

Show Transcript:

Transforming Communities Through Leadership with Quint Studer

Melody King: 0:01

Everything rises and falls on leadership. The ability to lead well is fueled by living your cause and purpose. This podcast will equip you with the tools to do just that Live and lead with cause and purpose. And now author of the book The Anatomy of Leadership and now our host Chris Comeaux.

Chris Comeaux: 0:23

Hello and welcome to the Anatomy of Leadership. I'm excited, I'm really excited today because it's a really good friend, a mentor, someone who I've just been blessed to have in my life. So welcome, Quint Studer.

Quint Studer: 0:35

Well, vice versa, I'm always in awe of you. I mean, you continue to drive into your own leadership, continue to learn, and I'm always taking notes whenever I talk to you. I've got to study this, I've got to read this book, I've got to find this article. So, thank you for continuing to be a great teacher to so many.

Chris Comeaux: 0:53

Well, you're awesome, Quint.

Chris Comeaux: 0:54

Well, just the fact that you say that just shows the beauty of just symbiotic relationships.

Chris Comeaux: 0:59

I remember just being a young, hungry leader at Covenant Hospice and I can still remember the moment I met you. Actually Del Nii asked me to go down to Baptist and we were working on a contract with each other and you actually met me and maybe the group and you and I were talking and you were just chatting it up and I looked over and I was still talking to you, and you were gone and I'm like where did he go? And I looked back and he was picking up trash way behind me and that was like one of my first impressions of you, just like someone who's just a humble servant leader, pouring into people and, um, just what you came and did with Baptist and Pensacola. And, of course, I was blessed to work with you later. So, I just thank you for your friendship and your mentorship. You pour into so many other people and I think last time I told you I said I feel like you're the Nick Saban of leaders in health care.

Quint Studer: 1:45

It's a good compliment, Nick Saban. Nick Saban, when you talk to I don't know Nick Saban, but I know people that know Nick Saban and you know Nick, of course, they always show him when he's intense, but I thought Nick created a real passion for his players and a real love and they

knew that he cared about them and of he had a real passion for his players and a real love and they knew that he cared about them. Of course, he has such a strong family foundation too.

Chris Comeaux: 2:09

Thank you, yeah, that's well said. It's interesting. We actually use the Nick Saban clip actually in some of the leadership training we do. Quint, I think you'd appreciate this. He makes fun of his own intensity now with the Airbnb or the VRBO commercials he does. You know, he has the checklist and the people can't have fun. But what people really miss is his dedication to excellence and also his love for his players.

Chris Comeaux: 2:33

But their 60 Minutes interview they missed the point. Like they showed this clip it was AJ McCarron and I think Webster was the name of the center and it was during a Sugar Bowl, and they were winning like way ahead and they got in a shoving match and the interviewers like basically trying to use an example, like do you never know when to let up? You know, you're just so intense and Nick kind of laughed and the guy was like what was going on there? And Nick kind of laughed and he said they're still trying to get it right. And it just totally went over the interviewer's head and what he was teaching him is that excellence, just this commitment to the passion of whatever it is you're doing, they're still trying to get it right, like even though the scoreboard they're trying to perform with a level of perfection that most people wouldn't understand. So, it's just like. It's like a brain tattoo.

Quint Studer: 3:21

You can cut this out, roy Go, but here's my favorite Nick Saban story. Nick Saban and his wife, and so if you have never seen this clip, Nick Saban's talking, and he had a huge crush on his wife in high school. And she wasn't dating him, she was dating this other guy who was like the star of the high school. So eventually he won her over. They got married, and this was years later, and they were going back for their 25-year high school reunion, and so they were driving into town and he found out where this other guy was working, which you know. It was okay but not great. So he drove by this place to tell his wife point out that you know your old boyfriend's working here and she said well, if I would have married him, he'd be coaching Alabama right now, wouldn't?

Chris Comeaux: 4:15

That's an awesome and I love how they refer to her as Miss Terry. And I, like you Quint, I don't know if you my guess is you say you married up. I know the relationship that you and Rishi have and just the partnership you have. I've always tried to also use that as a great lesson. My wife's name is Deshia, and I do believe I married up.

Quint Studer: 4:47

Usually our spouses are good at in a way knowing when to support us and knowing when to deflate us a little bit, not in a mean way. But I asked my wife to read one of my books and I

looked over and she was sleeping and us was on her stomach. I wondered how much she had read and it was page one. So that sort of shows you that.

Chris Comeaux: 4:56

Oh, I love that. Well, Quint, well, let me for our listeners. I know we jumped in. It just shows our relationship, but Quint Studer is the founder of Healthcare Plus Solutions Group.

Chris Comeaux: 5:06

Let me read from Quint's bio and I've got a question for him. So, Quint's a lifelong student and teacher of leadership. He's the author of many books, serves on numerous healthcare boards. He's a frequent speaker and probably one of the best speakers. If you've never heard Quint speak, you would be in for a treat if you did.

Chris Comeaux: 5:21

He is in his element. He's a workshop facilitator. He's a mentor to individuals, organizations and, as I said earlier, I feel like the Nick Saban of kind of healthcare leaders 2021,. He released The Calling Why Healthcare Is So Special. His new book, Rewiring Excellence Hardwired to Rewired, provides tools and techniques that are doable to help employees and physicians experience joy in their work. He also wrote the Human Margin with Catherine Meese, building the foundations of trust, and so I believe that came out last year, in 2024. And then recently, Quint founded Healthcare Plus Solutions Group along with longtime friend and colleague, Dan Collard, and Healthcare Plus Solutions Group specializes in helping healthcare organizations diagnose and treat their most urgent pain points in order to achieve and sustain results. So, my question to you is what's your superpower?

Quint Studer: 6:10

Curiosity.

Chris Comeaux: 6:12

So unpack that. What does that mean?

Quint Studer: 6:14

Well, I think I've always been curious. Now there's other things that we all have characteristics. I think I'm pretty compliant, which, being a person who doesn't want to comply, I've learned. Compliant works around best practices and being a learner. I think curiosity is the key, though, because I'm always curious. You know, how do things work? How does someone tick? Why are we doing it this way? Can we do it better? And I think that's where curiosity is a great advantage for a leader. You just have to be careful you don't wear the people around you out because you're constantly wanting to make things better or ask questions.

Quint Studer: 6:53

So I think, if I've met good leaders like yourself, excellent leaders think of what you and I talked about even before we went on the air.

Quint Studer: 7:01

It was all about learning, about seeking, all, about looking at things, and I remember reading a book about a gentleman, and he was really frustrated because he'd created a process that everybody was benefiting from in their life, almost like a spiritual process. Yet he was still a little depressed. So, again, a person of cloth met with him and to find, to interview him about this how he'd helped all these people, and he felt safe, and he told this guy well, you know, the problem is I'm helping all these other people but I'm not still feeling that great. And the fellow said to him well, you're a see, a seeker. And he said there's certain people that are seekers, but they're always looking at seeking better ways. Now they'll have glimpses of what you're searching for, but probably not consistent. But the good news is the people that you're helping are feeling better and that helps, because with being in curiosity can come a little bit of what I call myself a chronic male content which is always wanting to make things a little better.

Quint Studer: 8:10

I had to really learn this, Chris, because I would come off the stage and say I should have said this, or I should have done that or write it like this podcast Gosh, I should have brought that up. So I had to also teach myself with the curiosity to sort of not to be kind to myself too, because that means I'm also always looking at what could I have done better.

Chris Comeaux: 8:31

Well, maybe me mirroring it back to you, Quint, just thinking about our time and just we were just talking about a friend that you just blessed. I feel like you're always calling people up. So, I see now what you're saying. It's your pursuit of curiosity; what we would call the learning mode in my organization. But the amazing thing, the way you do it is it calls other people up around you and I think maybe it's an interesting byproduct, although I think it's also part of your superpower.

Chris Comeaux: 8:57

Somewhere, as you're calling people up, they find their own cause and purpose. It lights that fire internally. In fact, I remember you might remember we were working with Metropolitan Jewish Health System in Brooklyn, New York, which is a huge post-acute system, and their HR director was talking about, like some of the he goes man those early days when Quint would talk, he's like you're ready to run through a brick wall, and I think he was talking about you would call people into that cause and purpose and passion, but also challenge them to be a better version of themselves, and so it's interesting. If you would ask me what I think your superpower is, I would have gone there, but I love where you took it, because there's something innate about you, that what you're calling seeking, but it calls other people up around them. I don't know if that inspires something else.

Quint Studer: 9:42

I think the other thing maybe again this could you know what's in it for me? But I am a real, real convinced that the only way you keep something is to give it away. So, you know, I've always been, I've never protected capital or said, oh, you can't have this. You know we try to give as much away as possible and you don't know why. You don't even sometimes know why you're connecting with someone, but usually you're connecting with someone. Sometimes it's different than the original reason.

Quint Studer: 10:14

But I think, Chris, the key to all of this is people have to know that you care about them.

Quint Studer: 10:21

You know, if you look at a coach or anyone like that, we've talked a lot about coaches, but you talk about people that are very effective you can learn from someone and feel they don't care about you.

Quint Studer: 10:32

I'm not saying you have to feel that, but for me I'll push people, but I'll always try to let them know because I care about you. I know you want to be the best, and the term I use I learned from Beth Keene, and she's passed now and she used to call it spinach in your teeth. When we care about someone, we tell them they have spinach in their teeth. So I was speaking in West Virginia all last week to three health care systems and then the city of Elkins, west Virginia, and on every one of them I sometimes early on explained if you care about someone, you tell them they have spinach in their teeth and I said there will be a time during this conversation that I will talk about some spinach and that way when I do say spinach in your teeth, they're more willing to accept it because they know I'm coming at it from a place of love and concern and care.

Chris Comeaux: 11:26

Yep, that's well said, and I think our last podcast together we really focused our time on that real kind of general theme. So, we'll include a link to that one of just that whole modeling caring for others and I use some good examples, like you and I. This was back in the day when you had the suite of offices in Gulf Breeze, and I swear we walked together maybe 15 seconds and you looked at me and you asked me a question. That then sent me off in research and now it's like one of the key tools that we use in our toolbox just by you asking me a question.

Chris Comeaux: 11:56

But I felt like when you asked me the question, you gave me a challenge and I'm like I love Mission Impossible and the gist was like how organizations set goals, like is there a true good way to do that? And it was so cool because I was sitting in a hospice interdisciplinary care group meetings basically, where they developed the care plan, and I was watching the dynamics of that process and I'm like oh my god, this is one of the most brilliant models of goal setting I've ever seen. And then that kind of inspired us. Literally. A 10-second interaction, 15-second interaction with you has now kind of created a tool that we're using with hospices all over the country, and how they set their goals. But again, that's out of that space of like. I didn't think you were being

mean to me. I felt like you were giving me a cool challenge. Like at some level you trusted I would take that seriously and go do something with that.

Quint Studer: 12:48

Oh, thank you, I appreciate that.

Jeff Haffner / Dragonfly Health Ad: 12:51

Thank you to our Anatomy of Leadership sponsor, Dragonfly Health. Dragonfly Health is also the title sponsor for leadership immersion courses. Dragonfly Health is a leading care at home data technology and service platform with a 20-year history. Dragonfly Health uses advanced technology and robust analytics to manage durable medical equipment and pharmaceutical services as part of a single, efficient solution for caregivers, patients and their families. The company serves millions of patients annually across all 50 states. Thank you, Dragonfly Health, for all the great work that you do.

Chris Comeaux: 13:38

Well, quint, so a lot of people know about your work with hospitals, healthcare systems, healthcare as a whole. They may not know about your work with communities, cities and towns. Can you talk about that, and why do you do that type of work? Why is that also part of where you focus?

Quint Studer: 13:53

Well, yeah, I can talk about it probably for the whole podcast. Almost you back into things and sometimes I always say, don't really know. I was talking to our mayor here in town, mayor Reeves, who used to work, be my chief of staff, and we were going over his career and it was interesting because every part of his career has positioned him to be a great mayor. But when he was going through pieces of his career it wasn't thinking well, I'm going to be a sports writer, so I can be a mayor. I'm going to do community events, so I can be a mayor. I'm going to do community events, so I can be a mayor. You know, I'm going to open a craft brewery, so I can be a mayor.

Quint Studer: 14:28

So for me, what happened to me and it was just purely accidental about 2005, I was really excited. You know I got reached out to from Jim Clifton, who's at the time he was the president and chairman of the board of the Gallup Foundation, which his father had founded, and he was interesting in creating a health care dashboard at Gallup and they had been working with some health care systems in Arizona that we were with and he was intrigued because he noticed that when the organizations that we were working with when they did the Gallup work. We just did some stuff with Loma Linda recently and Sam Bernardino that used Gallup, but same thing, he would notice that they did better. So he was interested in finding out why. So, he had me. He asked me to. He didn't make me. I was excited. I flew to Washington DC. They have their main offices in Lincoln, Nebraska, but they have offices in Washington DC, which makes sense. And it's a neat tour. Before you go to his office you see all these old photos of research they had done and

all these great causes, and he's very excited about it. And we sit down and as we're touring, I'm just saying what are you working on now? And he said, well, they just did the biggest research ever. Why do some communities thrive and some don't? And it was called Soul of the City.

Quint Studer: 15:51

So, being curious, I said could I have a copy of your white paper? So he sent me a copy of the white paper and I read it and, like any learning, when the light goes on, then we look at things differently. You know I'm very active in early brain work. I believe children, when they're in a stroller, should be facing their parents for communication, not out, you know that type of crazy stuff. So, I read it and when I read it, I kept looking at Pensacola and thinking, well, gee, we're not real good here. You know, I'd go to other communities and tell my wife we should go to Portland, Maine, that's really cool and we should go to Savannah, Georgia. We should go to Beloit, Wisconsin, and we should go to these different cool cities. I get to go in and see. And you know, I never thought, well, we should have that stuff. I was just excited. I got to go see the stuff.

Quint Studer: 16:41

So, I came back, I sent it to Randy Hammer, who was with the newspaper here, and he was intrigued. I brought Jim Clifton down to Pensacola then to learn again, and so I got on this journey of trying to implement the stuff in the book or the research, and basically it came down to the overwhelming theme is if you want to be a great city, you got to keep your talent, and he wrote a book in 2010, based on this research, called the coming jobs war, which he was predicting as capital follows talent, but talent follows place. So how do you create the right place? I think that's communities. Well, so, anyway, let me now go with your listeners. I think that's communities. Well, so anyway, let me now go with your listeners. I think it's interesting because I think we get confused. Growing a great city is not having a commerce park and throwing incentives at someone. Many times, it doesn't work. So, there's. The elements that he brought up were these and I was just talking about this the other day to someone these aren't in. I tend to talk in one, two, three, but it doesn't mean that's the right sequence, that's just how I talk.

Quint Studer: 17:48

He said first of all, you got to make sure you know which businesses in your town create revenue from outside of their community, because those are the best companies you can have, because that's bringing fresh revenue into your community. Not that my wife's coffee shop isn't good, but that's just moving money around. People aren't flying into Pensacola to go to a coffee shop, but it's nice to have it and it does have an impact as I go on later to have a nice different coffee shops. So, he said if you want to know if your elected officials are on the ball, go up and just ask them what are the 10 businesses in your town that bring their revenue from outside the community? So, if you go to Lafayette, Louisiana, you have a guy named Matt Stuller who runs a retail jewelry store and he made it out of his trunk of his car. Now it's \$7 billion and all that FedEx planes landing in Lafayette Louisiana to take jewelry. What a gift to Lafayette Louisiana, something like that. And it doesn't have to be big, just revenue from outside of town.

Quint Studer: 18:55

The second thing he said you need to make sure you do is support new startups and entrepreneurs. And he said if you look at economics, it's usually not the political leaders, because you can have political leaders completely opposite of what they believe drives the economy. But really drives the economy is the fact that can you get these startups? So, you know, during the Clinton administration, money got real tight in other countries, so a number of people from India came to the United States to bring their intellectual capital, which led to a lot of great IT, other things that they came with. That it doesn't have to be from out of the United States, but the main thing is how are you helping these startups? And that's really important. We do a lot of that in Pensacola, you know. Identify the startups. We have an entrepreneurial hub making sure they know, because it's usually three things they want Either help with my product, find me a place or get me money. So how do you do one of those three things? And those made sense to me. I mean, I got that stuff. You know, it was nice to learn that, but that's not the thing that shocked me.

Quint Studer: 20:08

He said if you want to have a vibrant community, it's not the climate. You know, like I mentioned, Portland, Maine, Beloit, Wisconsin aren't known for climates. He says it really comes down to do you have a cool place downtown that particularly young people and now older? Cool place downtown that particularly young people and now older people too, but particularly young people. It's not affordability they're looking for, because they'll jam into all sorts of things. It's Duke, is their opportunity and it's their fun and vibrancy. So, we started looking at our downtown and it was really nothing. I mean, I call it gaps in the teeth, closed buildings. People really didn't think of our downtown as a place to go.

Quint Studer: 20:52

So what then, in my work in a building of vibrant community book, I wrote is there's four things you need in a downtown and the first thing you do is you have to program the heck out of it and see most towns that aren't doing well financially, Chris, that might be a part-time job by somebody at the chamber, but you need somebody waking up every day saying how do I create activity to bring people downtown? You know whether it's gallery night, which is a fun night, or whether it's walking your dog downtown. Whatever it is, what are you doing to bring people downtown? Because you can't expect, because you're not going to get a uh, you're not going to get a real successful franchise to move downtown because there's not enough people. So, it's usually an uh, a family and you know a local person risking their whole money to open up a little shop downtown. But you got to get people down there first. Then the entrepreneurs follow. Like you know, my wife opened up a coffee shop and olive oil, so that was the first big deal downtown and now it's jammed and we'll talk about that later. So those are the two key things. You know retail, entertainment and a lot of activity.

Quint Studer: 22:05

And then what happens is the two other things sort of come next. People say, well, gee, I wouldn't mind having an office down here, and people always say to me oh, we have office space, but it's usually crummy office space. So, you know, how do you create great office space,

and so that's what started happening here. You know, we built a class, a office space, first one downtown. In years nobody thought it would make it and it actually we had to add another floor when we started because of demand. Once they see what that's like.

Quint Studer: 22:34

And then the big one, Chris, isn't the hardest. One is truly getting residents downtown, not just a few residents, but really getting residents. And that comes last because people aren't going to move downtown if there's not fun, if there's not things to do, and they like to work. So that's sort of where we went and give you the now. This was a long journey. We just celebrated 20 years, so give you some feedback. We are now the fourth safest city in the United States. We are the 17th best place to start a business. We are the 31st best city to live and the smallest one in the top 100. Our Palafox Street is one of the top 10 downtown streets in the United States one of the top 10 downtown streets in the United States. And our CRA, which is like a TIFF, was about 550 million 20 years ago and it's about 1.5 billion and right now there's tons of growth going on. And yesterday I went to reception because American Magic, which is the New York Yacht Club that races the big boat, is moving their operations to Pensacola Wow.

Quint Studer: 23:47

So, it's a long journey and I was in Elkins, west Virginia, so you don't have to be a town of 55,000. Elkins is 6,800. And it's pretty cool to go there after five years and meet all these young entrepreneurs that started a little hardware store downtown or a little dress shop, or they have a you know a Mexican restaurant Great story. Entrepreneurs that started a little hardware store downtown or a little dress shop. Or they have a? Um, you know a mexican restaurant great story. A guy worked at ups and wanted to open up a restaurant, so he's worked at chipotle to learn how to do it. So. So that's the type of stuff that and I love it because I think for small communities they just used to think we can't do that.

Quint Studer: 24:24

And it all went to the urban environment. And here's the other great advantage. Of course, some of the big urban environments aren't that attractive to a lot of people today, so they're looking for smaller communities, but they're looking for places that are safer. They're looking for places where their kids can ride a bike and walk. So, I think that's how I got into it and, um, it's been pretty cool because you know there's, there's.

Quint Studer: 24:51

At first people weren't that happy with some of the changes, but now I remember some of that. Yeah, it's not unusual to walk down the street and have people say you know, thank you, you know, um, and even if they don't know or don't say you know, thank you, you know. And even if they don't know or don't say thank you, we just get great pleasure out of watching other people have fun and enjoy their life. And the other thing is I'll give you another statistic Chris Lafayette, Louisiana, which had another great success story, studied Pensacola and there's ways to study this and they showed that at a time when a student, a person, went to college out of Pensacola, there was about a 9% chance they would ever eventually move back because there were a lack of

jobs opportunity. Today we're at 43%. And also, when you look now the movers and shakers in our community, I'd say almost the majority of them are under the age of 45.

Chris Comeaux: 25:48

That's incredible, quint, because I could look through the rearview mirror. You know, I was 25 when my wife was from Pensacola. We were living in Houston, Texas, and so I could look through the rearview mirror and actually see in action what you're talking about. And we were one of the first like for me to fall into hospice to be able to work in Pensacola. I remember going on these job interviews and there was this restaurant chain and so maybe they were going to hire me as their controller and like I walked in and like on the thing, it was like wet t-shirt contest Wednesday night and I'm like there is no way, this is what I'm going to do with my life, and then to be able to fall in a hospice and so to now know what you're talking about because, yeah, back then there was very few jobs you can get.

Chris Comeaux: 26:30

And it's so interesting, as I sit here and reflect, we had a congressman, Heath Shuler actually, you remember, played football for Tennessee, quarterback for the Redskins. He was our congressman, and his chief of staff said hey, we want to come visit your hospice and we've got an interesting question for you what was the impact on the economy for your hospice basically becoming better, growing, et cetera. So, we started crunching the math and it was like an \$80 million economic impact by us just serving the need that was already there within our community. And it would just open my eyes to how beautiful even hospice being part of the ecosystem, of what it will do to a community. And it would just like open my eyes to how beautiful even hospice being part of the ecosystem of what it will do to a community.

Chris Comeaux: 27:11

You know, going to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, we stayed on my way to visit my parents in Louisiana a couple of years ago over Christmas, and Tuscaloosa is a totally different town and Nick Saban transformed that town in some respects you can say. So, I think there's. It's just so cool to see what you've done. And one of my follow-up questions, Quint, is where is the intersection of leadership in this? What does leadership have to do with this?

Quint Studer: 27:35

Well, I think it's much harder. I tell people it's much harder to do this in the community than it is in your own organization, because you have some ability, Chris, in your own organization it's called you can hire, you can pick who's going to work there, you can fire, you can tell people and not that you want to but this might not be the right place for you. Communities are much tougher, much tougher. Because you've got a built-in group and the research will show this. There's 20 to 25 percent of people in any community that will be virtually against almost anything, even before they hear what it is. You know I call it contempt prior to investigation. You know Herbert Spencer stuff they're against it. We actually hired a polling company to measure negativity in our community and we didn't measure it. That was part of what they measured, because when you're going to introduce something is there pushback. So, for today, our mayor

announced another new hotel downtown. Well, this is the third new hotel he's announced now in six months. I guarantee you the first thing somebody's going to say is what about traffic? You know what about this? And I tell people, if you have people complaining about traffic and parking, you're probably moving in the right direction in your community.

Quint Studer: 28:55

So, I think the real key thing in all of this is why it's so hard is you've got people that go into like four categories. You get your people that really are gung-ho and love it, and you got to be careful because you want those but you can be convinced they represent more than they really represent. Because they're gone. And then the second group is they'll be with it but they're going to need love and support and that'll get you to about 50% and the next 25, and I'm just giving broad numbers. They're going to be a little bit of a different hurdle, like right now. Those are people that we can get much quicker, but the first time was some of them we never got, but now that they see success. So, for example, again our Mayor Reeves announced that the Soccer League wants to come here where we'd be the third Florida city, and you know people asked me about. I said Well, I think because our baseball has been so successful, people are more likely to be supportive because they've lived through it. Then the fourth group, Chris, is that group I talked about Now being competitive.

Quint Studer: 30:03

Here in Pensacola, we broke the record for negativity. They basically said 33% of the people in Pensacola are going to be against anything. Then they used a line which I love. They said if God was looking to relocate heaven and chose downtown Pensacola, 33% of the people would be upset. It's a gated community.

Quint Studer: 30:24

So, I think handling the pushback is much harder, and the mistake I made, Chris, was spending so much time trying to win over the unwinnable, and I think you've got to really sequence. And so what you've got to do, Chris, what you're an expert in, is change management. And when people go looking at a community whether it's a city council member or a mayor or anyone in general, the Chamber of Commerce how much training do they get on managing change? How much you know I go speak? I said how many of you read John Kotter's work? Not a hand goes up. You know he's a sort of a change expert. Or the Heath Brothers from the book Switch when Change is Hard. There's all these good things out there, but there's processes you have to do whether it's get the burning platform.

Quint Studer: 31:09

Our burning platform here, Chris, was if we don't make some changes, we're going to die because no young people are staying. And our burning platform was getting people young people to either come back or stay home, and that was an emotional grab. And then the next thing was getting that critical mass, you know, of people to be supportive and understand it, which means a lot of education. And even when you do that I mean even when you do that, Chris we just oh, there's a 258 apartment building happening right across the street from me here on some what? 70 land.

For years they did a strategic plan, they did charrettes, they did community impact, they did an RFP, they communicated it all. Yet as soon as ground was broken, guess what? Some people said we didn't know this was going on, nobody told us, nobody told us, nobody told us. And so, again, the other thing I would say to people, and this happens inside communities and in businesses like yours, Chris ask specific questions.

Quint Studer: 32:15

And I see it, you know, you see it right now in the national news Somebody says everyone's upset. You know morale's bad, you know. Well, give me some numbers. Like I got a call from the apartment guy that's building these 200, you know, spend 80 million bucks here. And he said I got a call from the cities A lot of citizens are upset. I said, well, call them back and get how many a lot is and get their names. Well, it ended up being six, so a lot went from six. And then when he told me the names, it was sort of like well, these people, they don't have much wind here. You know, they sort of complain about everything. So, you want to talk to them, you want to be respectful, but don't think they're running with hundreds of people behind them.

Chris Comeaux: 33:04

That's so good, quint. Well, that's a good segue for me to ask you this question. You've run hospitals, a consulting company, baseball team restaurants. What's the similarities and differences to running such a diverse set of businesses?

Quint Studer: 33:20

Healthcare is easier Really, yes, because you have purpose sitting right there. So, if you really look at how you get people, you want people to own it and I like accountability, but what you really want is a sense of ownership. Because I have a sense of ownership, I'm going to do things because I own it, whether it's picking up paper or it's taking people where they're going, whether it's running good operations. You know customer and everything and so the similarities are. They're so similar and I tell people I don't see a big difference between a baseball team and a hospital. You know you got to have talent, you got to invest in talent, and I think that's the big miss for all businesses, Chris, is they don't put the time and money into skill development. Because if you look at all the new people, all the new COVID, the number one gift you can get a person is investing in their skill development side that 92% of people in healthcare will stay if they feel they're being invested in Managers. 84% of frontline employees Are we really investing in them? You know that. So, I think they're very similar in hiring, training, selection, connecting. So, for example, I'm speaking tonight at a fundraiser for the Studer Children's Hospital which we built when we sold the company, at a fundraiser for the Studer Children's Hospital, which we built when we sold the company, and I just happened to get on my phone today a story of a baby that was born that should have probably died, that is still alive, that maybe was saved because they had care quick to home, or something like that.

Quint Studer: 35:01

So, in healthcare, if we do it right, purpose is right in front of us. It's just sitting there, but we have to make sure we connect the dots, and we have to make sure we do that. I work really hard in

coffee. Our mission statement for all our businesses outside of healthcare is to create memorable experiences. So how do I convince the person that's scooping ice cream they're creating a memorable experience? Or the person in our bookstore? They're creating memorable experiences, you know. So, I think that the similarities are all the same. You know hiring, developing, educating, employee engagement surveys you know you can do the same one to everyone. They're all the same.

Quint Studer: 35:48

I think healthcare I know people are probably listening saying what a nut job this guy is, but purpose is right in front of us, sitting right there. I mean you talk about hospice, you talk about those things. I mean, how many times does the hospice professional become the best friend of the family? How many times do they replace many members of the friends and family? One of the most emotional stories I remember, Chris, and I think you might have been there, is when the family wants to make sure the hospice workers can come to the funeral. The family wants to make sure the hospice workers can come to the funeral and then when they get to the funeral, they're. The chairs reserved for the family are reserved for the widow, for the hospice workers that have now become her best friends.

Quint Studer: 36:36

You're exactly right. So, it's there, it's sitting there and you know anyone? I remember my son-in-law father was dying of uh, you know, had a tumor, um, in his spinal, all this crazy stuff, terrible stuff, and he was dying, and he was 52 and they're trying to do all this stuff and I kept saying get hospice. And they kept saying, oh, you know this idea, the hospice. Finally they got hospice, and he called me within 24 hours and said, oh, my god, what a difference, what a difference this is this is making. So I, I think there's mostly similar and I I know people in health care you know, because might not see it that way, but I do. And and the other thing, Chris, is, my main message lately is listen to how you're talking to yourself, how you're thinking, because we play tapes over. So for your people on the podcast here thanks for letting me be on Hold up the mirror and listen to yourself.

Quint Studer: 37:41

Are you saying the word you got to have to, or are you saying get to? And I find that. So, when I go into a workshop, like at Vandalia Health or West Virginia Health this last week, university Health they're all coming in. There's 200 to 400 people in the room and I'm going to talk, and they introduce you and do some other things. And it was, let's say, a Tuesday in Vandalia South, in Charleston, west Virginia. 400 people are there. And I say, when you were talking to the staff yesterday and you told me you weren't going to be there, did you say to them I get to go to this session tomorrow. Or do you use the word I have to got to when you go to a meeting, when you're going to be off the unit, do you tell the staff you've got to go to this.

Quint Studer: 38:30

When we say the word got to or have to, we start becoming victims. We have no choice. When you have no choice, then you don't think you control your own destiny and that means you don't

take ownership. And I'm talking real broad for your listeners. I apologize if anyone says, oh, I do take ownership and I use the word got to. But when you think about it, get to changes the mindset. I get to do this work and when I do these workshops, Chris, there's always a questionnaire afterwards like what's your one takeaway? And I try to give takeaways on our emotional onboarding toolkit. We guarantee even skilled nursing facilities. You can reduce your first-year turnover in half if you do these things, so we give actual tactics. If you do these things, so we give actual tactics. But the number one thing they walk out with, and I'm pleased if I can accomplish this is I'm going to be a get-to person, not a got-to have-to person.

Sona Ad: 39:31

Good employers know that health benefits can make or break your business. But while employers are looking out for their employees' best interest, who is looking out for theirs? Sona Benefits is an independent pharmacy benefit manager who partners with employers to optimize their pharmacy benefits while supporting their business goals. By offering no spread pricing, contract, guaranteed rebates and the SonaMax program, clients are regularly able to save 20% to 35% off their total drug spend. The result Pharmacy benefits that improve employees' well-being and employers' bottom line.

Chris Comeaux: 40:11

I've actually got it on my whiteboard in my office, quint, because you said that last time. I mean just truly, and you know I was reflecting, coming into this, the blessing of having you in my life and then Dr Thayer, who was Stephen Covey's mentor. What I was reflecting on is that you are both incredible communicators, and one of the things that Thayer would say is we create our world based upon the words that we use. It's another way of saying what you're saying. The world that I am creating is literally the words that leave my mouth, and sometimes we're not thoughtful, intentional, that we use words and we don't even realize it's creating this world for us that we really don't want, but our words are doing that.

Quint Studer: 40:53

Well, and writing. You know, I hope people who listen to this go on to LinkedIn and sign up for my weekly newsletter, because it's a weekly little tip and I wrote one that'll be out in about a month. And when we write, do we sometimes write a nice note to recognize people? Then by the time we're done, we aren't. You know Stephen Covey, which I love I talk about him all the time emotional bank account. So, our job is to make deposits because there's natural withdrawals. We sometimes make a deposit and then withdraw it by the time we're done with our letter. So, an example. Here's an example. And I work with a lot of people. So, a person's very excited. He writes a letter to his team because they got one recognition. Just great job, recognition, this is wonderful. Now we gotta figure out how to monetize this. So how did we take this really nice compliment and suck the motion out of it? I remember one time, you know, got this letter and it was all positive and then it says but we gotta we can't declare victory, we gotta keep it up. You know, let's take it to the next level, and I'm a big believer.

Quint Studer: 42:07

Sometimes, when you do something, you need to let them feel good and you can come back. So, for example, you do an event and it's a very successful event. Yet you see, there's some things that could go better. And what I suggest you do is, instead of telling people, here's what could have been better because that feeds our ego and I know this because I like doing that you say, okay, this was wonderful. Why don't you meet, talk about what really went well and congratulations God, it was great. Well, by the way, also, drop some things. If there's anything you think could be better, they will usually come up with everything you are going to say. But let them feel good. You know, if you watch college football which we watch you know, after a win or a basketball, the coach, they all run in and they celebrate and they go to the locker room and they have a good time. He doesn't sit there and pull out the thing and say let's talk about the next game. He'll get to that the next day or two days later. He tells them to enjoy the moment. He'll see them on Tuesday or she'll see them on Tuesday.

Quint Studer: 43:11

And I just think we think recognition is easy and it's not. The other thing I know we're running out of time is I think you have to micromanage communication, and we micromanage. I'm not against micromanaging key elements, so I don't think it's the decision that gets us into trouble, it's how we communicate the decision that gets us into trouble. You know timing of the communication, how are we going to do it, what are the key points that we're going to do, and then be real cautious of listening to people. The other day a fellow said to me and he was sort of talking about his boss, and he said something like jokingly, like she really, you know, beats on him type stuff. Well, she doesn't. Now, he said it because he likes her.

Quint Studer: 44:03

But somebody else hears that I wrote a column two years ago because somebody said was it describing somebody in front of other people as high maintenance? Okay, and I pulled them aside and said you just can't do that. Because when people hear that their perception of high maintenance is not a positive one and in essence you're almost complimenting yourself for dealing with this high maintenance individual and then people are precluding that this person's a high maintenance and there may be why. Well, because this person really was a perfectionist and you know, if you're taking care of patients, I sort of want a perfectionist here. So, I think. Words count, as you said, Chris, and we have to be really sensitive in how we say things, when we say things and teach people how to say things.

Chris Comeaux: 44:52

Well, let's kind of land the plane here. Quint, I think that you know you're a little bit further into your career now. My guess is that you're a little bit reflective, and I hope you are, because in reflective, in a way of celebrating, just like you were saying. I'd be curious at this point how do you define success? Developing others? You didn't even hesitate with that.

Quint Studer: 45:14

Yeah, developing others. So, for example, we have, you know, not counting healthcare we have a couple of baseball teams and different things, all to make the community better, and I have a

person named Jonathan Griffith who runs those and he's a great operator, a great day-to-day operator, On his goals. This year, there's nothing about money, there's nothing about revenue, there's nothing about expenses. It's not even on his evaluation tool, which you're familiar with, our type of evaluation tool. This year, everything that's on there is about developing other people, because for us to go to any level, we're all chief development officers and I think over the years, Chris, we've been a little unfair to HR or organizational development like, well, they're in charge of developing people. No, they're not. They're in charge of creating structure, creating material, creating content, creating methodology, but we're in charge of developing people and the one up, everybody's one up, and so I really judge people today more on, are you developing those that report to you? So, I was talking to a CEO the other day and he has a COO which is his successor, and she'll do a great job. However, right now, her number one goal is to create her team behind her, and I think so. You know, that's the goal and if you're coming and you're telling me that people aren't doing things, then how are you developing? How are you building their skill set? And I think we get fooled.

Quint Studer: 46:51

Chris and I'll finish with this is about a third of the people don't need training or development. You're one of them. You didn't need it. You give a lot of credit for it because you saw what I'm saying. If I didn't need it, you give a lot of credit for it because you saw it, what I'm saying. If I didn't have a structured development plan for you, you would have went out and sought it anyway. You would have read a book. I didn't have it. I went to the library and found Tom Peters in search of excellent stuff. So, I wasn't in any formal development program until I was in my early 40s.

Quint Studer: 47:20

At an organization I was working for. About 30-something percent of the people don't need it. Well then, you can fall into the trap of thinking well, look, Chris is doing it. Why can't the rest? The rest of the group probably needs help. We call something, we call it an OSIR. What outcome are you seeking? What skills do you need? What actions can I help you with and what resources do we have? And I think, as a leader, if you just sit down and think for those that report to you. What outcome are you helping them? What do you want them to accomplish, what skills are they going to need, what actions should they take and what resources are available to them.

Chris Comeaux: 48:00

I'm reflecting Quint. We'd always talk about the bell-shaped curve it applies to so many things in life but also the talent pool. What you're doing by that is you're moving the middle, and that's the difference between a mediocre organization and a high-performing organization.

Quint Studer: 48:13

Yeah, because we get fooled, just like in a community. We get fooled Because you know the story. I remember years ago, and people are a little heavier now but years ago, if you were running a men's clothing store, about a third of the men wore a 42 regular. So, if you just said you're a 42 regular, you'd be right 33% of the time. Well, I think in health care and in general, we

just think because we have the 33% of the people that are going to do it and they're going to be great, why aren't the other ones doing it? Well, because we have to help them, we have to provide resources, and I think that's it you want to create.

Quint Studer: 48:51

You know, I haven't heard it a lot lately, but you know, Chris, we went through that whole period some years back when the goal was to create a learning organization, and I think we're back to that with COVID, with all the changes, with all the newnesses. We'll go to organization. Chris, 40 to 50% of the managers weren't there five years ago. Wow, you know the staff. They're young and, by the way, young people want investing and one of the best places in the country right now with staff retention is called Chipotle, because they invest a lot in people.

Chris Comeaux: 49:24

Wow, wow, and that's a typical one that would have probably fast food. What 75% or 100% turnover? Yeah, so talk about kind of going against the flow. Yeah, what final thoughts. There's so many great subjects we touched upon, just final thoughts.

Quint Studer: 49:38

Trust. If there's one thing you've got to get is trust. Whether it's trust in a community is called safety, in a company it's called trust. And I'll give you the key things of trust. Number one is making sure that your communication is transparent and open, because people want to trust their executives and you have to build a strong middle management team, because that middle management team is the one who creates the trust, not the senior executive team, it's the middle management team, because they're the ones that say hey, this is this, you know. Here's why, explaining it.

Quint Studer: 50:14

Um, I think the second component of trust is resources. People say do I have the resources to do my job? That's why, Chris, over the years, we've always said do you have what you need to do my job? That's why, Chris, over the years, we've always said do you have what you need to do your job, you know? The third one is, I think, interesting is do you care about me as a person? So, when we go in and we provide skill building, we say we care about you, and the reason we to show you we care about you, we're gonna invest in you because we know the more skills you have, the better you feel. So, well-being is more than just, and it's I mean, I like EAPs, I like all the other stuff but it's really connecting to skill building.

Quint Studer: 50:50

The fourth thing is really making sure we're recognizing performance and not assuming that. And the fifth one is that whole sense of belonging. And one of the reasons we do with that is early on, when you first hire a person, you get the existing staff they're going to work with, and you put them in a room and the existing staff says how did I feel when I first started? And they start sharing with the new person. Then they have empathy for the new person and the new person starts feeling good about them. And what you really want to do is create, whether it's a

community or a company, where people say this is the place for me. I can't fathom working anywhere else.

Chris Comeaux: 51:32

Wow. Well, quint, thank you, you're such a treasure. I just want to reflect back to you. You're an inspiration to me. I hope I'm the type that I don't know what retirement means. I mean, you're still giving back your I don't know in your late 50s and you're still giving back.

Quint Studer: 51:50

You've always been a real open, honest guy. You just went, yeah, but thank you. Well, that's how you stay alive. You give back. I mean, look at Warren Buffett. Yeah, I think that's the key thing is you got to get something you love. I tell people I have not worked in so long. I think the last time I worked was probably about 1993. And since about 92, maybe Since 1993. Now I've had that and if you ask me what I wish I would have done better, I think I wish I would have been more patient with people. I think I would have got this a lot sooner. So, I think when I get asked what's the one thing that you advise you give to young careerists, it's to be kind to yourself, don't beat yourself up.

Quint Studer: 52:42

So, you know I love you, Chris, and I appreciate everything you do, and thanks so much for giving me this opportunity today.

Chris Comeaux: 52:48

I love you too, quint. Now two things. I'll mirror back to you at the end, and I pay this forward. It almost feels like at least a weekly basis. When the student is ready, the teacher does appear, and I wish I was in my 20s whenever that student appeared. But and progress, not perfection, that's the whole journey of this life is just progress. We don't. We don't achieve that perfection, this side of eternity, but becoming a better version of ourselves, and you've modeled that beautifully. You've inspired me and so many others, and so again, you're a treasure. I appreciate you.

Quint Studer: 53:16

All right, well, thank you.

Chris Comeaux: 53:18

And to our listeners. The end of each episode we share a quote, a visual. The idea is we want to create a brain bookmark, a thought prodder about the podcast, subject to further your learning and growth and thereby your leadership. And we're going for stickiness in our brain. Be sure to subscribe to our channel, the Anatomy of Leadership, especially after this episode. I just made a list of 20 people I want to forward this one to, and so, please be sure, subscribe, pay it forward to your friends, your family, your coworkers. It's easy to rail against the world and be frustrated by things. Let's be the change we wish to see in the world. So, thanks for listening to Anatomy of Leadership, and here's our Brain Bookmark to close today's show.

Jeff Haffner / *Brain Bookmark*: 53:56

“For your organization to be successful, people have to know that you care about them.” By Quint Studer.