

BWF_Adam Tarnow

Adam Tarnow: [00:00:00] There's another way to look at it, which is, hey guys, guess what? I'm not trying to be pessimistic, but the bar's never been lower. And so, if you really want to stand out, you don't have to backstab. You don't have to sell out. You don't have to change who you are. If you just put a little bit of thought around how you are. Presenting yourself at work each day. Your career will take off.

Tim Spiker: While engagement from followers is an issue. Every senior leader needs to take seriously that doesn't absolve emerging leaders from needing to show that they are all in. 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.

You just heard from leadership thinker, author, and podcaster Adam Tarnow. If you go by Adam's resume, it seems as if he's had two different professional lives, one in [00:01:00] business accounting and the other in a faith-based nonprofit. But at the intersection of these two wildly different industries emerged Adam's true calling. Engaging with and developing leaders.

Adam is the co-author of the book, *The Edge*, and he's the co-host of the podcast, *How to Lead*. His mission today is to equip professionals with the qualitative skills they need to become excellent leaders. During this episode, Adam shares with us the book that inspired him to write his book.

He talks about the four overarching qualities it takes to stand out as an emerging leader. And he challenges us as senior leaders. To do more than complain about younger leaders, while expecting them on their own to just figure it out. But first, we get to hear how Adam's attendance at a Christian church unexpectedly introduced him to the passion he now has for leadership.

Adam Tarnow: Where I was awoken to this idea of leadership would be [00:02:00] probably 1998 at a local church. Of all places. And so, I had just moved to Atlanta after I graduated from Clemson. I was working in Atlanta, got plugged into what at that time was a very young and up and coming local church. I went there and met a guy, I met a bunch of people, but it, it completely, the church itself blew my mind on all the preconceived notions of what a local church could be.

I didn't grow up. Going to church a lot. It was something for me that kind of awakened in me when I was in my early twenties. So, at this point, when I just graduated from college, I was still in my early twenties. So, this is all new. But I was still used to any church that I did go to growing up was very, very small, you know, 75 people, 100 people, nothing, nothing massive.

As I started to go to this big, you know, vibrant, young church. I start to meet some of the most impressive leaders I've ever met in my life. And [00:03:00] they took an interest in me and started to teach me, not only, you know, teach me about the faith, but they also started to teach me about organizational leadership and leading volunteers.

And it was It was very influential in my life. So, there were some of the, the people that I knew from afar, you know, names like, like Andy Stanley and Louis Giglio and those guys that were a part of that church. But then there were people that were very up close and personal guys by the name of like Bill Willits and Bob Strickland and that had a really profound impact, influence and impact on me. And so, as I'm learning all that in the faith world, I started to understand that these principles were not just for my personal life these principles really impacted all of life. And that's where things really started to become fun for me with these things that I was learning in the church context.

We're really about how to lead people and I could use that anywhere and then starting to apply it. My young, my young professional career was you know, everything kind of started there in Atlanta in the late [00:04:00] nineties.

Tim Spiker: I think it's really interesting because And I don't I won't say that this is true certainly not of everybody's experience but in in my experience when you start to lean into the nonprofit world, there are two things.

One, it's, it is an amazing place to think about leadership because you don't have, you know, you don't have the leverage of a paycheck at the same time, right? I would say that I've seen a lot of very poor leadership in the nonprofit space. I got a lot of theories about that, but one of them is when it comes to leading volunteers.

People have the choice about whether or not to be there. I think one of the things that I've seen is when organizations are not thoughtful about volunteer's time which is to say, look, they're not paying, they have no motive for efficiency. As long as we can get people to say yes, then we'll just have them kind of hang out in the parking lot for a while until we figure out what we're doing. [00:05:00]

But I think Northpoint in particular. I think is a very unique place that doesn't fall into that typical mode of being a not well led nonprofit organization. In fact, I think it's really just the opposite. And for those who may not be familiar with it, Andy Stanley, who Adam just mentioned, has a great leadership podcast that is worth everybody's listen.

And it doesn't matter what your faith background is. It's focused on the issue of leadership. They understand that not everybody listening comes from the same faith background, but I don't often recommend things from the nonprofit or faith community because it can be led so poorly at times. But North Point is really, in my opinion, really just the opposite. So, I definitely would, would plug the podcast.

Adam Tarnow: Yeah, and then, you know, then as I start on this journey, and again, I like to say that my eyes were just kind of awoken to this idea of leadership and people and who is an influencer and how do you gain influence. Then it [00:06:00] truly became, I don't want to sound cheesy here, my life's passion from a curiosity perspective.

I just have not stopped studying and observing what causes a group of people to follow another group of people in multiple contexts. So, you know, in my accounting career and 10 years, my 10 years working for a local church in the nonprofit world now, you know, in the consulting world, it's just a fascinating, fascinating case study for me.

So, I've been observing so many leaders for the last 25 years. And it's really interesting as I'm watching some men and women get towards the end of their leadership career and we're getting to see the end of the movie, so to speak, and there are certain examples and certain things that now I can go after I've seen the end going, huh, I don't know if that one really worked out the way they thought. And so, I'm, I'm all these people that are my young twenties. I just kind of put on these pedestals and go, they're an amazing leader, follow everything they do, try to be like [00:07:00] them. I've now had the privilege of seeing the end of a few movies going.

Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. If I was watching that movie over again, I would go, that's an issue. I think that I know long term that's going to come back and bite that person. And I'm not like trying to shine a spotlight on anybody's failures. I just think as a student of leadership. It's interesting to watch both the good stories and to take note of some of the ones that maybe didn't end the way the person wanted it to.

Tim Spiker: Sometimes it comes with that gut level intuition where you see somebody that appears to be chasing trends instead of following principles. And maybe at first they're successful in aligning with You know, current momentum, whether it be, you know, culturally in terms of society, but you see where they're, they're disconnecting from some of the core principles and it they're doing well at first, but then eventually it can kind of break apart because it's very difficult to stay aligned with trends long term. We need [00:08:00] grounded principles, so I've seen some of that in terms of examples that you. You can think of. And again, you know, as you said, the point isn't to vilify anybody, but to learn, you know, what's an example of a story that maybe started out in one way and ended up in a way in a different way, just to put some meat on the bones there.

Adam Tarnow: I would just say this, like when those leaders, when certain leaders come on the scene and seem to be so counter cultural, like that is so wildly different. Then some of the things that I am used to seeing in leadership that can become very novel and interesting for a season. And then that, then you start to see some of those differences really exacerbate themselves and become divisive after a while, like those differences really were just kind of interesting and new at first, but maybe long term they were not great strategies.

If we went to an example here I think this would be another good one which is one that's out there in popular media apple tv plus made the story called, We Crashed right which is the story of Adam Newman and we [00:09:00] work because I think that's you know the celebrity leaders that come crashing on the scene filled with charisma and what we now know is like toxic level of optimism and positivity, I think are great examples of that. It seems so different at first, like, wow, they are the unicorn. They seem to have the golden touch and look at how charismatic they are. And look, their corporate motto is to like awaken the world's consciousness, What business does that? Well, none, you know why? Because it doesn't work. That's not real, but it was cool at first. And then it was, you know, we got to see how that really wasn't leadership. Yeah. That was a, that was an abdication of responsibility. That was toxic positivity. That was a refusal to recognize what was truly wrong.

That was not defining reality. That was that was something completely different. So that, that's maybe one that's a little bit more safe to talk about because it's out there that everybody knows about.

Tim Spiker: I think that's a wonderful distinction because I think in the end, as we think about [00:10:00] kind of promotion.

And messaging and communication, I think it's important that we, that we pause and think, I wonder what's going on behind the scenes, which is not to say that behind the scenes is terrible, but does it have substance? Because ultimately it look, if I can be great from a podium, if you can be great from a podium delivering a message, let's call that what it is.

Let's not call that leadership. Let's even be careful about, okay, maybe it's vision. Maybe Speaking things is not leading like behind that. It's great that you have vision and it's great that you can communicate it. I might even just call that PR, but if there's no systems and there's no process and there's no substance, and that's very frustrating to be to be following that kind of leader, who's all PR.

And again, I'm not saying every leader has to be an execution maniac, but you need execution people in place if you're not going to be that [00:11:00] person.

Adam Tarnow: yeah, I mean that the PR people, they end up what Maxwell said, the person who's taking a walk but has no followers. Is just out taking a walk. That's all you're doing, you're not leading. So you may have some, you may have a lot of followers and people that you think are listening to you, but it ultimately is determined by how many people continue to follow you day in and day out, which is, you know, one of the best definitions of leadership in my years of study that I've ever come across is this idea that leadership at its core is, is the person who chooses to take initiative for the benefit of others.

And so, what I what I love about that definition of leadership that I learned from my buddy Duke Revard years ago is it's pressure relieving and it's not a list of all these words that you have to try to memorize. It really is just this very portable definition that is applicable to any and every leadership situation that we face.

It very much lines up with the Who* Not What message that I know is near and dear to your heart because the person who does live their life where they want to just support leadership. [00:12:00] Every day wake up and drive wherever it is that they're driving and say what can I do today to take initiative for the benefit of others that's a person who has to have some substance under underneath to be able to drive that others focused but it really does it's it reminds us of the autonomy in the agency of leadership that just because you have a title doesn't mean you're a leader you still have to choose the lead the primary activity is initiative that you're just you're not waiting for people you're gonna go first that.

Activity is hopefully going to be not for harm, but for good. The benefit piece that you're going to, you're, you're trying to do things that are going to bring benefit to people. And then hopefully the, the target is others more so than yourself. Very much influenced by Donald Miller's thoughts on this and Hero on a Mission about this idea of mutual benefit there with that piece that that really is the key to sustainability.

So, it's not 100 percent altruism all the time. That's impossible. We're humans. But there has to be hopefully more often than not. We're taking [00:13:00] initiative to bring good to others, not just to make our life easier. I think those truly are the leaders that are worth following. You know, that's where, like with your message, Tim, and what you're doing, that's where I feel such a camaraderie and like a connection between what you're doing.

Because, you know, even though we may, we may have different definitions and certain ways that we're approaching things. It really is that same basic core that's there, which I, which I just, I find that those were, those have been my favorite leaders to follow. Those have been the leaders that have been the greatest examples.

I think they've done the most good, not just in our organizations, but around the world. And it's a portable definition that feels like, okay, that's, that's, that's attainable. I think I can do that.

Tim Spiker: And I mean, it's very direction setting. It's simple. It can be, you know, when we get into the weeds and sometimes it does feel overcomplicated and, and, and so many words and we're trying to get it, like, what if I just came back to this definition and let it guide me?

What if I thought about, am I taking initiative? For the benefit of others. Am I, am I doing that today? It would be very [00:14:00] centering. And I think, I think it's worth remembering, you know, as you, as you mentioned in there, this idea of mutual benefit, there's a couple of things that come to mind because as we do work with our clients, this question comes up sometimes, because we talk about the ideas of what does it mean to be sacrificial for others. And, and one of the things that we get into is this kind of dilemma where folks will find that they're benefiting and they're like, oh wait, I'm not others focused now because I'm benefiting. And what I would say to that is we have to be willing to sacrifice. I have to be willing to put somebody else first.

Now, does that always turn out poorly for me? No. I mean, I have a very simple example that comes to mind, which maybe isn't all that fair, but I will sacrifice

dollars to give my child a Christmas present or a birthday present. And what happens when they open it up and their face lights up? I can tell you what happens in the heart of a father in that moment.

And I can also tell you, I may have sacrificed dollars, but I'm not losing out. [00:15:00] So, this idea that we would be willing to sacrifice and not put our, not put ourselves first.

Adam Tarnow: Sometimes when we are sacrificing it, it is it will feel like that, and the reward will come a little bit later for us. I can think about a couple of instances with some dear friends that when I was on staff at a nonprofit, I had to help them make the decision to leave the organization.

Very, very hard conversations, right? That that took initiatives like I gotta have these conversations. I can't avoid these. I need to have these. I want to be clear. These people were not being fired. It was not being fired. It was not, it was more my reflection of where their heart was towards the mission and thinking, I think your heart's drifted and I think, I think it's time for you to maybe move on to go find something else to now for one of them over a decade later and the other one, five years later to see how they are thriving. That they are thriving now. The reward has come a little bit to go. Hey, they had to have the courage to make the final [00:16:00] decision on all that. But that was a hard conversation back in the day. But I'm now seeing that it truly was a conversation motivated by benefit for them and to see them thriving in this in their new endeavors is really rewarding.

So, yeah, sometimes that sacrifice comes later. Like, like you just said, I buy the gift at, you know, whatever store at Amazon or Walmart or Target. And then six weeks later, I get to see the face light up and that's but there's a reward that will come.

Tim Spiker: Help us understand how a 10 year, a decade veteran CPA comes over to the leadership side because that's a that's not a common story to be a CPA who is up in front of people and in this way.

Adam Tarnow: There are certain parts of my life where I feel like I was destined to be an accountant. I'm actually a third-generation accountant. You know, it really is just like that, that DNA lottery. I really don't know what else to say. It's funny, there's a, there's an assessment tool that I use in my work called the PXT Select, which [00:17:00] measures thinking style, behavior preferences, and interests.

And on the interest section, my top two interests that pop up, number one, creativity, number two, financial and Admin. Listen, as far as I can remember, I've got this real logical brain. I can be analytical. I can be I can not be super decisive, not very bold and decision making. Like, I have all the makeup and some of the personality that is, that is drawn towards accounting.

It was a puzzle. I like putting puzzles together. I took a class in high school. I loved it. My dad was an accountant. And so, he just said, listen, this is a good stable job that can, you know, this is a path to, to you know, being middle class, basically. And so that sounded really good. My dad didn't go to college.

He was a statistic. My grandfather didn't go to college. And so, my dad was like, go to go to college, get your accounting degree, become a CPA and you're pretty well set. And listen, his strategy was right. It opened up so many doors. What I also had in me was this love of learning and teaching. [00:18:00] And can and I knew that in eighth grade, I've got some, you know, maybe stories for another day of where I was always praised for my.

When I, I was standing in front of classes in eighth grade in my math class, my teacher would let me stand up and teach the warmup exercise every day for a year. Wow. And I loved it. Wow. And I remember there was a student teacher in that class one day, and she came up to me after she watched me do that and she goes, have you ever thought about being a teacher?

But I just didn't know how to blend the two of them. And so, it just like for all of us, Tim, it's just a it's just a journey. And again, I'll go back to that showing up there at North Point and starting to see how you could earn a living and be a teacher, but not just feel like you had to only teach in the elementary or middle school or high school levels like there, there was a way to teach adults and that, you know, then, then it was like, all right, what subject matter do I like?

And that's where I always found [00:19:00] myself teaching. It just was, it was what I was learning and what I learned is what I go teach. And so anyway, I was, I was a very average auditor and accountant, but I was really, I was really good at developing others. People liked being a part of my teams. They always felt like I helped make them better.

And so that gave me a clue that if I was going to leave accounting, that may be an area where I could continue to add value and earn a living.

Tim Spiker: Well, occasionally this kind of thing happens to people like, like you and, and I, and I'll include myself in that category. I'm an engineer by

education and we don't usually end up necessarily in these kinds of spaces either. I'm thinking of another individual. I know Jeff Brzezinski, who is an IT mind, who also is a wonderful leadership teacher and executive. So once in a while we get picked out of kind of the boxes that people would expect us to be in and, and we end up doing things like Delivering content and writing books.

So, let's talk [00:20:00] about the book. It's called the edge. You co-wrote it. So, talk a little bit about what motivated you to write the edge, to you know, take on the endeavor of writing a book.

Adam Tarnow: Well, we were both, you know, David Morrison who's chief operating officer for an organization called Takala Companies.

They own and run Taco Bell franchises. They've got over 300 of them, 8,000 employees, massive organizations right there. That is a lot of tacos. And now they're starting to open up seven brews, which are as this drive through coffee concept. That's awesome. And so, they're starting to open up those as well.

So, David and I have been dear friends for. Over 15 years and a couple things that we saw. Number one, I do, I feel like we're standing on the shoulders of Clay Scroggins and his book, How to Lead When You're Not in Charge. That was a phenomenal book for both of us in our career and like all good creative endeavors, you, you build on somebody else's work and you start to fill in some gaps and some details.

So, and we just want to give credit to Clay because I really feel like we [00:21:00] took his idea and then we started to add some more details to it as we took his, his core principles from that book. And we incorporated that into our professional journey and the way that we were developing other leaders under us.

We just felt like, hey, there's some more to say to this. So, I, I don't want to diminish Clay's title by saying we feel like ours is a sequel because it's not nearly as good as clay's, but that's, I think that's part of the origin story, as you mentioned, that is really helpful. To put some context around it.

Another motivating factor was, I don't know about you, but when I look at all the employee engagement stats out there, they're all terrible. Most of the articles that are written or podcast recorded or books written about how to solve employee engagement is basically, Hey, manager, you suck. And although that's right and appropriate to point at managers and senior leaders we do feel like it's a lopsided conversation and there's another way to look at this and there you can

talk to the employee and there's another way to look at it, which is, [00:22:00] hey, guys, guess what?

I'm not trying to be pessimistic, but the bar's never been lower. And so, if you really want to stand out you don't have to backstab, you don't have to sell out, you don't have to change who you are. If you just put a little bit of thought around how you are presenting yourself at work each day, your career will take off.

And so that was, that was why we wrote it. And so, the E.D.G.E. is an acronym. That stands for these four basic characteristics that we think somebody who does want to show I'm serious about their career, they'll focus on these four things and that's Energy, Diligence, Growth and Endurance. So just bring in a positive energy every day being very, very good at your job.

That's the diligence showing care and persistence towards your work, having that growth mindset or that showing that you have a hunger for progress and development that you want to keep getting better. You're not going to settle. You never graduate, so to speak, you're always a work in progress. And then just to show endurance and to show some resilience and some grit, not [00:23:00] to quit when things get hard.

We think those four things, if you do that. I'm telling you, just watch out. People are going to start to take notice and you're going to leave the competition behind, so to speak.

Tim Spiker: I think it's telling the subtitle of the book. Can you share that with folks that are listening? So that gives them a little broader scope on what the edge is about kind of to couple it with what you just said.

Adam Tarnow: Yeah. So, it's how to stand out by showing your all in, and then it's a book in parentheses. It's for emerging leaders. So those early in their career and those who lead them. So, if you are responsible for leading some emerging leaders, this would hopefully give you some language to use to basically say, Hey, this is what I think these authors are right.

This is what we're looking for around here. And so, as we've, you know, the book's been out a little over a year now, the most encouraging feedback we've gotten is from those organizations that are using it as a playbook of sorts for their young emerging leaders. Thank you. [00:24:00] To say, you know, we may not agree with all 12 of the principles that are talked about in this book, but there's a lot of them in here that they say what we want to say.

This is what we're looking for. And yes, if you do want to stand out around here, do these things. And so that's been, that's been really helpful and encouraging to see how people managers are using the content to train up their next generation of leaders and say, yeah, this is what we're looking for.

Tim Spiker: I so appreciate this idea as we think about engagement. Yes, I agree with you that normally the answer is okay, manager, you suck. And to agree with you, we've got to take responsibility for that. And yet there is an opportunity on the other side of the coin to invite emerging leaders into this kind of space. But yet here we are, you know, so many of our listeners operate at the top of their organizations or very high levels.

What is it that people in the C suite or senior levels of leadership really need to keep in mind when it [00:25:00] comes to working with, supporting, developing the younger emerging leaders in their organizations?

Adam Tarnow: Yeah, I just do not assume it's the curse of knowledge. Do not assume that they are able to connect the dots on these, what it takes to get ahead and what it takes to have a good executive presence, personal brand, whatever it is.

That that, you know, things that you probably figured out along the way, which is how to navigate a complex organization. Just do not assume that this next generation of leaders knows about all of those, those attributes and those soft skills and those things that they are going to need to be able to get ahead.

I had a stint when I was on staff at Watermark Community Church for about four years doing college ministry. So, it had been, you know, over almost 20 years since I had been in college. And then I got to go back and spend time four years with college students. And I could not believe how [00:26:00] different college was compared to when I was there, today's average college student is so distracted and so stressed. That they are just, their mind is, is typically just in the mire of technical details. How am I going to pass this class? How am I going to graduate? How am I going to memorize all these facts to ace this test?

How am I going to fill up my resume so that that looks good, so then I can get hired and get a job? Then they're plopped into corporate America and they've been taught by no fault of their own, almost no... People skills, relational skills, emotional intelligence skills. And we as Gen X, Boomers who are watching them are just throwing our hands up going, you know, why don't they know this stuff?

Well, it's because it's one of the most stressed out, busy generations that has ever been around. They're incredibly smart. They're incredibly bright. They have phenomenal creative ideas. And when you can just give them a little bit of attention and help them and hold their [00:27:00] hand a little bit and teach them some of these things there, they can be incredibly effective leaders and producers and really help an organization.

Tim Spiker: What do you say to a senior leader whose response that would be? Well, nobody did that for me. I just had to figure it out in that part of it. I mean, why should I have to hold their hand? Why should I have to make it so easy for them that that wasn't an advantage that I had. And I don't know that I'm up for putting all the time and energy into holding hands of people who should figure it out on their own anyway.

Adam Tarnow: Well, that's, that's great. I can understand that because senior leaders are busy, and they have a lot going on. I, I would say not to be too fatalistic. I think the future of the organization is riding on your ability to do that. And so, and I think Gallup has, has done a lot of senior leaders a favor.

Specifically with their research that came out and It's the Manager and night in 2019 on the future of work and how it's changing and what people want. So, one of the things that's changed is where [00:28:00] the way people are thinking about work, where they used to when you and I started our careers, it was like, I just hope I have a good boss.

You know, I just want a good boss. Where now, they're using different languages. I hope I have a good coach because there is this hunger for development. And so, this is the new way to communicate care where for you and I, what communicated care was a 401k plan, health insurance with low copayments PTO and things like that.

We were like, golly, this is amazing. Where nowadays it's no, if I, if this person cares about me as a person and is developing me, that's where I'm going to show loyalty. So, nothing's different. Everybody's looking for reasons to stick around, but there's a lot of different reasons. Now that's the part that is changing.

Tim Spiker: We're all responsible to invest in the people that are directly. Reporting to us. And if we're thinking maybe as we, if I can be so bold as to say, maybe as we should as leaders, then that means that [00:29:00] the leaders we're developing, that we're encouraging them to reach down and coach and develop as well.

That should be part of our conversations with them. When you think back, you mentioned the book's been out for about a year. Curious as to, you know, what are some of the most common responses or feedback points that you've gotten as you've introduced folks to. The E.D.G.E. concepts.

Adam Tarnow: There's a couple of illustrations in the books or some metaphors that we use that seem to be getting a lot of good feedback. And so, one of them on the chapter on resourcefulness, problem solving. We give the metaphor of if you just continue to tell your manager about problems without bringing solutions, that's like taking your trash and dumping it on your manager's desk and saying, there, deal with that and then walking away.

So little things like that seem to be sticking with people. And then maybe the, like the, the chapter, if there was [00:30:00] one chapter that we've been hearing a lot about is the chapter on conflict in, in the section on endurance and how that's a way we build endurance is learning how to have difficult conversations at work.

I just seem to not be able to talk about how to handle hard conversations enough, like the moment I start to get into those waters when I'm in front of a group of leaders. I mean, you know, you know how it is sometimes when you're in front of people, Tim, and you can tell by their eyes that they're listening because their eyes are like just so locked on. That's when people listen with their eyes, is when I start talking about how to navigate those really sticky conversations at work.

Tim Spiker: You know, they're there. I think the spot where we get that kind of dialed in. I'd look if you if you will on that is when we're talking about that connection between who and results.

Ultimately, people seem to really lean in because I [00:31:00] think it connects with their experience in a way. And we're not inventing anything. You know, I'm a reporter. More than anything else, all we're doing is articulating the thing that they've experienced their entire lives, just giving some explanation to it.

And so that's where particularly that's where I feel a lean in from folks in some of the conversations that we end up with. But back to this conflict thing, I think I'll confess I've got I've got some concerns as we look forward into what is kind of brewing in terms of younger folks, and I don't want to be the I don't want to be the kids these days guy because I think you know, I think I think a variety of people, including Simon Sinek, have done a good job of kind of unpacking the space in which younger leaders are growing out of and so many things that they

didn't choose but have chosen them because of the time and space in which they were in which they were born.

And yet, you know, the ubiquitousness of technology, especially these little things that [00:32:00] we carry around in our hands. And I would say changing definitions. I can just imagine this wide eyedness you're talking about and leaning in around conflicts because we seem to be entering a space where some people will mistake conflict for failure or conflict for harm and if there's anything that we can talk about right now in our society, my goodness, bring up the word harm and it's like, no, no, no. And, you know, Henry Cloud has a wonderful distinction between harm and hurt. And in his book necessary and endings, he talks about, there are things that hurt us, but are good. And we should be careful not to mistake them for harm. And he gives the example of a of a tooth extraction, which does not feel good. It hurts, but it isn't. It is the opposite of harm when you look at the long run. And so, as I look at a world, I mean, you hear about this idea of people being ghosted all the time. And I just get a little pit in my stomach when I hear that, [00:33:00] because I'm thinking through technology, you. Are we raising up a generation of leaders who doesn't know how to do conflict well in relationship?

You know, a disagreement can be a wonderful thing if we handle it well, cause it can help us find a solution that wasn't even on the table when we started. I love that you're digging in on conflict and just remind me, which of the four does the, does the conflict piece stand under,

Adam Tarnow: We put that in the endurance chapter. We talk about resilience there. We talk about conflict, and we talk about patience really being building endurance with your attention span. The new winners in the new world, I really do believe are those that know how to control their attention. Who can say not yet, not yet or not now to something easy and fun, because listen, we live in Disney world all the time, right?

There's always a, there's always something fun and easy and those that can say not now to fun and easy, I'm going to [00:34:00] focus on what's, what needs to be done. It just seems like the bar keeps getting lower and it just, just new skills that you're going to need to be able to stand out and win. And I think just attention management is one of those skills we all need now.

Tim Spiker: You mentioned Clay Scroggins earlier, and it's and it's fun to think about the other part of the story, which our folks are gonna get to hear about now, which is you mentioned how influential Clay's book How to Lead When

You're Not in Charge was and now. You have a little closer relationship with Clay than you, than when you originally read the book.

So, you and Clay, you, you have a podcast, how to lead, and you just you just crossed a hundred episodes. So congratulations Talk a little bit about that experience and what you and Clay have been learning by, by having this podcast now over 100 episodes long.

Adam Tarnow: Here's the way I would describe our podcast. And I don't know if this is good marketing or not, but here's the way I would describe it. So, Clay and I both do things that are very similar to you. We both are in that leadership development [00:35:00] space where we're working with clients and leaders all day, every day. We view the podcast as a little bit of an incubator for some of our ideas to talk about some things that we're seeing to talk shop.

Almost like the way a stand-up comedian would view small clubs as they're getting ready for their Netflix special. That's a place for us to try out some new ideas, to try on some new ideas, to try some new ways of thinking and new content. So those are some things that have been fun for us just to stay in the game.

And to stay growth minded ourselves and to there's just something about the discipline of putting content out every week that as a creative has been immensely helpful for us from like a leadership perspective, maybe the biggest takeaway is that people still hate meetings whenever we put content out about meetings. Those get downloaded and shared at a much faster clip than others.

One of the things that I've been so surprised by, so 10 years as a [00:36:00] CPA, 10 years on staff at a church, and then now three and a half years in this leadership development space. There's a subtle conviction that I've had and then some things that I've really been surprised by and impressed by just about, uh, and, and like, if I could have a message for, for all leaders, it would be around this idea of, of just the dignity behind what you're doing and trying to lead other people.

I think I falsely believe that some of the best leaders in the world were all in the church. And I want to be very careful when I say this, there's a lot of great leaders in the church. And, and I'm so glad that I was wrong, that they're not all in the church, if that makes sense. I mean, some of the finest leaders I have met are out there just getting it done in their organizations, adding value to people's lives, providing jobs, trying to do good work, trying to work hard.

And they're really impacting a lot of people and it, it really does. And I don't want to sound cheesy. It's an honor [00:37:00] to try to spur them on and to help them get better and develop them. And I think that's been a big surprise on this journey over the last three years. It's just what an embarrassment of riches this country has when it comes to really, really great leaders that are out there and all walks of life.

And it really encourages me, and this kind of comes full circle, right? As we talked about all the celebrity leaders that are often held up. And if we believe Jim Collins research was right in Good to Great. And that the level five leader really does have that, that mix of that ambition and that humility.

I think what that would mean to us from a practical standpoint is probably some of the greatest leaders the world's ever seen have never graced the pages of Forbes magazine or wall street journal. They've never had a documentary made about them. I'm seeing that to be true. And just my little slice of the world that some of the greatest leaders I've ever met, nobody's ever heard of them. And I love it. I love it, right? Because they're just out there getting it done, and it fires me up and spurs me on. So, this work [00:38:00] matters. It really does. Not just the work you and I do. I mean, the work of leadership matters. It really matters. It impacts lives, and it makes the world a better place.

And so, I just, I'm honored that we get to be a small part of it.

Tim Spiker: It's so fun to interact with and talk with a leadership pro like Adam Tarnow. And there are a couple of things that Adam shared that I would put a special emphasis on as we wrap up today. The first one is that definition of leadership that he shared, taking initiative for the benefit of others.

If we do that over the long haul, that will, over the long haul, produce the greatest result, taking initiative for the benefit of others. If leadership starts to get really complicated at times, that is a definition worth thinking about holding onto. Maybe you even print it out and put it somewhere where you can see it.

The other thing that I want to make a special point about before we sign off with [00:39:00] this episode is the discussion point that Adam and I got into around the issue of conflict. And under the banner of endurance in his book, The E.D.G.E, he talks about conflict and the need for healthy conflict. And this is a, this is a challenging issue because frankly, there are many leaders at very senior leadership spots in organizations who are deathly afraid of conflict. Now, as soon as I say that I'm sure many of you can think of the people who are the

opposite. It's like, they're looking for a fight at all times. And that's a different issue, but there are many of us. Who don't sit in the conflict space?

Well, we don't know how to do healthy conflict. We don't know how to engage with opposition ideas without becoming defensive. Even if we're a quiet defensive, you don't have to be a big, loud defensive person to be defensive. How can we engage with conflict in a healthy [00:40:00] way? Because a conflict of ideas can be when handled in a mature way, one of the best things for our organization, it's going to help us get to the best outcomes and think about the avoidance of conflict. If we're not able to be in dialogue and discussion where we don't agree with one another, what is that going to take off the table? In its most extreme sense, it can paralyze an executive team or a leadership team or division team or a frontline team.

If we're not able to disagree. In a mature way, in an effective way, in a healthy way. So that leads me to the question I want to leave you with today. And that is this. As a leader, are you participating in healthy conflict in your organization? And are you teaching others to do the same? This is Tim Spiker.

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