

LeaderImpact Podcast Ep. 2 Braden Douglas

00:00.00

Lisa Peters

Welcome to the LeaderImpact podcast. We are a community of leaders dedicated to optimizing our personal, professional, and spiritual lives to have impact. This show is where we have a chance to listen and engage with leaders from around the world who are living this out. Love talking with Leaders. So if you have any questions, comments or suggestions to make this show even better. Please let us know the best way to stay connected is through our newsletter at LeaderImpact.ca or on social media @LeaderImpact. I'm your host Lisa Peters and our guest today is Braden Douglas.

Braden is the founder of Crew Marketing Partners, one of the fastest growing strategic marketing and creative agencies in Canada. founded in 2007 Crew has won numerous awards for their service and brand leadership. Braden started his career in Brand management at Frito-Lay and Proctor Gamble but throughout his life his passion has been helping leaders make a significant impact in the world. He currently volunteers with LeaderImpact as a member of the global advisory board where he plays a key role mentoring leaders, speaking and developing content formerly from Vancouver, BC Braden has recently moved his family to Dallas, Texas where he has opened a fourth office I had the opportunity to do a live follow-up Q and A with Braden many months ago after a keynote and I'm going to bring some of those questions here today but the one thing I walked away knowing about Braden is that no one succeeds in life alone. Braden's commitment to the people around him is evident in everything he does. I took this quote from the Crew website, "With a strong brand that commands respect and with a higher purpose, you could make the world better for everyone. We really can make a difference with our brand and once you meet Braden you'll see he does things differently." So join us now for a conversation with Braden Douglas. About his new book and really the idea that no one can succeed alone in your personal, professional, and spiritual life. Welcome to the show Braden and it is.

01:56.88

Braden

Yeah, thank you for having me. It's great to great to be here.

02:10.60

Lisa Peters

It was nice to see you. We actually just finished our big global forum and I watched your kind of the bonus section of it and it was so nice to see you because you've just recently transplanted yourself to Dallas. How is it?

02:13.64

Braden

Yeah, you know it's been good. You know, moving countries, starting something from scratch is always scary. It's difficult because it's just you haven't done it in so long so it feels a little bit

like a duck out of water but the people are fantastic. There's just so much opportunity. It's been great. So the family's transitioning. Everybody's kind of getting settled in and just trying to learn everything new again. But it's been great.

02:41.55

Lisa Peters

Good, good and the weather must be better than where I am?

02:46.45

Braden

Man you know the weather is fantastic. 25 degrees yeah it's beautiful. So I can't complain.

02:49.64

Lisa Peters

That is wonderful. Good I have some really exciting news I'm gonna share it with you at the end though because I'm really excited to hear about your book. But before we begin I really want you to tell us a little bit about yourself.

03:03.39

Braden

Yeah, well you know what I grew up in the Niagara region. So right by Niagara Falls you know had a great you know, upbringing have a couple siblings went to university for a business degree. And then got right into marketing and so I didn't really know much about the marketing field but started with Proctor and Gamble marketing fabric softener then, you know, worked with Frito-Lay and PepsiCo marketing potato chips which is so much fun like doing commercials and promotions and you know new products and you know, you eat a lot of chips. So I am a chip connoisseur.

03:40.74

Lisa Peters

My dream job.

Braden

Oh you know what? You say that right? You think it's like oh it's gonna be my dream job. We called it the Frito 15 where you would everybody who works there. You kind of gain 15 pounds and then you realize. Oh I can't just keep eating chips all day and so you kind of work it back but I still love you know eating you know I do eat a lot of chips still because we want a chip company. And then from there I you know had a life turnaround and was like and this was in Toronto and I was like well I just want to give back to the world I want to make it a better place so I took a job with a nonprofit in Vancouver. And I was in there and you know I loved it, but I realized that man, I just love business. I love working with entrepreneurs I love working in the business world and I realized that almost every strategy of the nonprofit was how do we get businesses and leaders to make an impact. to actually you know use their influence use their money use their connections to actually help the nonprofit do what they do and I realized

how important that was and so I went home to my wife Jen and I said hey Hun like I think that there's a possibility of creating a company that you know infuses marketing and creative together. But we could help companies make a lot of money but also have impact and to be able to use that wisely. and so that was the start in 2007 of Crew which is our agency which is now grown you know to now we're starting our fourth office which is pretty neat.

05:15.44

Lisa Peters

Wow you know when I met you the first time I knew that you were just you're just that caring guy and that is what I know about you is that you care about people. You care about entrepreneurs. You care about businesses. So how do you play a positive role in the people around you?

05:31.20

Braden

Well, you know what? I think , well thank you very much for saying that. That's really nice but I think it's really about you know you have to like it's not just numbers anymore and I think in business what I've learned over the years too is that there's strategic plans. There's your target audience. There's positioning. There's you know, pricing strategies and all these different things. But what it always comes down to is people and your employees, your customers, your suppliers, your clients and for me is that you really have to get to know them. Like who are their spouses? Like what do they really like to do? How do you really create value for them? And I think if you go through life just thinking what can I get from somebody or either I'm just trying to sell you a product to buy or I'm just trying to come get you to work for me so that I can pursue my dreams and I think you have to really change that to say you know how do I actually help them? Like what's really important to them even consumers as we think about our own businesses? You don't just think of your customers just as people who might buy your product but what's their life like? Who are they really? And is this product or service really going to help them. And do I understand how it's helping them and why they're buying and why they're using it and it's this empathy I think that is that's really important. I've just learned sometimes the hard way over the years of getting better at that. But I still think it's about an attitude and a shift that says I'm just going to give. And I'm just going to serve and I'm going to trust that it works out well and if it doesn't that's okay, but you still have to have that mentality of really just caring about them as people first and then you'll be absolutely surprised that the strategies the thinking the ROI does come, but you can't just start off with that mindset.

07:24.42

Lisa Peters

Yeah, reminds me of in the forum that we just had the LeaderImpact forum. And I can't remember what speaker but you talked about your story like we need to hear your story because your story has impact and I think that's important in your company.

07:39.75

Braden

Yeah, Well I think especially as an entrepreneur the story of me you know, being in nonprofits, working with entrepreneurs, working with startups and now with much larger companies but you really it's just about your story has as because nobody else has it. Nobody else has your experience. Nobody else has your life. You know relationships that you have. So it's absolutely critical that how that comes out. It does make a difference but you have to have a good story like nobody wants a boring story like that sucks. So you kind of have to feel like what is your story going to be are you going to be. You know what kind of character are you going to have what kind of adventures are you going to go on? or are you going to just play it safe your whole life and you know and have you know this weight that you've left behind that's just broken and not getting great results. So. I think yes, your story is good but make it a great story if you're going to do it.

08:33.78

Lisa Peters

Yeah, you talk you spoke about giving and you're always giving. You know it takes a lot of energy right? And how do you get your energy back? How do you gain energy in your personal life? Like you go home. Are you drained?

08:51.54

Braden

You know what? Well like let's say even last night like last night I'm like I'm exhausted and it was like nine o'clock at night and I'm just like falling into bed and I usually like to read before I sleep and you know when you read like half a page and your eyes just can't even stay open and you're just zonked. But you know what I think it's and I even write about this in my book is that you know when people talk about you have to take care of yourself, but it is really true you do need to work out so that you can have energy you can actually have the kind of energy to be able to give. So for me, it's working out in the mornings. It's eating well it's being able to have some devotional time so that it's not just all about you. It's actually trying to really learn what God has for you and be like okay Lord what do you want? What do you want you trying to teach me what do you want from me today. And taking that taking those moments first. So I think that morning time is a critical time. Because if you wait if you don't do it in the morning I guarantee you won't do it. You just won't find the time to work out or you know to do stuff and if you're always rushing around and you're not planning you're going to eat poorly because you have to grab it on the go or whatever it is. You do have to have that time to just say Okay, what am I trying to do have that time in the morning so that you can be that kind of person you want throughout the day and then for me I'm just spent at night and after you play with your kids and you're investing your family and stuff and working and you're just like okay next day boom. Just start again.

10:23.90

Lisa Peters

I totally agree I find that if I don't take that time in the morning my whole day seems a little off like I'm just rushed. I haven't taken that time to sit down in my time and it's and I have to get up early sometimes to have my time.

10:38.61

Braden

Yeah, and you know what and I have learned that most leaders I know like the really good ones they become morning people and so for me I have to become a morning person and now I love it. But it did take a transition. It's amazing. Some people feel like oh I just do my best work at night and that's great I would say that's very, very rare. Most people I know you have to do it in the morning. If you don't like waking up in early in the morning it's like well too bad like do you want it bad enough like do you really want to actually do this because if you don't you just want to sleep then you won't accomplish I don't think what you really want to in the day unless you do it.

11:16.79

Lisa Peters

Well I'm gonna shift a little bit so, as a strategic marketing and creative company. You personally have a platform to influence people from. Brand influence marketing management communication strategies and more so how do you. How do you use your influence in your professional life?

11:37.38

Braden

Professionally, we get to be in strategic planning and it's really about intention. So every company you go through strategic planning you're we're creating marketing strategies and plans and it's about saying well, Guys could we actually integrate some charitable initiatives into this? Or what's our giving plan going to look like? Where's our swim lane in terms of the kinds of companies we want to work with the kinds of activities and so we can actually integrate those and help clients and help companies integrate these things into their marketing. So yeah, we're gonna sell your brand. We're gonna create brand awareness and great market share. But also we can actually integrate really cool initiatives. and so some things we've been able to do is giving back to First Nations and working with them on some of our food products that are say seaweed snacks and different things. We've done some that we've worked with you know, single families and single mothers in that one purchase of this you know, goes 50% of the proceeds goes to this charity. and we've done so many of these kinds of initiatives where we've helped companies integrate that so that it's practically Giving. but it's amazing that we could have just been like okay, let's just do this really cool ad that's super funny and people just you know, buy your products. but when you can actually show them and be intentional about well. How do we use our platform maybe in a different way? Most people are like yeah great. They just don't know how to do it. They just don't know

where to start what to do. So that's where we've been able to really integrate a lot of these which is pretty satisfying.

13:16.76

Lisa Peters

And I would think and I don't have any numbers to prove this, you may have to jump in here, but I would buy from someone who I knew was doing something so great in my community. like if I knew that you were contributing to a program a charity group I might go you know what. I'm gonna buy your product would you say that?

13:35.19

Braden

Yeah, well they right now you know it's like 85 percent of people actually would choose brands that had a social impact you know over others that don't. and so there is an element but you have to do it in a way that doesn't feel like you're just trying too hard. like do you actually, and I think this is where why I think it's so important that we work with people who what's really on your heart like where do you really want to give back to? So we had one company that is a big closet manufacturer and so if you ever see those you know remodel your house. But they loved doing food pantries and they love the food bank. and so we created a so we were like oh that's awesome and it's already a charity that they were giving to that. They really loved and so we said well why don't we just integrate for the month of November that anybody who does closet or pantry reorganization with you is you give back to the food bank. and they're like oh my gosh. That's amazing. Yes, okay, cool and so they were able to just leverage relationships that they had and it was something that was really close to their heart already. So but you can't fake it. You can't be like, Hey why don't we get back to children's hospital and they're like okay, but if they're not passionate about it and then you can get employees involved. You can get suppliers. You make it a really rallying thing and I think that's where impact happens when you sacrifice, when you're giving, when you're really pursuing something to really for the benefit of others. and then saying you know what I'm going to use what I have to just to make a difference. and I think that is I just I love when that when those come together.

15:17.51

Lisa Peters

Yeah, that is my favorite saying make a difference if I can just make a difference today. Just one thing just you know so I do love that. I love your passion and I hope that all clients when they meet with you they're like grabbing onto your ideas because you really sound like you have amazing ideas to help them grow and make and have impact. so I love that. Isn't that great.

15:40.48

Braden

Yeah, thanks, yeah, it's fun.

Lisa Peters

It's fun I love that. So in your professional life who is one person that made an impact on you? And why?

15:53.24

Braden

You know, probably early in my career. So when I was at Frito-Lay I was the youngest person that they've ever hired in their marketing department. and so it was like me and then a bunch of late 20, 30 year olds and 40 year olds and stuff and so, and even my nickname in university was you know Corporate Canada and people said man, you're like an old man trapped in like a 20 year old's body and you know at the time. , you know you're kind of like you kind of laugh about it and stuff but I still remember like even when my wife met me, she's like Braden you wore like the khaki pants with the tucked in golf shirt and your Blackberry on your hip and I was like an old soul and trying to fit in with all these older people. But one of my managers his name was Jason McDonald and he was the director of marketing at the time. I was reporting to him. And it was in his personality in the way that he approached the work was something that was really different. And what it was is that he would just create a positive environment where you felt like your ideas like he would push you in ways but it would make it fun. There was lots of high fives. There was this energy that he would bring to it. And it was smart. You were you were forced to be really strategic but yet the way that he just rallied others around these ideas. I remember that impact to being like man like that's what I want like when you walk into a room and into a meeting how do people feel? Like is it, Here come Braden again. You know it's gonna be a little bit... He's gonna challenge us and it's going to be a little bit negative. Or do you walk in and it just feels like the room just lightens up that everybody feels like man I can do something here. And it doesn't mean that we don't gloss over or have those difficult conversations or whatever but it means that when I saw him leading he was able to then talk to finance and operations and get people excited about a new initiative. And yeah, it might be difficult but do you think we can do this? Yeah, we probably can. But here's the issue here's the issues okay, well let's solve them together. And so it was this element, this idea that really impressed on me that whenever I want to lead or be with people I hope that when I go people are like man it was great having Braden in this meeting. Or I love working with him and I just feel like we can actually accomplish this because anything new is tough. Anything new ideas. New Initiatives. New campaigns because people hate change. So you have to be able to give them this attitude and belief that yes we can do it. Yeah, It's not going to be easy but hey let's refine it. Let's make it great together and so that's always kind of stuck out at me.

18:34.99

Lisa Peters

Oh I love that and I think you know you as a young guy joining you know Frito-Lay and you're coming in with your Blackberry on your hip and you have to surround yourself with people you want to grow so surround yourself with great people, with passion that you want to be like so you know you found someone. So where is this person today in your life?

18:56.15

Braden

Well, you know what's funny is that we used to. We always kind of think of mentoring I kind of talk about this too in the book is that people think oh I need a mentor I need somebody who's just dedicated to me and just you know working through it. And the more I've realized that that's really rare and I think people shouldn't be looking at just one specific mentor that you know takes them like Yoda and Luke Skywalker and you know you're gonna just have him on your back and you're just running around and he's training you. I think you have to look at mentorship in a community setting. And what I've learned is that who you surround yourself with. So even for me I've got a LeaderImpact group in the morning that we just actually met this morning and you know there's 7 entrepreneurs. Great guys and they are all going through very different things. One guy his business is going amazing. His wife has breast cancer. And that is taking his extreme toll on him emotionally, on his family and he's working through that. Another guy, family life and spiritual life are going fantastic but his business got destroyed by COVID and he was in the fitness industry and it just wrecked it. And then you have another guy who is you know his business is going well. His spiritual life is going well. Personally he's losing friendships because he said hey I'm going to stop drinking. I'm going to change my life around. And it's interesting how friendships are shifting away and he's working through those.

And then they're able to speak into my life. I'm able to speak into their life. You're able to you know, really help each other really grow. And mentorship for me is about looking at those people who are in your life and then either asking them direct questions and there's others like investors and stuff that. I talk with that I'm like hey what are your thoughts on this like. What do you think I should be doing and they take the time and they say hey Braden I know you I respect you and so you're able to have those dialogues and I think mentorship is it about the intention of you to seek out advice and to be then also be able to pour out into others and so it's a reciprocal basis. It's you're receiving and then you're giving and vice versa. Who you surround yourself with is absolutely critical. So I think you have a bunch of mentors in your life and people that you are receiving from as well as people that you are then also giving to.

21:20.21

Lisa Peters

I love that! I'm huge about surrounding yourself with lots of people. I never really thought about the mentorship that you know, that word, right? It's just you need a mentor. I have a group of people, and we're going to come back to LeaderImpact in a bit, but I wanted to ask you about, we talk about mistakes and failures and it is more important to learn or we learn from our mistakes and failures we learned from those but would you be willing to share with us one of the greatest failures or mistakes that you learned through it.

21:57.18

Braden

Yeah, yeah, you know and we kind of joking around that you know I've never made a mistake I don't know what I don't know that feels like I hope it doesn't hurt but you know the reality of it is that it's you know your life is full of mistakes. It's how you deal with them how you learn

from them and how you move forward is really the key thing. But about three years ago, and this is where you know for the first ten years our agency was growing super-fast, and we started planting offices I acquired 3 companies. And you just feel like you can't lose. And what started to happen was I became, I think subtly more prideful as the company was doing better, and the pride kind of led to this idea of look what I've done man I've made some really good decisions. And it's paying off and you know and even though you don't say that out loud because you don't want to look like you're you know, full of pride but I think internally I was thinking man I'm a really good leader. And you start to do this and then about 3 years ago at but the same time we had 3 of our largest clients leave. And then not too long after that another client left and they left us because you know they got acquired. You know a new CMO came in different circumstances that happened and all of a sudden our revenue dropped by about thirty percent. And it was one of those where you start to realize that actually Braden like you don't control a lot of this success. Like this is really about God's hand in your life. And I felt like at this moment I was I went through this period of like my identity I had to lay off people. And that is one of the worst things especially because you pride yourself on great culture and positive and then to have these conversations with people that you know that you have to let them go. And they look at you like man I trusted you I you know I trusted you to provide and. And I really struggled with this and it was a probably it took about 8 months and even during that time like when the ship is sinking you can see who's in it with you and who's not and everybody loves like you know great story. A great positive trajectory. But when it goes bad that's when people start to jump ship like oh man I don't want to you know, be here. So we had people resigning we had you know people leaving too. And it just felt like my whole world was unraveling. And at this time I had to say well where is my footing? Like Braden are you is your identity just locked into a successful business. A good person and that's who you are and that's what gives you confidence, that's what gives you your self-esteem? Or are you getting it from where you should be which is, if you call yourself a Christian, if you call yourself a follower of Jesus and you love God it's like do you really get your identity from that? Or do you get it from professional success? And I would say I got it from God but I acted as if I did it myself. And that was a really good awakening for me and it was something that it really just turned me around where I was like oh my gosh. It felt like a big spiritual spanking. It was just like bad Braden you know and but it was a wake up call. And I think that God disciplines those he loves. Like it was one where I felt like it was hard but it was the absolute best thing I needed because it forced me to evaluate and to actually really come back in a humble way to the Lord. To say you know what God like my success isn't about what I did and my failure isn't about what I've done either. You just keep trying your best doing what you're doing. You're learning, you're growing but it's all about relationships and people and loving God and loving others. And I had to learn that the hard way. I don't wish that on everybody but even through even the pandemic I think we're all learning about how important relationships are. That the world is crazy. You can't predict certain things that are gonna happen or disasters or whatever. But how you work through it is so important.

26:16.82

Lisa Peters

Well I feel like that's a bit of a counseling session Braden, for me. I think I owned, I own an events management firm and when COVID hit it was, we were done. And there was all events

were canceled. The books were cleared and I had to have those conversations with my planners. They you know they had to go somewhere else. There was no events. We know we haven't recovered but I thank you for sharing that because it's hard to share our failures but we learn so much from them. So thank you.

26:47.98

Braden

It's true. It is totally true. People say oh you sacrifice to keep employees in this kind of stuff and I think yeah, that's commendable, but your main job is to keep the ship afloat because it will come back again. But I still remember I said you haven't been in business long enough or you haven't had a big enough operation that you will have to lay people off. You will have to let them go not always by your choice by circumstance. And you have to realize that I'm not their savior. I'm not and the one there but how I do it. And I remember this HR consultant. When I was doing these he came in it was like okay Braden when you give them the resignation letter and you don't say a lot about it because you don't want to get sued and you just kind of give it to them and then you have somebody walk them to their desk to get their keys their personal belongings and then you walk them out you know. And I was like okay. You know cause I'm not used to doing this and so I followed that and I remember thinking when it was done I felt like such a low. I just felt gross. I felt like oh my gosh like why would I treat somebody who spent years with us like a criminal. Like all of a sudden they're just gonna start stealing and like wrecking things. And like don't I know them well enough? And I remember they're like no Braden this is best practice. And I'm like man well maybe that best practice isn't that best. Like maybe it's just been that way because you have big corporations who just have faces who have just are all about litigation. But I thought to myself after that day I'm like you know what? I'm not going to do that anymore. We're going to do it just as a human as somebody who really cares about them. And so now it's about you know offering more severance helping them find a job. Talking them through with this. Like giving them options and working with them so that even if they even when they leave they can come back and say to people yeah, you know what, it didn't work out and maybe the company didn't do this or whatever happened but man such great people and I have nothing but great things to say about Crew and Braden. And that's my hope is that. It's not necessarily that we have to do certain things that are hard but how we do them is such a great reflection of our character.

28:55.27

Lisa Peters

Yeah, it's our brand and you the branding guy. Like this is Braden's way. All right, well we're gonna switch a little bit to our spiritual sides. I want to hear a little bit about you and your spiritual journey to faith throughout this whole podcast, you talked, dripped a little bit about God and how he how he's been in your life so share with us your journey to faith.

29:21.40

Braden

Yeah, so I grew up in a Christian home and my parents they were not Christians until my mom was pregnant with me. And so when she was pregnant with me she contracted German measles. And she was kind of in her second trimester. And at that time German measles was

going around in Canada and if you had it there was a high chance that your pregnancy that you could have deformities with that. And so she remembers just she said I just prayed to God and I said God if you let this baby be healthy I will serve you. I will be all in for you and so you know she had me and I was fine and then all of a sudden they became like crazy church people. And so they were like the dancers of like of like an Anglican church. Like it was like my mom became the tambourine lady. And so I grew up kind of knowing a lot about God. And my parents were fantastic people and things. But as I progressed through life, I got more involved in student council and sports and I did you know with school and I just started to see Christianity and stuff as almost like a crutch. Like oh that's good for people who don't have a lot going on but I've got lots going on I'm fine. You know. And so I just kind of drifted and university when I was out of my house. It's like I you know I was free I was didn't have to go to church. I'm like finally like you know and just lived my own life. And then when I was working this was at Frito-Lay, I was there for about a year and a half or more and in Toronto living by myself. And so coming back one night and I kind of talked about this a bit in my book where you know you start to really start to look at your life a little bit differently when crisis hits and so I remember you know working super late one night. You know, being like only one in the office and being like Braden what are you doing with your life? And I can I remember driving home I go upstairs to my room, to my apartment, and I look across in my mirror and I'm just looking at myself and I'm like Braden you are such a fraud. You are like a mile wide and an inch deep. You're like a puddle and you have no like what are you going to do? You're just going to climb the corporate ladder your whole life. Are you just trying to get that next title make it more money? You know, just try to live your life the way that you think you should live it and you're maybe a good person and hopefully nothing happens. And you know, but it's like where's your soul like and I just remember almost just almost like crying like I just started hating who I was going to because I was chasing something that I thought was really good that the world would say Braden and that's great. Yeah, make more money you're doing really well you're getting pats on the back. But inside I was just living for me. And I knew because of my parents growing up, I knew that there was more but I didn't love church. And so I started looking at this I was like okay well I'm going to do it on my terms then so I remember kind of scouring around for churches and there's a church called the Meeting House which is in the Toronto area. And it was a church for people who aren't into church. I'm like oh that's perfect. That's me! And so I remember I'm showing up and it's kind of in this like theater. And it's this startup kind of church and the pastor gets up there, and his name is Bruxy, and he's got this like long hair and he kind of looks like an overweight Jesus a little bit of what I picture Jesus to look like. And he was the first time just really clear like you know, educated smart and they have a Q and A session at the end of his sermons. He just okay, anybody asks questions. And I remember like oh gosh. Like most churches don't do this. Usually the pastor stops and he's like I think I'm in charge here I know what to do okay, no questions please. You know and but he was just it was like open. And then I started being like okay this is actually kind of cool. And so I remember going went to a young adults small group and I'm asking all these different questions and just peppering them because I'm like if I'm really gonna follow Jesus I want to know is this real? Like I know you guys say he's real and I know that. You know we have you know forgiveness for our sins. And we have eternal life. But is this really true? Does it really make a difference or are you guys just a bunch of homeschooled kids now that are just hoping

to have this relationship? And so I just you know the more I started to research, the more I started to read the bible for myself, going through the Gospel of John and just hearing who Jesus was. Hearing what he you know that hey yes I'm God's son but man I love people. And I challenge those ones that were religious, the Pharisees and stuff about where's their heart? Like where do you really love God? And I remember thinking yes, that's exactly it's do I really love God with my whole heart, mind, soul, and strength? And do I love others? And am I really trying to live you know for him? And do I know that faith in him you know forgiveness in this? I'm like yeah this is it! And I remember driving home one night and that just this moment of just like crying you know and you're listening to this and you're like Braden you cry a lot I'm like I don't cry I don't usually but I just felt like in that moment, I was just in this car and I just felt like that that the Holy Spirit just in there. I'm just like crying to be like God I am so sorry for living my life on my own. Like I really do need a savior and you're it. And I want to follow you. I remember that was about 25 at the time and thinking yeah this is real. This is legit. And then that from that moment it's about just learning and growing. And you know and just seeing the refinement in your own life. And I you know my friends were like well Braden, you're different now and this is odd but, but we like it. It's positive. You've got, it's like you start living like for heaven. You start living for eternity like how can I make a difference? And that's what really propelled me then to go to the nonprofit and to do stuff. And my whole life trajectory has changed because of that and so that's kind of the nutshell long version/short version.

36:06.48

Lisa Peters

It's a great version and I love that you shared that because I think there's a lot of people that grow up, myself and my husband grow up in a certain faith and we just we went away from it. It is the similar story to yours we went away from it and we came back to find something that was great for us and now we're raising our children and that. And in saying that I'm going to raise my children the best I can in our family and one day I hope whatever their decision is you know I'm gonna raise them and hope they follow God. I don't know what church they'll go to. Maybe they'll go to the church that isn't for church people. But that's a great story.

36:45.59

Braden

But you know what? But this is where I always just I think that it's I want to be a Christian that other people that would say if that if that's what being a Christian is like that's pretty cool. I like that I like that version. I don't know what you've got but I like this. And it's not about church or denominations or whatever. It's about do you really love God? You know him. And then you get to read the Bible about trying to really understand who God is. Like what's going on here? What's the context? And Jesus, what was he trying to actually do? And the sacrifice and why that makes a difference. And it's funny, you kind of talk to a lot of Christians and or a lot of people who may have had a church background or maybe a Catholic or different stuff. And what I find is that they just haven't taken the time to discover it themselves. Or they've had bad examples in their world of Christians that have called themselves Christians but they're not really living it. Or maybe they're hypocrites or something they had a negative experience. And it's and I just feel like oh man just don't throw out the baby with a bathwater.

It's so good and it's so amazing. And just because you have one bad experience or maybe even a few. You will find good community and you will find people that are different but here's the thing is that it's open to everybody right? You know if you go into church. It's not like a church for perfect people. It's a place for broken sinful people kind of figure it out themselves and life is crazy and they make dumb choices and they're still trying to work things out. But the idea behind it is but I want to be more refined I want to actually love God better and if I'm not, help me to do that well.

38:29.67

Lisa Peters

Yeah, definitely not perfect here. So thanks for good point. So how did you become involved in LeaderImpact?

38:37.29

Braden

So in the early 2000's a good friend of mine went on a Global Exchange to Panama. And she came back and she was kind of my age and she's like oh Braden you love leadership and all this kind of stuff you gotta check out LeaderImpact and there's a guy named Ian Whitfield who's coming into our city. You should go have lunch with him. So I'm like oh okay, sure I didn't even know who they were or whatever. And so I had lunch with Ian and there's a few of us there. And I'm like yeah, this sounds amazing like this sounds really cool. And so from there I got to know the organization a little bit and when I went to British Columbia there was no LeaderImpact out in the west side. There was maybe you know, maybe an event. But nothing that we would say would be LeaderImpact. So I talked with Esther de Wolde and Preston Wieler. And so Esther is the CEO of Phantom Screens and Preston you know was a hog farmer who now is kind of working at LeaderImpact and we were like hey we should start a group. And so we said okay, let's start this out this was in Abbotsford, British Columbia which is a city just outside of Vancouver. And so we got together with about 7, 8 others and we said okay, let's start this up. And we were like okay this is really good. We and so we said guys like could we make this even better? And so we went through this Bursting Your Bubble kind of sessions together as a group of 7 of us. And then we said okay well let's invite others and so we all invited. You know people and there's about 20 of us meeting at Esther's, corporate meeting room in her manufacturing facility. And so we said okay well what are we going to go what are we going to do with them? And so we said well I was like well why don't we do John Maxwell's 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership that was the book that we said okay, let's go through that it was about ten weeks. And we met in the mornings at 7 am and then we went till 8:30. And we went through this and it was great. People loved it. It was 20 people in a room too. It lots of people. It was busy. We were bringing in muffins and just trying to make it like a really fun time and we thought okay 20 getting a little bit big. We should probably split off. And so I said Esther okay, you take ten. I'll take ten and meet at my office in my boardroom. And then we started with 2 groups and then we started with and those broke off and then there was about but four and then 6. It started to really kind of grow from that and that's where we started to then figure out okay, well what are we gonna do after we're done this? And so we sort of just writing content and curriculum and this small group model that LeaderImpact has adopted

has kind of started out of what Esther and myself and Preston were doing and even the content. And so that's when we just started to you know, even then we created the Integrated Life Series which a lot of LeaderImpact groups use today. And just the format and so it started out in kind of the west side of Canada and now has you know started to grow.

41:54.41

Lisa Peters

I think I love doing this podcast but my cheeks hurt so bad from smiling like I'm just like this is amazing. I Never knew that about you Braden. That's really exciting so leading right into your book. You've written a book called Becoming a Leader of Impact, which is now being used by LeaderImpact groups, I'm going to say, around the world because in the Global Summit I saw your book behind people they're doing their thing and it's right behind them. And I'm laughing because it's yellow I can definitely see the book. So tell us how you laid the foundation of your life to become a person of faith and impact.

42:32.51

Braden

Well I think you know even that book was out of LeaderImpact to say hey guys we you know we do all these business books with Patrick Lencioni and Jim Collins and Henry Cloud and I thought you know what we need our own. Like we like we've got great leaders and LeaderImpact like we should really should have our own and be one that talks about our philosophy. And so that's where you know if you ever mention an idea to a nonprofit usually they come back with hey that's a great idea, you should do that! And you're like oh okay, I'm not sure I can find time, but this is where you're just like okay yes I think we should we should do that. And this philosophy of your personal, professional, and your spiritual life was a concept that I started to use a lot with LeaderImpact and then they've really adopted it and say yeah this aligns because you know my life and what LeaderImpact is about. This is it and there's so many other leaders and people listening to this right now that yeah, you're professional, your personal, and your spiritual life coming together to be that be a leader who has impact. That's what it's all about.

And so for me, it was about saying well professionally I want to be great at what I do. And I think as a leader you have to be great at what you do in order to have credibility or in order to have resources to be able to use more effectively. And so my hope is that when people you know come to LeaderImpact or even for me is that I always want to be learning. I want to be reading I want to be challenged. I want to keep growing as a professional as a marketer but also as a leader. And so that was really an important aspect.

And then personally this is about relationships. This is about relationship. This is about mastery over yourself and your time and your self-discipline but it's also about mastery of your external relationships, whether you're married or you have a significant other. Your kids, your family, your friends, your neighbours, your employees. The people that have been put in your life because if you can't impact them you're not gonna impact anybody. And I think so many times some leaders we look at the masses but we forget the micro like the really

important relationships. And those are the ones that are so important and we all have these fears of spheres of influence that we have been given. And I believe that if you can't have impact those around you those closest to you that really know you, you're not gonna impact others. So are you investing in their life? Are you caring about them? Are you helping them achieve what they need to achieve and do you know what those are? And so really helping people work through that.

And then spiritually is that if you don't have a spiritual life, if you don't really want to follow God and really understand you know his ways of doing it, then your professional and personal life become very self-focused. They become very about what can I get out of this? I want to grow I want to have this new vacation property and earn more money and retire comfortably. And all these things that the world would say is important, but once you have a spiritual life and you realize what God wants and the life that he calls you to of being other centered and giving and you know pouring into something that's bigger than yourself. And that it is just like whoa and so for me, it's like I want that and when you combine that with being a great professional that has resources and platform, who is pouring into relationships that they've been giving, that are now other centered and for the benefit of others. You become the leader who's going to have impact and that's what I think the book and everything is all about.

46:15.27

Lisa Peters

Oh yeah, well I'm excited to tell you, you have made an impact on me in the times that I've met you in the times that I've interviewed you and I have started a new group. I've been in LeaderImpact since 2015 I started a new group that were Zoom and I'm bringing in people from around my province. So because we're Zoom so I've got someone you know from I've got a member of the legislative assembly who's sometimes in Estevan and we've got some people in Saskatoon. So I'm really excited and yours is the first book we're gonna do?

46:42.52

Braden

No way that's awesome. Well congratulations. It's you know what? I here's the thing I commend you because it's tough. There's always pain at the beginning. You have to recruit them. You gotta tell them what it's about hey do you want to come join this group and they're always like well and they're trying to figure it out and and it's like but taking that initiative like that's amazing. Thank you Lisa for doing that.

47:01.16

Lisa Peters

Yeah I'll be looking for some prayers I'm super nervous. But I mean I've been in it so long. So my final question for you Braden because I think you've really talked about LeaderImpact is what and so I don't need to ask any more about that, but thank you for sharing everything and my last question is what brings you the greatest joy?

47:23.95

Braden

Oh man, great question. You know what I love to play. And what brings me the greatest joy is that when I get to play with others. And so when people come to our house I love playing games. So in our neighborhood we had we play this like manhunt with the kids. So and I just turned into like a big kid. And so we had this like dinner party and usually like you know the parents were kind of sitting down here and you know the kids are playing but I always say okay guys after dinner. Okay, great, okay, parents. Okay, let's go. We're gonna go play manhunt with the kids. And they're all like what we mean we're gonna play manhunt. Like parents don't do that and I'm like no, we're all playing. And so we you know all the parents are into it and man, like you have so much fun. And I love just you know integrating play with our kids, with families, with others because it breaks down barriers. And I just you can't help but have a huge smile and just enjoy it and your kids love it like. And everybody has a great time and for me like what brings me joy is when you get to play with friends and family and people in and stuff because you just get to enjoy each other's company. You get to just have fun with each other and so for me like that brings me a ton of joy.

48:47.85

Lisa Peters

Oh Braden you're awesome! Thank you so much for taking the time we you know, almost fifty minutes. Thank you for taking that time out of your life your day to share with us.

48:55.98

Braden

Hey yeah thank you for having me. It's great and I hope it's I hope you have a lot of fun too and congratulations on your group. Hopefully it goes really well.

49:03.74

Lisa Peters

Thank you? Well I feel pretty blessed to be part of this podcast and just being able to dive deep with you and an opportunity to read your book I'm super excited about that. So thank you?

49:15.18

Braden

Yeah, thank you.

49:18.92

Lisa Peters

So to everyone listening, we hope you enjoyed meeting Braden Douglas you can find him at crewmarketingpartners.com or Bradendouglas.com. LeaderImpact is a global movement dedicated to leaders having a lasting impact. We believe that true impact occurs when your personal, professional, and spiritual life is fully engaged. We have a network in over 350 cities from around the globe. We host live and virtual events throughout the year and have a

growing network of peer groups that meet weekly across these. Our podcast is just one of the ways to help you accelerate your growth as a leader. If you're part of a LeaderImpact you can always discuss or share this wisdom with your group. And if you are not yet in a LeaderImpact group we would love to have you. So check out the groups available in your area at leaderimpact.ca or get in touch with us and we will connect you. Stay in touch with our newsletter at LeaderImpact.ca or on social media and remember - impact starts with you!