

## LeaderImpact Podcast - Ep. 28 - Dave Nordel - Falter and Fail...

### 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 the 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 @LeaderImpact. 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 Dave Nordel. Dave is a retired United States Air Force command chief master sergeant with over 30 years of service. He is a registered nurse and an emergency manager and served as a medic in areas of operations including Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South America, Iraq, Korea, Japan, and Hungary. Dave grew up in rural Northern California in a dairy farming community and left home at 19 to join the air force and ascended through the enlisted ranks to culminate as the senior enlisted leader for all nuclear missile forces in the United States.

Dave currently lives in Montana and continues to be a mentor and speaks to young leaders to aid in their development and future successes. Today I'm going to talk to Dave about faltering and failing and how we get back on our feet. In his book titled Giving Back, he says your knowledge is power after you share it. So today we're going to ask Dave to share his story. Thanks for joining us, Dave.

### Dave Nordel

Hey it's great to be here. Thank you.

### Lisa Peters

When I read your book and I read that line about knowledge is not power. It's the sharing of knowledge. That's the power. And that is a great line and I know it goes back in history but it is a good line, Dave.

### Dave Nordel

Thanks. I mean if you look at the greatest leaders in history, most of them are most respected for sharing their wisdom and their knowledge. And even in Jesus and the way he conducted business. Could you imagine if he didn't share? it'd be.

### Lisa Peters

Good point. So we're gonna jump into a little bit about yourself Dave and just tell us about yourself and why you chose to join the air force at 19.

**Dave Nordel**

Well, we're all products of our environment and the people that influence us when we're younger and I had some people in my family that I really admired that were World War II veterans. And they spent a lot of time with me. They must have seen something in me that you know to help me develop. And so I decided, I'm gonna go in the, I was actually gonna go in the navy that's a longer story but and I ended up in the air force. I went in to be a plumber. The air force told me I needed to be in medicine. It was the exact right thing. And so I landed in a spot to get me started in life and 30 years later I've had an amazing career. So it was the right thing.

**Lisa Peters**

Wow, a plumber to a nurse. That's quite the career opposite. Let's say that. That's a good story. So you know after 30 years and I know you've probably got a lot of stories to share and you do in your book and you wrote the book called *Giving Back: Life and Leadership from the Farm to the Combat Zone and Beyond* and from what I read, the reason you wrote the book was and I quote, "to deal with the leftovers of days gone by that will always affect me." So my first question is, what do you think is unique about yourself and your message?

**Dave Nordel**

Sure. Well, I think all of us are unique and I think all of us have a message and I think everybody has a book in them. And I think that that you know it just depends on whether or not you write it. So I don't want to put myself in some category that says I'm special or different. However, I've been privileged to get into a lot of places environmentally, geographically, spiritually with people around me that have shaped me to get me to a point where as we deal with the challenges in life, and we'll probably talk a little bit about that as we go forward, as we deal with the challenges in life, you come across a point in time where you can do 1 of 2 things. You can keep all of that to yourself and just finish out your life or you can give it back. And I think here's the difference is that I've matured in my balance in life and my you know my 4 core areas of balance. I've matured at a level that I've I've been able to become transparent and very vulnerable and to share those things and be able to have people grow from my experiences. Why not?

**Lisa Peters**

I know that a few of the questions I have challenged that in being vulnerable because I wonder if for me I found it as I aged I got more vulnerable I started to share more. It's like, if I can help someone, share a simple story, then I will versus holding it back. But I found that came with age more. Maybe it didn't or maturity.

**Dave Nordel**

So quick comment on that was it age or did you not have the right people when you were in your mid-30s that put their arm around you and said it's gonna be okay, kind of think this way and go out and try it. Let you paddle around with your floaties on while you're learning to swim a little bit and then kind of put you out there. So that's our job now.

**Lisa Peters**

Yeah, it is. And that's a great point because I think of the people I did surround myself with. And maybe at the time I didn't realize it but I done all the right things and they just you know they mentor you as you go and one day you become that person. So great point to surround yourself with those people.

So my first question was well not my because I already asked my first question but I looked up the air force at [airforce.com](http://airforce.com) and I went to the airmen's creed and I want to talk to you about that. And that's gonna be the meat of this because and I'm only going to read, people should go read it. It's at [airforce.com](http://airforce.com), but the last paragraph says, "I am an American airman. Wingman, leader, warrior. I will never leave an airman behind, I will never falter, and I will not fail." So I want to talk to you about, "I will never falter." because for me that is to weaken and in your book and you talked about crying. So in your book in Iraq in 2008, you were a senior leader the trauma center and you saw a lot of people including killed-in-action casualties and quote, "I would sometimes lie in bed with the smell of blood and plastic explosives in my nose and I want to cry but I didn't allow it." And I think as an airman and a member of the air force I will never falter. I will never let them see me weak. So I want to talk about that in where are you now with your emotions versus then and how have you grown?

**Dave Nordel**

So amazing and thank you for plucking that out of the book. So at the time I thought I was living that credo to it's core definition. Because as everybody else was crying, if you read when you read the book, you'll find out everybody else is crying in the room, but I couldn't afford to. I had to stand there and be stoic because that's what I thought was not faltering and not failing because I thought that the judgment of other people would be that.

Later on you develop baggage from that. And then all of a sudden you say, "Wow I've got these things, these negative things that are leftovers from this. And how could I have done that differently?" Well God gave us emotions and some of us are very passionate and you know you wear them on your sleeve. Whatever they are passionate emotions hand gestures, smiles. Whatever they are however demonstrative you are, but he also gave us emotions because we're based on chemical balance. And crying is a rebalancing of the chemicals based on emotions. So when you take that part out of it, which is towards the grieving piece of that. Whatever that is when you take that part out of it, you actually have a negative effect on yourself. So you got to be grown up.

And so as grown up as I thought I was and as well as I thought I was leading, and there's a lot of things that I did there that was good. Personally, I did something bad and I just wasn't grown up enough to understand that my emotions are me. And as soon as I got to liking me and telling me positive things and good things about myself as soon as that happened I could cry and it didn't matter who was in the room because I'm doing my thing. I'm balancing myself. If people want to pass judgment on you about crying and those type of things you need to kind of drive through that may not be people you want in your life and it may not be

people that are productive for your future growth. But I learned the hard way I learned that this emoting thing, as long as it's controlled, I mean anger is another emotion and you have to work through that and make sure that that's not detrimental on a variety of levels. But as long as you're emoting healthily, in a healthy state, then do it. Be confident enough to do it and have the courage to do it. And if that's in public or in private let yourself be what you are.

**Lisa Peters**

I think that's really a great statement to say. I think it's incredibly hard. And I'm thinking of me as a woman, if I cried I would be seen as incredibly weak because I'm thinking the men still around me don't cry. And in saying that is probably why I have a group. We talked earlier about surrounding ourselves and I surround myself with women in leadership, LeaderImpact does that. And those are the women that have seen me cry and have seen me struggle and truthfully I don't know if I do it outside of that group like you know. And a lot of CEOs, C-suite, they feel that. They're alone at the top.

**Dave Nordel**

Oh absolutely. Well, even the mother at home with 2 children gets the alone feeling right? And you know if you think of the old cliché things, back in the day that used to and I grew up on a farm and used to rattle around the farmhouse and people would say, "Pull yourself together." And I don't even know what that means anymore. But it was a phrase, right? And what that says is that you're not together. Yet you haven't explored that.

So when we go back to kind of where we were talking about age and so as you get older, you get more comfortable with being vulnerable on those types of things. Maybe you and I started too late. And I think people really need to talk about, you know we've talked about balance in the past. You know your work and your life and your spirituality and your health and how do you balance those things? You know when one of those is off because that health and spirit bubble can be negotiable and you can take all the energy that goes in there and put it into the other two because those are the constants right? When those are out of balance, you can't be as good in the other 2 as you want to be unless those are balanced.

**Lisa Peters**

I got asked about balance yesterday. Like how do I balance it all? And I'm like sometimes I am not in balance but I do see the light. You know if it's a project that's going to end on Friday or an event that's going to happen or whatever that I can I know that if I just get there so my day every day may not be balanced as much as I try but in general my life is balanced.

**Dave Nordel**

Well, we're always searching for literal and figurative white space on our calendar. And so when we are, our emotions... Think about the emotions that are driven by when you wake up and I don't know if you grab your phone or you get up or when you look. But when we all open up our calendar, for the day, no matter what, it is taking if you're taking your kids to you know hockey practice or whatever you're doing, when you open your calendar, you're not looking at

what you have to do. You're looking for white space. When I could take a deep breath. Then it's on you on how you're going to emote and fill that white space and how are you going to feed yourself with whatever it is. And so we have to do a really good job of managing that white space and being respectful enough of ourselves to take that white space and actually spend it on ourselves. And far too often, especially when you have life going on, especially in families, my kids are all growing and gone, but when I had children you tend to take that white space and say what can I do for the kids? What can I do hey you do know what, sometimes it's time out and all you do for the kids is explain to them why you're not going to be present for the next two hours because you can't be the mom or dad or whatever you need to be unless you fill your white space with the right type of food to keep you going. So yeah.

### **Lisa Peters**

Yeah I'm gonna add to that because I'm at the other like I'm at an end where my last my son is 17 he's gonna move out I'm gonna be empty nest in about eight months. And right now I am doing everything with him. If he has a hockey game I am in. If he's got a whatever like I am there I am soaking it up because I won't have it. I'm adopting the boy next door. He's gonna be my new son because I need something but as for balances like I'm taking all this right now because you know if your kids are 11 or 12, they're going to be 18 one day. Or the people you work with they're going to leave one day or you know so take it and love it.

So the other part of the Airman's Creed was the last line was I will not fail. And for us for everyone, I think we learn more from our mistakes and failures than our successes. So I was wondering if you'd be willing to share one of your greatest failures or mistakes where and what you have learned.

### **Dave Nordel**

So I'm going to take you to a place that's a little broader because I think most people right now would expect me to tell a story about there I was and I was 25 and I did X, Y, and Z. I'm going to tell you my biggest failure in life was, and we've talked about a lot of this already, was replacing this whole, you know, not crying and replacing the need for help with alcohol. And I'll tell you, you know, I work with young nurses, and one of my survival, I give them 3 survival tools. We won't go into that. But 1 of those survival tools is if you have to have a clear head in mind to make sure that you're taking care of the best care of your patients that you can, then what you put in your mouth matters. And so a couple of glasses of wine after work every day might seem normal but it's actually not. And so the easiest counselors to hire in your life, to help you with emotions, and in my case PTSD are John, Jimmy, and Jack right? Johnny Walker, Jim Beam, and Jack Daniels. And they're always there and they're kind of present and when they wear off, you can get them back readily available. And it's just a huge mistake of not being able to realize that not only there are people there that want to help but it's the most courageous thing that you can do in your life to get vulnerable enough to walk into somebody and sit down and say this is everything that I've got and I can't handle it. We do it in every other walk of our life except when it comes to mental health and our emotional-physical balance.

And so when you use the Airman's Creed as a sideboard to get on onto the subject I will not fail thing is more based around your team right? Not failing your team. Always says I because you're repeating it but the I's should all come off of that and should say we won't. We will not fail because collectively to do what you need to do in a military environment you have to have a mindset of success and being. Well, think about that. How many people, this is you know pain and fear drive everything in our lives. They really do. I mean how many times do we say to ourselves, "Oh that scares me to death," and it might be a new project. It might be getting in a group right? Somebody says hey why don't you join the quilting club, I'm just using that as an example, and you go but and what's the first thing people say they say well I don't know anybody at the quilting club. And I haven't quilted for 2 years. And I don't even know where my quilting needles are. They come up with it because they're scared. Because that's the pain and fear that keeps us from exploring the unknown. Unknowns in our life that help us grow.

And so when I was using alcohol, it protected me from all the pain and fear that was out there of what happens when I take the first step to doing the right doing this the right way. And to my amazement the more vulnerable I got, and you know and you've read the book, it's pretty vulnerable, the more vulnerable that I've been, even with perfect strangers, I find that it makes me stronger. It makes me more courageous. It opens me up and then it makes me even more effective when I want to help people like myself. It's a whole big deal.

So the biggest mistake in my life was wasting the time patting it with you know the elixirs of the world that are out there and are readily available and it's easy. And as soon as you have a little courage to take a little bit of the harder way around it you'll find out that that's the right way.

### **Lisa Peters**

So can I ask a bit of a personal question because I have had friends when, I mean I grew up with an alcoholic father and he ended up in AA and he stopped drinking. But friends, what happens to your friends? Because I'm sure all the friends you have and you're all partying and it's all great. Did you change those friends? And what happens because I mean they're like well we don't want to invite you to a party because you're no fun or we don't want to invite you to party because we know you don't drink and are they responsible enough to say we don't want you to drink or I don't know? Because that's the hardest part? Are you're gonna get left out, or no?

### **Dave Nordel**

This is a great question. This is why you're so awesome. So this is a great question and I want to answer this the right way. I had to change friends. I'm not one to make assumptions. But I am one that believes in building empathy and the way to build empathy is 1, to if you don't know, go find out. Ask the question. And 2, is to at least try to visualize the other person's situation. You can never get completely there but you can drive some emotions.

So as I took this journey of pulling away from alcohol and having to change friends and have different people in my life. Or have people in my life that still drank and actually be in those situations. But I found out a few things. There's 3 kinds of people that are on the other end of this. One is people that truly love you. They don't care what you do and they'll actually go out of their way to make sure when they're entertaining that there's a lot of club soda there because I'm coming. And they're more than happy to tell people you know Dave doesn't drink anymore so don't ask him to participate in the fun game. The second person is the person that I still like to hang out with you because of everything but drinking and when drinking's included just don't criticize me and it's just kind of a silent partnership and that changes a little bit. The third person is the person that is their constitution towards alcohol, their courage towards alcohol, are usually people that have the same problem and they're not ready to get where I'm at. So, therefore, they disengage because it's I think that they're almost embarrassed that they can't get to where they're at. And if they would keep the relationship I could probably get him there.

So well I had a gentleman. He's seventy years old. He's older than I am but we're good friends with, military background. When he finished reading my book that chapter he said I just apologized to my wife for living with a drunk her whole life and I quit drinking. So there you go.

**Lisa Peters**

Helps one person.

**Dave Nordel**

Well, I'm not trying to convert people. But what I want people to understand is that it's okay and sometimes it takes 1 person to take the first step for other people. I understand that's okay, right?

**Lisa Peters**

So yeah, got to share the knowledge, Dave.

**Dave Nordel**

That's right, it's not power has no power.

**Lisa Peters**

if I ever go to a party and I'm not drinking. They'll be like are you pregnant? That's the first thing everyone asks a woman, really?

**Dave Nordel**

Are you serious?!

**Lisa Peters**

That's kind of a sad thing, but anyway. So I want to ask you about the tools. In your book, you just talk about possibly picking up the wrong tools and I'm just going to I'm going to read this,

“Many people fail because they possibly pick up the wrong tools or they're taught to use the tools wrong or have no clue about the tools. They don't even know they exist. So I'd like to talk about resources and tools for leaders.” Now in your book, you wrote, “A lot of people pick the wrong tools. Some of these led to tragedy that to this day burns a hole in my soul.” Those tragedies you were talking about were suicides. So my question for you because you've been through this you know is what are the resources or tools that you would suggest for leaders experiencing tough times, hard decisions, or maybe some failed attempts?

**Dave Nordel**

Just like Jesus, if Jesus would have done it all by himself or walked alone or there would have been a problem right? So I'll show you this is my pocket knife. Because the story's about a pocket knife right? The first tool that you get when you're a kid and it's always in your pocket so you tend to use it as the screwdriver.

**Lisa Peters**

Well I didn't get a pocket knife.

**Dave Nordel**

As a boy on this is a rite of passage at six years old. it's the first thing of responsibility.

**Lisa Peters**

I got Barbie.

**Dave Nordel**

But as guys go I mean. I can show you the scars on my hands from using a pocket knife because I should have went got a screwdriver. Well what happens is you jam it in your hand then you walk to the shop and you stop the bleeding on your hand then you get the screwdriver and then you go back and finish the job. So why not take the time to get the right tools?

I think that you and I would be naive if we assume that your lead your listening audience does not have a basic understanding of the tools that are out there that they can use to help them through life in whatever situation there is. It's more about choosing the right ones. So expediency. I think water is one of the most boring things in the world because it takes the path of least resistance and always has boundaries and it never gets to see what's on either side of the banks right? So it's kind of uninspiring even though it can be inspiring when it's in a big ocean. So you have a lot of tools at your disposal but you have to have the personality, the courage to pick up the right tool versus the easy tool. Alcohol, easy tool. It works. Alcohol absolutely works. It's temporary but it works. Or counseling, your social environment, the people you surround yourself with, and most importantly, your spirit right? Where do you lie with that? Besides yourself, what else is with you 24-7 that is a tool to help you navigate all these things? You used a lot of examples, struggles with work, and struggles with home, and

struggles with parenting, and struggles with finances, and those types of things. It's all there. I can name a thousand of them.

But let's just talk generically. 99.9 percent of the people on this planet are good human beings. They get up in the morning and they want to do good things. They don't go to work and try to destroy their businesses. They don't try to destroy their families or their children. They don't. I mean they're absolutely good people. So some of those people just decide to put themselves in a position where they can help you. Go talk to them. Let them help you. Be vulnerable and do those types of things because they have the tools. Most good people that aren't the right tool will tell you I'm not the right tool. You need this tool and to go over to that person.

So I mentor what is scientifically coined now as geriatric millennials. These are your they're all about what 37 to 40 now 38 to 40 and about half of them are women. And when they start down the road of glass ceilings, and workplace discrimination, and you know old old boys club, and that stuff...I stop. I let them cry. There's some tears involved probably on both our sides. I look and I say I'm not qualified. I'm empathetic. I'm trying to feel you, but I'm not qualified. But I have tools I give them to somebody that has absolutely felt that and has walked the walk so you've got to go find those. Yeah if you're looking for a tool for a specific thing I can probably tell you but they're all out there. It just takes the courage to go pick them up or just keep using this over and over again. It will be unsatisfied.

### **Lisa Peters**

That knife. What I took from that, we have to talk more. And because we don't, we keep it inside and with me especially, I will say it for me, I keep it inside. And I think I'm going to solve it. And I don't and if I just talked about it someone might connect me to the next...And Dave when you said that, I'm a connector. I know a lot of people and if you have if you need something if you...I will connect you in and I've called my kids in another city and said if you ever need help I know I'm 3 hours away but I will find someone and I will get you the help you need. Just call me. So I think that it's so easy. Just talk and ask for help. Connect with people.

### **Dave Nordel**

Right, which starts to hedge on vulnerability right, which is pain and fear. We just have to. This is high-level stuff and I don't expect anybody that's listening or even you and I to get into the same space. But this high-level vulnerability thing is just tempering that fear emotion of taking a step out there. Because sometimes it isn't always just perfectly, Oh I'm so glad I did that and that was perfect. Because the receiver on the other end might not be mature enough to deal with it. And yeah, if you wanted to talk about mental health in depth I mean we're starting to do some things here in the States that I think you know Canada will pick up that are more public health model-driven. But you know people weren't dying of heart attacks in ambulances, in emergency rooms. They were dying of heart attacks in churches and cafeterias, right? So we decided we needed to teach people CPR because that's where we needed the layman to have enough right? Well, there's actually a course called Mental Health

QPR and it's CPR for mental health and CPR for these types of things. It's starting to happen. You know where it starts? It starts in classrooms and conversations in academia and didactics and...

**Lisa Peters**

Yeah in your Moms group.

**Dave Nordel**

And in your mom's group because everybody brings something to the moms group right? Besides the food right? Yeah, I love it I love it. That's the best part. I go speak to a moms group and then I got to go run for 5 miles right? So that's good.

**Lisa Peters**

So have you ever thought, as when you talk about all this, have you ever thought of any of your falters, your failures, your fears as a blessing?

**Dave Nordel**

Well, of course. So there's a battle right because it usually starts off with oh I wish I hadn't done that. Or oh if I could go back in time I would have never you know it might be a failed relationship. It might be a failed... boy I could have had that job or if I would have bought you know \$5 of this stock or you know I should have got a lottery ticket. Whatever it is I mean it's a thousand things. So yeah I have those type of thoughts. However, I have to quickly change the polarity from that negativity to a positive polarity on that and say that's what shaped me. That's what shaped me. That's put me in this position. So maybe it's a step back for you. But it's 5 steps forward for your kid, your friend, your confidant your yeah. And so you that's why the book is titled what it's titled because you got to be able to get your head around it and let it make you better.

So PTSD. I've got it I've made friends with it. But it wants to rear its ugly head and drive me into a place that's dark and drives energy. Now I just get the energy, I flip it on its head. I say Okay, what are we gonna do with you? I drive it towards something that's either good for me or good for somebody else and I visualize a positive outcome and move on. So if you're strong spiritually and you believe in yourself and you believe in your core people around you, why not.

**Lisa Peters**

You know it's funny because, and I wasn't going to talk about this because I knew that we only had so much time and I knew if we got into PTSD that is a whole subject in your so and I am not an expert and I would really have to you know, be reading up on it. But in your book I don't remember you ever using the words like post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD. You do not mention that in there yet, you talk about it. You could smell it like obviously there's the triggers you talk about it in your book. "I could smell it. The plastic explosives the gunpowder

smell, the dank air, The... you know it threw me into what I call deep trigger." Tthat's about as close as you got to you to saying, why was that?

### **Dave Nordel**

Well, so the book was meant to be introspective. And so if you look in the book in each chapter there's a little bit of a gap that sometimes people that know me well will call me and say in this chapter just like you're doing, why did you leave that there? Because I want people to take the next step on their own. I want people to identify their triggers and I want people to say that's... you got to the point of Dave has PTSD from these experiences. You're already there. But when you relate it to your own life....so a couple of things. PTSD is not exclusive to military people nor should they feel that way. And one thing I like to tell people, we lose 22 veterans, American veterans a day to suicide. Only about 2 of those have directly related combat PTSD. the rest of them have this thing called moral injury and this separation thing. So think about moral injury and think about where you can get moral injury just growing up. Even if it's in White City, Saskatchewan. There's opportunities for moral injury. There's moral injury and lower grades in school. There's moral injury as you go there's moral injury. So PTSD can get is a thing. It's a real thing and people should not think that they have to have had some combat experience to have PTSD. And you can have all levels of PTSD and all levels. You might have one trigger. It might be you know people always didn't have nails on a wall or something but you might have 1 trigger. Well, that's your trigger and you have to work through that.

So what I want people to do and the reason I didn't mention that what I want people to do is reflect. Reflection is powerful that's instead of wasting time worrying about poor outcomes and scaring the heck out of yourself right? Take that energy and reflect and when you reflect, 9 times out of 10 you're going to walk yourself to a happy spot where you want to be and you can kind of see that and it starts a journey of goodness. So I wanted people to fill in their own blank.

### **Lisa Peters**

Good answer. Yeah because I'm like you're not talking about it but I filled it in. I got it. And it's funny because I obviously I was Googling it and now you know artificial intelligence. My computer is now telling me what I want to hear about PTSD and it's bringing up a lot. So that's kind of interesting.

But I have a few more questions for ya. So a little bit about LeaderImpact. If anyone's listening, this is a LeaderImpact Podcast and we believe that if you want to be a person of impact you need to be growing personally, professionally, and spiritually. So can you give us a practical example of how the spiritual makes a difference in your life as a leader?

### **Dave Nordel**

Sure. So I don't know if you and I talked about it previously, there's a model. There's a life model. And in that model, there's 4 things work, home/family, your health, and your spiritual.

So if you think of a perfectly round bubble and inside that there's 4 perfectly round bubbles. The object is to keep all of these the same size because that's symmetrical. That's a balanced life.

So I was working with a men's group and, it's a very diverse men's group. You have people with alternate lifestyles. You have branch guys. And they're all doing Bible study and they're working through stuff. And so I had them go through this drill and I said how big are your bubbles? And you got this big work bubble. And you got this big life bubble. and you know family bubble and then you got these two little dots on health and we can leave health for another time. And then little spiritual bubbles. And I said well why are those small. And everybody has walked it back to well I guess those 2 are negotiables. You can always peel those off and walk away from that to strengthen the other two because those are constants and you feel like they're priorities and then you're out of balance.

So spiritually, I like to tell people when I do a keynote, I talk about the flag behind me and how that all ended up coming out of Iraq. But I tell them that the beginning of my day, every day in Iraq, I would stop at the chaplain's office. It was where I started. So the answer to your question is going to be that this spiritual thing is probably foundational to everything else. It's probably the most important of the 4 bubbles but people neglect it. And so I would go into the chaplain's office and I'd get on my knees, this was quick. They knew I was coming after a while, was routine. I'd get on my knees I'd say good morning and they pray on me. And they would say words and you'll love this because one day it was a rabbi, the next day it was a catholic priest, the next day it was a baptist minister. There was all these denominations and they were always you know on different cycles. They were 24-7. Lisa, the words were the same every day. It didn't matter how they were dressed. They were the same words every day. Said differently, pulled from different parts of scripture. But how can you not stand up and feel an inch taller and your back is a little bit straighter and you're able to look people in the eye and have a little bit of confidence with having just that word that food to feed that. To feel balanced. To know that there's something there. That's walking with you. That you're never alone and those types of things.

So spiritually I've always made sure that that doesn't have a crack in it because when it does usually when you're in a ditch or a burrow pit or whatever we call them. Usually when you're in a ditch if you look that's the 1 thing that's a little tiny. It's a little tiny bubble or it's not getting its food. And ironically couple hours before we started this podcast when I called my buddy and we were talking through things, he literally said this to me. He said Dave I've stopped working for the last two days and he says I'm in the scripture. I'm in the book. And he goes, "I'm refeeding myself and filling myself back up because I am was at a point where that was out of balance," and he stopped and did it. So I got to be comfortable with that too because not everybody when you talk to when I talk to groups always tell them that their spirit bubble is what they define it, as it's not just a religious bubble or a relationship with God. Your spirit is your spirit. I mean we have a spirit so things that make our eyes shiny. Our smile attractive and that that type of thing and so you need to fill those things up.

So it's bedrock. After having messed with all of those bubbles and had big ones and little ones and giant ones and trying to keep everything symmetrical I think you got to take care of that. And however you choose to do that good on you.

**Lisa Peters**

Yeah, as a busy mom I'm going to say, I get up really early in the morning to have that quiet time because the day can get out of control. , and I just you know what, he's gonna sleep for another hour up there until I got to make him lunch and get him up and you whatever. And that's what I found is it's quiet at five in the morning. No one's up. So yeah, you got to find your time if it's on your way to

**Dave Nordel**

Absolutely, you have to make the time. And when we're really, really, really busy, everybody thinks that they're busy. I wrote a chapter in the second book that talks about the coffee line. And so when you ask most people how are you doing? What are you up to? They give you, well they give me, the whole calendar right? They go oh on Monday I got that, on Tuesday I got this, and they give you all of this. Yet if you go to an organization that has a coffee bar in it or there's a coffee shop across the street, if you go and watch 10 minutes in line, 2 minutes to order, 10 minutes to wait, 50 minutes of conversation. But people are busy. Well guess what skip a coffee and get in the word. There's time.

**Lisa Peters**

I'm gonna hit the coffee maker still gonna have the coffee. Just saying I need the coffee.

Well I got 2 last questions for you I ask all my guests this. LeaderImpact is dedicated again to leaders having a lasting impact. So as you continue to move through your own journey in life, have you considered what you want your faith legacy to be when you leave this world?

**Dave Nordel**

My grandfather used to say that the difference between heaven and hell may just be what people think about you after you're gone. And so I want, I'd like when I leave for people to say, that he was a believer and he was grounded in that and guided by that by faith. And that regardless of what he thought or whether or not people agreed or disagreed with me that I was fair because of those teachings. It drove me to that to stay true to that. And you know I don't hit a home run on that every single day but I try to get really close.

**Lisa Peters**

Thanks for sharing that. That's good. Yeah, so my last question again I ask everyone is what brings you the greatest joy?

**Dave Nordel**

So I don't know if you're into personalities or color personalities or what that thing is but and I've been psychoanalyzed forever. So that's an easy question for me because I'm a blue personality which aligns with Oprah Winfrey and Martin Luther King. So I'm an empath and

I'm a giver and so other people's successes bring me joy. Other people's growth brings me joy. And the ability to build trusting relationships to the point where they let me in to really make them better and that makes me better. So eah, just watching others just blow up and blossom and bloom and I don't care if they run past me in life or career or whatever it is. Yeah their successes are pretty awesome and obviously the things that you have total control over those things being successful your kids and you know your family and your relationships.

**Lisa Peters**

Well then what a great title for your book *Giving Back* because that's what it's about. Well, Dave I want to thank you for just sharing the last just over 40 minutes with us. I know that you were just speaking this morning to a group and you've probably got more to practice and prepare. So just thank you for taking the time and answering just a few of our questions and sharing your own story with us. Thank you.

**Dave Nordel**

Yeah, you bet I think you're amazing and I hope that thousands more people listen to your podcast either because of me or because of us or just because of you. But I have more people here in Montana Googling your name and looking you up. So thanks for what you're doing and making a difference and that's huge.

**Lisa Peters**

Yeah, well I know that you're an outdoorsman. So if you ever end up at Lake Diefenbaker you know I'm there in the summer you just call me.

**Dave Nordel**

So do you want the dates because they're booked. I absolutely, I mean my dates are booked I can all give you the dates I'll send them, perfect.

**Lisa Peters**

Good. So now this ends our podcast but I always ask if people want to connect with you in any way follow up, look you up. What's the best way for them to find you?

**Dave Nordel**

So the website is onemanoneplanmt, like Montana, mt so onemanoneplanmt.com. And when you get to the opening page there's a thing there that says work with Dave and just click on that and there's a whole section there to write me a personal note. It'll come on my email and if you want to have a virtual cup of coffee or you just want more information. Whatever just let me know and we can chat and be great.

**Lisa Peters**

Well thanks for being an open book and thank you again for sharing with us.

Well that is it for us and if you're part of LeaderImpact you can always discuss or share this podcast with your group. And if you are not yet in a LeaderImpact group we would love to

have you. Check out groups available in Canada at [LeaderImpact.ca](http://LeaderImpact.ca). Or if you're listening from anywhere else in the world check out [leaderimpact.com](http://leaderimpact.com) or get in touch with us by email at [info@leaderimpact.com](mailto:info@leaderimpact.com) and we will connect you. And if you like this podcast please leave us a comment, give us a rating or review, share it with your friends this will help other global leaders find our podcast. Thank you for engaging with us and remember impact starts with you.