

BW*F Gary Bridgewater Transcript

Gary Bridgewater: [00:00:00] BJ and I and a woman named Kathy were talking about the future and we said we have a problem in 2025, 2026, or 2027 and that is none of us are going to be here and we're going to have the next generation of leaders leading this place and our thought was how do we equip that group of people so they have a better chance of succeeding of winning and thriving. And we had the understanding that the company that we were thinking about in 2024 would be so different in 2030. How do we equip people to be able to lead that company? Whatever it was going to look like in 2030.

Tim Spiker: When you think about the leaders you're developing, how far in advance are you thinking and how intentional are you being?

I'm your host, Tim Spiker, and this is the Be Worth Following podcast. On this show, we talk with exceptional leaders, thinkers and researchers about what actually drives effective leadership across the globe. And over time, [00:01:00] you just heard from Gary Bridgewater, CEO of Baker Group, a 100 percent employee-owned specialty construction contractor.

Baker Group is “one company with many experts”. Now that's a pithy statement, but when you look at it more closely, it actually has profound implications. After all, how do you get all of those experts to work well together? It's been done through a high trust environment that Gary and other leaders have developed within Baker.

That high trust environment has been created in part through Gary's personal relationships with other contractors, designers, clients, and coworkers. It is something Gary has been doing for over 38 years, and it has helped Baker to grow to have more than 1, 000 employees. In this episode, you'll hear when Gary and his colleagues began planning for the succession of the company.

You'll also hear about out of the norm qualities that Baker spends meaningful time, money, and [00:02:00] energy developing within its leaders. And you'll hear about a special day in 2031 that Gary is already looking forward to. But before all that, you get a chance to hear about the family and mentors that built the very foundation of who Gary is that enable him to become the leader that he is today.

Gary Bridgewater: I probably have to start by saying I'm in the Lucky Sperm Club. I was born in middle America uh, with two parents in the home with values and great role models. And I felt safe. Growing up where so many people

don't feel safe today and you can tie it back for me to leadership because I think I have this grounded inner sense of safety um, that probably goes all the way back to something my parents gave to me when I was a newborn and when I was a young child that helps me be the kind of leader I want to [00:03:00] be today and I, and I should say this out loud, I've told my dad for as long as I could vote, I was put on this earth to cancel out his vote.

And with a sick sense of humor that God has, my daughter was put on this earth to cancel out my vote. So, the other thing for me is our mentors, some mentors along the way. I had a shop teacher in high school that was kind of the velvet hammer, um, football coach, huge heart, great integrity, saw something in me that I couldn't see in myself.

Another mentor was when I was in college, was a fifth degree black belt in Taekwondo, Mr. Philip and got me into the martial arts. But again, seeing something in me and asking things of me that I couldn't, I probably wouldn't have asked for myself. One of my [00:04:00] most important mentors in my life was a plumbing superintendent that worked for the company I work for today.

In the first 20 years of my time here, his name was Rocky Shipman and Rocky was a Marine Corps vet and was in Vietnam. And he taught me so many things around honor and duty and responsibility and discipline. I am a product of a long line of really amazing people.

Tim Spiker: As you unpack from parents to multiple mentors, it's really amazing to pause. One of the gifts that I get to be a part of is because on the podcast, we ask everybody this opening question, cause we want to have the audience a chance to get to know where somebody's coming from. And in most cases, it creates a little bit of a pause. But as I sit on the other side of it, what I can sense and you know, other people listening to this, they can't see you, but I can see you.[00:05:00]

And to me, what comes flying through the computer here on the screen and in my ear is a sense of gratitude. As you go through that list, is that, is that fair?

Gary Bridgewater: It couldn't be any more true. I'm blessed. I'm, I'm lucky. I haven't even talked about my wife yet and I and that's a whole different conversation.

I don't know how I got so blessed in my life. That have the people in my life that have, have shaped me.

Tim Spiker: You have what is increasingly a unique story. And it's a story in many ways that will be very rare to be duplicated, which is to say that you graduated from college. You joined Baker and 38 plus years later, you are still with that organization.

That is a really unique story. And for, you know, folks that may be a little bit on the younger side listening, they might say, I [00:06:00] didn't know that that actually existed anywhere, but that is your story. So, walk us through that a little bit. You, you graduate from college, you joined Baker. Now you're leading the organization, but there's 38 years of time in there. Give us a little bit of the Gary Bridgewater history of Baker.

Gary Bridgewater: Well, I want to tie it back to my dad. When I was in college, I needed a co-op experience with what they call an internship and my dad knew a guy by the name of Bernie Baker. So, in the summer in '85, I spent the summer with him at the end of the summer, Bernie and his son, BJ said, hey, when you graduate in December, if you'd like to come back here, we'd like to have you.

So, it was connections of people that actually got me that opportunity. I was an estimator. And if you really talk about my journey at Baker, I've probably held every operational office based role in a contractor you could possibly have. I was a safety director at one point. I actually [00:07:00] detailed and drafted.

I estimated. I was a purchasing agent, project manager, senior project manager, a business unit leader. The president of the company and, and now in the last couple of years, the CEO of this company. So, I, I have pretty much screwed everything up. You could possibly do it every level of the organization along the way. And I'm still here.

Tim Spiker: What is it like now, as you sit in the CEO's chair with that level of responsibility and you think back all of the different seats that you have been in the organization. How does it affect the way you live out this leadership role of CEO today?

Gary Bridgewater: You know, there are some practical things to it around when I see a project manager, somebody struggling, I have some sense of what he's struggling with and maybe some ability to support them with their struggles, but as a CEO, what's surprising to me is I am all about team health and people [00:08:00] doubling down on people in a way that I've never really understood how important it is until I got to this seat. You know, Covey's book

Speed of Trust, um, I think is, is not the best book in the world, but the concept couldn't be more true.

I watch sideways energy in our organization when in low trust moments, and I see great forward propulsion in our organization and high trust moments, and I'm trying to figure out how do we have more of the latter and less of the former.

Tim Spiker: If you have a conversation about leadership and we never talk about the word trust, we, we may not actually be having a conversation about leadership, at least that's, that's, that's how I think about it.

So, so as you have worked your way through a variety of roles at Baker, including president and now CEO. I know that Baker has made tremendous investments over long periods of time in the growth and development of [00:09:00] its leaders and its culture. And I would say just sharing with people out there that are listening.

I know that Baker does this at a volume level compared to their size that outpaces most organizations. They are supremely committed to making those investments. So, I'm just curious for folks to hear a little bit about the story about how did that evolve? How did you, how did you get to that spot where you're putting such a high premium on the development of leaders within the organization?

Gary Bridgewater: I give a lot of credit to BJ Baker, who is the second generation owner of Baker group. It was 2014, BJ and I and a woman named Kathy were talking about the future and we said we have a problem in 2027 and that is none of us are going to be here and we're going to have the next generation of leaders leading this place and our thought was how do we equip that group of people [00:10:00] so they have a better chance of winning and thriving and stress reduction than we had.

We made it up as we went along, and we had the understanding that the company that we were thinking about in 2024 would be so different in 2030. How do we equip people to be able to lead that company? Whatever it was going to look like in 2030. Which led us to Exceptional Leaders. Which led us to our first class in 2015 of what we call advanced leadership development.

And frankly, we didn't know what we were getting into kind of on faith. We thought, Hey, let's spend \$15,000 a person for 16 people in 2015 for their development and organizational development and what unfolded after that is the

thing that's so surprising for us. What unfolded after that is the impact of this development in people's personal lives and [00:11:00] how they were better parents and better husbands and better fathers.

And when that part of their life was healthier, it was easier for them to be healthier at work. And since 2015, we've had five classes of 16. Tells you how many people we've invested in. And I talk about that sideways energy that goes on in organizations. And part of the secret sauce of our organization is this group 70-80 people who see sideways energies going on and stop it in its tracks.

So, it doesn't have to be a senior leader doing it. We broaden the discipline and the awareness of what we want to be when we're at our best.

Tim Spiker: So, you make that initial investment, and you get a result that, if I were to summarize what you said, goes perhaps beyond the scope of what you were expecting. It reached into people's personal lives, not just at work.

[00:12:00] And so now as you look at the prospect of this isn't a one time, you know, \$15K per person investment, but we're going to make this a continuous investment for the organization. And for those that may not be familiar with the construction industry, they are not giving away money in the construction industry.

They are, they are making you earn it, and they are making you earn it at a relatively high risk level. The things that have to go on in the construction industry in order to come out the other side with a completed project and still some profit margin, there is meaningful business risk, economic risk that goes along with that.

And yet the decision is made at Baker. Oh, this isn't a one-time thing. We're going to go for it. We're going to go for it over a long period of time and continually make this investment. So, talk a little bit about after you got that first. How was it to go ahead and [00:13:00] say, well, we're going to make this not a one-time thing. We're going to, we're going to put some money down here on a pretty regular basis. And I say money, but time, energy, mindshare. It's not just a financial investment that you're making for sure.

Gary Bridgewater: Again, it just continued to evolve. We thought, wow, this is such an amazing experience for the first 16. Who would be the next 16?

What's fascinating where those first 16 we said are people already in leadership roles and drinking from a firehose and could use this right now with the second

16 there were some of those for traits. And there were three or four people that we would call talented assholes. And we said, what if we could reduce the sideways energy and the negative impact of the, of those three or four people and channel it in a way that, that supports the organization better.

Tim Spiker: So, what happened? I can just hear the question bubbles coming out from folks that are listening. What [00:14:00] happened with that small group of three to four?

Gary Bridgewater: One of them said, I'm out of here and self-selected out. Two of them became a better version of themselves. And they are both retired today. Probably the ability for them to stay here and, have a great story to end their primary career, that helped. And they were a better mentor. They're a better leader here. And one of them is still hiding in place with a smile on their face.

Tim Spiker: All right. I think based on that description; I might say three quarters success rate. Is that a, is that a fair way to put that?

Gary Bridgewater: Yeah. And even, even the one that you'd say is hiding in plain sight is a better version of themselves. They're just bumping up against their capacity to change their worldview.

Tim Spiker: Ooh, you just opened the door, Gary. We got to go there now. Okay. You just said the magical word worldview, which [00:15:00] plays such a pivotal role. And frankly, even referred to it a little bit earlier when you talked about your upbringing and the things that shaped you, especially as you mentioned the idea of having a safe place to be as you were growing up.

But let's talk about worldview a little bit because I don't personally bump if I'm, you know, walking down the street and I bump into Yeah. 10 CEOs. There are not 10 CEOs that want to talk about worldview. But you just brought it into the conversation without me even bringing it up. So, talk a little bit about the significance of worldview in, in developing leaders and, and how you've seen that unfold at Baker and maybe start with what's your definition of worldview, because it's, it's a term that the people have different ideas about. So, let's, let's talk about that and go from there.

Gary Bridgewater: You know, I'm not sure I have a great way to describe it for me, Tim. I've never actually been asked that question, but some words or some phrases come up generous service to others, [00:16:00] courage, resolve, kindness, gratitude. As we talked about earlier, I kind of say this.

If I deal every day with a level of humility and looking for the humanity and other people, and infusing humor into everything, a lightness into everything. I think the result for me is if I, if I do that, I just instill, I help people just be a little bit more hopeful and a little bit lighter their whole, what everything is going on in their life to the extent that I can have an impact on someone.

Tim Spiker: You listed a number of words there that I think for many of us, if we were to say, I get a chance to follow a leader who is generous, has gratitude and resolve, courage, has a mentality of service to others, even brings kindness and, oh, by the way, let's throw in some humility [00:17:00] and humor and a perspective on humanity.

All of that sounds like a leader that I would be pretty interested in following. But how is it that somebody's worldview could actually be shaped or influenced by where they show up to work? There's a lot of people that may not agree that those types of things can be influenced, that can be grown and developed in people. As somebody who's lived out that story at Baker, what's your perspective?

Gary Bridgewater: All of it can be learned and developed, every bit of it. And, and maybe learning it. I might use a different word. It can be refined. I am a product of a lifetime of to use your language of not being focused on others and not being internally sound and especially in this last 10 years of my primary career, finally [00:18:00] having the tools and the foundation to not just focused on me and focused on others and not just be something that is, I'm not just speaking the words, I can actually act out those words every day.

Tim Spiker: What a valuable thing to work to instill others from your role previously as president and now as CEO share a little bit about the process, because again, I think there's some folks who might be listening, who would say, okay, Gary saying that these really core ideas of who we can be, even down to the lenses through which we see life and work and everything can be influenced. But, how do you do that? How do you, how do you, because we know how to do the craft of the thing that we're about, whether it be we're manufacturing building materials or we're building wind farms or we're designing computers, whatever it is we might be doing. [00:19:00] There's a craft to that. There's a methodology, there's a process. And yet when we talk about ideas of generosity and gratitude and humility, you're, you're saying that those types of things can be refined in people, but, but what does that even look like?

How do you as a leader, how does an organization go after that?

Gary Bridgewater: I sent you some something that I shared with our organization around what my worldview is. And what's centered to that is the word support. People have joked with me for years. I say, so what else can I be doing for you? I say that to customers, I'd say that to people internally, and it got to be just this running that's kind of Gary's asking, what else can he be doing for you? It's amazing. What you get from people when you ask that question. But as I've learned, what I'm about is if I just figure out how to support the people that need support inside our organization, that allows them to support the people they need to support. And ultimately we're supporting our [00:20:00] customers.

Tim Spiker: Well, and just to give a little bit, we'll let folks know we're gonna, we're gonna share with you. You had sent over a diagram, which I want everybody to get a chance to see. But what you'll see in that diagram is that the CEO sits at the bottom of the organization, not the top. And you'll see this word that Gary is talking about support. How did you get to the mentality that this triangle of an organization is actually inverted when it's at its best? What was the, what was the process where you came to that kind of belief and leadership,

Gary Bridgewater: Gary? First of all, I don't think it's all that remarkable I was witnessing inside our walls some behavior that I didn't I didn't like and I wondered how I was contributing to it

Tim Spiker: I just need everybody to pay attention for a second I was witnessing some behavior in the organization that I didn't like and here are our options. A. I [00:21:00] nipped it in the bud. B. I pointed it out to everybody. You know. C. It was annoying so I looked the other way. Or D. Gary's answer. I wondered how I was contributing to it. The reason I cut you off and stopped there is because it is rare and commendable that that's the first question you would start with. All of the other things I just said, our options maybe not to look the other way part, but the other things are things that leaders can do, but you begin.

By asking yourself, how have you contributed to that? How did you get to, we're going to come back to the answer, Gary, but how did you get to that kind of a reaction? How did you get to that worldview that says, hey, I see a problem. It's likely I've contributed to it.

Gary Bridgewater: It's ownership. It's really hard for me to throw down on other people. unless I make sure I'm not in control of my own blind spots [00:22:00] because I have no problem. I'm an eight, Tim.

Tim Spiker: Enneagram eight for those that may be familiar. Enneagram eight. Yes. Gary has never met a decision that he didn't like wasn't ready to make. Is that fair?

Gary Bridgewater: That's right. But as I get older and wiser, I realize there's so many blind spots that I have. That I better get really clear with myself of how I'm either contributing positively or negatively to stuff. So, I thought I'm just going to write down what it looks like for me when I'm at my best, really, when I shared this with the organization, I said. I need to have you hold me accountable to this, and when you don't see it, call me out, and I'm going to invite the rest of you uh, into the same style of leadership.

That, and, and I gave all kinds of evidence of how it already exists here when we're having a good day, and evidence when it [00:23:00] doesn't show up when we're having a bad day.

Tim Spiker: Did it feel risky in that moment to invite people to hold you accountable to be, you know, aligned to this, you know, supportive CEO, generous, humble, all the, all the words that we've been talking about, that that feel like a risk to ask them to hold you accountable to that.

Gary Bridgewater: The risk is that they won't enter into it with me because of my position. That's the risk. I need, I need to be safe enough as a human being that they walk up to me and say, hey, Why'd you do this? So, I'm working on being the safest version of myself. So no, it's not a risk at all in the way you intended it.

Tim Spiker: So, the fact that Baker operates in the construction space is helpful, I think, in this conversation, because, you know, this is an industry that has a reputation of being, having a pretty hard edge on it. You think about kind of [00:24:00] the history of all kinds of different things, whether it's the conditions in which the work gets done, or when you think about going hard bit into the market and how do we, how do we squeeze, you know, I always squeeze 1 percent out of this job, which sometimes is a conversation you end up in. But to talk about this kind of leadership in an industry that for most of its history was extraordinarily accepting of, you know, some version of a baseball bat being, and I mean that metaphorically, being, you know, the primary leverage tool from a leadership standpoint, how is it, as you think about, you know, you know who your competitors are, you know, other organizations that haven't gotten better in this way and maybe play by traditional perspectives around construction. Talk a little bit about that because you're leading in this way in an industry that is not traditionally pulled in that direction [00:25:00]

Gary Bridgewater: You know, I'm lucky because. BJ before me was a very kind very straightforward leader, uh, that would give everybody the benefit of the doubt.

So, this is nothing new for our organization. I would tell you what I'm doing as the next leader after BJ is just taking some of the really cool traits of BJ. And saying them more out loud and setting a stronger tone about this is, this is where we're headed as a team. I can't speak to the, to the past.

I was here in 85, so I know exactly what you mean. Because in 1985, all the leaders were from World War II and the command and control structure. Was in place everywhere, but I, I have sensed, and I have felt with us for the last 15 years, it doesn't work the language that you might use her with your kids do it because I said, so that hasn't worked inside our walls.[00:26:00]

It probably hasn't worked for 20 years if we're really honest with ourselves and so you know I have this on my wall, if somebody's doing something I don't understand or if somebody's doing something doesn't make any sense to me there must be something I don't understand, I need to get curious and so getting really curious about what's going on around here.

And a lot of people don't understand the decisions being made instead of saying, well, that's what we did. So just deal with it, wander into it and educate people and talk about it. And this is why we're doing what we're doing. What else should we be doing? We need to create 50 CEOs around here. If we had 50 people that operated like the CEO, I can't imagine what we could do for customers and for our own bottom line.

Tim Spiker: That ultimate level of responsibility perspective [00:27:00] to say, Hey, no matter what's going on, if I'm leading here, then there's some contribution that I have made or not made. If it's not the way that I want it to be, then where have I contributed either by doing something or not doing something, saying something or not saying something?

And what do I then need to go out and change? And it gets back to that upside down triangle. I think there's a connection between those two things, which is this idea of support connected to the concept of humility, which begins when things aren't the way we want them to be with this question of. How have I contributed to this? Or the secondary question you've brought in, which is what do I not know? This doesn't make any sense. So, there's gotta be something that I don't know.

Hopefully people can just feel the, the, the culture of Baker as we're talking here, it kind of reeks in the best possible way, if these are the directions that we are encouraging and pushing our leaders and culture on a regular [00:28:00] basis.

So. Let's go back to 2014 for just a second. Then we're going to fast forward. You're in the conversation with BJ you're talking about, we have a problem. And by the way, hopefully we've all noted they're having this conversation 10 years in advance of the problem, which we probably all know of organizations who woke up one day and say, oh, we have a problem today.

So thankfully, you're having this conversation well in advance. You begin to make some very concerted and deliberate investments in the development of leaders. And here we are on the doorstep of 2024, as we are recording this. November 14th, 2023, when you look back at the preparation. That Baker has been making over the last decade and you look at the organization and think back to that 2014 conversation from what you see now, how do you feel about the progress that you've made and how the organization is set up for the next decade to come?

Gary Bridgewater: I'm, I'm probably my last day [00:29:00] in this primary career is probably sometime in 2027 or 2028. I want to go away, do other things and I want to, I want to step back in and look at this company some point around 2031. I just pick a date and time and I actually want to have a twinge of jealousy. About how good they're doing. I want to feel like, wow, they, they did this without me. And I want to feel jealous about that. And it'd be almost this human frailty about that. And when I have that emotion, I'll know we did something right.

Tim Spiker: When you, when you evaluate kind of, you look at that, a continuum between 2014 and this hope, hope of jealousy in 2031, and you're like, okay, where are we on that continuum here in 2024? Does it look like it's on track to you?

Gary Bridgewater: The next CEO has already been identified. It's an internal candidate, and we've communicated to the whole organization, even though it's three or four years [00:30:00] away, and I can tell you with almost 100 percent certainty, I know who the CEO will be after that in 2035. And these are all people that are internal people to Baker that are as invested in what this style of leadership looks like and shows up like every day.

So, Tim, I can tell you with almost total certainty and unless health issues get in the way or somebody wins the lottery, I can tell you who the CEO of this company will be for the next 20 years. That's how confident I am.

Tim Spiker: That consistency, Gary, to be able to, you're talking about being able to see it coming because you've invested in it. And you've watched these people grow. I think, you know, but I'll just confirm it, you know, I get it. I get the privilege of being in and out of a lot of organizations. I don't know anybody that can make the statement that you just made. I don't know any [00:31:00] organizations who have made such a concerted effort that they feel like they have these things identified out in advance that way and are ready and I'm sure that well, let me not put words in your mouth.

If something were to happen like a health situation or the lottery that that took one of those future CEOs out, how would you feel about the other players around to fill in that role and be that person, even if it's not the person that you expect.

Gary Bridgewater: Really good. The next CEO, there were really three candidates for that. And the one after that might be that's 2033 or 2035. I can think of three really great candidates for that.

Tim Spiker: Yeah. So many, like, I'm like, ah, there's 27 things to say about that. And yet maybe the most important one is, think about what that provides the organization. Back to your comment about 50 CEOs. That's tremendous. That's [00:32:00] tremendous. Is there anything that you wanted to make sure that we spent some time talking about that we haven't talked about?

Gary Bridgewater: Coach me, Tim, as I listened to you, here's some areas I'm still curious about challenged me in one or two areas. If there are any.

Tim Spiker: A lot of the qualities that you listed here are deeply connected to the other's focus side of things. And yet I have seen, and I bet you have as well, some leaders that get the concept of being others focused, but they are lacking some of the being inwardly sound piece that really helps enable that somebody who says, yeah, I see the value in having a service mentality as a leader, but I'm so deeply insecure and those questions are bouncing around all the time that I, I really have a hard time being others focused because I've got some really big, important questions about myself [00:33:00] that are yet unanswered.

And so, some combination of a lack of security and a lack of self-awareness means that my mind and heart desire to be others focused, but I'm going to be

limited by these things that sit below that. So, I guess the challenge slash question would be to what extent is the organization also talking about, on a regular basis, investing in requiring, even at a certain level, this maturation around being inwardly sound

Gary Bridgewater: As, you know, exceptional leaders actually outside our ALD group does a program called Leaders Journey. That's a three-year program. And so far, we have five people that are going through that program.

I graduated from it last January. And we have four other people and we're about to add another person to it. So, as we look at that, that tier of leaders that, that I'm talking about, [00:34:00] and we're that are on that short list of people that could be the senior leader in this organization, every one of them is working on getting better and getting healthier at being inwardly sound and others focused.

And for me personally, my journey, my journey is really around, I don't know if you'd call it emotionally mature. But I'm one of those guys that spent most of my life shutting off all feelings.

Tim Spiker: But you're, you're conscious of that. I'm, I'm guessing, how far back, we go back 10 years, are you as conscious of that, even that question of, well, what am I really feeling? As you, were you as conscious of that today as you were a decade ago? More so today, I'm guessing?

Gary Bridgewater: So much so. I wouldn't have even known to ask the question a decade ago. What am I feeling a decade ago would be leave your feelings at the door. I'll tell you why I touched on this. What I [00:35:00] realized one of my blind spots is how in the world can I touch into the emotions of other people if I'm not willing to touch into my own emotions, and I realized for me to develop as a leader, that is a big part of the work that I need to do. And I'm, I'm continuing to do.

Tim Spiker: So, I want to follow up our conversation with Gary Bridgewater by pointing out a couple of things that Gary shared with us. The first is, did you notice his conviction when he talked about the development of some things that live at the very core of who we are?

He was talking about generosity, gratitude, resolve, courage, service to others, kindness, humility. And I asked him, you know, Are these things developable? You know, are these things that you can grow and develop and others? And he was, he was unequivocal in his comment afterwards. He said, absolutely. Yes. And that they've had that experience at Baker.

But lest you believe that is [00:36:00] simply a Baker group story. There is research out there to support what Gary and Baker have experienced. And the primary source comes from Cheryl Armand and Theo Dawson. They were building on the work of a Harvard researcher, Lawrence Kohlberg, about the stage development of moral reasoning.

And they began a 13-year study. And over that time, they measured the development of the inner core of who people are. And some of their subjects in the study were 55 years and older when the study began. So, we're talking about people that are not in their teens or their twenties. And they found some very interesting results.

They found that in fact anybody could grow and develop at the core of who they are in moral reasoning and development regardless of their age. So, there was no hindrance. Now it can be a little bit tougher later in life. But it's certainly not impossible. And then they found [00:37:00] another thing that I think is really worth noting.

If you take the very highest stage of this moral reasoning and development called post-conventional reasoning, Cheryl Arman and Theo Dawson found that no one, no one reached that highest stage before the age of 35. So, this idea, this concern, and I've heard it many times and I understand it. It makes sense to say, hey, can we actually grow and develop at the core of who we are beyond the age of 30? Is that possible?

The answer is yes. The investment does turn a result. Now you might find somebody who's not willing to grow and develop in the core of who they are, but from a psychological standpoint, from a personhood standpoint, it is possible for us to develop the core of who we are throughout our entire lives. And so, what Gary experienced observationally is in fact true from a human psychology [00:38:00] standpoint and a research standpoint.

Another point that I want to emphasize here as we wrap up this episode is the utter intentionality of Gary and others at Baker to develop the next generation of leaders in the organization.

To think that they began that conversation in 2014, and here we are just about to head into 2024, the idea that they're planning ahead like that, and then doing something about it. And see, that's the, that's the thing we could, we could get together. We could have an hours, hours long conversation about wouldn't it be great if, or shouldn't we, and then not do anything.

And yet, Gary and other leaders at Baker have dedicated themselves to utter intentionality around the development of the next generation of leaders that is coming after them, and that is coming after that group, as you heard him describe that.

So, all of that leads [00:39:00] me to the question I want to leave you with today. And that is this, are you utterly intentional about developing the leaders who are coming behind you? This is Tim Spiker reminding you to be worth following and to follow us wherever you receive your podcasts. If you've heard something valuable today, please share our podcast with your friends and colleagues.

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