

LeaderImpact Podcast - Ep. 27 - Scott Francis - How to be a Magnanimous Leader

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 or on social media @LeaderImpact. If you're listening from outside of Canada, anywhere else in the world, check out our website at leaderimpact.com.

I'm your host Lisa Peters and our guest today is Scott Francis. Scott is a leadership development specialist with 18 years of experience. He helps executives to increase productivity, manage effectively, and shape corporate culture. Scott holds his Ph.D. in leadership studies and his master of arts in organizational leadership and management. His doctoral dissertation was on leadership and the psychology of executive coaching.

On the side, Scott volunteers as a firefighter in his community. He also works with minor sports teams with their mental training. Most importantly, Scott loves spending quality time with his lovely wife and 2 teenagers. Today we're going to touch on a book that Scott has written and currently sitting on the shelf waiting to be published called Magnanimous Leadership. Thanks for joining us, Scott.

Scott Francis

You bet ya. Good to be with you Lisa.

Lisa Peters

Oh, it is nice to see you. So number one, from your bio, thank you for being a volunteer firefighter. That is a big deal. So as a person who wants to save our house and lives in a community of volunteer firefighters, thank you. And the second thing I want to talk, from your bio is you talk a little bit about minor sports. So thank you, you're just the number one volunteer. But the mental training, I just want to ask you, because when I think of, I think it's amazing, but I have to ask when you talk about mental training like what's that one thing that's holding children back in minor sports? You know when you talk about mental training and the question is what's the main thing that's holding them back but is it the same thing as adults? Is there a connection there? I got to know.

Scott Francis

So the principles are the same. You know when you're watching your kid playing a sport and you have seen them play better, and then things just start falling apart for the team right? And

you're screaming from the sideline to do better or something. There's going to be something intelligent that you can yell at your kid that's going to make them play better, but they just start circling the drain. Or you see a couple of teammates that they just can't hold it together when things start to get tough and, they start beating themselves up.

Well, that happens also in leadership contexts. People start eating themselves up. They start circling the drain. The nice thing in a leadership context is you have the opportunity to say let me sleep on it to a decision right? And so you can kind of get back. But if you're in like say a boardroom or in a crucial conversation, in that moment, absolutely all of the psychology of performance on the court also comes into play in the boardroom.

So to your question, what is the biggest thing that holds kids back I think it's also the biggest thing that holds us back. And that has to do with our unconscious belief on our capabilities. If I think I'm capable of doing it right now, and that's the big thing right now, then I will lean into it and I might bring that kind of energy to it. But as soon as that belief starts to creep in that this is not working right now, there's something wrong with me...once that's there, it's just like these tendrils that come creeping up your back and start grabbing at your performance. They cause you to become tight and small.

Lisa Peters

So I'm a big believer in coaching and that's probably why. Is to have someone. I mean we grow up while in the minor sports, they're growing up, they have these coaches, and then as we get adults we think we don't need any. We still need them. I believe that so thank you for joining us here today.

I know we want to talk about magnanimous leadership. But I'm going to first ask you just tell us a little bit about how you got into leadership studies. And most importantly, I really like the psychology of executive coaching. How did you get into leadership and then the psychology of executive coaching and why?

Scott Francis

You know how way leads to way. Standing on 2 roads diverging in 2 different directions. I was making a decision on whether I would go 2 different ways with my master's degree. And it just had to do with what college happened to be right by me. I was in a small town and there were 2 colleges that were kind of nearby that had master's programs, and it was one or the other. And one happened to be organizational leadership and management. And just the tiniest little nudge, one was making a move and a change and so I just went with this other one because it seemed good. Both of them had something that resonated within me right I was emotionally passionate about both topics. And the nudge just took me that way into leadership. As a result, the way leads to way, that took me then to teach leadership at a different college, I was a Dean of students there. And then that, because I had been teaching it, I wanted to do a Ph.D. in leadership studies. And so that took me then where I went for my doctorate.

When you're working on your doctorate, you have to write a dissertation and that's like a long, incredibly boring book about something that no one else has researched before. And you have to get in there and do some research. And so I was looking around for a topic when someone asked me to coach them. And I'd never done that kind of thing before. And so of course what does an academic do, you hit the literature to see how do you do executive and leadership coaching. And I discovered that there was some research but not enough. TaDa! I found my topic. And it's particularly around that 1 question there, what are the psychological methods and approaches that today's executive coaches are using with their clients? That's what I really got into.

Lisa Peters

I love that subject. My former coach had that. She was a former psychologist who then got into coaching and man she pushed me till I cried just you know you can do better. You can do more. You know it... anyway a whole other story.

So I know you have a book on the shelf. You're about to publish it. It's called Magnanimous Leadership. So what is that? Because you know what we've all heard of executive Executive Leadership, strategic, kindness, mindful, good to great leaders. Great book. You know we've all heard of that. I've never heard of magnanimous. So what is that?

Scott Francis

Yes, so magnanimous. It's a word that most of us have heard, used somewhere but most of us have no idea what the definition is so probably my publisher is going to nix that as a title but but the theme is still there.

Magnanimous was first actually used by Aristotle when he talked about the magnanimous man. He wasn't gender sensitive at the time. But what his gist was that in your ethical life, you can rise to the challenge and become the kind of person who lives in this sweet spot between 2 extremes. So to Aristotle, the ethical way to be was not, he disagreed with his teacher who said that there's only one way to be right and everything else is wrong. He said no no, it's more like this. There are 2 ways to be extreme and the correct way is somewhere in the middle. And he was talking in this case here about how you bring your personhood to life. How you rise to the challenge.

So in the 2 extremes would be this: on one side is a person who puffs themselves up. Someone who thinks that they deserve to be the prime minister because they've got a huge following on Instagram or something like that. And individuals like this tend to really try and be fake. Or they're being fake but they're trying to portray something that they literally aren't. That there's more matter there than there actually is.

And then on the other side is a word, pusillanimus, don't worry that's not on the test, but that's someone who makes themselves small who actually are bigger than that. And I think that's certainly in the province that I live in that's very much within the water here. Where

people, you don't want to make other people feel insecure and you don't want people to think that you're haughty or anything like that and so you bring this humility but it's actually a false humility. And that is another extreme on the wrong side.

And so in the middle is this sweet spot where an individual knows what they're capable of and rises to that capacity. They know that they're capable of winning this game and playing this way on the court because they've done it at other times. But in the moment they might not be feeling it but they know they're fully capable of it. So then you tap into the psychological hacks and tricks that help you to manifest and be that person that you're fully capable of being. And so that's magnanimity, but there's more to it than that. There's more. (There are) layers to it.

Lisa Peters

It's layers. So did Aristotle ever...like that for me, there's the good, the bad, and the in-between. That's almost like perfection. Are you going to hit that? Or are you gonna lean to one side? I don't know.

Scott Francis

No. And he wouldn't he wouldn't be saying perfection. Plato would have been saying perfection and that's where Aristotle disagreed. Aristotle was saying no no, that's just too ridiculous. He said it's not workable. I can't deliver perfect. But I can deliver something that is very effective and meaningful and helpful and appropriate and correct. And it's when you stay out of the 2 extremes.

So another example just of that, a little bit of a side. He gave the example of giving money. You can have on one side Scrooge who doesn't give anything. And on the other side, you can have someone who is just giving it away willy-nilly until they have nothing left. And in the middle is the sweet spot of the philanthropist who intelligently seeks out what is the best thing to give my money towards and then gives very generously but not to the state where they're going to lose their capacity to give next year and the year after that and the year after that.

Lisa Peters

Okay, so how do we get there or are there traits? Are there like how do we...How do we get to be that leader? I don't know.

Scott Francis

How do you become magnanimous?

Lisa Peters

Like is there...I don't know is there...

Scott Francis

Is there a 3-step program?

Lisa Peters

Okay yeah, is there a 3-step program? Or are there traits...are there truths we can follow?

Scott Francis

There are axioms. So you look at lots of different leadership theories and many of them come this way. They have this kind of leadership and usually, it's like a word that comes before leadership. It's an adjective describing leadership. One of my favorites is servant leadership. But there are other types that are like that you've probably seen. So in most of these types of theories, there are these axioms and they would be a truth that you hold. It might not be like an absolute truth, but it is a mental posture that you hold and it helps you to walk out that style of leadership. And you might have 3 or 4 of these different things.

So for example, servant leadership axioms. So servant leadership has an axiom that when you are a servant you, like to the people that you're leading, which causes them to also become servants themselves. And it perpetuates this servant leadership style. But that's not 1 of the axioms of magnanimous leadership.

Lisa Peters

Okay. So what are they?

Scott Francis

Yeah, so the ones that I've identified, and I'm just going to make sure that I've got them just on the side here on another video. So when the word magnanimous has been used in history, you find it littered throughout great literature. And it oftentimes is being directed at someone who was a political leader in a time of great turmoil. And in a time possibly where they lost or won a war, and it's how they work with the people after the war is done. And so that's one of the big things that I look at as I'm identifying this. When I look for someone who has that kind of posture, they're the kind of leader that actually can mend fences build bridges, and whatnot, what do they look like?

One of the first ones I think is that their leadership style, here's axiom number 1, their leadership style elevates humanity. So it keeps the human front and center. We're not here to build widgets more than we're here to help people to live a more fulfilling life. And so a boss who is magnanimous would be someone who is not tormenting their staff and forcing them to work ridiculous hours just for some extra profits. It's the other way around. Prioritize humanity and so there is a high degree of respect that you give to everyone else. And where this most shows up is in the people that you're in competition with, especially if it's deadly competition. So after a war. Like at some point the Ukraine and Russia are going to sign some document and it's going to be over and at that point, there's going to have to be reaching across the border. And that will be the magnanimous people. Some people just won't be able to do it. They'll be so bitter. And there'll be so much resentment there, and I get it. And yet still through that can I see this person who I was locked in mortal combat with, with respect. I don't have to like them. But I still treat them like a human.

Lisa Peters

Wow, That's good. That was a great example to understand that one.

Scott Francis

It's a hard one though. It's a hard one to do that.

So another axiom, you want another one?

Lisa Peters

I want them all!

Scott Francis

They're not going to want to get the book! Okay, so axiom number 2 is that magnanimous has oftentimes been, again littered through the literature of history, is someone who stands with great posture. At least that's kind of what it evokes. And what it does though is it's a leadership style that causes the posture to expand but not just in how you stand physically, but it's how you manifest as an organization. So magnanimity expands yourself. It expands the people that you're working with on your team, and it expands the organization that you're working with.

And one of the reasons this is important is that far too often people will come into a leadership role and they saw the person doing it before and the person before that. This especially happens in bureaucracies. You come into the role and you think that your job is to maintain the status quo. And that may be exactly what your job is, but that's not going to be a magnanimous job. There are people who are able to bring some magnanimity. They're going to expand that. Now it may just be that expansion for that is to survive when everything else is collapsing around you. That's an example of expansion at least, but it's who we are now is not where we're gonna stop. Like the rings of a tree we are always making another ring. If you stop making rings you die and that's the thing about this. You're expanding but you're also expanding yourself. You're doing training, you're doing practice. Whatever that is for you in your context but you're also doing that with your people.

And you see that with a lot of organizations is they have no investment in training for their people or expansion. And especially nowadays that's something that people are really interested in. Is this the kind of organization that...here's one of the top examples, would this organization pay for me to take an MBA as long as I guarantee them five to ten years of work or whatever that is. That kind of thing goes a long way to, first of all expand the person but also, let them know that you're the kind of person that highly values that. And then guess what happens to your organization?

Lisa Peters

It expands. That's the answer.

Scott Francis

Yes, expands.

Lisa Peters

That's interesting because I just had the conversation, you know it's a time of year when salaries are being reviewed, and my comment was I think there are people that it's not always about the salary as you commented. Like if I took my MBA, would you pay for it? I would guarantee you 5 years you know, whatever the deal was it's more than just salary sometimes to expand. does that sound right?

Scott Francis

Oh yeah. There are lots of ways to expand. And you know for each individual you can actually take personality tests that would show you what you want to expand in the most. And lots of times it has nothing to do with finance. Yeah, lots of times it doesn't. One other important thing, a caveat here is, oftentimes we can overgrow. So expansion doesn't necessarily mean just bigger. It might mean better, sharper, richer, or something like that. Because it is very possible to overextend your business or your work and whatnot and that's not helpful. That's not helpful.

Lisa Peters

Yeah, okay, that's a good one all right. We're rolling along. These are good.

Scott Francis

now all right rolling along. Let's go to the next one is related but this one takes some ego work. So Axiom number 3 is that your people can grow around you. So there's this one of the ideas out there is that leadership acts like a lid. And if you are say a 6 out of 10 when it comes to leadership, everybody else gets stuck at 6 and the sevens and eights can't do anything because you're keeping it down at a level 6 for the whole organization. And you've probably been in experiences like that. I think we've all experienced that.

Lisa Peters

Yes. Many people have said you know as a business owner, hire people that are smarter than you. And I hire the people that, I think I can do everything, but I hire people that are probably better at accounting than I am and I think I can do it but they're they're smarter. They're you know and they are going to make the company better. I'm not a know-it-all.

Scott Francis

I think one of the challenges here because your ego, for a lot of people, means that you need to be the smartest person in the room. And you might unconsciously just be keeping other people down. And yes, it's the person who's who just walks in and says I am not the smartest person in the room help me, that kind of thing.

But also if you are a 6 and you've got a 7 or 8 coming up behind you, way too often the leader just gets way too insecure about that and they just squeeze them. And it's not a case that they

don't want to have success. It's literally they don't want this person to outshine them. That's one of the things more on the dark side of things is never outshine the master because it might bite you back. What I'm saying here is, be the kind of master where people can outshine you. Let them pass you. Which is hard. That is so hard on the ego. And I discovered the higher you go in the chain of command, the more fragile the ego literally is. You'd think it would be the other way around, but it's not.

Lisa Peters

Yeah, it's a great point. A great point but a tough one.

Scott Francis

So it calls for humility. So another axiom is that a magnanimous person takes on worthy projects. So, it's not just a case where they perpetuate the status quo and build the same widgets that they did last year. They're also looking around and looking for something that is actually an epic thing to do. Whether that's to start a nonprofit organization. Or to run a large event that thousands of people attend. Or I think of someone like a Mother Teresa where she just made stuff happen. She had this way about her and she made projects happen. So she wasn't just a nun. She was a...she disturbed the way things were and made things better as a result.

Lisa Peters

That's a good one. Disturbed. You disturbed what was around you to make it better. I mean you have to.

Scott Francis

Yeah. I heard one person say if you're not making any enemies, or at least if you're not upsetting some people, then you're not doing your job. But you don't you don't make enemies just for the sake of making enemies. I have got a few friends like that. (Laughing)

Lisa Peters

When I think of taking on worthy projects, are we just trying to make our mark?

Scott Francis

There's a piece of it. So the magnanimous person. Yeah, there is that there. It's you're doing things that you can be proud of. I sometimes will go to the legislature in my province and underneath the stairs that go up, they've got this hallway that has people who have won the order of, I'm in Saskatchewan, people have won the Order of Saskatchewan. They've got pictures and a little write-up about each one of them. And I like to walk down that hallway and just say Here it is. Here are some people who have done epic projects.

You can hear my dog howling in the back.

Lisa Peters

I can hear your...did your clock go off?

Scott Francis

Yeah, we have a Christmas clock that chimes along and he has to howl along with every so it's the top of the hour we know but is.

Lisa Peters

Yes, thank you dog. That's awesome.

Scott Francis

Yes, he will be done shortly here now. Oh boy, he's really going.

Okay, so one of the challenges here though is you might say if I can't do that kind of thing then I'm not this kind of magnanimous leader. And I think to be magnanimous is not something that you accomplish, but it's rather something that you aspire for. And again, you don't want to be faking it and making yourself bigger than you actually are. But neither do you make yourself small. It's live up to your potential.

Do you remember the movie "Mr. Mcgorium's Wonder Emporium"?

Lisa Peters

No. I don't even remember I don't know the title.

Scott Francis

Okay, it's a children's movie. But in it one of the last things that Mr. Mcgorium says. He says life is an occasion. Rise to it. And I think that encapsulates what magnanimity is. Magnanimity magnanimous. Yes.

Lisa Peters

Magnanimity.

Scott Francis

Magnanimity.

Lisa Peters

I don't know if you have any more or not.

Scott Francis

More axioms? There's one more axiom.

Lisa Peters

I will let you tell the one and then I have a question.

Scott Francis

Yeah, sure. The last axiom is with the leader like this you want to make sure that you're appealing to the the better angels of your nature.

Lisa Peters

Better angels of your nature.

Scott Francis

And better angels of your nature because you know like that classic trope where you've got an angel and a demon on each side of you. What's really going on there is it's saying that within you have the capability to be a saint and just as much you have the capability to be a tyrant. And it's in every single person. And if it isn't in you to be both these things then you're probably harmless which is not something you want to be I mean if you are capable of doing great things, you're also capable of doing horrible things. And I think too often we blind ourselves to the fact that dark nature is in us. And we keep telling ourselves the story that we're the good guy here. Especially in those battles. And so when you're trying to reach across the floor to shake someone's hand who you were in a conflict with, if going through your head is I'm the good guy, they're the bad guy. Well, that's not your better nature.

Lisa Peters

So if my hand slips to their neck, that's not...Wrong! (Laughing)

Scott Francis

Within every one of us lives the capacity for being a monster and so we must guard that.

Lisa Peters

Wow. Appeal to the better angels of our nature. I've never heard that before. That's a good one.

Scott Francis

Better angels of our nature. Well, it's not mine I think it was Abraham Lincoln who said it first.

Lisa Peters

So my question would be, do I need all of these? Or do you I mean, you aspire probably to be all of these 5 axioms you've listed and or it's a work in progress? I mean what would you coach someone?

Scott Francis

Yeah, really good question. It's in this case here because it is a leadership philosophy. It's more like it is the lenses that you put on. It's something that you intentionally put on that you look at the world through. And so it's a daily choice you have to make.

Marcus Aurelius, he was one of the best Roman Emperors that Rome ever saw. In his journal, one of the first things he wrote in his journal was, this morning, when I start working with people, There are going to be some who are tyrants, there are gonna be some who are haughty and nasty and they're gonna be conniving and they're gonna be...and he said, but that shouldn't stop me from working with them. I need them just as much as the top teeth

need the bottom teeth. And they are humans just like I am. And so I recognize that we share this divinity. That's what he wrote in his journal, I'm paraphrasing.

But I like that idea right from the beginning when he first wakes up in the morning he decides he puts this lens on that saying I'm going to work with people even when they're like that. And it's normal for people to be like that. I don't want to assume that I'm going to find someone who's perfect out there.

So in the same way, that's what I'm interested in here. That magnanimity, magnanimous leadership is actually a lens that you look at your leadership context. You put on this posture. You choose to inhabit that space between these two extremes. And it's a daily choice.

Lisa Peters

So as a leadership coach, and in leadership and you've taught it and you're now a coach you know everything, what do you fear most about leadership today?

Scott Francis

Okay. I do fear, it goes back to that better angels of our nature. I do fear that it's becoming too popular to be the tyrant leader. To be machiavellian. There's another good word for you.

Lisa Peters

Wow Machiavellian.

Scott Francis

Machiavellian. Yes. It was a book that was written like four hundred years ago by a guy writing to a king to tell him how to be a leader in his context. And the thing he said he basically taught the King was it's better to be feared than to be loved by your people. And I think we're seeing that the world is maybe really overcorrecting towards that people are bringing a leadership style of terror and fear rather than that benevolence, that kindness. And for good reason.

The problem, if you bring a magnanimous style, the Achilles heel to this is that people can take advantage of that, especially sociopaths. They can and so you've got to keep that in mind. That's the thing you got to watch is. I'll you know I'll let you hit me sideways once. If you do it twice things have changed. And if you do it a third time I'm still going to treat you with respect, you're still a human, but you're dangerous and I'm not going to let you have any power over me or my people.

Lisa Peters

Yeah, that reminds me I'm reading, I just finished Boundaries by Dr. Henry Cloud. Yeah boundaries. I felt the moment there of setting the boundary. Like, once fine or I'll you know I'll let it go, but we're going to set some boundaries.

So this podcast is obviously about integrating personal, professional, spiritual. So we're going to switch to spiritual and I just sort of want to know, can you take us a little bit on your faith

journey? I mean that's why we bring you here. We know you're a follower and just were you always? Just tell us a little bit about your story.

Scott Francis

I was one of those lucky, lucky people who grew up in the faith. I remember making my own choice for faith at age 4 and following in it. My parents, growing up like the Waltons. I had that blissful time growing up and the church was very much a part of our life. It was our external family. So very, very involved. Lots of volunteering at the church but also as I got into my teenage years, I also had quite a spiritual renovation where it became my own faith. I was involved with youth groups and some Christian camps and my own relationship with God took hold apart from my parents. Before I was riding on their shirttail and then I became, then I discovered God in my own relationship. And so then I did end up going to Bible college. And at some point I realized that I was able to feed myself. So up until then it was like I needed the pastor, I needed the preacher, I needed the author. Someone to give me, to feed me, and to teach me and whatnot. But then there came a point where I realized okay and I can start doing this for myself. I still want those people's influence in my life, but I'm equally capable of spending time in scripture by myself and in prayer and it's like I became my own priest. And that was a really important kind of moment in my life. And I think that's a big part of Protestantism.

Lisa Peters

I don't know.

Scott Francis

The protestant says that I don't need the priest in order to have God come to my life.

Lisa Peters

Know it's your relationship.

Scott Francis

Yes, I am the priest.

Lisa Peters

Yeah, that's it interesting. I think I'm still at a point where I probably surround myself with people that you know...I mean I spend my quiet time and time and prayer. But I still feel I need...that little devil that's on the shoulder sometimes I need some people just to...I need some guidance. But yeah.

Scott Francis

Well Lisa, probably we're talking about like Aristotle would say there's your two extremes. One is a person who does it all by themselves and the other is a person who does it only or gets feeding only from other people. The sweet spot is in the middle. And actually, he would say the sweet spot leans one way or the other. What's the best side to err on?

Lisa Peters

Try to go to the angels I'm gonna work hard. Yeah, pull me. Yeah.

Scott Francis

Yeah. Right rudder! Right rudder!

Lisa Peters

So how do you, because I know you're a coach, so how do you integrate your faith into your work? Because I think some people I mean if they're not a Christian or if they're not a follower they could actually be, I'm thinking they could be, offended or is it more just come out in how you...the goodness of you? I just do Christianese I think they call it. Do you bring that language you know that...for some people it's scary.

Scott Francis

Yeah I get it. So one of the techniques I use, not all coaches are the same. And to this because my dissertation was on the psychology of coaching so I identified somewhere between twenty-five and thirty different methodologies that coaches use. And I made some intentional choices on the ones I use. And one of the ones I use is unconditional positive regard. So when I'm with someone I extend to them a forgiveness and an openness and it's a come-as-you-are kind of approach. I'll work with you like I'm a mirror giving you back what you're giving me. And I think that to a degree that is how Christ is with the church. Unconditional positive regard. Yes, you've got flaws. You've got sins that kind of stuff but come as you are. As Billy Graham used to say, come as you are. The buses will wait. And so there's a big way but that is not necessarily a Christian thing. That's 1 thing that Maslow you know, Maslow's hierarchy of needs that's Maslow would have said that's the same thing you want to bring that style.

If I'm coaching somebody who is a Christian and welcomes it then definitely we'll talk about how their faith connects with this context here. But I'm equally comfortable coaching someone who has zero faith. Because in that moment I am their coach. I'm not trying to give them my idea of what they should do. And quite honestly I assume, this is a lens you put on as a coach, I assume that I don't know the answer. Their situation is too complex for me to know what their answer should be. So I help them find the answer that's within them by asking them questions they are not asking themselves.

Lisa Peters

That's great. That's great. That's a good answer. Now I know that you were involved in LeaderImpact prior to moving to where you currently live. So I don't think you have found... you're not in LeaderImpact right now but like how was your experience in your other city or town?

Scott Francis

Yes, so I lived in a different town and there was a very strong LeaderImpact group there. And because of what I was studying for my doctorate degree some of the LeaderImpact folks there

thought Scott could contribute. And so after spending a little bit of time with them, they invited me to be part of their own local board and we put on quite a few events. A couple of marriage retreats and special events. We brought speakers in and whatnot and there was just also that small group aspect.

There we didn't have small groups like we do in some of the larger cities. The city was small enough that whenever you bumped into somebody that was the group. You knew everybody in town anyways. So I was with them for about 3 years before I moved and deeply enjoyed it. And I think that's where the most rich friendships that I had in that season of life came from.

Lisa Peters

That's awesome Scott. So before I have, I ask my guests all the same 2 questions but over this interview, you have listed some amazing books and you're just really amazing brilliancy and like Aristotle and Maslow and but I'm sure you've read a lot of leadership books and I always and I like to ask people what is your favorite leadership book or do you have one that maybe you go to time and again or you know the one that's sitting on the shelf that you haven't published yet. Yeah, I just wonder if you have one.

Scott Francis

Actually, I've already mentioned it. I go to it once a decade and it's Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics. It's a deep, it's a hard read because you're and you got to find a good translation. You got to take your time going through it. But I find that it really helps me to see the world in the nuances that are there. Not so black and white. And to understand the tensions that we're oftentimes having to navigate.

So that's one of the big things as a leader we too often think that this is a simple problem I just need the one solution to it. And oftentimes it's not. It's a tension between two things like should we lower taxes? Well, to some people, they have this ideology that absolutely you should always be lowering taxes. Well, there are sometimes where no, we need to actually raise taxes. You may not like it but there are times where you need to raise taxes and sometimes where you need to lower and it's a tension between these two. And you're managing the tension.

Lisa Peters

You should be on city council.

Scott Francis

Yeah, no thank you. (Laughing)

Lisa Peters

So my final 2 questions I ask everyone is, LeaderImpact is dedicated to leaders who have a lasting impact and as you continue to move through your own journey and life and leadership have you considered what you want your faith legacy to be when you leave this world?

Scott Francis

I have just recently thought about that for just a context that I'm in. I'm in a context right now there's some drama happening around me at a political level that an organization that I work with is dramatically impacted by. And there's a lot of people that are very bitter and angry and heavy resentments. And I am choosing to be the magnanimous person to bury hatchets, build bridges, you know men fences. And reach across the floor and there's going to be some of the people that are part of my group that are going to be very upset at me for shaking hands with that other person. But the thing that I've said to them is my kids are watching. And I want my kids to see that's the kind of dad they had who is able to rise above that kind of animosity. Bury those parts of the ego that, it's tough because you have to eat stuff you don't want to. But I want them to see that I had that capacity. Yeah, and that would be the legacy. He was the kind of guy that that that you knew wouldn't get pulled into a feud. He was not a Montague or a Capulet.

Lisa Peters

That's a great answer. Good. Our kids are watching and they're watching mommy or daddy and how they're doing. And they can see when you bring it home and how you talk to your partner about your day and you know so that's a great, great example. Thank you, Scott! My last question is what brings you the greatest joy?

Scott Francis

Carl Jung said when you're walking through life if you don't quite know where to go follow your bliss. Now it brings me the greatest joy, follow your bliss. I think what brings me the greatest joy honestly is when I'm able to be a catalyst for someone else's growth. So coaching. That's a great thing. You know I spend an hour with them and it makes you know major difference in their life, I like that. I really like that. I like teaching people that are going to take what I taught, like as a firefighter I'm the training captain for my fire department, I know that what I'm teaching them might very well save a life. It might be 15 years from now. But what I'm telling them right now is going to make a difference to someone's life. That it's. Just that. That brings me so much bliss. So yeah.

Lisa Peters

Yeah, oh good answer! Well, Scott, I want to thank you for joining us and sharing the last 45 minutes with us and sharing a little bit about yourself your axioms, and your magnanimous leadership. It's pretty exciting. I really enjoyed listening to you. And I think of my own struggle I'm currently in and it sounds very much like your work struggle is just there are two sides and you know people are angry. And I think I want to be you. That person that reaches across and shakes the hand. And I feel almost that's why I'm there. So I resonated with everything you said there. So thank you. If anyone is listening, I mean I'm hoping they're listening, how and they want to get in touch with you, how can they message you or so how can they find you? What would be the best way?

Scott Francis

You can find my website advanceleadership.biz. B-I-Z. Or you just email me scott.francis@sasktel.net.

Lisa Peters

Okay, is that advanced with a d or advance?

Scott Francis

No good catch. No just advance CE and then it's the verb to advance leadership.

Lisa Peters

Okay got it. Well, thank you again, Scott. And a great time has been spent with you. And again thank you for being a volunteer firefighter. All the volunteer work you do is just appreciated but good luck on the book. Get it off the shelf! How's that all right, all right?

Scott Francis

I'll see what I can do about that. Thanks, Lisa.

Lisa Peters

Well I want to thank all of you for joining us. We've had a great 45 minutes.

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