

LeaderImpact Podcast - Ep. 33 - Andy Howard - Common Things People Contend with in Their Lives

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

book, people, leader, depression, life, podcast, expectations, marriage, write, wife, pastor, andy, lisa, easy, find, story, pursue, pursuit, talk, good

Lisa Peters 00:00

Welcome to the LeaderImpact podcast. We are a community of leaders with a network of 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 or on social media @LeaderImpact. And if you're listening from outside of Canada, check out our website at LeaderImpact.com.

I'm your host Lisa Peters. Our guest today is Andy Howard. For over 20 years Andy has served in ministry as a youth pastor and a marriage ministry pastor. He has found that nothing much changes in each role just that some come with more wrinkles and less hair. Andy is an advocate for mental health awareness as he has known the heaviness of depression himself. He is passionate about fighting against the awful attack of mental health issues that are running rampant across the human race. At his heaviest Andy weighed 345 pounds, and his wife Tiffany weighed 317 pounds. Together, they have lost over 350 pounds combined and have co-founded a health coaching business called Taking Back My Life where they have helped thousands of people get healthy as well. Andy currently lives outside of Dallas, Texas with his wife Tiffany and their three beautiful daughters Payson, Parker and Presley. Today, we actually want to talk to Andy a little bit about his new book, *When Words Don't Come Easy*, and dive deep into the conversations we have with ourselves. Welcome to the show, Andy.

Andy Howard 01:45

Well, thank you so much, Lisa, it is an honor to be on. And I'm excited to chat with you for a little bit here.

Lisa Peters 01:51

You know, it's funny, because when I read your book, you talk about weight, but you did not tell me these numbers. So that's incredible. And what a commitment. Like, I think I say congratulations. Like, that's amazing.

Andy Howard 02:05

Thank you so much. It's a dream come true. Honestly, I talk about it in the book, but the very

thing that almost killed us is the thing that has brought us life. And I think it's just wild how that happens in so many different areas of my life. I could say that about. But it was my weight that was holding me back in so many areas of my life, and especially in health. And now how God has a little bit of a sense of humor, I would have never saw myself helping so many people lose weight, you know? So it's very funny and very wild how that's come about.

Lisa Peters 02:42

I love that you said God has humor because yes he does! So I'm usually asked my guests, and I know that people all around the world always love to hear a little bit about yourself. Because I think you know, wherever you're living, we all live differently. So tell us a little bit about yourself.

Andy Howard 02:58

Well, I am I live here in Dallas outside of Dallas, Texas. And as you mentioned in the bio, I'm a daddy of three girls, Parker, Presley, and Payton and I'm married to Tiffany, my wife, I love sports. So absolutely, if I'm not speaking or traveling, you will find me glued to a game somewhere. That's just how I love to pass the time. But that's a little bit about me and I love gosh, arts, I love music. I love creating music. I play music, I love writing. So that's my passion. And I so just finished the book. And I'm a fellow podcaster as well. So I love talking with people. And that's just a little bit about myself.

Lisa Peters 03:42

You did just finish this book, I think the copyrights like 2022. So this just came out.

Andy Howard 03:48

Yes, came out in September, brand new and just excited to hopefully I spread it to as many people. It's about hope. That's the story of my life is about hope. And so hopefully this book will help some people.

Lisa Peters 04:04

Awesome. Well, good. So and I realized so I'm gonna switch the lens to like professional we're gonna talk a little bit about your actually book but I realized you have a health coaching business and I wanted to focus. I mean, I want to focus more on your book, *When Word Don't Come Easy*. But what was the reasoning for writing the book and the title?

Andy Howard 04:25

Well, the title is kind of a funny story as well. So I knew for a decade I was supposed to write this book. That's when I first started experiencing the depression when my oldest daughter who's about to be 15 now, when she went through everything with her diagnosis, she's got cerebral palsy and 10% brain function. Pretty bad case. But I went through depression. After that point, and on the other side of coming out of depression, so about a decade now, I've known I'm supposed to tell this story. And it wasn't till after 2020 when it's felt like depression was at all-time heights across everywhere I looked at across the US here, I'm sure in Canada

as well. But it wasn't until then that I knew I really got to get the story out. The only thing I knew for the whole time was the title of my book, it was going to be *The Beauty in the Broken*. And when I got to, to my team, it was pitching the idea and everything they said the only thing is we can't use that title. And that's a apparently it's a number one hit from romance novels that I didn't know nothing about, maybe I was gonna reach a totally different audience. But at that time, I had wrote a song 20 years ago, coming up in May, for my wife, for our was actually our wedding at the time. And it was called *When Words Don't Come Easy*. It was really ended up being somewhat prophetic. There's some of the things we've gone through in our marriage, that I had no idea at the time. But I just wanted to write something to her that I promised I would be there, no matter what, you know, no matter what happens, no matter what comes no matter what trials we face. And since then, you know, she's lost. She lost her mom and her dad shortly into our marriage, and she lost her only sister as well. And then all the things that happened with my eldest daughter. So it has been a lot of things we've had to overcome. But you know what? I've held on to that promise. And we're still going on strong 20 years now. And coming up in a couple months here. So just excited to see what's next.

Lisa Peters 06:30

I find it. Because there's always a timing. And the timing was right now for you to write the book. You know, I know, it's been 20 years, because it's it took 20 years to get ready to right here that I mean, I just believe that, yeah, never want to look back and go, Oh, I regret I should have I could have no. Right now. It was meant. So

Andy Howard 06:50

Well thank you, I feel the same way. And especially after the, you know, the pandemic and everything happened. And then people were shut in. And just it felt like anxieties and depression, and everything was just at an all-time high. And so, you know, I believe myself, God's timing is always perfect. And so even though back then I could have wrote the book. I don't know everything is just falling into place. And looking back. I'm just pleased at the timing. And I agree with you. Now's the time.

Lisa Peters 07:21

All right. So in this book, there is a section that you talk about the common things people contend with in their marriage. Now, I want to use that same content. I don't know if you're up for this, but use that same content to change the conversation, just because our podcasts we're really you know, we're trying to reach the people who are integrating their personal, professional and spiritual. So I'm gonna get started change the content, if you're up to if we can discuss those sections to the most common things people contend with in our lives. And I think I'm fine. I'm gonna flip open my book, because my book is written all over. I love that. Yeah, it's like just a gong show. But yeah, so we're gonna go through these and just, you know, the common things people contend with in their lives. And I'm gonna let you start, and then I'm just going to keep writing.

Andy Howard 08:09

Oh, of course. Well, number one, and this does correlate with so much. This particular chapter was focused on our marriage. But all these five things that we're going to talk about, no matter where you're at, in your life, whether you're married or not, whether you're it's professionalism, whether you're chasing a dream and goal, whatever your desire is, even as a leader, these five things apply to your life. The first thing was expectations, expectations. And I remember working for a pastor once, and a good friend of mine, a mentor, and he always told me inspect what you expect. And for that, I mean, we had goals, right? If I was the youth pastor, and I had people who worked for me under my group and was still under the church and still under his leadership. But we would have these meetings once a month. Andy would always say, inspect what you expect. Because sometimes you can have expectations, you can have things set up. But if you just leave them to chance, right, if you don't inspect, if you don't ask questions, if you don't get in there, how do you know one if it's meeting your expectations, but where are you going right with it? So I love that. Always that's the goal that I've always kept is always inspect what you expect. Always ask questions. Don't leave anything up for chance. And just search for more.

Lisa Peters 09:33

Yeah. And I even find that even going into your book, you know, we go into it with our expectations. We go into situations at work, we go into leading groups, we have these expectations, so I like that inspect. That is great way to put that. Yeah,

Andy Howard 09:50

For sure. And you're absolutely right expectations in our own mind, right?. And then you don't even and so if you never inspect it, you don't ask questions you don't communicate. And that's another one, I'm gonna get ahead of myself. But if you don't let these out, you're your partner in a marriage or your business partner in business or as leaders, if you don't communicate or if you don't seek what's going on. Even if you're by yourself, if you're your own company, by yourself, you're the main cog, you're the leader. You need to circle back after whatever the event is, after whatever you've done. Did this line up with our goals? Did this line up with what I'm doing as I'm branding myself? And just ask yourself some questions, inspect what you expect. That way you can know going forward, hey, maybe it didn't go. Maybe it flopped, whatever your event was, or your ideal was. That's okay. It's okay to flop. But what's not okay is to stay down and not learn from it is one of the things I've learned.

Lisa Peters 10:52

Yeah, we learn more from our flops. Yeah. All right. Well, let you continue.

Andy Howard 10:59

Oh, yes, of course. The second one is pursue. And I had mentioned this as far as in marriage. But we're gonna play this everywhere. But you know, how, when, when your everything is, I don't want to say hot and heavy when you're first in love when you first find your girlfriend, boyfriend, your significant other, you know, it's so easy, right? Because you're in that puppy

love, everything's just so happy. They can't do nothing wrong. In fact, the things that drive you crazy about them, later, are the things that attract you to them. And so, for me, it's that pursuit that keeps your marriage going well, and that's the same in no matter what you're doing whatever that drove you to start your business or whatever that's driving you as a leader, whatever your goals are, do not ever get to a place where you've arrived. Like, sometimes it's so easy to get comfortable. And it's well, I've made it. I've made it I'm married now, almost 20 years, I don't have to pursue my wife anymore because we're married. She's with me, right? And no, it's that pursuit of constantly saying, you know, I brought you flowers 20 years ago. So I can't just say, Well, I've already gave you the flowers, we have to constantly pursue. And so even as a leader, where are you right? Did you just arrive and say, Well, I'm here now. I don't have to get any better. I feel like we can always grow, we can always learn. And like you just mentioned, we learned so much from our flops, our mistakes, there's always so much more to go. And when you get to a place where you've arrived or you are satisfied. That is a dangerous place. That's a scary place. Because it's very easy to get comfortable. And you don't even realize that there is a backtrack that you're slipping away because you're comfortable.

Lisa Peters 12:54

Yeah, the pursuit of the dream can is very uncomfortable. And it should be because then if it's not, it's maybe not the dream, but you're or the pursuit that you should be doing. You should be uncomfortable. Yeah. So I like you're just went when you get all nice. And this is good. Yeah.

Andy Howard 13:12

You should be concerned. Yes. When things are comfortable, that's when you need to be concerned that is really good. Yeah.

Lisa Peters 13:18

And I think of pursuing the things that we want, because if we don't, someone else will, again, those ideas are floating out there. And if you don't grab on them, or if you don't grab that thing. Yeah,

Andy Howard 13:31

it's true. And that's the same with Gosh, that's the same point with marriage or with your significant other, that if you quit pursuing, somebody else will and that doesn't give, and I'm not gonna go down a rabbit trail doesn't give them a path by any means. But at the same point, that appreciation of the pursuit is there. And that's what I wanted to come across with that dream chasing that dream. Once you get that carrot. What's next? Right, what's next? So always, always ask yourself, which goes back to the expectations, inspect what you expect, what is next, always ask those questions, so you can keep going forward. Because if you're not going forward, that's when you get stagnant.

Lisa Peters 14:10

Yeah, good. All right. Next one.

Andy Howard 14:13

Number three is communication. And some of these, some of these do flip-flop with each other a little bit here and there. But communication is so huge in every area of our life. And I think so many times from where I wrote it from the standpoint is communication, maybe expectations. All these things are kind of in our head. But it's easier to communicate than it is to read your spouse's mind. It's easier to communicate than to read your business partner's mind or even someone who, whatever it is, if you're leading someone, whatever you do, whoever you work with, it takes communication. The greatest teams, the champions of any sports team, you will find that one, it takes talent, it takes skills. But the communication is so huge with that, whether it's from the coach to the player, whether it's from player to player on the team in the game, and the better we can get at communicating it's just, it's just being understood. It's just speaking, a language of understanding. Because expectations are may seem so crystal clear to me, in my head, I see exactly how this is gonna go. But if you're not communicating, it can be, it's like you're speaking two different languages. And then you end up with how did we miss this so bad? Maybe we should have communicated. And so that's where I was going with that point.

Lisa Peters 15:47

Yeah. I also think of the communication with ourselves, what we are asking of ourselves what we are saying to ourselves, because when I look at the title, you know *When Words Don't Come Easy*, I think of what I am saying to myself to what I am putting out there, you know, and we actually did a podcast, it was our third podcast, Howard Olson. And he talks It was, yeah, the third one, And he talks about the power of words, and the power of words you are communicating. Yeah. How are you talking to people? How are they talking to you? You know, and I think like, the people you surround yourself with, if they're talking trash to you, or, you know, what, are you talking trash back, like, you know? And even, yeah,

Andy Howard 16:28

Even more important, how are you talking to yourself? You just touched on a very special nugget for me. I can be the worst, I can be the hardest on myself. I do have expectations. I do I have goals, I have dreams, I'm very driven. And then sometimes after I speak at an event, or after I do a podcast, or I write something, I judge myself so harshly, and my wife will tell me, she's like, You wouldn't let anyone talk to your kids that way? Or you wouldn't let anyone talk to me that way. So why are you talking to yourself that way? So that's another thing that I do agree with you 100% the power of words are so powerful. So how are you talking to yourself? Are you uplifting yourself? Are you hanging out with people who are uplifting you? Or are people talking negative and bringing you down?

Lisa Peters 17:19

Yeah. Because you don't have to be hard on me, because I'm already hardest on me. Yeah, oh, this is good, good stuff. Well, the

Andy Howard 17:28

The Fourth one is rejection. And rejection is hard. From a relationship standpoint, it's extremely hard. But who doesn't hate rejection. I don't know that anyone is out there right now listening to this podcast that says Oh, Oh me, I just love being rejected. There's so much mental battle that comes with not being good enough. And it doesn't even mean that. And so with rejection, sometimes there are some positive feedback that has to happen. But I always try to frame it, the feedback, as good as possible by my even like a sandwich method of say, hey, hey, Lisa, I want you to know that this is coming from my heart that I really appreciate you and I love what you're doing with your podcast, or something complimentary first. Before, if you were to just call someone in your office as a leader, just like Bob, you know, really, you just totally went the wrong way with how we were going with this thing. I mean, it's the same thing. You're saying the same message. But by framing it in a better way and coming from a spot of gratitude. I think rejection or positive feedback is received so much better.

Lisa Peters 18:55

You know, as you're saying, you know, things pop into my head. And I just read this morning, I'm reading *Radical Candor*, by Kim Scott. And she talks about building trust with your teams. And the one thing she and I'd have to go back and read it, but you talked about hugging. And you know, she comes in and you know, they were they hugged and then she gave them feedback, which was hard. But she came at it in a trust. Like, you're doing great. Like, I have to read it again. But it was you know, not everybody's into hugging. Let's just say that.

Andy Howard 19:28

For sure. Right. So you might want to know your audience, but now I'm a hugger. I'm from the south. I'm from Texas. I think we all have we either have hugs, hugs or guns. It's kind of both ways down here. I'm just kidding out Not really. I mean, it's very if you've ever been to Texas, but you would know your audience. But yeah, back to that. That trust is massive. And so I bet she and I'm sorry I missed the name of the person that wrote this book. But I bet no matter what she has to say, after she is just loved on them or gave them a hug and built that trust, there are 100% positive that you're going to receive from it. It doesn't mean it doesn't hurt. No one really likes feedback. But at the same time, feedback is what makes us better. It makes us grow. It's what makes it when we talked about the flops earlier, well, then well, how do we get better from that? If you have no one in your corner giving you feedback, chances are you won't get better. Or you'll just keep repeating the same mistakes until eventually, no one has you back. For whatever you're doing, or you run out of run out of jobs, you keep moving on to the next, moving on to the next. So feedback is huge. It's massive.

Lisa Peters 20:41

And I think it's way easier to take feedback, rejection, when there's that relationship. And I, of course, Kim Scott's book that she taught, but she taught us building that relationship, you know, before you give the rejection, make sure you've built the relationship and it'll be taken differently. So

Andy Howard 20:56

I love that. The number five the last one is grace. And we talked about it a little bit when I said I wouldn't talk you know, my wife was saying that you wouldn't allow someone else to talk to you that way. Why are you talking to yourself that way? Give yourself grace. Grace is something that's incredibly generous, but totally unexpected and totally undeserved. So, next time that you I don't know what it is, whatever you fill in the blank right here that you feel like something does not go give you enough grace.

Lisa Peters 21:35

I'm going to give you one because this is in your book. Well, on page 128, you talk about, well, for over, I'll just read it from you. And you say for over a decade, I didn't write this book because I listened to the father of lies. I had a list of I am not that told me why shouldn't start, I am not qualified. I am not a writer. And I'm not an influencer. And I'm not smart. Enough of I am enough of that. I am not, you can fill in the blank. And at that point, I read that and it's like, Andy, give yourself some grace.

Andy Howard 22:10

It's true. It's true. And I do talk about I go on to talk about in the book about my self-esteem issues. And it's for no other reason. It's just an attack. What I would for what I believe is attack of the enemy. I don't know, everyone's listeners may be different here. But you are created for a purpose. No matter where you're at. I just want you to know you are created for a purpose. And there is something that only you can do, that you have a design, you have a purpose that only you can meet. And I felt that with all my heart. And if you don't step out, and have grace, and you fail forward, I say that all the time fail forward. If you just mess up, it's okay. What's not okay is staying down. So do it scared. I had to and it got easier. I never saw myself ever finishing the book. I talked about it for over a decade. My wife used to even have a running joke of Oh, yeah, the book you're writing. And then one day I sat down, and I'm gonna do it. She had heard that for 10 years. But I said, I'm gonna do it. And you know what, I did it one day at a time, one chapter at a time, one line at a time, really one word at a time, and it wasn't perfect. I did. I still don't know that. It's perfect. But what happened is I started gaining confidence, as I would have the bravery and the guts to share it with some close friends and like, Okay, I don't know, I'm trying to write this. But would you read this chapter? Would you read this paragraph, and so many who came back and said, Andy, oh, my gosh, this is so good. And that built more confidence. So I can say, well, maybe I can write another chapter. Maybe I can write another paragraph. So yes, have grace on yourself. If you're not going to do it, definitely no one else is going to do it. So have grace for yourself.

Lisa Peters 23:56

Granting grace. I use that a lot. And like grant them grace. Grant yourself grace, grant them grace. Just you don't know what's going on. Is true in their lives and yeah, I have love these five. I love how we've switched it a little bit to just being more about our lives. Because I mean, yes, marriage, but we all have to work, we all have to we have families we have volunteer was, wherever we are, we can go through any of these. I have loved them.

Andy Howard 24:25

I agree with you. 100%. Thank you so much. And I would have never thought about doing that time. You had emailed some suggestions. And I think it's a brilliant idea. It's brilliant.

Lisa Peters 24:36

So we usually switch our podcast a little because we want to while we move forward, and we're gonna switch into the spiritual side. You served in ministry as a youth pastor and a marriage ministry pastor, so I don't know if you can give us a little glimpse, because obviously you have been in faith your whole life. And yes, oh, you know, tell us a little bit about that.

Andy Howard 24:55

So yes, I my mom and dad were pastors growing up so I was about five years old, when, when I accepted Christ into my life, we read a kid's crusade way back then, and I'm not gonna give you the whole full story. But I so I have grown up though being raised in church being raised by pastors and I've had a close relationship with the Lord all, you know, for most of my life, I was when Payton was born, and I'll never forget it, we were at the chief neurologist's office at Dallas Children's Medical Center. It's one of the biggest specialty children's hospitals in the world, really. But especially in this area. So we're at Dallas. And so the chief neurologist anytime you see him, it's not good. And I'll never forget, he walked in with a box of Kleenexes and he told us guys, this, me and my wife, he said, there's no easy way to tell you this, but your daughter's got 10% brain function, then you know, she's not going to be able to talk, she's not gonna be able to walk she's really got no muscle tone, she won't be able to use her hands to like pick up a pencil her fingers to pick up a pencil, but she might be able to use her arms to give you a hug or hug a pillow. She's legally blind, just all these things. And at some point, he started sounding like Charlie Brown's teacher, just kind of it was fading in the background. And I was just overwhelmed with just this sadness. And but at that point, I was like, you know, Lord, I believe you can do anything. I personally believe in healing. And God, you can do this. And if you choose to, and, and I'm just gonna be the dad, I'm gonna beat down the doors of heaven every single day until she gets her healing, I'm gonna stand firm. And that happened. Gosh, for the next three months or so every day to and from I also worked outside of the church, because it was bi-vocational. And so I worked at a, I was a data entry clerk at a place, but it was about an hour from home. So I have a drive to work and from work, just praying God, you can heal Payton, you can heal Payton. But somewhere along the way, those prayers that were honest and sincere, they turned bitter. In fact, I talked about it in the book, but you know, kind of the John 11 story with Mary and Martha and Lazarus. And they're like Jesus, had you been here, man, my brother wouldn't have died. Somewhere along the way. I was like, God, don't you owe me something. I'm, I don't make any money as a youth pastor, and it was never about money. It was about the call. It really was serving people. But like, Don't you owe me this one. If anything, you could have helped Payton. So I became depress. It was about a four year season where I was still serving as a youth pastor, still trying to do the right thing, putting a smile on my face for people who didn't know how bad it was how hard it was, in fact, 10 years ago, this interview seemed impossible. Lisa, just being honest with you, I didn't know that I would be here 10 years ago. And so God has restored that

in my life. And I don't want this question to drag out and get too long. But there was even as, as a man of faith in deep faith. It doesn't mean you don't face trials. And it doesn't mean that you're too good for something like depression or something to sneak up on you. And again, the very thing that was meant to kill me, has now been put into a book. And I'm able to travel and share this story now. And I'm seeing so many dads, so many wives, even so many kiddos, from my youth ministry days I speak at youth camps, youth conferences. I'm just seeing so many people with anxiety and depression are able to relate to my story. And you know what they're getting, they're getting help from it. So I can see the full picture now. It doesn't mean it's any easier. But I do have an understanding. And I know one day she will be healed. I believe that with all my heart when she makes it home to heaven. But who knows, God could still do that here. He still could. But right now he is using her story. I used to pray. That's one thing. I'm sorry, I'll wrap this up. But that's one thing I used to pray at the very end of each prayer God use her story to reach millions. And I just thought in my own infinite wisdom that God's gonna, I don't know, take her story, see her raised out of her wheelchair and she's gonna go her video go viral and but you know, he's using her story to reach millions now. Here I am on a podcast with Lisa Peters, who I never would have thought I would know outside of technology now and it just getting to reach out to the right people. And God is using her story to reach millions and it's not the way I thought it would happen. But it's pretty cool to see the big picture of what he can do through our heartaches and through our pains.

Lisa Peters 29:58

Yeah, I think what and we're in that heartache and pain we can't see out. And, you know, I go back to some of the message you talked about, and I think of, you know, who we're surrounding ourselves with. Because there's times when I can't pray, like, you're just, it's so hard. And I think we need to surround ourselves. And that's what LeaderImpact does. There's a group of leaders that get together and challenges do not, you know, they enter our, our lives too, you know, but as leaders we have people we can talk to, and, you know, if it's your youth groups, if it's your work, if it's volunteer group, just school. It's just surround yourself.

Andy Howard 30:37

I've found, yeah, the more you open up about it, and ask for help. That's the hard part, right? We're all we all want to take care of, I'm independent, I can take care of myself. And it's just it's kind of natural to take care, but asking for help seems needy and seems like you're putting someone out. But the more you ask for help, that burden gets lighter. Now, no longer Andy is just carrying this burden. Now I have Andy and Tiffany has come alongside me and she's helping me carry this burden. And then the more I tell one more person, well, here comes Bob, he's gonna help me carry my burden. So it gets lighter each time you share your story is what I've found. Yeah.

Lisa Peters 31:16

And I think, and I, like, say, leaders, but everyone finds it so hard to ask for help. We don't want to be seen as weak. You know, here you are living this and you're in depression. And

you're four years, and you're still going to youth you know, and still being Andy but inside it's...

Andy Howard 31:36

Yeah, I would encourage you out there 'cause it's hard to see. Right. But maybe if you ask those questions when we talked about, Hey, are you really doing okay? Are you good? Take a second to ask those questions. Because for the longest, my first answer the first time I was always asked How are you was always fine. Doing fine. How are you? That was and it became such a recording. It was a soundtrack of my mind. I'm doing fine. How are you? And so it was just a go-to. I even had the smile to match it. And most people oh good. And of course, he's a pastor so he's fine. So sometimes listen to your heart, listen to your gut in say, Andy, are you really doing okay? Is there something I can help you with? Or pray with? And maybe they are fine, and that's fine. But sometimes the second question is where they let their guard down. So actually, will you help me with this? So...

Lisa Peters 32:32

I go right back to the relationships you have at work if you're a leader, build those relationships. Then, you know, yeah, I'm fine. And you're gonna pick up No, I don't know if you are, you know. Come on into my office. Let's sit down. So..

Andy Howard 32:46

So good. Yeah. Back to that trust.

Lisa Peters 32:49

Good. So I usually sort of prep you with maybe a question or two, and I'm not sure if I did this one. So this might be a throw, but and maybe you've already asked this, but have you ever been on your own path? Like, I know what's best for me, you know, and then God used disruption to realign your plans for the greatest purpose? Now, maybe you've answered that. But I don't know if you have an example?

Andy Howard 33:13

Very similar was I thought I would be in ministry forever. I thought I'd be a lifer and I am still, I guess, technically in ministry. I feel like so much that I do have more evangelizing now. And I'm going church to church or I'm going to school assemblies or I'm going to youth camps now. I'm not at one church. But I thought I would just be a lifer in ministry and what happened through the weight loss journey and then starting our own business helping people I actually found out I get to do ministry more now than I did as a pastor. It's so funny having that pastor title intimidates a lot of people. It is so wild how many people think that I just have everything perfect in my life because I am a pastor and I don't understand so I couldn't possibly understand what you're going through. Because I am just up here I don't sin I don't have this or that you know, I just everything's just perfect in my life because I'm a pastor which couldn't be more opposite. I don't want to say that that just means you are a sinner all the time but now you have your own challenges like everybody else faces it. So now what's happened

though, as just as a some dude, that's writing a health plan for you now. They're like, Hey, if you are if somebody will let their guard down about their weight, I think that's like one of the hardest things to let someone intimate with is that you know, I got on the scale this morning and I weigh whatever this number. After that gosh, you talk about the speed of trust. It has built up so much trust that if they will talk to you about your weight they will talk to you about pretty much anything after that. And so that's what we have found when we do a call Tiff and I will call it to check in on someone, and for supposed to be just our weekly goal check, then all of a sudden, like, you know what, actually, I got off plan this week. I didn't do it this week. But it wasn't even about the plan. It was about hey, you know what my sister died this week in you know, wow, you know, all sudden, it's not saying we don't care about your health goals anymore. But at that particular moment, it's no longer about hey, did you lose any weight this week? It is now it's about Hey, would you mind if we prayed for you? It's been situations like that, where God is using us just as Christians not as a title and not as a pastor, as a technically as a health coach, as a health and wellness company. More than as a pastor, but just being available now to do whatever he wants for us.

Lisa Peters 35:58

Yeah. You know, it's funny when you said that, because I don't have a fitness coach, but I have business coach, and I specifically chose my business coach, because she was a Christian. Because when she struggles, she says to me, can I pray for you? And I remember the first one initially said to me something like, you know, if you believe in that stuff, like God, like, I think we're done. Okay. But I mean, because this is my business, this is my life. This is my chosen, you know, this is my purpose. And I need someone to just look out for my spiritual guidance,

Andy Howard 36:36

So good. And I have heard this, and you've probably heard this before, too, but that you're like the five people you spend the most time with. So just be very careful who you let in your inner circle. If you start seeing yourself going down a path that you you're like, I would have never saw myself doing that. Andy doesn't do things like that, or Andy doesn't talk like that. Or I would have to go back to that inspect what you expect and say, Well, who am I hanging out with? Who am I letting I have so much of me, time of me and investing? Because they're either gonna they're either one way or another they're gonna influence you for the better or the worse. So we do have to do that kind of inventory from time to time.

Lisa Peters 37:18

How did I get here? Well take a look.

Andy Howard 37:21

For sure.

Lisa Peters 37:22

So we have two last questions, we ask all our guests the same last questions, and LeaderImpact. So we want to refer to LeaderImpact as dedicated to leaders having a lasting

impact. So as you continue to move through your own journey, have you considered what you want your faith legacy to be when you leave this world?

Andy Howard 37:40

Yes, I saw this question it is so good. And there's one word and it's, it's what I always say on every podcast, it's what I hope about the book, but it's hope. My goal is to leave hope for you no matter where you're at, because the very thing that almost killed me, is the very thing that God chose to use. I was 345 pounds, and I can name every single sickness and disease and all the things that I was having. I'm the last person you would expect to we just finished a Spartan Beast, which of the half a marathon is 13.1 miles with 35 obstacles. We did it about 12 of us. I'm the last person that would ever thought that would happen. The depression stuff now I'm trying to help people with mental illness or depression or anxiety, all the things. So hope is the word. No matter how there was so many times when I could have been my final day on Earth or just as I want to never saw myself getting to that point. And it was just so dark. It got so dark at one time in my life. So now, if I could have told Andy 14 years ago, hey Andy, hang on. You can't even see yourself, you can't even see like you talked about we can't see outside the darkness sometimes when we're going through the storm or through the battle. Hang on. So that would be my lasting impact that I hope one day when God should take me or however it ends for me is that people will say that was a dude of hope. And that he helped so many people that he always pointed people to hope.

Lisa Peters 39:22

That's pretty awesome. That was good. And my last question I asked everyone is what brings you the greatest joy?

Andy Howard 39:28

There's so much right now, outside of the obvious I gotta throw this in here for my wife and my kiddos. I absolutely love my family. Absolutely love it and my twins. They're 10 were born at a time when I was just coming out of the dark side so cool the timing of it, of depression but they and I tell them all the time. They will never know the role they played in helping Daddy get out of his depression. And so for the obvious it would be my wife and my kiddos. But the other is just helping people. I remember, I remember what it was like being just depressed, being in a very, very dark season, being hurt, just feeling alone, feeling like no value, feeling just helpless. And so now the greatest joy is when I get to pray with somebody in sometimes it's through counseling. Sometimes it's just a quick one minute prayer at the end of a session if I'm at a conference or wherever I'm at, but getting to pour into people's life brings me so much joy.

Lisa Peters 40:46

Well, you're poured into mine, Andy.

Andy Howard 40:49

Thank you, Lisa. Thank you so much.

Lisa Peters 40:51

Oh, I want to thank you for just taking like 40 minutes with us and sharing some great content, yourself, your book. It's been a pleasure. And I won't forget this and our conversations has just been fabulous. Thank you so much.

Andy Howard 41:06

Well, thank you as well. And it's been an honor and I do appreciate you taking the time as well to hear my story.

Lisa Peters 41:12

I love it. I am. I love hearing stories. That is I love it. So this ends our podcast, but if anyone wants to engage with you sort of outside or if our listeners want to find you, what is the best way to get ahold of you.

Andy Howard 41:25

Awesome, well, andyhoward.com. So again, a-n-d-yhoward.com is my website. You can find out more about the book if you're interested. Or search the When Words Don't Come Easy podcast, and social media as well on Instagram or Facebook. It's AndyBHoward like Andy Blake is my middle name. So AndyBHoward.

Lisa Peters 41:47

All right. Well, Andy, thank you again. It has been a fabulous 40 minutes, the fabulous 40 there we go.

Andy Howard 41:54

Well, thank you again. Appreciate you.

Lisa Peters 41:56

All right. Well, I want to thank everyone else for joining us. If you're part of LeaderImpact, you can always discuss or share this podcast with your group. And if you were not yet part of LeaderImpact and would like to find out more and grow your leadership, find our podcast page on our website at LeaderImpact.ca And check out our free leadership assessment. You will also find on our web page Chapter One of Braden Douglass's book, *Becoming a Leader of Impact*. It is an amazing leadership book. You can also check out 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@LeaderImpact.ca And we will connect you and if you like this podcast, please leave us a comment give us a rating or review. This will help other global leaders find our podcast. Thank you for engaging with us and remember, impact starts with you.