

Anne Beiler: 0:00

It keeps me in the light. I don't have secrets anymore. I just bring them into the light, either with somebody or with my husband, or in prayer. That's the lifestyle of overcoming.

Doug Smith: 0:17

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 in today's episode. It's brought to you by my friends Beratung Advisors. We also recorded this live from the new Birgo Realty Studio. If you're new to the podcast, welcome. I'm so glad that you're here and I hope that you enjoy our content and become a subscriber. Know that you can also watch all of our episodes over on our YouTube channel, so make sure you're subscribed there as well. And, as always, if you've been listening to the podcast and its impact on your life, it would mean the world to me if you'd leave us a rating and review on Apple Podcasts 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. While, leader, in today's episode you're going to hear my conversation with the founder of Annie Ann's Pretzels who doesn't love those, Ann Beiler and I would tell you a lot more about her now, but she's actually going to share her story and I'm pretty sure everyone on the planet knows Annie Ann's Pretzels and if you've never heard Ann and you've never heard her story, just get ready. It is so powerful and I know you're going to be challenged, I know you're going to be inspired and I'm just so grateful that she was willing to take the time to share this here. So I know you're going to be blessed. But before we dive into her story, 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 baritungadvisors.com. That's B-E-R-A-T-U-N-G-Advisors.com. Securities and investment products and services offered through LPL Financial, member FINRA and SIPC. Beratung Advisors, lpl Financial and L3 Leadership are separate entities. I also want to thank our sponsor, Henne Jewelers. They're a jeweler owned by my friend and mentor, John Henne, and my wife Laura and I got our engagement and wedding rings through Henne Jewelers and had an incredible experience. And not only do they have great jewelry, but they also invest in people. In fact, for every couple that comes in to engage, 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 hennyjewelers.com. And with all that being said, let's dive right in. Here's my conversation with Anne Beiler the founder of Auntie Anne's Pretzels. Enjoy. Anne Beiler, welcome to the L3 Leadership Podcast. I'm extremely excited for this conversation. We're so glad to have you.

Anne Beiler: 2:37

Well, it's my pleasure to be on your podcast today, Doug, and thank you for having me.

Doug Smith: 2:42

Yeah Well, we're going to go into all kinds of different directions with you and your story, but obviously you're most known for being the founder of Auntie Anne's Pretzels, which I don't think there's a person on the planet that doesn't love those. When I told people I was interviewing you, they're like can we get some free pretzels?

Anne Beiler: 2:57

I know People still want freebies.

Doug Smith: 3:00

So funny. But I want to dive in your story, but before we do and we'll dive more into Auntie Anne's later but can you at least give people an idea of the scope of where Auntie Anne's was and what you built it to prior to selling it, and then we'll dive into your story.

Anne Beiler: 3:14

Yeah, sure. So we started back in 1988 in a little farmer's market in downtown Pennsylvania. I grew up in the Amish culture which my mom and dad were old order Amish until I was three and then we went to the black car Amish. We moved on up which meant we could have a car it had to be black and my dad could farm with a tractor instead of horses and we had electricity. So it wasn't so bad. We had some. It was pretty cool. But on the other hand, we looked at Amish and I grew up in that culture, very knowledgeable and understand the traditions and I grew up in this very, I want to say it was a very good environment for me as a child. My mom and dad loved us, cared for eight of us kids, or three boys, three girls and five boys and it wasn't almost. Looking back I just realized how good it was and how it almost seems idyllic to me today because I've experienced a lot of life since that time. At the age of 16, I met my husband, Jonas, and he was my attraction and the love of my life. As soon as I met him and obviously at that point in my life was pretty short, but he was a good man. Also grew up in the Amish culture, and a good looking guy and worked hard and love God. I'm like, wow, okay, I hit the jackpot with this guy. I hope I can marry him one day. And three years later we got married. I was 19 in the year 21. And it's still very culturally. That's Amish people, Amish men, and eight he's still married, most of them married very young, because we are taught well about how to do family, work hard and care for each other. My mom always said little children, love each other, do not give each other pain. When one speaks to you in anger, do not answer them again. So we had all these. You know, forgive and peace, salt and light and go this heck of a mouth. So you know I really had a great starting life, Doug, and when I look back at that I realized that was enough. You know that foundation helped me weather the storms of life. Mama, dad took us to church, of course, every Sunday, without fail. We sat around our dinner table, three around our kitchen table, I might say three times a day breakfast lunch and dinner without fail All of the years I was at home. There was never an exception to that, unless we may have been out visiting or something. But yeah, that's what we did. And so I realized that the around the table being with my family, mom and dad always being around was. I look at that right now and I didn't think, of course, didn't realize at the time, but what a gift to our family that they were always around. In particular, my mom and dad went to farmers markets from in Philadelphia for a couple of years and during those years I was around 11, 12 and 13. And I would come home from market and my mom that was the only night that she was not at home when I got over from school and she would have a list for me to a pies and cakes that she wanted me to bake and I would do that in my farmhouse kitchen I'm sorry, basement. I would go down the basement steps as a little girl I remember I would. Many times I would cry because my mom was not there and but I knew how to do this and I made 60 to 70 pies and cakes every Thursday night for maybe two years by myself while the other kids were out doing their chores, you know anyway. So I feel like God set me up for something that I would never have dreamed of, which was Auntie and Sup Pretzels and going from one store, a Downing Town, and then two stores that that year, the very first year, 12 stores the next year, 35 the next and 15 years so the following year. So we just kept growing until we sold the company in 2015. And by that time we had almost 900 locations. So for this little Amish go from Anixtra County, Pennsylvania, let me tell you, God worked an amazing work in my heart, in my mind, in my professional world, in my personal life, in my spiritual life. Those almost 20 years I always say that Auntie and grew me up. That's where. I learned real life.

Doug Smith: 7:35

Wow. Well, I certainly want to dive into leadership lessons with that a little bit later, but what I think so interesting is, you know, you just shared your story. If we just shared what you just shared, it's business

like hey had a great childhood, had great parents, and basically you started a company and scaled and we sold it and it was fantastic.

Anne Beiler: 7:52

But that's right.

Doug Smith: 7:54

Behind the scenes. You know, I know your story, that that you know it wasn't all up into the right, it wasn't all perfect, and you actually experienced. You know a lot. Can you share a little bit about? You know your story beyond, behind the veil of any ends and in your upbringing.

Anne Beiler: 8:09

Thank you, doug. Yeah, because that's really what. That's really what made me who I am today, you know, not the success of the ends, although that grew me up, but what really sparked my spiritual journey. As a kid I knew I knew God and I loved him and I believed that life is good because it was, and that God is harsh. Because I was taught that if you keep the 10 commandments and you know, do your very best to keep them all that God would be very pleased with me and he would smile on me. But if I did something, you know I don't know how wrong something should be to be wrong, but I just knew that if I did something wrong, maybe God would be just pleased with me. What I know today, doug, is that that's bad theology number one. And also what I know is that, after over seven decades of real life experiences, I know today that life is hard. God is good, and I'm not confused about that anymore, but I sure was for many years. So Jonas and I were happily married for about seven years and we had two little girls, one four and one 19 months old, and our sweet Angie Angela Joy. We live right next to my parents during that time and she would always make her little trek up to my mom's house for her second breakfast very often, and one particular morning she went up to mom's house and we lived in the country, so it was a very common, or sometimes the two of the girls would walk up together. But that particular morning I saw her walk out our drive, out our, through our yard, headed from my mom's house, which I always stood at my door waiting, watching her go to make sure that she got around the corner and was heading in the right direction. Then I would call mom and tell her she's on the way, and that morning I watched her, never said goodbye to her, never called her back, and the unusual part about that morning was that she still had her pajamas on and I kept thinking I should call her back and, you know, change her for the day, and. But I didn't. And so I turned around, walked into the house and I put my hand on the phone and as I did, I heard all of this commotion, screaming, yelling. I had never heard anything like it, but in my heart, immediately I knew that Angie was gone. And I don't know how I knew that, except that a mother's instinct is very strong and it's very real and it's most times right. And so I ran to my front door and in that moment my father was bringing, carrying Angie's body in his arms, just wailing that I believe she's dead. I believe she's dead. Well, of course, doug, you know that's tragic and traumatic because I had been, I was, I was living a good life, I'd been a pretty good girl according to the standards of the, you know, the church, and immediately, as Angie made her ascended to heaven that morning, I knew where she went and there was some comfort in that. But as time went on, the longing and the loneliness and the questions and the grief and just as sadness was overwhelming and I began my very slow and gradual descent into a world that I knew nothing about emotional pain and spiritual confusion. That journey, you know it's hard for me to explain it. You know just how, how it happened for me. But I went from really believing and trusting in God to why, if I was good, why did you do this to me? I know today that's everybody asked that question. Why, god? You know, and I think that we forget that Jesus was very clear when he said the enemy has come to steal, to kill and to destroy, and I have come to give you life, and so I think that we're very confused about that. But we all everybody asked that question why God? And that became my question. There were no answers for me. Even though I kept calling the church my husband, I began to drift apart emotionally. We,

of course, stayed together and after a couple of months of and I would always cry when nobody was watching and I tried to be strong I felt like I had to carry this grief. You know, I had to carry it by myself. That was so. It's not okay to carry our grief by ourselves, and Jonah's not going to be able to talk about things. And so we then began to live in a silent marriage and a couple of months, a very short time later, my pastor gave to me at church and and it has to be to come to his office and just to talk, and I'd never talked to him before about anything that I was feeling or anything in life, about my experience, and I had never really taken the time to do that because life had been good for me. So I was relieved when I felt like, wow, I can. I can just at least try to talk about what I'm feeling. It was a very difficult thing for me to think about talking about it, but I went and so it was. It was a good conversation for the most part and at the very end of it, though, he took advantage of me physically and I I, I was devastated because I didn't understand the number one, why? And number two, I guess I did something that I don't know that made him do that to me. So of course, the guilt, you know Angie, took me into a place of sad, deep sadness and grief. But this was the journey for me of guilt and shame, and it wasn't my fault that that he did that to me. I know that now. But at the time, when I walked out of the office, out of his office, I clearly remember making a choice that I would never tell. And let me tell you, doug, that's, that's a big lie, and that's where Satan very often grips us in our secrets, and I've never in my life kept a secret from Jonas, ever. I mean, there was no need to, you know. So that took me then into the dark world. And that one choice, that was my choice. And but I made that choice because I felt like there was no alternative because I didn't know, you know, like who, who, who did I tell anything? I didn't know how to talk about Angie's death, how would I know how to describe or even have the vocabulary to talk about abuse? And that one, that one secret kept me in nearly seven years of abuse of every kind and took me into the dark world and kept me there. And Satan gave me the tools I needed to keep me there and I almost succumbed and almost, almost died there, physically, almost died there.

Doug Smith: 15:14

Well, thank you for sharing that story. So after the seven years, I do think it's important. So what happened after that seven year period that kind of brought you out of that?

Anne Beiler: 15:23

Well, you know, I stayed there too long and my message today is for people that are in dark places and don't know how to get out. I felt stuck, I felt like there was no, no way out and I I, I believe truly believed that life was over for me. I knew I believe the lies that I was unlovable, I was unforgivable and for sure, I was unchangeable. I didn't feel like there was anything within me that I had to offer to anyone. I didn't feel like I had the ability to change anything. I was stuck in this, this dark place, and did not know how to get out. And I weighed 90 pounds. I was falling apart from the inside out. I was majorly depressed and went to the doctor a couple of times because, physically, I thought that I had ulcers in my stomach and my heart raced and I thought I was having a heart attack. So I mean physically secrets over time will kill you. If not physically, you die emotionally. And Dr Richard Dobbins says that the tragedy is not in dying, but it's what dies inside of us while we live. I was dying inside and I was trying to live, and so at the end of all those years, I prayed and I wept and I just got to deliver me. And I knew that one day it was just like I don't know, come down and somehow just deliver me out of this dark place. But one day I was compelled by a Holy Spirit within me that said get up off your knees, stop crying and go tell. Go tell your husband. You know the story of the man by the pool of the pesta. You know, for 38 years he sat there, waited, tried to get into the pool and he wasn't able to manage that and had all the reasons as to why he couldn't get into the pool for his healing. When Jesus came to him that day he said to him Sir, would you like to be healed? You know, and that's a question of all time, do we want to be healed? And my, the question, for me, was I wanted to be healed but, like, like the man by the pool, I didn't know how to get into the water, I didn't know how, I didn't know where to go, what to do. But that morning Holy Spirit was very clear with

me and go tell. And I gathered my broken self together. I'm sorry, it's okay, I'm grateful. I remember it very clearly. I gather myself together in Holy Spirit within me Never left me, doug. He never left me because it was him. It was him he gave me the courage. Wow. So I gathered it all up in my heart and palm sweating and heart racing, and all the way to my husband's, jonas's repair shop I kept saying, god, I can't do this, I can't, do this, I can't. But I kept driving and when I got there I made a very hard. When I say hard, no feeling, no emotion, two sentences could passionate him and the look in his eyes was scary. I had never seen the sadness or the that look and whatever that look was. I had to turn around and leave. I couldn't touch him. I didn't say it. Forgive me please. My end, my the end of my conversation confessional, is simply I'm sorry and I'm a sorry person, and that that principles founded James 516. I didn't really understand that principle at the time. I didn't even know it was in the Bible. I just know Holy Spirit gave me the courage to do what I had to do that morning. But, as from that day to this day, doug, I've learned the power of of being real, open, honest. And let me tell you something there's no other way. There is no other way. I prayed for seven years and I stayed in this dark place. Jesus and God, holy Spirit, sustain me. They never let go because they won't. They promised that they would stay with us forever and they stayed with me. But wow. And so that day, though the choice I made to tell Jonas that James 516 model can bet your balls one to another and pray, and then you'll be healed. And that's the model. I feel like us, as Christians, as believers, followers of Christ, whoever we think we are, whatever we're following Christ. But you know, what we want to do is pray, never tell and expect God to heal. And I believe that James 516 is not the spiritual connection with Jesus, it's the relational model. It's the model that builds and heals, heals and builds relationships. Without that confession to Jonas that day it was long before, it was five years before he ends there would not be an anti-an. Wow, jonas and I would not be together today and there would not be an anti-an. And I always say can you imagine a world without anti-an self-rencils? No, I mean so. I mean it sounds silly, but that is a truth. Every time I say that it is, my heart feels it, my stomach feels it. It's true. So the point to that is, you know, satan wants to destroy you. Why, why? Because he doesn't want you to fulfill the purpose for which God created you, for that's why he wants to destroy you, because he knows that once you are well, once if you're able to overcome and you're able to live a life of freedom and truth, honesty, transparency. You know confession is, it feels like a, it feels hard and harsh and subjective, but you know what it really means. You know. Be open, honest, transparent, because as you do that, then you are actually walking in the light with your faults, your failures, your sin, your mistakes, your struggles. You know, we all live those things every day. But as we are able to talk and talk about it and confess it to someone, that's where we begin to live in the light. We walk in the light, as he is in the light, and then we have fellowship with one another. What we're doing right now, doug, is we have fellowship with one another, and then the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin. It's all about bringing our deeds into the light, no matter how hard, no matter how bad, no matter what the struggle is. But when you begin to do that, as it happened for me that day with Jones, there was not an instant miracle, let me tell you for sure. But there was something inside of me that I began to feel lighter, slowly but surely. I mean, the weight of it was still here, but I knew I had done the right thing. And when Jonas came home that night, he simply said to me we need to talk. And I didn't want to talk. I had just given him the greatest, the most information that I had told anyone about my secret, and he wants to talk about it. It was a hard, hard evening. But what he said to me after that is what got me on the path of really truth and believing that maybe there's hope for me. I was done, life was over. During those years I truly believed, doug, that my only option was to take my life. That seemed easier than to tell my secret. Can you, I mean, think about that? But that's where I stayed for about three years of those nearly seven. I thought about it, had suicidal thoughts, but yet I still wanted family, I still wanted my children, I still wanted to be married to Jonas, but I didn't know how to get back to that. So, anyway, as we began to talk, he said I know that you have not been happy, but if you want to be happy, I want you to be happy and if you have to leave, if you have to go somewhere, please don't leave a note on the address or on the middle of the night and go, but just come to me and talk to me. Tell me what you need, we'll talk about it. I'll help you find a house. Wow. And I'll help you pack your bags, but you have to take your girls with you because they need their mother.

Okay, doug, so that was it right there. He believed in me. And how could he do that? It's because during that day he called a counselor and the counselors and Jonas was completely distraught. He I can't tell the story right now because it takes too long but in the few hours maybe eight hours he had called a counselor and the counselor had said to me, or had said to him you have a right to divorce your wife. I guess Even at that time, doug, we didn't understand actual abuse of spiritual power. We didn't even understand. It's like I hadn't up there for almost seven years. But I understand. I understood much later. Abuse is not the same as an affair and anyway, that's a whole other subject which I speak about in my book. It's called those Secret Lies Within. But that day, when he said that to me that the girls need their mother, you can't even understand the impact that had on me because, again, I was unforgivable and lovable and changeable. I don't deserve anything good. I was unworthy of the shame, the cloak of shame I wore every single day. There was nothing good. I could never have written anything good or anything that I liked about myself at that point. And so I said okay, I promise you I won't leave you in the middle of the night. And then I asked him can you make a promise to me? And he said sure. I said promise me you won't rub my past in my face ever. Wow, he's right. And you know what, Doug, from that day. And he said I promise, from that day to this he has never. We have talked about it a lot, all as well. But the challenge that the counselor gave in that day was you can either go and divorce your wife and have a committed adultery and you can go do what your wife has done, or you can love her like Jesus loves you, not like Jesus loves the church, because he heard that all his life. But he said there was something about when the man challenged him to love your wife like Jesus loves you, he said. In that moment I began to weep like a baby because I began to think about how is it, how does Jesus love me? And my focus changed from what happened to Anne or what Anne did to me to how is it that he loves me and how can I love Anne and the girls in the same way. And that, doug, is what kept our marriage together and he would tell you that God did a work of grace in both of us, and that's why we're still one today, after 55 years.

Doug Smith: 27:18

Wow. Well, thank you so much for sharing your story and thank God for your husband, thank God for God speaking to you, and thank God that you had the courage to confess and not just give it all up. So thank you for that. A few follow-up questions just that, I think, will help One. I just love that you are vulnerable and willing to share your story, because I feel like so many people are going through similar things and they don't speak up and they think they're the only person on the planet dealing with this, and so I guess my first question would just be if someone's listening to us and they're in the middle of being sexually abused or in a situation where they're being victimized and they feel similar to you do, if I share this, if this ever comes out, my life's already over. They've been in forever. What would you say to that person?

Anne Beiler: 28:04

Well, I've written a book about it. Again, I'll mention that it's secretized within. So that's a very, that's a deep question, a loaded question, but I'll just share my experience with that which I mentioned a minute ago, was to, first of all, be courageous. It takes courage, it takes strength. It's almost impossible to do it by yourself. So I would encourage anyone to who is in your life right now, that you know loves you. Number one that you know has been down the road and has experienced, maybe has experienced some, some hardships in their life and they have gotten to a point in life where they've overcome and you know they're strong and they're steady and they, they, they can love you and guide you. You don't want to go to the bar and talk about your troubles at a bar. I mean, people do that all the time and there's something kind of like appealing to me about that, Like, actually, why can we not do that in the church? Why? can we not, you know, just go and say, hey, this is my problem, this is what I'm struggling with, and I'm like, why can we not do that? We should be able to, because you know, we've we've been instructed to bear one another's burdens and so, as we do that, we fulfill the law of Christ. So I believe that it's really the only way that you'll be able to overcome any of your, your struggles and the and the depression and the, the anxiety,

and you know, we hear so. So many people today, you know, struggle with panic attacks and and it's all around. I don't, I don't know that I go through a day without somebody telling me that I'm I'm anxious or I haven't. I feel like I'm having anxiety or I'm having a panic attack. It's almost like a buzzword and I'm saying there is a better way and I truly believe. You know, I love the fact that Jesus died for our sins. That's like wow. But I just, you know, a couple of years ago, I realized, as I read the Easter story once again read Isaiah and Easter story and I realized Jesus not only died for my sins, but he carried my shame and what most of it experience with abuse of any kind, whether it's verbal, physical, sexual bullying, whatever it may be, the abuse that we've experienced, you know, somehow it fills us with shame. What someone has done to us to hurt us fills us with shame, Like it's my fault, Like I must have done something wrong. And yes, you know, after I experienced what I did with the abuse, I became, you know, hurt people, hurt other people. I abandoned my children, not not physically, but emotionally. I abandoned my children. I mean I could, I can write a book, I have written a book about you know how I responded to the pain and that was inflicted on me. But then I began to inflict pain on my family. And so the shame that you feel, number one, is that somebody did this to me. And then, number two, you feel ashamed because now you are, you know, I know some young people that I've isolated themselves. They're mean and short tempered and angry at their families, at their parents, and are mad at mom and dad and mad at God. So all of these things, you know, there's really only one way we try to drug it away, we try to sex it away. We become workaholics, we, we, we come, we can even become ministers. We start, you know, busy in the ministry. We exercise it away, we try to. This pain is inside of us. We're up to here. We can know we can hardly carry it anymore, and I know that there's people in your audience that are there right now. And the only way for me I tried everything the only way for me was to begin to unload, and the only way you can do that is to actually talk about it. It's so hard, I know. So when I talk about finding someone that could help you and you know I'm careful about this because I felt like I went to the right place I mean I went to my pastor, someone that I truly trusted. So how do you know who to go to? I pray that you ask, that you ask, first of all, ask Holy Spirit to help you find the right person and gather one or two close friends that can guide you. And then, ultimately, if you're abused, you find yourself almost depressed, so bad that you want to take your life. You have to call. Maybe it's a helpline, maybe it's somebody in your church, maybe it's someone in your neighborhood, maybe it's someone at school that your teacher or your I don't know, but you have to find somebody to talk to. And that jug is then the beginning of opening a door to a better life. And there's a verse in Proverbs 6-5 that if the audience that you have is they're not all believers. But let me tell you this is practical advice, and it says in Proverbs 6-5, set yourself free like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the snare of the fallow. Think about that picture. That means great struggle. So what you're about to do is not easy. It is a great struggle, like it was for me, and even after I made my confession, I began to talk to Jonas. I had no idea how deep I was in my darkness and how long it would take me to get to a place of total freedom. But I have to tell you I mean, that has been my experience it's beginning to talk, finding the right person and eventually finding a trauma therapist, a good Christian, solid trauma therapist, or start with just a Christian counselor, but someone that is, I have to almost say, professional, because I didn't want to talk to anyone, doug, that would talk to me about Bible verses. I mean, I hate to admit that, but I knew all the verses, I knew what to do, but I couldn't do it. And so the Word of God is very important, going to church and doing all the things that we do as followers of Christ is really important. But I did all that and the only thing that set me free was to begin to talk. And there's, you know, the Bible says that we are overcomers by the blood of the Lamb and the Word of our testimony. I want to say, by your story, tell your story and the blood of the Lamb. The combination is why I'm on your podcast today, doug. That's why I'm here today. The blood of the Lamb and being able to tell my story. I started out just a little fall. I'll never forget the very first time with Jonas, and then after that we went to a counselor for five times. Five times my husband said we need to go for help. I fought him, I resisted him. I said I don't want to go. So you know everything is scary, but you've got to be courageous and you have to keep moving forward toward the light, the darkness. Get out of the darkness as fast as

you can and begin to look toward the light and people that are light filled, people that you know are followers of Christ.

Doug Smith: 36:09

It may be the same answer, but I'm curious. You know, obviously you lost the unthinkable. You lost a daughter 19 months old. We were talking a little bit before. You know, I lost my mom when I was 17. I lost a sister a few years ago to an overdose. So it was interesting a few years ago, nine months after I lost my sister. Basically, I have what I refer to as a mental breakdown, and so what you said I reached out for help and my counselor said something to me I thought was so interesting he said. He said, doug, I don't think you've ever grieved. So what do you mean? He's like I don't think you've grieved your mom, I don't think you've grieved your sister. And in my mind, again, going back to the Bible verse, it's like hey, we don't grieve like others grieve.

Anne Beiler: 36:47

I know I'll see him again one day Exactly.

Doug Smith: 36:50

And he said, doug, you can't say goodbye to something that you've never said hello to. And that hit me just like a ton of bricks. And he sent me on this whole process. He actually had me go to the grave sites of those I've lost and write letters. You know I have four kids under seven and I can't imagine losing a child. The grief that comes with that Do you have and so many people listen to this have lost loved ones and had traumatic events. Do you have any advice in addition to what you already shared when it just comes to grieving and getting over the loss in our lives?

Anne Beiler: 37:18

Well, I think what you just shared, doug is powerful and we run from it like our grief and pain, we actually run away from it and I wanted to say run towards it. What I learned to do over time was sit in my chair and when I had these feelings of sadness and guilt and shame and whatever it may have been, there was a load of just emotions of all kinds that I would experience after I told my secret and eventually I learned to sit in my chair instead of running away from my pain and the feelings that made me feel bad. I just talked to somebody at a place a couple of weeks ago where I was speaking and a gentleman came to me and was talking to me about my story and I said so what's your story? He said, well, I can't talk about it. And I said, wow, can you tell me why you don't want to talk about it? He said, well, because if I do, then I will feel all of the pain again. I'm like, wow, exactly, we don't want to feel the pain, but there is no way to be well, unless you tell, unless you feel the pain of it all, you can never be better. It's mind-blowing and that's kind of like a. Some people have never heard that. They may never have heard that phrase, but you said what I'm saying, but it's true. You have to tell to be well, and so I believe that when people experience this kind of tragedy as time goes on, like you said, nine months later, is that what you said after?

Doug Smith: 38:51

a year or six months?

Anne Beiler: 38:52

Yeah, nine months, nine months, that's a very short time. I'm proud of you for doing that. I mean understanding. I can't go on it, it's too heavy, you can't bury it forever. And so the tragedy people walk through it, they keep walking to walk it away from it, and the further they get away from it, the more they feel like, oh, wow, I survived. Right, I survived, but at one point survival is not good enough. It's the tragedy, the trauma which you experienced, and then the survival. We move on and we feel like we're

okay and I see survival. As for me, it was like wow, I survived the death of Angie. And then, as I got out of the abuse, I survived, that I was so proud of myself I survived. This is amazing. But survival, I picture that in my mind like you're on a raft on the middle of the ocean and you're on the raft, you're keeping your head above water, but I mean, the waves are crashing, you're not living, you're surviving. And so then it's tragedy, trauma, and then it's surviving, and then it's overcoming, and the overcoming is Doug, what I believe that you're beginning to feel and experience, as you began to open up and begin to talk about your pain. I may not be right about that, but the overcoming happens as we begin to talk. Yes. And that's why I can't. You know there's so much in my book about that and I love what Dr Richard Jarbens says. The Christian psychiatrists that helped me out of the emerged ministries in Akron, Ohio, which would be near where you are yeah, they're still there today emerge ministries If you need help, emerge ministries is there for you. They do trauma counseling, counseling about kids. But Dr Richard Talbott, he had one line that I love that it was he paraphrased James 516. He says Satan builds his strongholds in the secrets of our lives and he reinforces them by silence. Don't talk. But when I break the silence, when I begin to talk, I break the stronghold. That is, in fact, the James 516 model. Satan builds his strongholds in the secrets of our lives. He builds this, he's building that secret. He's building it's getting bigger and bigger and bigger. It becomes a stronghold in our life. But when I begin to talk, I break the stronghold. And that's my story and I'm sticking to it. Your stronghold, it's so big in your mind, so hard to bear, that eventually you cannot bear it anymore. And I just want to encourage you whether you're 20, 15, 30, a young age, don't wait. I was almost 40 before I was able to talk about the death of my daughter and the abuse I think I was actually 37 and the abuse of my pastor, and I was so wrecked that it took me years to overcome. If you can begin to live this lifestyle I call it the lifestyle of compassion If you can begin to live this lifestyle every single day, when things begin to come at you and you're feeling overwhelmed or you feel your stomach and knots, or you're hurting your heart's, hurting the feelings, their real feelings begin to pay attention to that. And so what I do to live the overcoming lifestyle is when I feel like I've hurt someone and I can't just pray about it and say, father, forgive me, I'm sorry. It lingers in my belly or in my heart, I know. Then I need to make an honest confession, or just when I'm sorry, or if they've hurt me sometimes I can't get over it right away. Over time I will go say to them you know what you said to me the other day or the other week, whatever. What you did hurt me and I just want you to know I forgive you for hurting me. That sounds silly, but it's a principle in the Word of God that keeps me free. It keeps me in the light. I don't have secrets anymore. I just bring them into the light, either with somebody or with my husband, or in prayer. That's the lifestyle of overcoming and that's where I live today. And listen, Doug, I have gone from the darkest of nights for years hopeless, depressed, suicidal to the brightest of light. It's so big and the more I tell my story Doug I don't even understand this the greater the light becomes. Wow.

Doug Smith: 43:31

Well, thank you for sharing that. I don't think we're going to get to the leadership, but people are saying what does this have to do with leadership? Everything it's like.

Anne Beiler: 43:37

Oh, everything.

Doug Smith: 43:39

Yeah, do you want to say anything to that?

Anne Beiler: 43:40

I mean yes, well, I just want to say I believe that God wants to equip. In these days in particular, he wants an army of people that are overcomers, that can help those who are living in this survival mode, in this marketplace, but he wants to take us to a place of leadership, live the overcoming lifestyle. He wants it.

It's going to take an army of us, a whole army of soldiers that are strong and courageous, that can reach down to the downtrodden and lift them up, and I feel like that's my mission. My mission is to the church, help people, just to lift them up, and God needs all of us to do that.

Doug Smith: 44:24

Yeah, and this probably be. We can land a plane with this question. But you mentioned, you know, even just recently, just if something's in shuffling you're holding on forgiveness, forgive someone if someone's been in abuse. Like how have you? I don't know how much detail you want to go to, but you talked about spiritual abuse or abuse of authority, and that happened. This happened. Unfortunately, statistics say this happens every day. I think one, one in three or four children are abused. Like which is crazy. So how, how do you deal because I think that I'm assuming that that's part of the fear and telling too. If I tell, then then this person who has authority over me, how do you, how do how do victims deal with that?

Anne Beiler: 45:01

There's such, there's so many, there's so many the, the, the tentacles you know to abuse is. There's so many pieces to it. It's so deep and so troubling and so confusing. But you know, as a, as a child, it's hard to deal with abuse. I mean as a child, but I should grow it. For me I was a grown woman so I cannot even imagine. But what I know is is that the abuse that I experienced, it felt, and then also the same pastor abused our oldest daughter from all the whole time he was abusing me he was a part of her life as well, and I didn't know that till she was 25. And that was that's a whole other story that took me. That almost made me crash and burn. So you know, the question becomes how can I forgive? How can I forgive? I don't. I'm going to answer this very quickly because I know we're running out of time, but but the most comfort that I got as far as forgiveness was many, many years after my story unfolded, and it was actually in the year 2003. And I, I was sitting on my chair and thinking about forgiveness and just telling the Lord I don't know, I don't know. And I remember the story of Jesus on the cross, when, when he was dying, and he said I know, you know what he said, but we, I went over. I just read this so many times that I never saw it. But on the cross, Jesus said, I believe the weight of the world was too much for him. He was Jesus, he was God in the flesh. How can you take the world, the weight of the whole world, from beginning of time to the end of time, upon yourself? And he said, father, forgive them, because they don't know what they're doing. And you know, when I read that in the year 2003, I realized that sometimes things are so hard for us as human beings to bear and I began to pray that prayer Father, would you forgive him because he really doesn't know what he did to me and my family? And you want Doug, even to this day, if I struggle with how do I forgive? Maybe it's something there's still trigger points in my family, or I hear stories, my, I, that's my, go to prayer Father, forgive him, for he does not know what he did. And that was a. That was a way of forgiveness that I experienced, that gave me peace, no guilt, no shame on my part, like, oh, you have to forgive. I have. To the best of my ability, I've forgiven, but sometimes, when it feels hard, even today, I just read that prayer Father forgive, or he doesn't know what he did. Try it yourself, it might work, I don't know. Yeah Well, thank you for sharing that and I guess I'll just leave this open at the end.

Doug Smith: 48:06

Is there anything else you want to leave our listeners with today, before we wrap up?

Anne Beiler: 48:10

You know, I just, I just believe that God is bigger than all of us Even can imagine. His, his grace goes further than our pain. His forgiveness is deeper than any sin, any shame that we've borne. He is greater than all of that and believe that. You know, faith is believing that God will do what he said he would do. Whatever God said he would do, he will do. That's that's who he is. So I want to encourage your audience to just believe that God is. He is as good as his word and he has promised to give you life and to help you

live an overcoming life, the life that he died for, and that's what he's. He's. He's offering that to you today. Work out your own salvation and fear and trembling. There's a lot of work that we do in faith. We call out to him constantly. There's a lot of work that we do. Do the hard work, Set yourself free and you'll begin to live a life that you didn't even know was possible.

Doug Smith: 49:13

Yeah well, and thank you so much for doing the hard work yourself and allowing God to use your story and the circumstances you've gone through to glorify him and help other people. I'm believing, god, that you know everyone listening to this, those who need help or or in a similar position, that this will be the the key to them getting free, and so thank you for your ministry and, of course, thank you for for great pretzels to everyone on the planet. My family is extremely appreciative. So thank you so much, and hopefully we'll get to do this again sometime.

Anne Beiler: 49:43

Awesome. Thank you for the opportunity. God bless you and Merry Christmas to you.

Doug Smith: 49:47

Merry Christmas. Well, leader, thank you so much for listening to my conversation with Anne. I hope that you enjoyed it as much as I did. You can find ways to connect with her and links to everything that we discussed in the show notes at L3 leadershiporg forward, slash 413. And as always, leader, I like to end every episode of the quote, and I'll quote President Ronald Reagan, who said this the greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things. And leader leadership is all about others, and so make sure you always remember that. As I say at the end of every episode, know that my wife Lauren, I love you, we believe in you and don't quit. Keep leading. The world desperately needs your leadership. We'll talk to you next episode.