my wife, Laura and I love you. We believe in you, and don't quit, keep leading. The world desperately needs your leadership.