

# Transcript

## Pathway to Leadership and Self-Mastery with Mike Harbour

**Chris Comeaux: 0:00**

Hi TCNtalks listeners and Anatomy of Leadership podcast listeners as well. We're just appending this message to the beginning of our podcast. Many of you know about the devastation from Hurricane Helene that has hit Western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee and Virginia. We've got many of the hospices that we work with. Three of the most impacted hospices Four Seasons, AMOREM and CCWNC Compassionate Care, Western North Carolina. We're going to include links of how you can support those hospices.

**Chris Comeaux: 0:29**

I want to thank you. The overwhelming response already has been incredible. We've even had other hospices get together and actually create a huge shipment of medical supplies and supplies for staff and the patients and families we serve. So just want to say thank you, just want to keep it in front of you guys. The road to recovery is going to be years.

**Chris Comeaux: 0:50**

This is one of the most devastating events I know I've ever seen in my life and I've grown up in Louisiana, lived in Florida with my wife and I've just never seen the level of destruction. So, we appreciate your support. We ask that you continue to keep us in your thoughts and prayers because this is going to be a long road to recovery. There are a lot of other great organizations that you can support as well, they're helping just the community. People like Samaritan's Purse, Operation Hilo, the Cajun Navy those are incredible organizations that we can tell you are doing a great job on the ground helping people. Again, this challenge has been unprecedented. It's really taken an all-hands-on-deck approach. So, thank you for listening to our podcast, thank you for supporting us. We really appreciate you.

**Melody King: 1:34**

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 our host, Chris Comeaux.

**Chris Comeaux: 1:56**

Hello

**Chris Comeaux: 1:57**

and welcome to the Anatomy of Leadership. Our guest today is Mike Harbour. He is the President of Harbour Resources. It's good to have you, Mike.

**Mike Harbour: 2:04**

Chris, fantastic to talk with you. You know, you and I I don't know, it's been maybe a couple months ago we interviewed on my podcast became fast friends, even though that was really the first time we'd ever talked, and so I've been looking forward to this conversation today. Thanks for having me as a guest.

**Chris Comeaux: 2:20**

You bet, Before we were done with that podcast. I'm like I'm having you on my podcast, so it just took us a bit to get a schedule. Well, Mike, let me. I want to read a little bit from your bio and then I want you to kind of hold forth a little bit. So, Mike's a veteran. He served as both an enlisted soldier in the Medical Service Corps in the US Army First. Mike, thank you for your service, Really appreciate you, thank you.

**Chris Comeaux: 2:40**

Mike has authored three books Power Principles, quit Losing Talent, which actually I have and been actually reading recently, and then also Quit Losing Talent, the expanded edition he co-authored Breaking Average. Mike's a former John Maxwell team faculty member. It's another place. We actually, mike and I, connected pretty quickly. He's a former cheerleader for the John Maxwell Leadership Award and he's the former co-host of the Maxwell Leadership Podcast. Mike currently hosts and publishes the Lead Up Podcast, which has over 380 episodes and counting.

**Chris Comeaux: 3:16**

In his work as a coach and leadership advisor, mike has created the Quit Losing Talent cultural framework and the Four Corner Post coaching and performance model and he has coached and trained thousands of leaders to be more effective leaders and coaches of their teams, and in his work he's personally interviewed over 20,000 leaders. That gives him incredible cred whenever he talks and holds forth about leadership. Now I saw that very quickly in our podcast together so 20,000 leaders, employees and understands deeply the skills and mindsets needed to be a great leader, a coach and a performer in work and life. Mike's focus and his company a coach and a performer in work and life. Mike's focus and his company's mission is to deliver excellence in leadership and personal development solutions to help you lead others, lead yourself. Hire A players for your teams and develop

them to be high performers. So, Mike, what did I leave out that you want the audience to know about you?

**Mike Harbour: 4:02**

You know you covered it all. It's never fun. I don't know if you're like this, Chris, it's never really fun to hear your hear your bio. You know when somebody else shares it, when you write it up, you know I need to add this and then when you hear it's like man that sounds so arrogant or I'm always. You know, my mindset's always kind of been let my work do the talking, right, or let my play do the talking. But yeah, um, yeah, that kind of covers.

**Mike Harbour: 4:23**

You know I've been blessed to be able to do what I do. I served with some great people in the military. That's where I really started my growth journey and my leadership journey. I had some great leaders to kind of push me along the way. And then, you know, my first job when I got out of the army was working for a head hunting firm recruiting leaders. That's where I really started that interview process right and and I've just I've been blessed for the last 25 plus years now to be able to do what I do and develop you know myself, my skills and my ability to develop others as well. So thank you for that intro.

**Chris Comeaux: 5:01**

No, that's awesome, Mike, and actually you know you're such a humble guy, which is what I love about you, and I think the greatest leaders do carry a spear of humility. I'll pay forward something to you, and another great connection point for you and I was Quint Studer. One time I heard Quint say this and it stuck in my brain. He said you know, when a physician walks in a room and he tells you he's double board certified and basically kind of tells you his resume, it's not about him bragging, it's about him establishing trust, like okay, I'm in good hands, and I never forgot that. So when I kind of think about kind of sharing some things, I always try to carry that spirit and you just have a beautiful spirit of humility about you.

**Mike Harbour: 5:37**

Yeah, thank you. It's a developed humility, right? I think you know when we're going to talk about self-mastery today. I think that that idea of self-mastery has helped me get to that level of humility where maybe before I was trying to be humble but it was more of a lack of, maybe, self-worth or self-belief, and so it came across more as a false humility. So those are certainly a developed skill and competency, if you will, that I've been able to hone over the years.

**Chris Comeaux: 6:12**

That's going to be a perfect segue. Before we jump in, I have asked all of our guests this. Now, I actually missed two shows. It started in the very beginning. It was almost a whim hey, what's your superpower? And then I left it off in a couple of shows and then our listeners actually like, hey, you need to keep asking that and I have, and it has been such a gift to me and I feel like it's been a gift to our guests. So, Mike, what is your superpower?

**Mike Harbour: 6:35**

I love that question and when you think about all of the things, when I really boil it down to, I think, what makes me who I am and what's gotten me to where I'm at today, I could give a lot of different answers, but the one superpower I think I have that when I look around the world that others maybe struggle with at times is perseverance. You know I have this ability to even though I have, you know, I go through little bouts of self-doubt or maybe a little depression because things aren't working out the way that I wanted them to work out, or myself back up and get going again, and I think that was developed early in my life. Chris, I grew up in a very violent, dysfunctional, abusive home. Grow up that way, you either crumble which I have siblings who did and have still do or you learn to be tough and fight through whatever life throws at you, because I don't care how successful you are, you're going to have challenges in life, right, as a leader, no matter how good you are as a leader and how developed your skills are as a leader, you're going to have challenges and so we have to have this ability to pick ourselves back up and persevere through those challenges.

**Mike Harbour: 8:12**

My grandmother, who was really the model in my life of what I wanted life to be. She grew up in the Depression. She was eighth grade educated. She had to drop out of school to help take care of family. Back in those days, toughest, smartest woman leader, really first great leader in my life. And she would always tell me Michael, no matter what, never quit, never give up.

**Mike Harbour: 8:41**

And you know she's the reason I just mentioned this to my son this morning before prepping for our conversation. You know my mama always is the reason that I'm where I'm at today now. I've had a lot of other leaders and mentors in my life, but but for her I could have ended up on a much different path, uh, than I did. And then I use that perseverance to really what I believe take maybe big concepts of leadership or communication and make them simple for others. You know being able to help people persevere through those challenges and different leadership um areas and challenges that they have in their life. So I think that's the skill of leadership I have is taking a big, complex concept and making it

easy Uh and in in in helping others learn to persevere through challenges as well and find a way forward.

**Chris Comeaux: 9:31**

That's awesome, Mike, and that is such a such a catalyst. Um, my girls were rewatching, uh, the first captain America the other night and I was just kind of sitting there with them just good opportunity to hang out with them and I don't know if you've seen it. People always go, do you not watch a movie and pull out of the leadership lesson. I'm like I can't help myself. They're just all over of you when you start looking for them.

**Chris Comeaux: 9:53**

But before he became Captain America and he was this scrawny person and this guy's beat him up in the back alley and he just, you know, just kept popping up and the guy's like, do you not know to stay down? And then, of course, you know he carries a spirit of that throughout the whole avengers episode and his spirit of perseverance obviously leads this amazing kind of superhero team. Obviously it's a movie, but yet I think that is a beautiful illustration of what you're poking on, that sometimes a person of perseverance creates such an ecosystem or almost like a um, like an inertia, inertia and then other people's gifts can come to the forefront because that one person gives back up and says we can do this. So kudos to you. I love that.

**Mike Harbour: 10:33**

Yeah, thank you.

**Chris Comeaux: 10:34**

Well, so, mike, you know already that I'm using my book, the Anatomy of Leadership, a meta framework. You probably remember I'm a CPA and so accountants by nature kind of organize stuff and I've always been, like you, a student of leadership. We have so many common mentors Quint, studer, john Maxwell but if you Google the word you get 6 billion hits. And so how do you kind of make sense of that body of knowledge? So I really wrote the book of like a table of contents on what is leadership. There's so many angles I could have gone with you, but I thought you know, my very first chapter is about self-mastery, and when we did our podcast together I basically said look, I definitely want to talk to you about self-mastery. So before we kind of set the table on that, before we jump in, given your extensive work and again I said, if you Google the word leadership you get six billion hits I'm curious, how do you define the word leadership?

**Mike Harbour: 11:23**

Six billion hits. I'm curious how do you define the word leadership? Yeah, I love that question because, to your point, there are so many different ideas or definitions of leadership. You know, John Maxwell has his, Quint Studer has his Everybody's got their own definition right, and for me, leadership is really just about lifting others up to a place that they may not believe is possible for them.

**Mike Harbour: 11:47**

I think that's the essence of leadership and one of my favorite quotes that I try to model. My leadership philosophy, my personal leadership philosophy, is from Jack Welch, and you know, Jack Welch led GE for a long time and sometimes he gets a bad rap for not being a great leader and sometimes he gets a good rap for being a good leader, for what he did at GE. But one of the quotes that I heard from him years and years ago was when and I kind of put my own name in it, Mike when you were made a leader, you weren't given a crown, you were given the responsibility to bring out the best in others, and I think that's what the true essence of leadership is. It's not to lord over people, it's not to yell at people, it's not to tell people what to do, even though early on, Chris, that's what I thought leadership was right. I mean, whether that's because I'm wired that way a little bit as a high D type A personality, or because of my modeling growing up or by other leaders that I saw do that, I kind of thought that's what leadership was.

**Mike Harbour: 12:54**

But then when I started that growth journey when I was 23 years old, I was in the army and started studying and you know, I picked up my first believe it or not, I read my first book at 23, even though I was a high school graduate and four years of college at that time and I never really read a book, I kind of read the table of contents and the cliff notes.

**Mike Harbour: 13:14**

But I started reading and studying personal growth and leadership at that point and kind of, you know, got John Maxwell's Developing the Leader Within you book back then and it started changing my idea of what leadership is. But then that quote from Jack Welch you know, Mike, you weren't given a crown, so you can't Lord over people. Uh, you got to learn to lift that, lift others up, pull their potential out of them. And when I really look at why I'm where I'm at today, Chris, that's what great leaders did for me, my grandmother being number one right Begin to lift something up in me that I wasn't sure was there, and so that's what I really try to do every day is yes, I'm very direct and assertive in my approach to communication about leadership, but it's really about pulling something better out of people and giving them that belief that they may or may not have.

**Melody King: 14:06**

Gosh. Every time we're with each other, mike, there's just so much common ground that you and I have. It's interesting I always say that really the catalyst for the beginning of my leadership journey had incredible teachers and people. I also had a mom-in-law who had a great impact on me, but it really was my wife giving me John Maxwell's book *Developing the Leader Within* you. And actually Welsh was my hero because when I came up in business school he really was kind of the Elon Musk, jeff Bezos. I mean GE was the model, most admired corporation and, as fate would have it, one of our top donors at the hospice where I was for a long time. Her husband was on the senior leadership team with Jack Welsh. So I've heard a lot of incredible like insider stories of you. Know what Welsh was like.

**Melody King:** 14:49

In fact, one of my favorite quotes that I use quite frequently because of the healthcare challenges we're navigating is a Jack Welsh quote that I just slightly re-engineered and he said if the pace of change externally is greater than the internal rate of learning, you're pretty much screwed. And so we've kind of taken it. That's kind of our own take on that Jack Welsh quote and we use it frequently in the work that we do. And so this is going to be a good segue, mike, because actually when I wrote the book and started thinking about because the book is kind of meant to be like, this is the anatomy of leadership, not the definition, but the anatomy, because, being in health care, they teach human anatomy, so that way you could be virtuosic in health care.

**Melody King:** 15:26

So I started with self-mastery, but then, where you actually just took it, the second chapter is actually caring for others, because they're so closely related. But yet, at least in my theory and I'd love for you to push back if you're not working on being the best version of yourself, ie self-mastery, it is really hard then for you to help bring out that best in other people. And so I'm just curious, you could take it from there, because really my question behind my question is you know, how would you define self mastery, but I do think the first part of it? You could probably weave the two together.

**Mike Harbour:** 15:58

Yeah, no, you're. You're a hundred percent correct. You cannot give what you do not have, right? I mean. So if you want to lead other people, if you want to care for other people, you better be taking care of yourself. It's the analogy of the airplane, right? What do they tell you to do when the? If the oxygen mask falls out of the ceiling, put your own first before you try to help someone else breathe.

**Mike Harbour:** 16:23

And from a leadership standpoint, and so you know, we'll go back in my history a little bit. What I was trying to do early on, Chris, is learn the leadership skills and how to tell people what to do the one-minute manager and all those kind of things, right, that we're familiar with. Kind of learn those skills so I could tell people what to do better. You know, because I often make the joke. You know, Chris, my two greatest strengths as a leader are to tell people what to do and how to do it, and then also how fast to do it, like I'm really good at that, right, but that's not, that's not really leadership. And and and. So when I became a student of of kind of life, um, I really became a student of, like, self mastery, and I'm still a student of self master, by the way. I'm still trying to master myself, but I and I'm a Christian believer, but I'm also a student of other philosophies. So I love to study stoicism because I just think it's a, it's a philosophy of how we really master self. And you know for for your listeners, stoicism is just really the, the ability to experience challenges, pain, trouble, without complaining, right, without complaining or showing emotion.

**Mike Harbour: 17:38**

Now I used to have a mother who was extremely abusive and she would beat the tar out of me with whatever she could find. And then she would tell me hey, when you quit crying, I'll quit. I mean, it didn't matter what she had. And so I'm able to take a lot of pain without crying and complaining, but that doesn't mean I wasn't crying or complaining on the inside, right. And then when you're whining, complaining, crying on the inside, that eventually is going to come out in your energy projection toward others. You know you and I are in our green room.

**Mike Harbour: 18:12**

We were talking a little bit about energy. So if I have, I left home at. You know, I raised myself pretty much from 12 years old, but when I left home for good, I left home with a ton of anger, resentment and, you know, just dislike for people and for the world and those kind of things. So I had to go on a self-mastery journey. Now, I didn't go to monk school or any of those things, Chris, but what I did do is I went to school on learning about myself.

**Mike Harbour: 18:40**

It took me a while to get there, really, but you know, this idea of self-mastery is being able to what I like to call observe yourself while you're living life, right. So there's kind of this out-of-body experience, like right now, while I'm talking to you, Chris, I'm also trying to be very observational of how I'm doing that. Like, how is my energy, what's my body language, what kind of words am I using that are going to make an impact on other people? So that self-mastery, you've got to be able to not be always reactive to things but observational in the moment of things so you can respond in an appropriate way. And it hugely impacts our



ability to lead and communicate and care for other people. But it begins with that self-care like working on the things, because, let's just be honest, the care like working on the things. Because, let's just be honest, the things we have going on the inside.

**Mike Harbour: 19:36**

There's an old saying you are what you eat right From as a kid. Right, we are what we feel we're going. I don't care how good you are when you go lead other people what you're feeling on the inside, if you haven't dealt with that and learned to kind of shelve that in a moment. That's really kind of what this idea of stoicism is. I may be angry, but I need to shelve that in a moment before I go lead other people. So how am I going to deal with that emotion before I just step in and be reactive to my people? Can I do that? Absolutely, Chris.

**Mike Harbour: 20:07**

I'm really good at coming in angry and mad and yelling and screaming and getting people to do stuff, but it's only in that moment. They're not going to do it when I'm outside the room and you know, one of the things I always say about leadership is leadership is not what happens when you're present, it's what happens when you're gone, right, like can you leave the room, can you take a five-week sabbatical, and people still get stuff done in a values-based way. That's what the essence of true leadership is. If I'm really a good leader and I've lifted other people up and I've created value in their life, everything I need them to do while I'm on a five week sabbatical is going to happen in an appropriate way, right? If I'm not able to leave, then I'm simply a manager. If I've got to be there to make them do it, I'm simply a manager in doing that. And again, all of that takes the ability to master self for sure.

**Chris Comeaux: 21:00**

Boy, there's so much in there and so much good stuff in there. First, mike, first kudos to you, because I've heard people. You know we are a product of the early part of our life and what we do with that will shape and mold the rest of our life and at some level, that work that you did and it sounds like you had one hell of a journey earlier part of your life and it sounds you've done some incredible work and it shows up in who you are Like. I've heard people talk about that. People can use words, but you can still see that internal hurt, pain, energy, and so it's obvious you've done some work in that area, especially considering I mean it sounds like trauma. I mean there's no other word. You went through some pretty tough trauma. Now it's interesting, you took it to the Stoics and so I'm going to say something. I didn't talk about this, so you push back if you disagree, and I love Stoicism as well. Love Seneca I'm trying to think of. Is it Ryan Day? I think that's his name.

**Chris Comeaux: 21:58**

Modern Day Stoic, great stuff, and so you can certainly put it on that shelf in that moment. In fact, Dr Thayer would call it de-centering what you're talking about, mike. And recently I think it was Shiraz who wrote Positive Intelligence. He said go up on the balcony of your life, which I love. That's another framing of if I can step outside of myself and observe there's a good chance. I kind of like, oh, that's not showing up. Pretty well, I'm going to have to do something with that. Maybe I put it on the shelf right now so that way I could perform and be the best version of myself for my team, my family, whatever. But you probably got to come back to that thing on your shelf. Would you agree with that? And then do some work? And perhaps sometimes that's where you know having someone else you know my faith has been a big part of my examining my own stuff and trying to become a better version of myself. Whatever those wounds is kind of the language that I use. So what would you say to that?

**Mike Harbour: 22:57**

Yes, absolutely Got to come back to it. I'm a great compartmentalizer, you know that's kind of what you're talking about putting things up on the shelf right. I'm great at compartmentalizing. You know, when you grow up the way I did, you have to learn to kind of shove things right and and not not really uh to, to really look at them. But as I got older certainly learned the skill of yeah, maybe I need to put that on the shelf for now, but if I don't deal with it, chris, it's um.

**Mike Harbour: 23:23**

I often use, you know, you've been in healthcare, I've been in healthcare a long time Uh, uh. You know I often use the analogy of the bed sore. When there's an older patient laying in a bed, they get a little blister, hot spot on their skin and then eventually, if it's not taken care of, dealt with, it turns into a gangrenous ulcer, right, and they may lose a limb for that. So whatever we put on the shelf, if we don't deal with it, we're creatures of habit, right, and so if that's a subconscious habit that you have, a subconscious thought that you have, you might be able to shelve it. But it's coming back if you haven't learned to deal with it in an appropriate, healthy way.

**Mike Harbour: 24:03**

And to your point, I mean my faith obviously was the turning point for me. I mean I tried to do a lot of self-help and reading books and stuff like that, but it's when I really turned over to God a lot of the things in my life, and then started getting some counseling in the right way. I did some counseling, but also coaches and mentors, and then I began to get. I easily talk about my past today. You can see how easy that is.

**Mike Harbour: 24:32**

But there were times in my life like I was married to my wife for 15 years before she knew some things about my childhood. She didn't. She knew I was an angry guy. I mean, we've been married 32 years now this year and the first 10 years were probably miserable for her right, because I there was. There was times I was, I was angry, I didn't have control of that emotion and when things didn't go my way I might throw something, never physically harming her, but certainly emotionally harming her, because I hadn't dealt with those things that I was trying to shove away onto the shelf. They're going to show up, they're going to show up. And so as leaders yeah to your point we can get up on the balcony. We can put that there and go do leadership. In that moment we're still probably going to carry that energy with us, but if we don't come back and deal with that and learn how to appropriately make that a lesser part of our life, our thinking, our energy, it's going to continue to haunt us if we haven't done that.

**Chris Comeaux: 25:32**

That's so good, mike. And one other thing that occurs to me, and I think you'll agree with this statement the journey of self-mastery, because what you're describing it is a lifelong journey. There is no there there. Probably you and I both, I mean, we could probably sit here and stay on this one subject, the rest and just keep sharing, and I could look through the rear view mirror and I know I'm a better version today. And I think it's Ed Milet on his podcast consistently says I can't wait to see who meet my future self 10 years from now, in other words, out of that windshield. I'm going to keep on that journey and I'm not. I'm fairly certain there is no day where we'll kick our feet up and go, ah, got that self-mastery thing kind of nailed. It's just going to be a continual process. Would you agree with that or say it differently?

**Mike Harbour: 26:19**

Yeah, no, at every level of life we are challenged to peel another layer back of the onion, whether it be in leadership, at every level of leadership that we climb. You know, if you look at just John Maxwell's five levels of leadership or the levels of leadership that you get promoted to, however you want to look at that, at every level leadership requires something different of you. But if you're only carrying the same person to the next level, the problems get harder, right, and so, as like for you. Look, I've written three books. This, this last one, I'm pretty happy with. The first two are, you know, kind of cheesy books, I think, but this last one is pretty good.

**Mike Harbour: 27:02**

But that's because I continued to peel back the layers and get better right, and then, and then I also had to let go of like I was a C student at best, Chris, and in high school I was like I

think they actually graduated me just to get rid of me, right, so this, there's this, always this thinking like what do I have to share with people?

**Mike Harbour: 27:20**

I was, I'm an idiot, I'm a dummy, like these are things I thought about myself that I was actually told by teachers or, you know, parents even, and, and so, yeah, you gotta, you gotta deal with those things, but that that also as you get better in life.

**Mike Harbour: 27:39**

I have adult children, pretty much now 23 year old and a 19. I'm a. I have to be a different parent today than I was five years ago, right? So it's another level of self mastery to, instead of be the dad who's telling them what to do, I have to move to the dad who's more of a coach, advisor for them in their life today, which is completely different than what I was five years ago when I had more control, right, when they were young teenagers or whatever. So, yeah, it's a constant state of learning, or whatever. So, yeah, it's a constant state of learning and it's a constant state of also fighting your, your subconscious habits, chris, because we, you know we will if we're not putting consistent growth and attentional growth into our life, we will fall back to those comfort areas for our, for our leadership.

**Chris Comeaux: 28:32**

That's incredibly well said. Well, Mike, I want to kind of move us. This has been great, so let's kind of move forward. Because you get so much exposure and so you work with leaders in so many different industries, Give me your assessment of just the current state of leadership and organizations, what you've been observing, what you've been seeing.

**Mike Harbour: 28:48**

Yeah. So I think, first off, I want to say that I'm hopeful about the future. Okay, before I say what I really think the state is, I'm hopeful that we are beginning to make some changes in the way we lead ourselves, the way we lead others and in the way people are asking to be led as well, and I'm hopeful we're going to get there. But you know, with that being said, we've got some real whitewaters that we're in currently and that we've got to navigate and that's going to take some years, chris, not some days, not some weeks, not some months, but it's going to take some years because, you know, the entire landscape of our workforce has changed and COVID gets the blame for that, but it's really been changing for the last 10 or 15 years and in my life, probably like yours, Chris, for the last 30 years we've been talking about employee engagement, with zero to very little improvement in employee engagement. Right. For 30 years we've been talking about the baby boomer retirements coming and the worker shortage, with zero real attention put into that. And guess what?

We're here now. We're there now, right there, that, there, that we're there now, by the way, leaders, and now we're, we're in this reactive mode to begin to address those things. And so you know the leaders that are our age, Chris, and even older we gave a lot of lip service to what needed to happen, but not a lot of groundwork into that.

**Mike Harbour: 30:34**

And so I think what's happening now is people are beginning to realize and COVID created a lot of this certainly is leaders are now realizing we've got to invest in our people, we've got to invest in their development, we've got to invest in our leaders. We've got to do things differently. We've got to quit just talking about valuing people. Now, unfortunately, there's a shift back to bottom line profit.

**Mike Harbour: 31:02**

And look, I'm a capitalist. We have to make money and we have to have a strong bottom line to be able to add value to our teams and those kind of things add value to our teams and those kind of things but profits can't be our driving force to do good work and to value people. So, you know, I think the state of where we're at today is not good. There are some whitewaters that we've got to traverse for the next few years. But if we do that and we put good systems and practices and growth and development in place, you know, with doing the internal work that you and I were talking about previously as leaders. Every leader's got to step up and say, okay, I've got to do the internal work to become a better leader so I can lead people more effectively and add value to them. I think the future's bright if we'll do that.

**Chris Comeaux: 31:49**

You know something that occurs to me. Listen to you, Mike, and I love actually where we started this conversation. There's something about the time that we live. Maybe it's the technology age and it's kind of like like I actually had this kid that worked for me, definitely definitely a millennial, and I'm not dissing on millennials but kind of the quick kind of Google. Like there was a complicated subject we were talking about and he did a quick Google and he's like oh yeah, it's blah blah, blah, blah, and it was a surface level understanding of the definition, not a deep understanding which comes through experience.

**Chris Comeaux: 32:20**

And I feel like we probably live at a time where maybe you know, there's a plethora of leadership materials out there. So instead of an in-depth understanding and in-depth work, it's like surface level, tactical things, whereas if you don't do the deep work, it's really hard

to make major progress. And maybe that's why the symptoms are showing up. Certainly they're macro industry changes. I think it's part of the time that we live, cycles of things happen about every hundred years. We happen to live in one of those huge cycles, and so I don't know if you have any comments to that, but it just strikes me when we started the conversation is the true foundational work that then gives you the foundation to start to navigate these whitewater rapids you're alluding to.

**Mike Harbour: 33:03**

Yeah, another one of my favorite quotes is by Eric Hoffer. He said in times of change, learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists. Right, and what he's saying in that moment is, if we're not in a state of constant learning and by learning I don't mean Googling and doing a five minute oh, that's the definition I can do that. By learning, I mean what you you said the deep work. There's a great book by cal newport, uh, titled deep work, and, and you know, maybe some of our, your listeners, will go read that book and understand what really doing deep work is to really get better. But here's what I can tell you. I'll just, I like to use my own life as an example.

**Mike Harbour: 33:49**

Early in my life, before google, because, yes, I'm, I'm, I'm the generation before Google, um, I wanted the cliff notes version, like I wanted the one minute manager. You know how can I be a better minute manager in one minute? Right, I wanted the. I wanted the, the cliff notes, the, the shortcuts to everything, chris, I mean, I was a shortcut guy, just like if, cause, and again, this is where I had to finally let go of blaming my parents. If my parents did this and my parents taught me that if they'd have been better parents, I would know all this stuff. And so I always felt like I was behind and I was looking for the shortest way to get to where I wanted to go, whether it be rich or famous or a better leader or better. Whatever it was Right. Just apply that to everything.

**Mike Harbour: 34:31**

Eventually, I had to learn there are no shortcuts. There are no Google searches to make you a better leader. What there is is a Google search to find, to get on the path to better leadership, to better books, to better you know podcasts, to better things. But we have to do the deep work and then apply. You know, I think back to you know things that I'm really really good at. I just got some of this feedback this week and some training I did is I'm really good at taking principles and making them practical, practical and applicable. Right, that's, that's what I'm really good at and that's because I've had to do that in my own life.

**Mike Harbour: 35:11**

I can read a John Maxwell book and read about the law of the lid and I can say, well, I don't really have any lids. But then when I really dig deeper and go, yeah, like, am I on a Likert scale? Am I 0 to 10, am I a 10 on that? No, okay, what do I got to do to go from a 7 to an 8 or an 8 to an 8.5? And that's what I mean by deep work is always evaluating um yourself, being a constant not critic, but a constant coach of yourself to get just a little bit better. And that's a daily pro uh process.

**Mike Harbour: 35:48**

But it again, I kind of hang on that quote from Eric Hoffer Am I, am I, am I learned or am I a learner? Because if I'm not learning, I kind of hang on that quote from Eric Hoffer Am I learned or am I a learner? Because if I'm not learning, I mean, I feel like that's why my business is really thriving today is because I've over 25 years. I've been a consistent learner and there are things that I know today. And, of course you know I've also brought people on my team that are much smarter than me that can do some things I'm not. I've learned that I'm no good at doing right, chris, so we have to do that as well.

**Chris Comeaux: 36:18**

The other thing that occurs to me just listen to you, mike, one of the great quotes that I first heard from Quint.

**Chris Comeaux: 36:22**

I think it's actually a Chinese proverb that when the student is ready, the teacher appears and even, like in your own personal journey, that again you're just so gracious and cheering that I imagine, and lately, my, my, my morning meditation, prayer time, I tend to just I'm holding my hands this way, like trying to be open to whatever I need to be open to at the time, and it's like that spirit of and being a true student not a Google student, but a true student that I want to do that deep work and until you find yourself in that space, as opposed to and the way Dr Thayer said, what I'm trying to say is it's the knowing mode versus the learning mode. And I spent a lot of time in healthcare in this country, especially healthcare systems, and you see a lot of knowing mode like it's a. It's a, it's a very survival of the fittest and like knowledge is used to bludgeon your opponent and it's kind of a blood sport and it's really all about knowing. It's not the spirit of learning and, especially times of great change, it feels like that spirit of learning is just so critical, so I don't know if you want to make a comment to that.

**Mike Harbour: 37:30**

Yeah, look, I mean you're absolutely right. We have to shift from I need to know everything. I mean that was the model of leadership, right? Maybe when you were coming up, I actually

wouldn't invite feedback because I was afraid to admit I didn't know and I would portray that I knew what I didn't really know. Which is really fake leadership? That's faking it until you lose, right, not faking it until you make it. And really you know, great leaders are willing to ask questions, be mentored, be coached and learn the things from other people, and that's you know. If you want to know this, that's the Cliff Notes version, right? I mean that's really you know, asking people being in that state of learning and we all. So what?

**Mike Harbour: 38:18**

One of the things I talk about a lot, Chris, is we have to learn to remove competitiveness from our life and move into a mindset of collaboration and unfortunately, our workplace drives competitiveness between employees. I mean, just look at the whole employee evaluation process. It's comparing one employee to another and you get a seven, this person got an eight. They're going to get a higher raise than the other. I mean it's so dysfunctional the way we evaluate performance of people, evaluate performance of people and then the other thing is most leaders won't do that. They don't understand how to create consistency in their life and in their leadership systems and processes. That's my book. Quit losing talent is a framework for leading people, for keeping people, for helping create value in the lives of people. But most leaders say, mike, this is just too much work. Well, and my question is is well, is, is interviewing endlessly not too much work? I mean trying to find the right people. Uh, you know, having to counsel employees who don't follow your value, is that not too much work? And you know, when you put it in in that, when you put it in that, well, yeah, it is Okay. Well, let's put some systems in place that are going to take you a time to implement and create consistency, but once you have them in place, you're going to create value from your leadership into the lives of other people and they'll begin to stay with you and work harder for you. But you know that takes learning, chris. It takes the, it takes the willingness to to not just look into this book and say, okay, what can I go do right now, in five minutes, that are really going to help me? No, it's what. What are you going to do over the next five years that are going to help you, and I love your statement a minute ago I can't remember exactly how you said it, but but one of the.

**Mike Harbour: 40:13**

I did a podcast a few weeks ago on the lead up podcast about the greatest question you know I've ever been asked, and it's the leader. So we have to sit down and have this vision for ourself what do you see five years from now in your team, in your leadership, in your life? So you create that vision for that and then the question is what is the person that is in that place have to do right now? What do I have to say? How do I need to behave? What are the thoughts I need to have? What's the mindset I need to create? What's the leadership



philosophy I need to follow in this moment to create that in the future, whether that's at the end of the week, the end of the month, the end of the year or five years from now.

**Chris Comeaux: 40:59**

And probably all of the above. Yeah, I think it was that Ed Mylett, He constantly says I can't wait to meet who I will be 10 years from now, that future version of myself, and I love that I keep that kind of continually. Well, let me land it this way, Mike Just, and it almost feels antithetical to what you said, but I think this has been such a great conversation, but I think people always okay, so give me some practical tips. So what would be practical tips for folks to improve their leadership, especially their self-mastery journey.

**Mike Harbour: 41:32**

I think you know, first of all we have to admit. You know, if you go back to the 12 steps of recovery for an alcoholic drug addict or anything, step number one is to admit we have a problem, right? So I think you know, practically we all have to admit we have a problem, even the leader who thinks they're great, even the leader. You know, it really bothers me when I hear leaders say, well, I'm just a born leader, or that person's a born leader, because it gives them the false sense that they're a great leader and they don't need to grow. And so I think the first thing we all have to do is admit we have a problem, like admit we need to grow. It begins there, Chris, because if we don't do that, none of us will stick out.

**Mike Harbour: 42:21**

Like, we won't persevere through the pains of growth. When I teach people how to have hard conversations, like conversations that involve conflict, which 90% of leaders are terrible at. When I teach them how to do that, most of them won't. They won't do the process that I teach them because it's too painful, because they're going to step on their toes a few times and I'm like you got to get through that pain. It's like going to the gym If you want to get stronger, you got to do the hard stuff for a little while to get through the soreness and the pain before you experience the results of that. So, admitting that we have a problem and in committing to persevere through the pain, ok, I think those are the first two steps and maybe, maybe those don't really seem practical, but I think I think they're practical steps that we have to apply first. And then we have to. We have to invite others into our life. Like, can I invite a Quint Studer into my life? Can I invite a John Maxwell into my life? Now, maybe you can't physically meet them, but they have books and podcasts and YouTube speeches and things that you can go out there with, and so one of the challenges I give all leaders is quit waiting on others to invest in you, like quit waiting on your company to invest in you for coaching or leadership development. Now do I think companies should do that Absolutely.

**Mike Harbour: 43:44**

But you know, the the one thing I did is I never, once I got started on this growth journey, I didn't wait on somebody to buy me a book or a cassette tape. You know we had cassettes when I started, chris, just like you. You know we, we, you know I didn't wait on someone to buy that stuff for me. I started that myself and so, practically, you have to also begin to invest in yourself. Through today, with, with the, the smartphones we have in our pocket, we have access to anything and everything for absolutely free. I have a. I listened to podcasts. I listened to Chris's podcast, I listened to Ed Mylett, who he's mentioned a lot. I listened to podcasts while I'm, you know, driving, while I'm working out, and so what does that mean? You know, when I say that you, we also have to quit saying we don't have time because you do.

**Mike Harbour: 44:32**

You just like I listened to books and podcasts on. You know when I say that we also have to quit saying we don't have time because you do. You just like I listen to books and podcasts on. You know, books on audible, while I'm working out right, while I'm on a treadmill, while I'm driving, I'm listening to things that are going to help me grow. So unless we intentionally build the time into our schedule, it will never happen and you'll get 40, 50, 60.

**Mike Harbour: 44:55**

I'm sure, chris, you have people in your life. You know people that that they're, you know they they use the word they, they, they should all over themselves, right? They say I should have done this and I should have done that. Right, we know people like that. They never intentionally put deep work time, growth time, into their schedule. And then you know.

**Mike Harbour: 45:19**

Another practical thing is I recommend I can recommend thousands of books, but I recommend reading Carol Dweck's book Mindset and ask yourself are you stuck in a fixed mindset? Are you in a growth mindset? And if you practically read that, you say, well, I'm in a growth mindset, and and and if you, if you practically read that, you say, well, I'm in a growth mindset because I'm reading this book. But. But I want you to evaluate.

**Mike Harbour: 45:39**

Sometimes we get fixed in our habits, like, well, I'm a good communicator and we've got this way, but we're also fixed because we have little biases that get in our way of communicating, right, these internal biases that, um, or unconscious biases that we may not be aware of. So I always challenge people. Most people are in a fixed mindset, including myself and I, and I'm highly aware of this right, but there are times where I've got to

challenge my, my fixed mindset and say, okay, this is keeping me stuck. Where am I going to grow? Um, and so these are little things that we need to be studying. But, practically, we need to invite mentors.

**Mike Harbour: 46:14**

You maybe you need to hire a coach, like, I have a coach, I'm a coach of people and I have a coach I pay to tell me what I need to be hearing that I'm, that I'm not asking myself, right. So so, again, those are some practical things, Chris, that I think all leaders should be doing right now. And, and all of that is about internal care. You started us out pretty much at the beginning about taking care of ourselves, that's. I'm a big believer that I need to look in the mirror first every day before I go lead somebody else. Have I done the work to step into what John Maxwell calls level two leadership, permission-based leadership? Have I done the work to build trust and relationship with others before I ask them to follow me? That's the essence of leadership, I believe.

**Chris Comeaux: 47:00**

That was a master class right there, Mike. Thank you. Any just final thoughts, Mike, because that was perfect, but any other final thoughts you want to share?

**Mike Harbour: 47:10**

Well, you know, you and I could talk for hours about leadership and and, um, I love your, your book.

**Mike Harbour: 47:19**

You know the anatomy of leadership because when I think of anatomy, right it, it challenges us to look at what's going on on the inside of of of a body.

**Mike Harbour: 47:30**

Right, when you think of of a body, right, when you think of anatomy of a body. So your body of leadership, right, reading Chris's book, listening to his podcast, but then practically it's easy for us to listen to something like this or maybe go to a church sermon or a leadership class and we can think of what other people should be doing. But I really challenge people to look at your own anatomy of leadership, like, evaluate your own physiology, anatomy, mindset and say, what do I need to do? Because until we can even challenge, let's just say you know somebody is a poor leader and you know it before you can challenge them, you need to be a model for that as well, because it's a life well lived, a model of leadership that people are going to follow before they follow what you tell them to do. And so I think that would be my final thoughts that I'd love to leave everybody with today, Chris.

**Chris Comeaux: 48:27**

It was a beautiful Mike, man. I appreciate you. Every time we hang out with each other, I'm like we need to hang out with each other more. Are you in Alabama? Is that where you're at?

**Mike Harbour: 48:35**

Arkansas

**Chris Comeaux: 48:36**

Arkansas, Okay News and A.

**Mike Harbour: 48:40**

It's just as bad as Alabama, right no?

**Chris Comeaux: 48:42**

Actually, there's some beautiful places in Arkansas, and it's actually one of the few states out of the 50 I've never been to, so we're going to have to figure out how to connect with each. When we first connected. We were like ships passing in the night. We both were in Louisiana at the same time.

**Mike Harbour: 48:54**

Yeah, I forgot about that. You're right In Baton Rouge. You had left, like the day before I was there or something. Yeah, Baton Rouge.

**Chris Comeaux: 49:00**

Well, thank you, Mike. Thank you for the great work that you're doing. Health care for sure, because that's near and dear to my heart, but in many different places People have lost community in so many different ways. Our workplace is the last of community. In many respects, I actually feel like it's our personal mission field, and I bet you feel the same way, and so the more that we're helping people learn and grow in the workplace, I think it spills over and makes families better, makes communities better, and so thank you for being part of that great work.

**Mike Harbour: 49:29**

Thank you, Chris. I mean, you're giving voice to that as well, and you know, one of the things that you know Chris and I are doing is just trying to help the world. Chris is doing a great job of that, but it's through collaborative efforts, right, that we do that, not through competitive efforts. And so you know, chris, I appreciate what you're doing and how you're helping the world as well, because it's in desperate need of leadership right now.

**Chris Comeaux: 49:55**

Well, it's sad and you know, I believe so much in what you said. We have it in the name of our organization, Teleios Collaborative Network, and it's interesting you mentioned that because I was actually going to say something earlier. I was on a call this week and this guy was extremely successful in Silicon Valley and he's now working on a project in health care and he kind of mused out loud to me. He said, Chris, he said one reason why Silicon Valley is like a place that was attracting all this talent. He said there was a spirit of innovation, but it was collaborative innovation and people were like almost openly sharing and it just created this cross-contamination of just amazing ideas and, of course, you had startups and capital abounding.

**Chris Comeaux: 50:30**

He said, in healthcare, I find there's this weird competitive spirit, and he was just naming it and I'm like man I think you just nailed it and I do want to be like you. I want to be part of that solution because, man, the problems that are facing us are huge and so that spirit of collaboration is absolutely going to be critical, transcending organizational bounds, and each of them can synergistically kind of help each other, and so I'm very passionate about that. I love that. You've actually said that a couple of times today.

**Mike Harbour: 50:59**

Right on. Thanks so much for having me, Chris, I appreciate it.

**Chris Comeaux: 51:02**

And to our listeners. At the end of each episode, we always share a quote and a visual. The idea is it's create a Brain Bookmark. It's a thought product about the podcast subject. Further, you're learning and growth and thereby your leadership, and hopefully this wonderful podcast just sticks in your brain. Be sure to subscribe to our channel, the Anatomy of Leadership. We don't want you to miss an episode. Check out the book on Amazon. We're also going to put a link to Mike's books and we're also going to put a link to his website, as well as also his podcast as well, and Mike actually alluded to this. It's easy for us to rail against the world, be frustrated. You know what? Let's be the change we wish to see in the world. So thanks for listening to Anatomy of Leadership, thanks to Mike for being here today, and here's our Brain Bookmark to close today's show.

**Jeff Haffner: 51:44**

"When you were made a leader, you were not given a crown but a responsibility to bring out the best in others. By Jack Welch.

**Jeff Haffner:** 52:30

Thank you to our Anatomy of Leadership sponsor, Dragonfly Health. Dragonfly Health is also the title sponsor for April and November 2024 Leadership Immersion Courses. Dragonfly Health is a leading care-at-home data. 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 dragonfly Health, for all the great work that you do.