Andrew Olsen:

Hey, listeners, this is Andrew Olsen and I'm really excited to be here today with Tim Smith. Tim is the managing partner at Nonprofit DNA. He's got over 30 years experience in nonprofit admin, management and fund development and he's served as chief development officer at both Food for the Hungry and Museum of the Bible. Tim, welcome to the show today.

Tim Smith:

Thanks, Andrew. Great to be here.

Andrew Olsen:

Hey, man. I'm really grateful for the time today and for the insights that you're going to share with us. Before we jump into talking about leadership I'd love if you could just take a few minutes, tell us a little bit more about yourself and a little bit more about Nonprofit DNA.

Tim Smith:

Yeah, for sure. When I was 19 I was interning with a nonprofit organization in Kansas City and the head of that organization came bounding in the room and grabbed all of us young guys and said, "Hey, we're in trouble. Get out there and go raise some money and don't come back without at least a thousand dollars." That's how I got into fundraising. It's a long time ago and he sent me out a couple of times, actually, and then we all decided that was kind of my niche and I jumped into that career space as a vocation and have pretty much been there ever since. Yeah, a few years ago we launched Nonprofit DNA. We're a boutique firm working with charities most specifically in the area of fundraising and donor development. We work a little bit with organizations that are in a search process looking for staff to fulfill fundraising and development roles. We do some coaching and strategy and management of nonprofits strictly focused on faith based Bible and C3 organizations.

Andrew Olsen:

Okay, cool. Well I got to ask as a follow up before we get into our other questions, how much did you raise before you came back?

Tim Smith:

I got the thousand dollars. There were like four of us that went out. I was the first guy back. So he sent me out again. It was great. They moved me out of the basement up into a real cubicle.

Andrew Olsen:

Awesome.

Tim Smith:

At age 19, man, I had the world by the tail.

Andrew Olsen:

Hey, cubicle is way better than the basement for sure.

Tim Smith:

Oh, it was sweet. It was sweet.

Andrew Olsen:

Well I want to talk today about leadership, get a sense for your own leadership journey and just ask that you share with us some perspective on this topic. To start us off if you could talk a little bit about your own leadership journey. How and when did you figure out that leadership was something that you valued and that you wanted to do as part of your career and just walk us through what that looked like.

Tim Smith:

Yeah, I was pretty young, Andrew. I was 28 years old and working on a big multi-staff organization by this time and program guy, there was one guy younger than me on a staff of 20 full time people working for this organization and one day my boss just came bounding into my office and he said, "Listen, I'm establishing this new position and they're basically going to be a position between me and the rest of the staff and I'm going to [inaudible 00:03:49]." I looked at him like, "Wow, that's great." He goes, "Now," he says, "You need to understand a few things. One is that there's five guys on this staff that have applied for this position and I'm turning them all down. Two, they're all older than you are. Three, they have more education than you have, that I've ever had and finally they're far more experienced than you are." I looked at him and I said, I go, "Well why me?" He goes, "You know, I just think you're going to be good at this."

Tim Smith:

That's kind of how it started at age 28 and he was right. Those guys kind of turned on me for a couple years and they were very upset about not getting the job. I remember going into his office many, many times during those first couple of years and just saying, "Man, I don't know if I'm made for this. These guys were my best friends and now they just respond to me differently." I remember him looking me in the eye, he says, "Listen, if you're standing in two years I think you're going to be a great leader but you're going to have to go through a lot of hardship right now because you're so young." He was right and I went through a lot of hardships those first couple of years but it was those two years that really framed my ideology, the way I thought about management, the way I thought about leadership and it was the catalyst, really, that took me to everywhere else I've gone in my work. I really don't think I could have been the leader I became without those hard times and looking guys in the eye that ...

Tim Smith:

He was right. I mean, I'd look at these guys, sometimes I'd go home at night and I'd say, "Man, these guys are so much better than I am. Why am I here?" I stuck it out and it turned out for the good.

Andrew Olsen:

I want to follow up on that for a second. If you had to pick one thing out of that particular galvanizing experience, what's the biggest thing that you learned about yourself as a leader in that process?

Tim Smith:

Well I think the biggest thing is it gave me confidence to lead. At that age I was just happy, energetic, I was a young dad and I was living life at its fullest and I loved the fact that I was in work that mattered and I was doing good work and it put a pressure on me to think bigger than that moment. To think that hey, life is more than just serving in this moment and really allowed me to invest in my own self confidence and with that, my own development. How was I going to development as a leader? Where did I need to go to learn more about leadership? That took a real boost of confidence at that point. I didn't come from a family that stroked you a lot and said, "Boy, you're great." This was probably my first time to really sense that somebody thought I was good at something. I had to turn that corner and believe in myself.

Andrew Olsen:

That's really interesting, okay. Tell us a little bit about from that point on, obviously you've grown a lot in that time span in your career, what would you describe as your leadership philosophy at this point?

Tim Smith:

Yeah I think it really does go back to that guy that gave me that first big job. He was a mentor and a coach and he wasn't a guy that was hovering over me and micromanaging my every move. I think that he kind of taught me the importance of mentoring and those days we didn't call it mentoring. It was just managing. It was the way he managed me. But understanding that that'll be in a coach ... I coached basketball in my 20s and 30s and so I understood coaching principle and so he worked with me in a way to say, "Well Tim," when I'd ask him a question he was like a therapist. "Well what do you think? How do you feel about that?" He was always challenging me to think and I think that just resonated early on and it really stuck. [inaudible 00:08:52]. That good leaders are good teachers and good coaches more than just giving direction all the time.

Andrew Olsen:

Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. Let's talk a little bit about values. Talk to me about, sort of beyond coaching and teaching, what do you think the most important values are to be demonstrating as a leader?

Tim Smith:

I think for me it probably falls into two or three areas. One is just be really good at listening and I don't mean just hearing people but really listening to people. Work really hard at engagement and just that when you're with people, you're present. That you're in that moment with individuals. I think we've all worked for that leader or we've had that person in our life when we're talking to them they're just not there. They're on their phone today but they're looking at their watch or whatever. I never liked it when that happened to me. I think the importance of just, again, good listening, good engagement, eye contact, that kind of thing just to make sure the people that I'm leading sense that their time was really important to me and what they had to say was important. Then I think the biggest thing for me is trust building. Any leader has to build a tremendous amount of trust. Now when I was coming up as a young leader, leaders were always talking about loyalty and how they demanded loyalty and that, "We need you to be loyal." I think I translated that more to trust.

Tim Smith:

Loyalty, to me, seemed like a one way street. That you need to kind of just make sure you're saluting the leader at the right time and honoring that person. Trust to me was a two way street and how we built ... I felt like I was built as a leader because I was trusted with things even when I failed. I think I made trust a big part of my leadership style and the values that I tried to bring across. That when people were given jobs, like I was when I was young, if they were deserving of those jobs or they'd earned the role just yet or not, they had to know that they had my trust that they could do it. That became a real centerpiece for me.

Andrew Olsen:

Other than saying the words, "I trust you," what are some of the different behaviors or approaches that you've used in your career to convey that level of trust and to build that level of trust with people that work for you?

Tim Smith:

Yeah, I think overcoming their failures. I can think of two or three people that I've managed over the years that were accustomed to losing their jobs when they failed and I think failure is the most fertile ground to grow leaders. I just believe that wholeheartedly. That we don't grow leaders during big wins and big celebratory moments. We really grow leaders through failure because that's when teaching takes place and that's when mentoring takes place. I think it's during those times when I was able to convey to them that, "Hey, you're good, let's work the problem and learn from this" and I think as you do that over and over with people then you begin to see them kind of parroting back some of your own values in their conversation. And when you fail. A lot of times the failure isn't on the person you're managing, the failure is yours as a leader and how do you deal with your own failure with that individual as far as transparency and things like that?

Andrew Olsen:

That's a big one and I've been doing this 20 years now and I can't keep track of the number of instances where I've gone in to consult with an organization and one of the challenges has been a leader who can't handle failure and can't honestly look it in the face and acknowledge to the rest of the team, "Yeah, I screwed that up." There's just this block and this need for the leader to maintain a façade that they're perfect and that they make no mistakes. What's your counsel to somebody who's in that space and has a difficult time getting over the idea that it's not acceptable to be perceived as anything other than perfect?

Tim Smith:

Yeah, well it's know yourself and be a student of who you are. I just this last year published a book called What Have I Gotten Myself Into? It's really about leading in a nonprofit organization and I dedicated a whole chapter to the topic of toxic leadership and in that chapter actually defined different characteristics of particular leaders, whether it's narcissism or I'm very opaque in my leadership style or all the good ideas need to be my ideas, that kind of leader and that type of thing. I think the hardest thing for a lot of leaders is to embrace their own humanity and the fact that they do make mistakes, they do fail and I think if you can't own that it's really hard to build that trust with the people that you're leading if they can't really see you in your frail moments, in your moments of humanity. Where we make mistakes or we overreact or we lost our temper or something like that and then just owning that. I don't think I was really great at that when I was first starting out because I didn't want people to ever see me as a failure.

Andrew Olsen:

Sure.

Tim Smith:

As you get older and you've been through a few of these experiences I think you begin to embrace it better. I think one of the things I really try to teach young leaders and coach them on is just accept up front you're going to get it wrong now and then and own it.

Andrew Olsen:

Yeah, for sure. Thank you. Okay so next question, I'd love to know what motivates you as a leader?

Tim Smith:

Wow. I think I am personally motivated just through the process of seeing other people develop and some of the members of our team, if you take a good look at us side by side you'll notice the age difference. I'm probably 15 to 20 years older than most of the men and women that are on our team today and for me, all of those individuals first walked in my office or first connected with me when they were in their early 20s and most of them today are in their late 30s to early 40s and the fulfillment that I have today as a leader is having watched them develop, is the growth that I've seen in them to go from maybe a just tenacious question asker of, "Why did you do it that way? What were you thinking when you said this?" Or just the overbearing personality or a, "Hey, I'm 29 years old and surely I've got it all figured out," you know? I have some of those. Those are real life experiences with some members of our team when they were younger and today I look at some of those men and women that are still working with me after all those years and they're the smart ones.

Tim Smith:

I feel like I'm kind of holding their bags now and I've just watched that. For me, the motivation is growth, is to see development and fulfillment and fundraising. We always say that the real ... To me, the fulfillment to me isn't just raising money, it's that process that we build in organizations to help them do that. I feel the same way about people. It's not just thinking about what they could be one day but the process of helping them grow into that person. That's what I enjoy is when I see the lights come on and they get it and they're not thinking, they're just leading.

Andrew Olsen:

I suspect I know the answer to this but in follow up to what you just said I want to get your feedback on something. I suspect that you would ascribe to the statement that to be a really effective, really good leader you have to love people. Do you agree with that? Do you challenge that? Talk to me a little bit about that concept.

Tim Smith:

Well for sure. I think, gosh I'm trying to think who wrote this, I read this in a book when I was really young but it was around fundraising. They said, it went something like this, "The stuff of donor relationship is the stuff of friendship." I've always taken that I like to be around people I enjoy and so for me, I like to build teams not necessarily a bunch of people like me, that's foolishness just to have people with all the same kind of gift mix and strengths and weaknesses, but I think you have to be motivated that you just care about people, that you want to see people grow, you want to see them improve. A few years ago I had a big birthday and my staff did this big thing they called "Tim-isms" and it was all the little things that they just heard me say so many times over the years. It was actually very discouraging because I realized how terribly cheesy I had become. They made a big plaque and they all made these jokes, they did these little one liners of things that I said. You know, it just endeared me. It just helped me understand how much I care about them.

Tim Smith:

I think people reflect off of their leaders and I think that it was one of those moments that I was like a very proud father almost because you could see that growth and how the things that they probably struggled with in those little "Tim-isms" as they called them were the very things now that they carried as the great badges of honor that they were very good at. I think if you don't love people, man, don't lead people.

Andrew Olsen:

Yeah, agreed.

Tim Smith:

Stay out of [crosstalk 00:21:21].

Andrew Olsen:

Agreed.

Tim Smith:

Yeah.

Andrew Olsen:

Totally agree. All right so let's move onto a different aspect here. I'm curious to know if you can share with us what the biggest leadership risk is you ever took and I particularly want to know what you learned from it?

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Tim Smith:

Yeah, yeah, that's a good question. It's one that I think about a lot but I've never really had to answer the question before. I think the biggest risk and probably one of my biggest mistakes as a leader was jumping from a role that I had in an organization to try to start something new and big. One of the things that I think in mid career that I wrestled with was what I would call the new shiny object. Is that I'm an ambitious person and I was driven to build things more than manage things. So when something new came along that had an opportunity to look shiner and bigger it was easier to jump to that. I remember that this stage of my career, it was a huge mistake and I just did it because it was a bigger hill. It was something bigger to climb. What I took away from that that has stuck with me, I think about it almost every day, is that understanding the value of contentment. That when you're in a role that you're good at and you're in a role that you are fulfilled in that sometimes we look at contentment as something that there's something wrong with us, that we're relaxing too much, we're not working hard enough.

Tim Smith:

I learned that contentment, to me at times, caused me to go look for a bigger hill to climb verses realizing, "Hey, this is a great place. You've built something that's really healthy, now just keep managing it. Keep building it." Boy, that was a tough one. It was key, it was a key moment in my life but it was a tough one to wrap my head around.

Andrew Olsen:

That is, I think, an incredibly tough one. It's interesting to hear you say that because I think I'm wired the same way. I tell people I have two speeds, full speed and off, right? The desire to always be moving forward is a big thing for me and I think it is for a lot of folks in the nonprofit sector. I think when we look at how frequently people change roles and how quickly people are to jump to look at the next best thing, this idea of being content with contentment and the idea of being able to be happy with what you've built and to lead and manage it well, it's somewhat foreign to me and probably something that a lot of folks in our space ought to be thinking about that I don't know that we are.

Tim Smith:

I couldn't agree more. In the middle of all that, right in the middle of all of that process for me was a big battle with cancer, as well. Now as a cancer survivor I kind of look back, it caused me to ease back a little bit, reevaluate the most important things and some people that knew me pre-cancer and post-cancer they're like, "What happened to that guy?" I'm like, "Well he had cancer."

Andrew Olsen:

He had a shift in priorities, absolutely. Yeah.

Tim Smith:

Yeah, exactly. Exactly, and boy, it's just been a great lesson and honestly more fulfilling. I think it's tough when you're a driver, you're a type A personality and you want to accomplish as much as you possibly can in the time that you have. It's hard to translate that back to, "This is okay to go slower" or just to be content amidst these moments. I'm a better person for it in the long run.

Andrew Olsen:

That's good stuff, thank you. I'm also curious, kind of in that same vein of things you learned, I'd love to know what you feel like is the most valuable leadership advice you've ever received and who gave it to you.

Tim Smith:

Yeah, so again as I've shared, mentoring and there's three or four individuals that have been great mentors in my life and I think one of the greatest things that stuck with me was a mentor of mine who said, "Do not fear risk." He said, "By taking more risks it's going to increase your propensity to fail and failure if a key part of your professional development." Boy, yeah at the time when I was younger I'd hear, "Risk" and gosh, there was nothing I was afraid of. I would take on risks all the time but man, when the failures came it was painful because I hadn't put those two things together for the longest period of time. When I began to understand that risk is a part of your growth and it's going to be hard to do really big things and accomplish big things if you aren't willing to take risk and that kind of translated, like my leadership philosophy where I began teaching individuals and trying to train people under my care where I'd say things like, "Listen, don't be afraid to take a risk because there's nothing you can do that I cannot undo."

Tim Smith:

To more than just talk about risk and failure and potential failure but to give people safety in risk and that was kind of how, I mean, that was great advice to me but when it first came to me it came with a lot of pain because there wasn't that safety net. I think as leaders if you're going to encourage people to take risks, you've got to create that environment for them to land when they fail and that's been kind of a big part of my ideology, I'd say.

Andrew Olsen:

That, I think, is a huge thing for us to hold onto for a minute because you know this as well as I do, probably most of the organizations that you engage with throughout the nonprofit sector, they operate or they tend to operate at least on really thin margins, which means that there's really low tolerance of failure. What do you think we need to do as leaders in our sector to create an environment where that statement of, "There's nothing you can do that I can't undo and don't be afraid to take a risk" where the reality follows that, right? Because today if many leaders said that and someone took a risk and failed, their organizations might not be healthy enough today to sustain certain failures. How do we square those two things?

Tim Smith:

Yeah, so it's a great question, Andrew. I think that's where boundaries are important is understanding what our limitations are. When you think about risk in nonprofit organizations, often that risk is financial. It's like, "How far am I willing to let a person go and how much am I willing to let them spend before we just have to pull that plug?" In organizations I've had, I liked, and I think this was part of Good to Great in Jim Collins' books, just the giving decision making power to people down line in your organization and I thrived on that kind of freedom as a young leader and so I've always given that but it came with boundaries. It came with ... A person could not spend us out of business. They couldn't take their corporate credit card and go crazy but they could take some risks within those boundaries and within those limitations. I think that's where, for me is like, "Listen, don't be afraid to take some risks. Here's the limitations that you have of what you can do and how far you can go on a certain thought process or program idea."

Tim Smith:

I remember one of my first jobs as like a VP of development, the organization went through a whole missional shift about three years in and I remember the CEO coming into my office and saying, "Hey, Tim, we need to take all of our donors that are over here and get them over here." Yeah, that's exactly what my response was. I remember looking at him and saying, "I don't think I can do that. That's not why they give to us." That's where I think some guys had kind of gone off the rails on looking at a program idea not thinking about the ramification that it would have on the people that paid for our organization. I think it's a give take process. The longer you work with someone and the better they do in that space you give them more money to spend, you give them more latitude to lead, you give them more room to manage changes and that type of thing.

Andrew Olsen:

Stay on this topic for a second. One other piece of feedback that I've heard primarily from junior level people in the sector is something akin to, "My boss says that I have the authority to do this and that I should take risks but I get yelled at every time there's a mistake."

Tim Smith:

Yeah.

Andrew Olsen:

What kind of guidance or insights or tips can you share for those bosses, those managers, those leaders who are saying the right thing on the front end but maybe the way they respond when something does go wrong is actually telling a different story? Help us with that.

Tim Smith:

Yeah, that's a tough one. I think what you run into there is a person who lacks sincerity about risk and so what they're saying is, "Don't be afraid to make a mistake but boy, when you do I'm going to really make you pay for that mistake." They don't really, they're not sincere about that risk tolerance, basically. They probably are that leader that needs to have more engagement and more input throughout the process. I would say if you're working for a leader like that [inaudible 00:34:01] one, you may want to go find a new leader to work for that gives you the room to grow but that's not always realistic for people. Secondly though, you may want to involve that leader more in day to day. I've had leaders like that over me in the past that they talk a good game but when the rubber hit the road they didn't really live that out and yeah, after a couple of thrashings after the fact I found myself just involving them along the way and keeping them informed and asking their opinion and asking their permission and things like that because they ...

Tim Smith:

People's behavior will demonstrate their style, okay? Despite how we describe ourselves, the way we behave is the real us, it's the real person and I think that a lot of times it may be cool to say, "I'm this type of a leader" but it doesn't really fit their behavior model because they've been at it a certain way for a long time.

Andrew Olsen:

That's good stuff. All right, I want to get your input on motivation and particularly I'm thinking around times like we're in right now. We're recording this on April 23rd, 2020. We're in the midst of this COVID-19 crisis and I think a lot of leaders are challenged to keep their teams motivated and in alignment during times of crisis. What have you found to be most successful in your own leadership experience to do those things? To maintain alignment and to keep people motivated when the chips are down?

Tim Smith:

Wow, great question, especially for where we are today, this day. We're having a lot of these conversations. Three or four things. One, I think as a leader you have to stay calm. When chaos is all around you and like here in April 2020 we're being told, there are stay at home orders, there's shelter in place orders, people are not flying on airplanes and we're not traveling, we're not even getting together in small groups. That creates some chaos based on the type of work that you're in and how you've worked in the past. I think first off as a leader nobody's looking to you in a time for you to lose your mind right now. Keep calm. I think also in the midst of crisis make sure you're engaging on a regular basis with people that you're leading and so the teams that I'm working with today where I would be doing monthly or biweekly meetings we're doing weekly meetings. Where I would be doing a weekly meeting we're doing daily touch base just to be consistently, regularly engaging so that we're in front of each other and we're working through the crisis and I think in the middle of crisis leadership it's work one problem at a time.

Tim Smith:

Don't try to solve the whole crisis. I remember at Food for the Hungry when the tsunami hit Indonesia there were hundreds of things that we had to do as an organization that was working in that region of the world but we could only really work one thing at a time to be able to really be effective. I think in any crisis there's a sense that it's all overwhelming. Like, "How do we solve this problem? How do we get through this crisis?" When maybe the only thing you need to do is work on, "Okay, what's our best communication strategy right now?" Then, "What do we do with our donors?" In '08 and '09 when the economy collapsed through the mortgage crisis I think it was some of the best fundraising organizations did and they didn't do any asking, they just engaged. "How are you doing? How are you holding up? How can we help you?" I think it's just working one thing at a time but as a leader, even if it's inside this head between these ears it's a massive storm in your head. You have to project calm with your team and then [inaudible 00:39:04] and then work through those issues because if you're in chaos, everybody around you is going to be in chaos.

Andrew Olsen:

Yeah, that's really valuable. I want to, one quick follow up on that and this is something that I, a couple of years ago personally struggled with and that's the idea that wanting to project calm in the midst of chaos. I had this one experience where I was doing that and there was chaos all around and I probably went a little too far to the side of projecting calm and I actually had a staff member who was bold enough to come to me and say, "Hey, we're all freaking out here and the fact that you're like, totally cool and calm and collected makes us wonder do you even understand how bad it is?" Talk to us a little bit about that balance of like, definitely bringing calm to a situation but also maybe interjecting enough realism so people understand that you see how much they're hurting or how much the organization is challenged. What's the tipping point there?

Tim Smith:

Well I think you're talking about making sure you have good empathy for people and as you're going through a crisis, I'm a big fan of understanding the internal wiring of my team. How do they learn? How do they communicate? How do they process information? I think it's easy to just put everybody into your frame of mind and so I think in those moments while you're operating in calm you need to be engaging your team in their language and on their channel. That's a lot of work and that's a lot of work as a leader. If you're a leader who is very much driven to lead by principle and you've got somebody that just needs a lot of affirmation through a crisis, that's a lot of work for you because you'd rather just, "Hey, here's the basic ideas of what we need to do. This is the way we need to be thinking right now" but that person may have eight questions. I remember someone like that who used to, "Hey," outside of crisis she would call me probably seven or eight times a day with questions and I'd say, "Hey, why don't you put all of those questions together and we'll touch base twice a day?"

Tim Smith:

She couldn't do it. She couldn't do it. I had to learn, okay, she's very effective, very valuable to the organization so I found myself adapting to that person. I think we have people that might be more fearful or maybe they're a person that just needs all the information in front of them before they can make a decision and it's just understanding that about them. But I can see that. I can see that problem. I think people probably had that problem with me in the past like, "Oh gosh, he's so laid back right now he just doesn't get what we're dealing with" and I haven't had too many people call me out on it but I could see that as a part of just how I'm wired.

Andrew Olsen:

Yeah, that makes sense. Thank you. You touched a little bit about this when you mentioned your book. You talk a little bit about toxic leadership but I want to go a little further and get your perspective particularly around toxic employees and conflict in the workspace. What are some tools or some guidance that you use with your team to help resolve conflict in the most healthy way possible?

Tim Smith:

Yeah so as I mentioned understanding how people are wired is a big value of mine. Tools like the enneagram, strength finders, Myers–Briggs. I'm a big fan of those kinds of inventories that help us understand how people are thinking and how they're wired. I wouldn't consider myself having any certain level of expertise in any one of those [inaudible 00:44:05] I think that [inaudible 00:44:10] it's like, for a few years [inaudible 00:44:14] were all reading StrengthsFinder's books and applying that in the work place. It seems lately its been [inaudible 00:44:21] and really [inaudible 00:44:28]. Anything that allows us to try to understand the underlying design of how people think, how do they express themselves? How do they manage hardship and difficulties? How do they manage disappointment? How do they manage when they're being told, "No?" How do they operate when ...

Tim Smith:

I'm a big advocate of how do we function when everything is messed up? It's so easy to be positive when we're winning and so it's those first of the month meetings when you missed your goals by 20% the month prior. That's when we really learn a lot about each other. I think the tools for me or things that help me identify how people are thinking and I like those inventories. I like those tests that kind of help us. Then they create an environment for us to talk about ourselves and I found that really ... I remember taking a group on a tour for Museum of the Bible years ago and I think we were in Israel or Rome or some place looking at some behind the scenes deal related to the Museum of the Bible's work and it's the first time I ever heard the word, "Enneagram." There were about a dozen people there that I knew pretty well and they were all analyzing me. It was very frustrating, all these numbers flying around. I remember going back to my hotel room that night, going online and ordering a book. Now I've used it a lot just as a tool to help me understand people and how they work under pressure and things like that.

Andrew Olsen:

Yeah, one of the firms I used to work for we used to do DiSC inventory for every staff member and then as teams we would do them as well. I remember the first time I experienced it I sat back and I thought to myself, "Huh, now I understand why there's often conflict between myself and this person or that person, because we totally approach situations differently." I agree with you. I think tests like that and tools like that can be really helpful. I think there's, oftentimes people have a fear of like, "Oh, is it going to put me in a box? Am I not going to get opportunities because I'm a blue and not a green or a two and not a four?" Or whatever. I think if we're honest with one another that really, like you said, it's about learning how to understand how they think and then taking that next step and thinking about how we modify our communication and our approach to engage with somebody. Those kinds of things can actually be really powerful tools to help us have healthier relationships.

Tim Smith:

Yeah, I'll tell you the thing that helped me more than anything was parenting. My wife and I have six kids and they're all grown today but every one of them was wired so differently than the next one and I think as a leader nothing prepared me more for complex personalities than just parenting.

Andrew Olsen:

As the father of three girls I can tell you I am right there with you. I hear what you're saying there.

Tim Smith:

You're in it. You're in the middle of it.

Andrew Olsen:

So we have time for one more question before I let you go because we're about the top of the hour. As somebody who is an on the go leader, you and I were talking I think before we started recording this that typically at a time like this you'd be on the road, you'd be flying somewhere and you've are a self disclosed type A driver. How do you recharge and recalibrate as a leader?

Tim Smith:

Yeah, yeah, that's a good one. For me, walking with my bride is a big part of my life and so as you mentioned, we're in the middle of a lockdown travel wise right now so a lot of times my lunch hours and just stopping and getting away from my computer and my work and taking a walk. Not spending that hour talking about everything that we're doing and should be doing and that type of thing. I think also reading, researching. I like to keep up on just what's going on in the world around me. Taking time out to do sports [inaudible 00:49:36] I like to golf, I love the local sports teams in my town and those are types of things that create space. I think the biggest thing for me, too, is to recognize at the end of the day the work's always going to be right where you left it and so many of us have probably come up with this, "Well if I didn't do 12 hours today, if I didn't do 10 hours, did I do enough?" I think a important lesson is to learn that it's a time to disconnect and recharge and whether that's, if you're a Netflix watcher or you're a reader or whatever. Just to go find that space that allows the other parts of your mind to foster and grow.

Andrew Olsen:

Yeah, that's great. Thank you. Well, Tim. I appreciate you being here with us today. Thank you so much for the conversation. If somebody has questions, wants to learn more about Nonprofit DNA or just generally wants to connect with you, what's the best way for people to reach you?

Tim Smith:

Yeah so our website is NonprofitDNA.com. My email is Tim@nonprofitdna.com and we'd love to engage through there. There's lots of resources there that you can see to just connect with us.

Andrew Olsen:

Awesome. Thank you again, Tim.

Tim Smith:

Thank you.