

## LeaderImpact Podcast Ep. 13 Akua Carmichael - Make Time for what is Truly Important

### Lisa Peters

Welcome to the LeaderImpact Podcast. We are a community of leaders with a network in over 350 cities around the world 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 who are living this out. We 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 in Canada is through our newsletter at [leaderimpact.ca](http://leaderimpact.ca) or on social media at LeaderImpact. And if you're listening from outside of Canada check out our website at [leaderimpact.com](http://leaderimpact.com).

I'm your host Lisa Peters and our guest today is Akua Carmichael. Akua asks have you ever wondered what future generations will say about your life's impact and for what would you like to be remembered? As a former wealth-planning lawyer in a private practice Akua Carmichael was a trusted advisor to many high and net worth individuals and believes that estate planning is important for everyone. Akua is a sought after speaker for workshops and presentations that provide individuals with the skills and impetus to navigate this somewhat daunting topic and is the author of an estate planning manual and workbook entitled *My Lifeprint*. Akua is an author and lawyer who juggles a busy life as a wife and mother. She draws on her personal and professional experience to highlight that death is not to be ignored but rather to be anticipated. Estate planning is a gift you give to others and eternal planning is the gift you give to yourself. Join us now for an engaging and honest presentation that will provide financial, relational, and spiritual motivation to overcome fear and make time for what is truly important.

Thanks for joining us Akua.

### Akua Carmichael

So happy to be here Lisa. Thanks for having me.

### Lisa Peters

Oh I get so excited. We get to meet the first time but only for a few minutes and I hear a little bit of your story. And I'm excited to hear your message because I know a little bit of your story and it's amazing and now we're just gonna launch right into it. For any of our listeners who are listening right now, normally we sort of start with that personal, professional, spiritual but Akua has this amazing story and we're launching into it because my heart just like just loved it and I just my heart grew 10 times that day. So I'm excited for you to begin so I'm just really gonna kick off and Akua I want you to tell your story.

**Akua Carmichael**

Okay, I'm going to tell my story. It's my story sticking to it! So let's jump right in. It's interesting you introduced me as a lawyer and I am a lawyer. And it's quite funny because oftentimes I feel like I went to law school not primarily to become a lawyer but primarily to find Jesus Christ. I really do believe that. And that's where I really found Christ in terms of my story, I was raised in a Christian home. My parents went to church. And when I was 12 I remember going to church with my mom and the pastor did an altar call and something stirred in my heart and I thought, You know what, I want to give my life to Jesus. I want to be saved. And so I walked to the front of the church. I said the Sinner's Prayer. And I thought great I'm a Christian I belong to Jesus. I'm in the kingdom. And that lasted, I was 12, so a few weeks, maybe a few months. And then I just kind of kept living my life.

And I always had an idea of God. I knew God was real. I believed. He was real I knew Jesus was coming back to the earth one day. But I also thought You know what, I think I may have been a little bit too rash when I gave my life to Jesus when I was 12. I'm young. It's really important to live my life. Sow my wild oats and when I'm about 80 I can get more serious about God. And I really spent my days just wanting to be successful. I remember that was a big part of my life. I wanted to be successful in life and I thought what can I do that will make me rich and successful and famous and all these different things.

And when I was 25 I actually ended up going to law school, which I hadn't planned to do. The funny thing about my part of my story is I actually had no plan to be a lawyer. I applied to law school six months before I got in. And it was funny because at the university that I went to, I went to Queens University, and everybody and their cat wanted to be a lawyer. And I thought these people are all really flaky. There are other professions than being a lawyer. For that very reason I don't want to be a lawyer. So of course, as life would have it, I graduated from university and I had no idea what I wanted to do. I was always very planned and detailed. Always had a plan, a schedule and for the first time in my life I didn't have a plan and it was freaking me out.

I had a friend who'd done a master's in law and she said Akua I know what you should do, go to law school. I thought I never really thought about that and I don't really plan to be a lawyer. She said, Listen, you got a great voice. I can see you in the courtroom. Just go. And so I thought well I'm not really doing anything else, so why not? I applied, I'd got in and went to law school. But something really interesting happened in law school. In fact, I remember on our first day in one of my classes the professor said, Look to the right look to the left. By the end of this month there is a certain percentage of you that will not be in this class. A certain number of you are gonna drop out. And in law school, it's all a bunch of type A personalities and the thought of dropping out or failing was completely stressful and scary. And one of the things about our first year of law school is everybody is stressed out. We're worried we're going to fail. We're worried that we're not going to get the straight A's that we were getting

before we got to law school. So there's a lot of anxiety. There's a lot of fear. There's a lot of pressure. There's a lot of stress.

But something really interesting happened when I was in law school. I met a girl, a woman by the name of Collette and we became friends kind of in the first week. And I noticed something about her that I didn't understand. She was calm. She was kind. She had this peace about her and it didn't make any sense. Because we were in law school and that was not the place to be exemplifying and having these kinds of expressions of love and peace and joy it just wasn't the place for that.

So I remember one day I went up to her and I said okay Collette I've been hanging out with you for a while now what are you doing like what's your secret. Are you taking something? Are you something like what are you doing? Because you're calm. You're peaceful. You're happy. We just wrote an exam. I'm freaking out. Half of the class thinks we all got D's on this exam You walked out of it like you got an A. None of us knows what our grades are what is your story? And she said to me Akua, you know what? I'm a Christian. And I said oh everyone's a Christian. I'm a Christian.

And I thought back to all those years ago when I said Jesus you're my Lord and saviour. I said no, no, no, no tell me what you're doing, like what are you doing? And she said she looked at to sit Akua I'm a Christian Jesus Christ is the Lord of my life. And she walked away. And I thought, Hmmm okay now I know I'm a Christian or at least I think I'm a Christian. But I don't have what she has but I want what she has because I had never seen anybody call themselves a Christian have that much peace and joy in really difficult circumstances. And so I just started following her and I thought whatever she does I'm gonna do because whatever it is to be a Christian I clearly don't have part of this thing that she's doing.

And so I just started going with her to church. And I started very slowly to pray again. Start praying to start reading my bible and really just asking God like God I know I know you're real. But I haven't known you personally. And my friend Colette knows you personally and I think I want that too. So fast forward to December 31, 1996. This is a day I will never forget. Of course, that was New Year's Eve. I was back home from law school. I was home for the holidays and I was in quite a predicament because all of my friends had made plans without me. I had no plans. It was December 31 and I remember thinking this just can't be happening to me. I have no plans on December 31.

So my mom was going to church and she said well you can come with me to church. And I thought I'm not going to church with my mom on December 31 that's so embarrassing. Like I must have something more exciting to tell all my friends about. And so I said no I'm not going to church with you and she says okay well your aunt is going to church. You can go with her and I thought. Okay, that's a little less embarrassing than going to church with my mom so

fine I'll go with my aunt. And I had expected that it was going to be a bunch of 80 year old ladies and be sitting and just kind of bored out of my mind all evening.

But we got there and it was a rocking party. I mean there was music. There were people dancing. They were enjoying themselves. There were a couple of cute guys there as well. And I just remember thinking church?! I don't remember this being what church is. It was such a lively atmosphere. And I remember just about 30 seconds into 1997, a pastor come up. I mean it wasn't 30 seconds and into 1997 but a pastor had come up. He'd been preaching for about 15 minutes and he started talking. And he said okay we are just winding down to the end of 1996 we're about to go into 1997. We got maybe 15 seconds to go he was preaching about Jesus and his disciples and going over to the other side. And he said we're going into 1997. Is there anybody in this church that is tired of carrying burdens, difficulties, challenges? Is there anybody who wants to go into 1997 no longer alone but with Jesus Christ in your boat? And I remember sitting there thinking about what my experience had been like since I'd started law school. Thinking about this stress and the pressure of life and circumstances and situations. and something in my heart said I want to go into 1997 with Jesus. I want to cross over from the old life I've been living into the new life that Jesus promises me. Not a life that means there'll be no problems and no challenges. But a life where Jesus Christ is in my boat. And I remember jumping up holding up my hands and the pastor was like okay we got 10 seconds, 9 seconds, 8 seconds. Is there anybody? Is there anybody? And I lifted my hands up. And I said I want to go into 1997 with Jesus Christ. And that night I gave my life to Jesus and I said no turning back. And from then till now I have been faithful to that promise to Jesus. There have been challenges and difficulties along the way. Certainly. But I have not turned back and he has been in my boat ever since. And it's been an amazing, amazing ride.

### **Lisa Peters**

So when I think of all the years when you talk about going to church as a young girl and I get that. I was that. I was there. And then later on in life. But you talked about Collette. You went to church with Colette. Was it the same kind of experience? You go with your aunt. It's a rock band. And there's cute guys which is I mean I've heard that story before. And it's like this is a place I want to be. For anyone who's listening and going I don't even know where to start. Like I don't have a Colette. I don't have an aunt. Do you have any advice?

### **Akua Carmichael**

I do. I do because and I've met with lots of people like that who say how do I know God is real? I would love to know him the way you know him. But how do I know God is real? And I've said this to people over and over again because I know it works and I've had people come back and tell me. I believe for every person who desires to know God and to know him intimately and for themselves, a simple prayer just asking God. And a prayer doesn't have to be complicated really just saying God, If you're real show yourself to me. Like if you're real show yourself to me so that I can know and experience you for myself. That is a prayer that God cannot and will not refuse because he promises that he's knocking at the door of our hearts

and if we will open will come in. And I believe that a prayer that invites him in by saying God just show me that you're real. Show me that you're here and that I matter to you that I'm important is it is an invitation that God will not refuse.

**Lisa Peters**

It's lovely I love it. So once you were finished at Queens you graduated. I think you have to then go and write the bar to become a lawyer is that right?

**Akua Carmichael**

So I went to Queens for my undergraduate degree and then I went to the University of Windsor for law school. And after I went to the University of Windsor for law school I graduated and then actually moved to the States because I had this plan, this great plan to become a lawyer. I have a lot of family members that live in California so I was out in Southern California writing the bar there. Had these great plans of being an entertainment lawyer in Los Angeles. I was just going to do these amazing wonderful things there. And so I went there and started writing the bar like studying to write the bar exam in California and that was another interesting experience.

So again, kind of get the context of my life at this point. So I've graduated from law school. Jesus is my Lord and Savior. I'm going strong with him. I'm in California preparing to write the bar exam. And a really interesting thing happens. I've been studying 12 to 14 hours every day. I go to write the bar exam. After about three months of studying I go to write the bar exam and I fail. And this is not really something I've experienced in my life before. Because this is the most important exam of my career of my academic career. And I've just like I'm just not somebody who ever failed an exam ever. So to fail the most important exam of my life and to be a Christian like this didn't happen when I wasn't a Christian and I wasn't serious about my God. This happened when I had remember in December of 1996 I gave my life to Jesus I said Jesus. We're crossing over to the other side. That's the Akua you're dealing with now right.

**Lisa Peters**

This isn't supposed to happen to me!

**Akua Carmichael**

Exactly, exactly. And that was a really interesting experience for me because I wrote that bar exam not once not twice, but 3 times. And I failed 3 times and I remember each time, I think actually the very last time I went back to God and I said You know what Jesus maybe I think I'm saved and I'm not. And maybe that's why I keep failing these exams. Or maybe I'm just like doing something wrong. Like I'm sitting I'm doing some terrible thing. But the thing is I wasn't like all I was doing was studying day and night and going to church and reading my Bible and praying and serving in church.

And I remember it was funny because I had a friend who had come from who was also in my law school. She was a year ahead of me and she was living in California and I remember she went to church occasionally like she didn't go all the time. She was living with this guy. She was getting married. And she passed! I remember we wrote the same exam on the third time and I called her and I was like oh my gosh I failed the exam I can't believe that this exam is so hard. And she wasn't saying anything and I was like you passed right? Yeah, sorry I did. And I was like no, no, I'm so happy for you. And when I hung up the phone I was like okay God maybe I'm not saved because she doesn't do any of the things I do but she passed and I didn't. And I'll never forget what the Holy Spirit said to me. But I believe that that the Lord spoke to my heart which was just Akua you're just not in the right line. That's all. This doesn't have anything to do with you as my daughter, you're not or you being saved. You're just not in the right line. And when you get into the right line the doors that need to open for you will open for you and I will be the one opening them.

**Lisa Peters**

How do you know that voice? Is it an audible voice for you? Can you hear it? What is it?

**Akua Carmichael**

That's a great question. That's a great question. That is not an audible voice. And I know sometimes people say they do in the middle of the night hear a voice saying go to China. I did not ever hear a voice like that. And for me, it's never been an audible voice. It's more of just a knowing like intuition or just...And I don't know Lisa if you've had that experience where sometimes you just have a sense about something. Maybe you go into a store and you're trying to decide o I get the pink shirt or do I get the yellow one and you just are kind of drawn to one versus the other. And you just know, no one's told you but you just know. For me hearing God speak to me is very much like I just know what he's saying in that moment to me.

**Lisa Peters**

I think some people call it a coincidence. And I mean so I have to tell you my story I was reading the other day and I have been asked to go on a like missions trip and I keep saying no and I'm just not feeling it. And I'm reading my book and it's talking about missions and I'm like are you trying to tell me something? And I'm kind of laughing and I'm reading this book and I'm not kidding, I opened my email and there was an email from LeaderImpact about a missions trip! I'm like are you kidding me? You sent me an email. Coincidence, I don't think so but I had to share that with you I know you would appreciate that one.

**Akua Carmichael**

That's amazing and I know that to be true that God speaks to us in so many different ways. Sometimes it's an inner knowing. Sometimes they're just a series of events that happen. And that is God speaking through different things that when you connect them together you can see this is really God speaking to me.

**Lisa Peters**

So now you've failed the third time...

**Akua Carmichael**

So I failed the bar exam for the third time. And I'm in California and I'm trying to figure out what my next move is. Because again remember in terms of context, I'm a woman who's always got a plan. I've always got a goal. If I always got a plan I'm always moving towards something. And for me now that I've given my life to Jesus and I've made him the center of my life, I've had to also shift and change a little bit about how I approach my life. I've had to change from being the Akua of I plan every single day every hour out to okay God I have my plans.

Because that was one of the interesting things about going to California and writing the bar there that was my plan. I never actually stopped to say is this your plan for me? Do you really want me to go to California and write the bar? I had all these great things I wanted to do but didn't actually check in with him. So when I started failing I thought okay maybe I should actually check in with God seeing as he's the Lord of my life and find out what he thinks about this. And I felt that it was time for me to stop writing the bar exam because for some reason I kept failing it and God for whatever reason was not opening that door for me. And so I figured why don't I try and find out what doors he actually does want to open for me.

Right around that time there's friends of my parents, of my family that we've known for many years. A couple that that was married I remember my mom called me to say There's been a death at the church. And in fact, this couple that my parents knew really well, and they were friends of our entire family, the wife of the couple had actually passed away. And I remember my mom said to me she passed away and she just had a baby. The baby was seven days old. And she had 2 other young girls a 7 year old and 4 year old. And of course the husband was 36 years old when his wife passed away.

So I remember thinking oh my gosh this is horrible. And I spent a lot of time...I just had a burden for them, for the family and I spent a lot of time in prayer. Just covering them and saying Lord, help them. Take care of them. And eventually called a husband just to get my condolences. I remember during my prayer time again I felt the Lord just saying I'm going to send someone to take care of them and to be with them. I remember saying oh God you're so good and that's wonderful. So I called him this young man and said I'm just praying for you in your family. And God has just spoken to me very clearly that he's gonna send someone to help you and I really believe that he will do that. So we had a lovely chat and hung up the phone. Went back into prayer for all of them. And one day in my prayer, again I felt God saying to me Akua, you are the person I am sending you back to be part of this family. And I was like Satan get thee behind m. This is not the voice of God. This cannot be God speaking because I have a plan to live in California and have this life. And this is not at all my plan. So there's no way that this is God speaking to me but sure enough it was God.

And I remember around that time all these things were going on. 9/11 also took place. And it was after that whole kind of seeing what was going on in the U.S. and all the problems that people were having, I realized at that time that it was time for me to actually pack up and go back home to Canada. And I and I went through a wrestling. There was a period just like Jacob with the Lord of wrestling and really saying God is this really what you have for me? Is this really what you want me to do? And getting to that place where I was able to lay down. Because I think sometimes we say oh God whatever you want me to do, wherever you want me to go I will go. Send me. And then he says okay, here's your assignment. And you're like okay, not this one. I'll go for another assignment send me somewhere else.

But I think for all of us, getting to that place where we say God I'm willing to lay down what I want for what you want. We all need to get there and I did. And was willing to say ok California, this was my plan but this is not God's plan for me. And I went back to Toronto and sure enough I got married to my husband and he and I together have been raising these beautiful young girls. And they're not that young anymore. So when we got married the kids were a year old, 8 and 5. And today they are let me get 20 youngest is 20. Jada is 20, Jessica is 25 and Justine is s 28. And so God has been so faithful. I mean...I really that's the word that I would use God has been so faithful and I'd be lying to you if I said it's been perfect and there've been new challenges and there's just been puppies and roses day in and day out. Of course, there've been challenges. Of course, it's been work. But my testimony is that God has been faithful through it all. And we're all here and we're all doing well and God continues to lead and guide us as a family. And yeah, it's been unbelievable.

**Lisa Peters**

That's an amazing story. And really going from single girl to mother of 3, that is God don't you have any other plan? Like this is big.

**Akua Carmichael**

No kidding. I remember right before I got married my father said Akua, this is the one bit of advice I have for you. Please take a cooking class. There are children involved, innocent children. Take a cooking class before you do this. And to my credit I did not take a cooking class but all the kids survived. No one has gone missing on my watch. So we give God the glory!

**Lisa Peters**

Excellent, well done Akua. So I introduced you as a lawyer. So you ultimately became a lawyer.

**Akua Carmichael**

Right! Oh yes, oh my goodness, the story continues. And that's a really interesting thing so we get married. come back to I come back to Toronto. So I'm married. I'm raising young kids. And about 5 years after we got married I actually said to my husband I think I would like to get

called to the bar. I really do. And he was working at the church we were attending at the time, traveling. I had these 3 small kids. I was a full time stay at home mom. And I was studying for the bar exam. And I wrote that exam and passed it on my first time out. With 3 kids! I have been very involved in my church, very actively. So again, right? Like there's nothing like laying everything down and letting God open doors. There really is nothing like that.

And another really interesting thing that came out of my experience. I have served for many years as a tutor with the Law Society of Ontario. And I've tutored law students who failed the bar exam multiple times. And my experience of having gone and failed multiple times led me to develop a system for doing multiple choice questions. Going through the bar exam. And when I'm tutoring students, I'm sharing this system with them and telling them, Look I failed this exam multiple times and this is actually how you could pass it and here's some strategies that really work. So it's amazing to me how God does not waste any experience. What looks like failure to you is just part of their story that is going to lead to success for someone else.

### **Lisa Peters**

I love that! Well done. So, we're going to skip a little bit ahead. You've become a successful lawyer. You've written a book. I think you've written a second book but we're going to talk about *My Lifeprints* and it is an estate planning manual and workbook that will equip readers to create an intentional and lasting legacy which is what you are calling our lifeprint. So can you tell us more about the book or can you give our listeners some things they should be thinking about when thinking about estate planning?

### **Akua Carmichael**

Absolutely.

### **Lisa Peters**

And I have my pen so I'm ready.

### **Akua Carmichael**

Awesome. You can take some tips down. And of course listen, estate planning is not one of those topics that people like to talk about. I was definitely not a popular lawyer when you go to cocktail parties or whatever people say what do you do? Oh I help people prepare for dying. And I help people prepare for losing their mental and physical faculties. So if you get dementia or Alzheimer's or you can't feed yourself anymore. I'm the one you want to speak to. These are not popular topics and I recognize them. I recognize that. but they're ultimately important topics that we all need to think about.

I led a seminar recently on International Women's Day at work and I came across an interesting statistic that says that women live longer. They tend to live longer than men in Canada. Women tend to live longer. They also tend to earn less money than men do. So they've got to make less last longer. In addition to that, women generally are

disproportionately more responsible for child care, domestic duties, and also for elder care. Taking care of elderly parents for instance.

And so it's important for women to be thinking about estate planning. A lot of times we think about men they earn more money. Oh but if a man passes away what's going to happen to the woman. But because of the contributions that women make to a family, to taking care of their children to taking care of parents, to take care of their husbands, a woman not being in the family is going to leave a major gap. Not just in terms of income that she's bringing into the family but in terms of what she does in the household in terms of what she does for caring for her loved ones.

And so having a will, having powers of attorney if something... if a woman... powers of attorney imply when a person's alive but they've become incapacitated so either mentally or physically. You're not able to make personal care decisions or financial decisions for yourself, making sure that you've appointed somebody to take on that decision making for you. And normally for married women it would be their spouse. And then having an alternate. So if you and your spouse ended up, both becoming incapacitated, a friend or a sibling. Somebody that you trust to make those decisions on your behalf becomes very important.

And then obviously with a will that applies when a person passes away. Making sure that you have made provisions for loved ones so that if something happens to you, your spouse, your children, parents perhaps are taken care of and all of that is documented in a will, for instance, so that there's provision made for them. That's really what estate planning is about just making sure that you've taken care of your loved ones. Because when you leave, for each one of us we are impacting a circle of people. And they will feel your loss. When you put your plan in place that at least alleviates some of the administrative burdens that they have to deal with because there's an emotional burden with you not being around. Having a plan in place means that at least some of the administrative issues can be dealt with more easily. And as I've said before estate planning really is a gift in and of itself that you give to your loved ones because you're leaving them with less burden in terms of dealing with your estate at least if things are organized and clearly laid for them.

### **Lisa Peters**

What if you are... I think of my husband and I, we've got the plan. And as so far. But if I'm single and I really I don't know anyone and I don't know what your advice would be to people that not they're single and they don't know if they have someone that can be their executor or power of attorney.

### **Akua Carmichael**

That's a great question. And a lot of times single people might think I'm not married or it's not a big deal or I don't have as much money. Another stat that I came across is in regards to single mothers for instance. The stats show that single mothers, their net worth is generally

50% less than a single father. And so for single parents, and particularly single mothers, it is so important again if you've got a child, and if you don't have a child, if you're just a single person, I shouldn't say just, if you're a single woman just as important to make sure that you've got your planning in place.

If you're trying to think about who should be your executor or who would act under powers of attorney, one of the things to consider is parents. Parents are not ideal though because generally you want to be appointing people that are younger than you. Generally, parents will pass before we will. And in terms of health issues, you want to be thinking about people that have a better health expectancy than maybe a parent would. So a sibling, a good friend, a trusted friend. Also to consider a trust company. Trust companies provide and trust companies are part of most any major bank will have a trust company as well. They provide executor services and attorney services for powers of attorney. So these are some options that single people could think about in terms of who to appoint to assist in their estate planning.

**Lisa Peters**

Yeah. I think for some, they might think it costs too much. So does your book help us sort of walk-through, we can pre-plan a lot of this ourselves.

34:55.15

**Akua Carmichael**

That's really the key to the book. It's an estate planning guide. So what it really does is walk you through some of the questions that a lawyer would ask you if you were putting your estate plan together. And if you thought about them in advance. You go kind of ready. You're aware of what the process is. You're aware of the kinds of questions. It should translate into less cost and expense because you're really prepared. You're organized. It should cut down on the time that the lawyer would need to spend with you and putting the plan together. And I think being as organized as you can be can impact the bottom line in terms of what you're going to spend when you're getting those documents prepared.

**Lisa Peters**

Yeah now I know I mean a lot of this book, and it's funny because I have a book at home and it's called Just In Case and it's to help you prepare. Which really makes me laugh because there is no just in case, it's happening right?

**Akua Carmichael**

Not if but when. I love it.

**Lisa Peters**

So just in case...I've got the book. But you have talked about legacy is not just about wealth. It's about what have you done to impact. I don't know if you have anything...is that part of your book or your workbook or is this just something that you just love to promote.

**Akua Carmichael**

Well it is a big part of the book. And I talk about my lifeprint. The title is *My Lifeprint* and the reason I chose that title is because I was thinking very much beyond what we give to people. Look I think it's important as parents to make sure...the Bible talks about leaving an inheritance for your children's children right? Like it's important that we leave something for our family members so that they're not destitute. That they have something to rely on if you're not around like in terms of finances. But beyond that our lives are not just about what we give to people in terms of dollars and cents or personal property. Our lives are about our legacy. Our lives are about our impact. So every day there are people, like for you Lisa, every day there are people in your life who say God, I thank you for Lisa. If she wasn't in my life it wouldn't be as sweet as it is. It wouldn't be as meaningful as it is. It wouldn't be as important as it is.

And for everyone listening, some of you who might say well that's not true for me. I beg to differ. There are people. There are organizations. There are causes that are better because of you and because of your impact and because of your contribution to whatever they are doing and whatever goals they're achieving. And that's really what our lifeprint is about. What is your legacy beyond dollars and cents? What is it about your life that is impacting other people, other organizations? And sometimes we say, and I talk about this in the book as well, sometimes maybe you're not really happy with the impact that you're having. But the good news about being alive is you can be intentional about your lifeprint. You can be intentional about your legacy. And if you're not leaving the kind of impact that you want to, it's never too late to change course. To turn things around. And I believe as a Christian, with the help of Jesus Christ, to leave the impact that he's actually designed and created you to leave on this earth for the time that you're here.

**Lisa Peters**

Oh man, you are just a beautiful soul. I'm listening to like this is so good. And I think of all the friends I just want to reach out to right now and tell them how much I love them, or how much they mean to me, or how much they brighten my day I think we all need to do that.

**Akua Carmichael**

Yeah, yeah. We're all impacting people at some level. And sometimes we don't realize just how much we're doing that. But where we all are doing it. We're all having an impact.

**Lisa Peters**

I mean you think of Colette. What an impact she had on your life. You realize you didn't go to law school to become a lawyer you went to meet Colette and find God.

**Akua Carmichael**

Exactly yeah. And the funny thing about her impact is I met her a few years ago. A common friend of ours got married and that was the first time that I told her. Because I told her I said Colette everywhere I go I tell people about this girl named Colette and how she changed my life. And because of your life I came to Jesus. I mean she was in tears. She had no idea what her impact did for me and how it's a domino effect right? Because what God has through her, God has done in my life I'm now able to share with countless other people.

**Lisa Peters**

Well I think you sharing today and that's how we sort of started with your story because it's so much part of your life, Akua. And to listen to it and to hear it again because I knew a little bit of it and but I just and to listen to you talk about *My Lifeprint* is so much more than the wealth you leave behind and the things. And the book that I have is all about the things right? It's your bank accounts and your passwords and that couch over there that should go to Jack. Nobody wants your couch. They want you to have part of their life. Like be part of my life. Have an impact.

**Akua Carmichael**

Right? Yeah. One thing Lisa I would just jump in and say is we're just chatting, when I was in private practice I actually came across the will of an individual who was a Christian. And right in that person's will she had left scriptures that meant something to her. And wanted, again talk about a legacy, right in her will she had left certain scriptures and said I want people to know that these scriptures meant everything to me. And I want to leave this for the world. And the interesting thing about wills are that they're public documents. Once they're probated, which the court process that validates the will, anyone, you can go to your little local courthouse pay a fee and get a copy of that will. And I read that will with the scriptures and they were giving me life as I was working because I was preparing all the documents to file in court. But I thought my gosh this woman...And the interesting thing about this woman is she passed, she was a single woman. She didn't have children. She wasn't married. But that will continue to speak even after she passed away and those scriptures were giving me life as I was preparing them to be filed in court. So again don't underestimate the power of your impact on this earth.

**Lisa Peters**

It's funny because my next question does have to do with impact. So one of the many questions I ask everybody, I mean this is a LeaderImpact Podcast. And we are dedicated to leaders making or having a lasting impact. So as you continue to move through your own journey, your own journey of life, have you considered what you want your faith legacy to be when you leave this world.

**Akua Carmichael**

I think about it all the time. My desire and my goal would be that when people met this girl named Akua Carmichael if they didn't know who Jesus Christ was they had a desire to know him. That's really the goal and the mission and the desire in terms of my own spiritual impact and legacy is when you get around me and spend time with me that you leave saying Okay if I don't know who this Jesus is, I think I'd like to at least find out a little bit more about who can. And if I know who he is, I want to love him even more. That would be my goal. That through my life those who have an opportunity to interact with me and I with them, would come to know Jesus.

**Lisa Peters**

And I think that happens in our in our interactions. The way we speak. The way we act. The way we move. People know, or they want to know just like, let's go back to Colette. You just you want it, to follow her. Like what are you doing? What are you taking? What is it? What is that thing? She's like it's just Jesus and you're like no, it's something else. That's funny.

**Akua Carmichael**

Right? Exactly things. Yeah and I get it. Look, listen. It might sound very churchy. Oh I want people to know Jesus by interacting with me. And it's not meant to sound churchy at all. It really is just, I believe if we love Jesus and we live our lives just loving him that will come out. And you don't have to plan it. You don't have to have a script that you're prepared with every day when you walk out of your house. I think if you just love Jesus that will come out when you interact with other people and they'll see it.

**Lisa Peters**

And when you say other people, I've seen my own life just change because I've made it intentional to surround myself with people like you Akua and these conversations that I have I need them to just continue in my own faith journey. And some friends have just, they change. I need to surround myself with faith filled people and followers of Jesus and all that churchy talk. But I love it. It's like what do you doing and you're so happy. So thank you Akua.

So I have two other questions. I have one question that I ask everybody but my first one was, I know that you aren't involved in LeaderImpact right now, and COVID has been a tough time, but we're all going back someday. In LeaderImpact we do a lot of leadership books. So my question for you is just what has been one or two of the greatest leadership books you've read?

**Akua Carmichael**

Right? Well I love John Maxwell. And I'm sure you know who he is, leadership guru. I've read a bunch of his books. One of them that I really love is *Thinking for a Change*. That's the title of it *Thinking for a Change*. And it's a book about...It's a leadership book for sure, but it can be applied not just for business or people, leaders in business or in the work world. It can be

applied to family. It can be applied to personal relationships. It's really just about our thoughts and our thinking. What are we thinking about? How are we thinking? It goes through different types of ways that we can think. We think strategically. We can have big picture thinking. There are different ways that we can see the world. I'm a big believer in starting with your thoughts because what you think about, everything flows. Everything starts with a thought. And everything flows out of the thought. And in my own life. It's something I've had to work very hard on and I continue to work very hard on making sure that my thoughts are right. Because for a long time I've had long thoughts about a lot of things. And so that's a book that's really blessed me. And I go back to it occasionally and just to remind myself to think and make sure that I'm thinking in the right ways about the right things.

### **Lisa Peters**

When you talk about thoughts I just came across the book *As a Man Thinketh* written in like 1903 and it's still like people are talking about it in leadership books today. So I have I have a copy of it I haven't read it but it talks about your thoughts ultimately are your consequences. So be careful. So thank you for that. I got to write down that book. I love reading and I just ordered a few new ones. But my last question for you is what brings you the greatest joy.

### **Akua Carmichael**

That's a good one. What brings me the greatest joy? Well anything with chocolate in it or chocolate in enough itself is pretty high up on the list. But let's get to something a bit more substantive than that. Perhaps I think ultimately knowing that I'm able to make a difference. Like my goal at the end of the day is, if it's in a work situation, if it's in a relationship situation, if it's in a family situation, just when I'm in a particular situation. Is it better? Is that situation better when I've left it than when I found it? And did I do anything that made it better? And it could be something minimal. It could be something bigger than that. But that brings me joy when I can go back and look on situations or circumstances and say that when I got into this situation it wasn't ideal or wasn't, but me being there actually made a difference. And it made things better for other people. That brings me incredible, incredible joy.

### **Lisa Peters**

Yeah I can feel my cheeks hurt with the smiles. Akua, thank you for spending the hour with us or 40 just over almost 50 minutes. I loved hearing your story. I loved hearing about your book. I loved that it's just so much more than wealth in life. It's okay to be scared. You taught us that. It's okay to not hear God audibly. He might come in an email, or a little nudge, or your mother calling. But thank you for sharing. It's just been a wonderful time with you.

### **Akua Carmichael**

Oh well, thanks for having me Lisa. And thank you for the great work that you are putting out into the earth. We're all better for it. And for you. And so thank you so much for what you're doing your blessing to the kingdom. Thank you.

**Lisa Peters**

Thank you. If anyone wants to engage with you or find out more about you or lifeprints, how can they engage with you?

**Akua Carmichael**

I am on Instagram, and I believe my handle is Akua.Carmichael. I hope that's what it is. And if you Google, I said if you Google me, if you search for me on Instagram you'll definitely find me. That's probably the easiest way to find me these days. And in terms of email I'm at akuacarmichaelATgmail.com.

**Lisa Peters**

Easy peasy. Well I appreciate you and you have made an impact on my day. So thank you.

**Akua Carmichael**

Oh thank you. My pleasure. Really great to be with you today.

**Lisa Peters**

Well that ends our podcast with Akua. And we hope you enjoyed our time together. If you're part of LeaderImpact you can always discuss or share this podcast with your group. And if you're not yet in the LeaderImpact group we would love to have you. Wo check out our groups available in Canada at leaderimpact.ca. Or if you're listening from anywhere else in the world check out leaderimpact.com or get in touch with us by email info at leaderimpact.ca and we will connect you. And if you like this podcast please leave us a comment give us a rating or a review. This will help other global leaders find our podcast. Thank you for engaging with us and remember impact starts with you.