



This Is Your Life Podcast
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Michael Hyatt

Michele Cushatt: Welcome to *This Is Your Life* with Michael Hyatt, where our goal is to give you the clarity, courage, and commitment you need to do what matters. My name is Michele Cushatt. Oh gosh. Did I just mess up my own name? Let me try that again.

Michael Hyatt: I feel so much better now!

Michele: Who am I? Okay, just so you know, this is what happens when you have a billion children. You forget who you are.

Michael: I know. Exactly.

Michele: All right. My name is Michele Cushatt. I am the cohost of today's episode, and I'm sitting in the studio with Michael Hyatt, who probably does know how to say his name.

Michael: My name is Michael, and I'm glad I'm here.

Michele: I'm so glad you're here too.

Michael: Thank you.

Michele: So there's an old proverb from the Bible that says... This is from Proverbs 4:23. "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." Now I've heard that verse multiple times in my years of life, and that's a pretty strong statement. King Solomon, who said that, was a king. He was a powerful and very dominating leader, and yet he emphasized the heart above intelligence, goal setting, strategy, team development, social media... Can you imagine?

Michael: I know! What was he thinking?

Michele: He emphasized it more than he emphasized social media, culture, productivity, and all of that! He really emphasized the heart above everything else. Today we're going to be talking about what guarding the heart looks like in leadership. Now before we go any farther, Michael, I have to ask you... Do you agree or disagree with Solomon's words? That's kind of funny because I'm basically asking you to either agree or disagree with God. Do you?

Michael: I mean, what do you say to that? What do you say to that?

Michele: Do you disagree with the Bible?

Michael: No, I totally agree with that. I would just say even more so... I agree that it's the wellspring of life, that's it's the most important thing you bring to the table as a leader. It's more important than your experience. It's more important than your education. It's more important than your skills. It is the thing that really makes a difference in your leadership and the impact you want to have on the world. If you come with your whole heart, it's very different from coming without it.

Michele: You know, that's so contrary to what our environment, our world, kind of says, especially living in the kind of place where we live, in the United States. In other countries... Those of you who are listening in internationally, some of you probably find yourselves in similar cultures where you don't emphasize the heart. We emphasize everything else, mainly the external parts, what we can see and what we can touch.

Michael: Absolutely.

Michele: And intellect, right?

Michael: Yeah. Totally. It's all of the stuff that either can be measured or is outward. That's what gets emphasized. As a leader, what's really important according to what we hear is where you were educated, where you got your M.B.A., who you trained under, what skills you have developed, what you've accomplished, and all of that. You rarely or never hear anyone talk about the heart.

Michele: Yeah, when's the last time somebody asked you, "Michael, what's the condition of your heart?"

Michael: Yeah.

Michele: We don't talk about that.

Michael: I'll actually tell you in this episode.

Michele: Fabulous! So now I'm going to ask you as a leader... You've been leading for a long time. You've been in the business world, the corporate world, for a very long time. I'm going to ask you to go a little personal, which I know is not always that comfortable, but this is too important of a topic for us to gloss over. I really think we need to take it down to a very personal level.

As a leader, have you ever been in a position where your heart was compromised, where your heart was damaged or hurt or wounded because of circumstances or whatever in such a way, and you weren't in a place of guarding your heart?

Michael: Yeah. I think it happened for me a couple of decades ago. I entered the workforce and particularly into publishing because I loved books and I loved having an impact on people, and I knew in my own life it was the books and the speakers I heard who really had changed my life. So I loved working with authors. I was very optimistic. I was very idealistic about it, and I had a client who I had a long-standing relationship with. It was a deeply personal relationship. It was somebody I not only worked with but really looked up to.

Michele: This wasn't somebody you had just worked with for a few months? I mean, it was years and years, correct?

Michael: Yeah. Yeah. It was a long, long relationship, and it was somebody I considered not just a client but somebody who was a friend. What happened to me was that one morning in my office, without warning, without anything, I got an email from him where he basically fired me. Well, he didn't *basically* fire me; he fired me.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: It was obvious that the email had been vetted by an attorney because it was one of those very cold, very impersonal, "I regret to inform you that your services will no longer be needed," kind of email. It was very short, less than a paragraph long.

Michele: From someone you had a relationship with.

Michael: It was someone who I talked with every day.

Michele: Yeah, so first of all, to get that over email is painful enough, but to get kind of a canned email or kind of a cold email is just salt on the wound.

Michael: Yeah, and I didn't really see it coming (which may say more about me than him, but I didn't see it coming) and it just appeared out of nowhere. Well, initially I was confused. Then I got angry because I thought it wasn't fair. I didn't have a chance... "I don't even know what the issue is. Why am I being fired?" There was nothing in the email that made that clear. So I called him. That just seemed like the natural thing.

We didn't live in the same city, so it wasn't possible for me to show up on his doorstep, though I would have. That would have been the best of all possible worlds, but I didn't have that option. So I called him, and he wouldn't take my call. I spent literally the next three months trying to work with his staff to get a phone call which he wouldn't give me. Then, finally, after about six months, he agreed. I would call him every couple of weeks, and I think I just finally wore them down, but he finally agreed to meet with me.

Michele: Pause for just a minute. What was your hope in even that meeting? Some people in that kind of situation just want to run as far away as possible. What were you wanting in order to be able to connect with him?

Michael: I felt I needed closure.

Michele: Yes. I can see that.

Michael: Because actually, when this happened, I said to my wife, "I just need a couple of weeks. I just need you to let me just shut down."

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: "I'm going to take off work. I don't even know what to do with this." It was a deep grieving process for me.

Michele: This wasn't just a client.

Michael: This wasn't just a client, but I remember saying to myself... It's these kinds of unarticulated silent vows that get us in trouble.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: I remember saying to myself, "I will never allow myself to get that close to a client again."

Michele: Mmm.

Michael: "Because the pain is so great when it's severed that it's just not worth it. I'm not going to get that invested in somebody when they can fire me with an email." I was wounded. I was deeply hurt, so I needed this meeting to try to bring some sense of closure, and frankly, I wanted to learn from it. What was it? It's one of those things that even months later I was in the shower or out for a run and was thinking about. "What the heck did I do?"

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: I didn't get it at all.

Michele: You were just at a loss.

Michael: Just at a loss.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: So I finally got the meeting, and I finally found out what the real source of the trouble was, and as it turned out, it didn't have anything to do with me. I don't want to get into the details. It had to

do with kind of an intramural squabble among the staff where there were some politics involved, and I just happened to be the guy who was easy to throw out because I was challenging some of the inner workings of their staff by my role in working for him. Let me just leave it at that because I just don't want to say any more, but the point is my heart shut down.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: I was unaware of it, but I continued in this condition where I really brought my head to my work and brought my body to my work and brought some energy to it, but I did not bring my heart.

Michele: Yeah, because you had made that... Nobody wants to get hurt like that again.

Michael: No.

Michele: So you had made kind of that vow, "I'm never going to let myself get hurt like that again."

Michael: That's right.

Michele: And you shut it down.

Michael: And it handicapped my leadership.

Michele: Okay. Now let's talk about that. You went forward. You brought your head to work, but you left your heart behind because you just were not going to go to that place again. Talk about what that looked like in your day-to-day life and how it started to impact your leadership.

Michael: Well, the problem with this is that it quickly turns to cynicism. Cynicism is, first of all, a poison that infects a lot of cultures: corporate cultures, churches...

Michele: Families.

Michael: Families.

Michele: Marriages.

Michael: Marriages.

Michele: Yes, it's true. It's true.

Michael: Seriously. And it's a self-protective device. It's basically a way we have of popping our own balloons so that somebody else doesn't do it.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: Rather than get our hopes up or begin to believe or begin to hope, we just go ahead and imagine the worst-case scenario, pop our own balloons, and just...

Michele: Because we don't want to be disappointed.

Michael: We don't want to be disappointed. Somebody suggests to us, "Hey, have you thought about going on that marriage retreat with your wife?" and you say, "There's no way she would go with me on a marriage retreat."

Michele: Yeah.

Michael: "She's so..." It's like we say no to the opportunity.

Michele: Mm-hmm. We pop our own balloon. Yeah. Absolutely.

Michael: Or somebody suggests, "You really should apply for that position. You would be amazing at it!" and you go, "Fat chance I would have of getting that."

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: You're just guarding your heart in the worst possible way, not in the way that Solomon means it but in a negative way of just not bringing it to the party and protecting yourself.

Michele: You think it's self-preservation, but in fact it's not.

Michael: No.

Michele: That's where I want you to go now. Talk about how you thought you were preserving yourself, but actually it was kind of this slow death in your leadership, right?

Michael: It was.

Michele: Okay. Talk about that.

Michael: Yeah, because to me the most important leadership tool you have is your heart. That's the difference maker. It's the thing that can make you stand out from everybody else. When you put all of your being... It's not just your head, which is really important. We're not dismissing the head, but to bring your heart and your intuition and all of those less-measurable inner faculties to it...

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: Just think about listening to a great speech or... If you've ever followed a great leader, it wasn't because they were the smartest person in the room. It wasn't even because they had the best

skills, but I can think back on the leaders who moved me the most, and they were people who brought their hearts. They were all in.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: Now I'll tell you a story. I followed Sam Moore at Thomas Nelson. He was my predecessor as the CEO. Sam Moore was the CEO of Thomas Nelson for almost 50 years...a long, long time. He's a Lebanese immigrant. He has an amazing story. He arrived on the shores of this country with \$500 in his pocket. He could sometimes be mercurial. You know what I'm saying, like kind of up and down?

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: But I'm going to tell you something. He was all in.

Michele: That's a huge compliment.

Michael: He wasn't always the smartest guy in the room, and I don't mean that as any insult. He was plenty smart, but he wasn't always the smartest guy in the room. He didn't always have the most technical skills, but he had the most heart, and it was the force of his heart that got him where he was, that took Thomas Nelson from being about a \$3 million company in sales to a quarter of a billion company in sales. It was because he brought his heart.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: That has always inspired me, to bring all of myself to every situation as a leader.

Michele: So let's go back to that time when you were bringing your head to work and you were leaving your heart at home. If I had been working in your office at that time, if I had been one of your employees, what Michael Hyatt would I have seen then?

Michael: Well, in some ways... This is kind of a sad commentary on our culture. I'm not sure you would have noticed anything different.

Michele: Mmm.

Michael: Think of the people you've followed. You and I have both had privileges in the sense of having had some good leaders and probably some bad leaders. There is a lack of engagement. There would have been a lack of engagement.

Michele: Okay. You were just a little detached.

Michael: Yeah. You probably couldn't articulate it, but you would sense that I was a little bit detached, that I wasn't fully engaged, that I might even be a little preoccupied. Even if you were having a conversation with me, you might have sensed that my head was somewhere else.

Michele: Again, you were in that self-preservation mode, which... Oh gosh, who hasn't been there? I've totally been there, where I shut down to preserve my own heart and emotions because I had been so terribly wounded. I totally get that. So you were thinking you were protecting yourself, but what were you really feeling behind the scenes?

Michael: Mostly numbness.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: I think I lost my capacity to feel. The joys weren't as high. The lows weren't as low.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: I'm choking up just thinking about it because I think it was... I robbed myself and my team of something really important. It's not that I had so much to offer that was important, but I think for all of us...

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: When we shut down our hearts, we're cheating the people we love and are trying to influence, and it's a self-inflicted wound. First of all, I couldn't control the fact that I got fired. I might have been able to influence it if I had known what was at stake, but I totally could control my response to it, and if I had been more self-aware (we'll talk about this later), I think I could have managed it better.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: Of course, we wouldn't be having this conversation about the importance of the heart if I had, so it all works out.

Michele: Yeah. But this is big, and I appreciate the fact that you're not afraid to connect with the emotion of this, because there are people who are listening right now who are in something almost exactly the same.

Michael: And it might be their marriage.

Michele: It may be a relationship with another family member.

Michael: Kids.

Michele: Or a friend. It could be a church organization. It could be an employee or a coworker. I mean, there are so many possibilities. The truth is that as long as we work with people, the potential for being hurt is always going to be there.

Michael: Yes.

Michele: It's going to be there, so for some of you who are listening right now, you are in the place where you have shut down. The wound has been too deep, too harsh, too much, and you have completely shut off. The good news is we're not going to leave you there today. We don't want to leave you in a place where you are numb and shut off and you're starting to rob both your circle of family and coworkers and everybody else of the best you, but you're robbing yourself of that too.

Michael: Yeah.

Michele: So now I want you to move us from that really low place that you never expected to be in. There's a story you have of something that happened that helped push you forward.

Michael: Yeah. One of the ways I numbed myself was just by getting very busy.

Michele: Oh goodness, yeah. I've been there too. I've done the same.

Michael: So I didn't have to think about it. It looked like I was being very noble and very virtuous and had a great work ethic, but it was basically so I never had to face myself and face this deep loss.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: I was sitting in Colorado Springs, having breakfast with someone who was a brand new author to Thomas Nelson at the time. He had written one book. His name was John Eldredge. He ended up writing a book called *Wild at Heart*, but that hadn't been written yet when we had this conversation. This was back in about 1998. We kind of had the chit-chat like you normally have when you're meeting somebody for the first time, and then John asked me this question. He said, "Tell me about your heart. How is your heart doing?"

Michele: Mmm.

Michael: I kind of felt two emotions. The first one was like, "I'm not even sure what that is," but of course I couldn't admit that, but then the other part was sort of like, "What the heck does that have to do with anything?" It just felt very intrusive, too intimate.

Michele: Well, if you're already in a place of guarding...

Michael: Yeah.

Michele: *Guarding* isn't quite the right word. You were being *self-protective*. You were like, "Oh, you're not allowed to go there. Back off!"

Michael: Right. "I basically spent years burying that so I didn't have to face it, and now you think you're going to ask me a question at breakfast and surface that and I'm just going to go, 'Oh yeah, it's fine' or, 'No, I'm really struggling with it'? No." So I gave him some kind of glib answer. I don't even remember what it was. But the question annoyed me.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: It gnawed at me, and I kept thinking about that question over and over again.

Michele: Long after your breakfast that day.

Michael: Long after that...weeks and months after that...I was thinking, "What about my heart?" That began a journey for me, and frankly, John was very instrumental in that. His book *Wild at Heart* was hugely impactful to me, and he has written a lot about that subsequent to that, but it began a process of me finding and excavating my heart.

Michele: Mmm. Ah, that's tough work.

Michael: It was really tough work.

Michele: Especially when you're coming from a place of being hurt and grieving.

Michael: Yeah, because it was like, "Do I really want to risk again?"

Michele: Yeah.

Michael: People face this in romance. Maybe that's the context in which you hear about this, but again, I want to emphasize the fact that we're not talking exclusively about that. We're talking about it in a leadership context because it also has an impact there.

Michele: Absolutely.

Michael: My own view is that God gave you this for a reason, and to not use it is to deprive yourself and other people of all you can be, all the potential, and most importantly the impact you can have.

Michele: With the help of John and kind of doing your own excavating, you developed several practices that kind of helped lead you back to a place where you engaged with your own heart again.

Michael: Yes.

Michele: A place where you stopped being shut down and started bringing your heart back to your leadership roles, into your business, into your life. Really, when you shut it down in one area, you kind of shut it down in all areas, don't you?

Michael: You do.

Michele: So you started this set of four practices that really helped you to re-engage your heart. Walk us through those. Again, for those of you who are at home listening and you're in this place, we want this to be helpful for you, and we're doing this for you. I have such a heart for this because I know

there are some who are living in a lesser functioning capacity because of this, and we want to help you get past it. Okay, walk through those practices.

Michael: Yeah, so practice number one is to *understand the importance*. This isn't just having a sudden revelation, like you're listening to this podcast and you go, "Oh! Okay, I get the importance of the heart!" This is something I still to this day have to remind myself of, and here's why: The entire culture is aligned against this.

Michele: Against the heart.

Michael: It's actually not against the heart. It's like almost an exclusive focus on all of the external stuff.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: We focus on all of the stuff we can measure and see, and the inward person, that person who exists below the surface, that person who represents the core and the essence of who we are, doesn't get much attention. All of the emphasis in our culture is on the outward person. There's very little on the inward person, so you have to remind yourself, "No, this is important."

You can tell when somebody is leading from the heart, when they're engaged with their family from the heart, and when they're engaged with their friends from the heart. You can tell the difference. It makes every difference, and you can tell...if you become aware of it...when somebody is holding something back. They're just a little reserved. They're not all in, and it makes a difference. So practice number one is becoming aware of the importance of the heart.

Michele: All right. What would the second practice be?

Michael: I think it's just *becoming aware of the condition of your own heart*, and this requires regular check-ins, asking yourself that question that John asked me so many years ago: "How's my heart?" I like to especially ask myself this question when I go through something difficult to make sure I'm not stuffing that part of my being, the core of my being, down deep into the dirt, into a dark place.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: I just ask myself the question, "How's my heart?" and develop and cultivate that self-awareness, because our hearts, as it turns out, are very responsive to what's happening in our environments. For example, I might have a fight with Gail, which occasionally does happen, and I realize that maybe I've wounded her. Like a flower that closes up, her heart shuts down, and I can detect that.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: She gets really quiet. Her body posture even changes. And it does for me too.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: There's no difference there.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: But it's important to become aware that there is this dynamic that's under the surface for all of us and to just train ourselves to be seeing that and asking ourselves the question.

Michele: When I hear that question, kind of like the way you responded to John Edridge when he asked, "What's the condition of your heart?" there's that piece of me that kind of pulls back just a little bit because it is a hard question, and it requires some effort, and it requires some time to really be honest. I guess that's really the key. You have to be honest about the condition of your heart.

Michael: Yeah. You really do, because pretending it's something that it isn't won't get you anywhere. This is overused, but it is what it is.

Michele: Mm-hmm. We so want to portray, too, that everything is fine.

Michael: I know!

Michele: I mean, our impulse is to say, "Oh, it's fine. It's fine. It's fine," and that's not really doing the work that we need to do on our self-development when it comes to this.

Michael: Well, this is kind of that Facebook phenomenon.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: This is like the dark side of social media, where we all live these superficial lives and we manage our images and the brand impressions and how people perceive us, and this is why you end up... On Facebook, people are talking about all of the good things that are happening in their lives, but they rarely talk about the hard things.

By the way, let me just say one of the things I really, really appreciate about your blog and appreciate about my daughter Megan's blog (when she blogs, which is not too often given her busy life) is that you guys don't fake it. I mean, you are just so honest, and what that communicates to me is it gives me the freedom to be honest about my own life.

Michele: Yeah. It's not easy to do, I have to tell you. Thank you. I do appreciate that. It's tough to go there. It really is, but what I've found is that if I continue to shut off that honesty, if I continue to shut off the truth about where I am, a part of me seems to die every single time.

Michael: Yeah.

Michele: If I really want to live fully alive and fully engaged with my calling and my message and leading where I feel God has called me to lead, then I *have* to be willing to go there. It's not easy, but I have to push through and be willing to go there.

Michael: Well, I think it makes a difference for your readers too because you're connecting with them at a whole different level. To live a fully authentic life does require this practice of self-awareness. That's where we have to go first, just to be alert to the condition of our hearts.

Michele: What is also surprising about this is when we go there (you've discovered this as well), we think it's going to turn people off, but often the very opposite happens. It's what we're hungry for, maybe because there's such a lack of it in our culture and businesses and whatever that when we actually have the courage to go there, we find such a great, authentic group of supporters who are there as well.

Michael: Well, it does. I'll tell you how this plays out in family relationships. I just thought of this story. I have five daughters, and I had deeply offended one of them. As a parent, I kind of ginned up this self-righteous story in my head as to why I had done (is that the right conjugation of the verb?) what I did. I didn't want to deal with it.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: But I could see that her heart was shut down, so for me to go to her and own that and just say, "Honey, I know I've done something that has deeply offended you, and I am so, so sorry," really just opened the relationship back up. It wasn't immediate. It took work. I think she wanted to see that it was genuine on my part and that I really meant it, but this stuff is real stuff.

This is the stuff that makes up our lives, and I had no voice into her life while this was going on. There was no leadership that I was exercising in her life as this was going on, because her heart wasn't open. It wasn't open to me for sure, so there was not only no leadership, but there was no connection, no relationship. Sometimes we have to go back to this very basic stuff to fix the core of these relationships in a business context so we can lead again

Michele: Mmm.

Michael: I think of so many situations in corporations where maybe somebody said something really hurtful in a flash of anger and shut somebody down, and that team member has never quite recovered from it. The team isn't what it could be because the leader is not aware, which is the point we're talking about now, of his own heart or the condition of other people's hearts, and we have to cultivate that. That is not a sissy, inappropriate skill to develop as a leader in today's world. I would say it's a superpower.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: It's a Jedi Knight kind of thing. If you want to lead at the top level, you have to develop this awareness and this perception where you can get past the superficial and see the condition of people's hearts and know the condition of your own heart so that when it's in trouble, you can deal with it and then bring it forth.

Michele: I'm so glad you said that, because there's this part of us when we start talking about the heart that feels like it's almost cheesy or... I don't know.

Michael: Yeah! A little soft thing that...

Michele: We're just being soft here on this leadership podcast talking about the heart. It's not true at all.

Michael: No.

Michele: Let's settle that now. This is too critical and too important, and if you choose to invest in this piece of your leadership, it will set you apart as a leader.

Michael: Absolutely.

Michele: All right. We've gone through two of the strategies. I want you to move on to the third one, and just a minute ago you actually mentioned the word voice, and that's really what this third strategy is all about.

Michael: Yeah, and it's a practice.

Michele: Oh. Practice.

Michael: Practice. It's the third practice, which is to *give voice to that wound or the condition of your heart*.

Michele: Okay, so what does that look like, to give voice?

Michael: Well, I think it's to admit that things aren't okay, to say, "You know what? That really hurt, and I'm on the verge of shutting down here," or, "That really offended me." I think sometimes in our culture, depending on what culture you're in...I can only speak from the culture I live in, but I run around with a lot of Christians...it's very easy to kind of dismiss this or ignore it or just kind of try to take the high road and say, "Oh, it was nothing. That didn't really hurt. I'm beyond that. I'm more mature than that." Well, hurt is hurt.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: To acknowledge that does not make you any less of a person, but it keeps it from getting buried and coming out in a less healthy way. Do you know what I'm saying?

Michele: Absolutely.

Michael: Yeah.

Michele: So giving voice... Does that have to be an actual expression? Does it have to be spoken out loud or maybe written down? Do you need to go actually talk to the person who hurt you?

Michael: Well, this is one of the values of journaling for me, because I journal everything before I talk it out with somebody else. You may end up having to express it to somebody else, but at least at the beginning, admit it to yourself. Give voice to yourself, to your own consciousness, so you're saying, "You know what? That really hurt. Let's just be honest with that. That hurt. I'm wounded."

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: Or, "I'm grieving," or whatever it is. Then, for me, at least writing it out is important. I believe in this adage that I've quoted many times, which is, "Thoughts disentangle themselves passing over the lips and through pencil tips." There's something about it for me where I don't know what I think until I write it.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: Then as I write it, I get clarity, so for me writing is a tool to bring about clarity in my own life. I journal for about 15 minutes every morning, and that's all the time I spend on it. I journal that, and then once I get clear, part of what that may demand or require is for me to go to that other person and have a conversation, for no other reason than that I want that relationship restored.

Michele: All right. So we've said to understand the importance of your heart, become aware of the condition of your heart, and give voice to whatever wounded your heart, and what would be the last strategy for those who really want to start to re-engage with their hearts, bring their hearts and best selves to their leadership, to their work, and to their families? What would be next?

Michael: Well, first of all, we don't have time to go into all of these, so I'm going to try to summarize these, but the next thing would be to *develop these ongoing disciplines of the heart*. This is like rehab or physical therapy, heart therapy. This is the stuff to maintain a healthy heart so that it's strong, so first of all, when you get wounded, you're more resilient in dealing with it. I'm much more resilient today. It still hurts when I get hurt. Even when somebody sends a critical comment or whatever, I still feel that, which is good.

Michele: Well, it means your heart is engaged, which is the goal.

Michael: That's right.

Michele: So the goal here isn't to never be hurt. It's just not to pull back and shut down when it happens.

Michael: That's exactly right, and not to numb yourself.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: So these are kind of the four disciplines of the heart, and by the way, there's this blog post (and we'll put a link in the show notes to it) called "The Four Disciplines of the Heart" that I've written on my blog, but let me just give you the quick overview of these. First of all, there's the *discipline of reflection*, to just take time away from the busy, overscheduled world and think about your heart and give yourself time to ask that question, "How is the condition of my heart?" That's the discipline of reflection. Then there's the *discipline of rest*.

Michele: Mm.

Michael: I promise you that you will lose contact with your heart, you'll lose awareness of the heart, if you're so stinkin' busy that you don't have time to rest. You can't reflect if you don't rest, so take time to get sleep. Take naps. That's something I religiously practice. But mostly, take time when you can just get away and do some thinking.

Then there's the *discipline of recreation*. There's something about play that restores our hearts. For me to get down on the floor like I did last night with Charlie, my labradoodle, and to wrestle with him for 20 minutes... I totally lost all consciousness of time. We're just wrestling...

Michele: Therapeutic! Charlie the therapist. He can be available for appointments for the small fee of...

Michael: That's right. But it was amazing. I was just kind of lost in the play of that. Or playing with one of my grandkids... I haven't done this in a while, but my oldest grandson, would come over, and we would play with these helicopters, and we would fly them all over the living room and through the house and stuff.

Michele: So much fun.

Michael: Make time for recreation, whether it's fishing or swimming or whatever it is. Just make time for recreation. Then the final discipline I talk about in that post is the *discipline of relationships*. Michele, for years, I didn't really have any close friends. I thought the people I was relating to for 40, 50, or 60 hours a week at work were all of the friends I needed...except those were proximity friends.

They weren't friends of the heart. Now I have...because I've intentionally cultivated it...people who I'm in relationships with who I don't have any work relationship with. We're just friends. Relationships are restorative to the heart.

Michele: Mm. Yes they are.

Michael: To know that we're known and that we can be fully expressed as who we are and accepted is huge.

Michele: Someone I know who is a therapist... Actually, a couple of different people have told me this, and I've seen it to be very true. When we are wounded in a relationship, we also heal in relationship.

Michael: Yes. Very good.

Michele: So the thought is that when we get hurt in relationships, we shut down and don't do it anymore, but really, the way to heal from a relationship wound is through cultivating new relationships.

Michael: It is, and it's counterintuitive because the thing that's not healthy and is hurtful is that we try to withdraw from that when what we really need to do is lean back into it. Maybe that requires healthier people in the relationship or a different kind of relationship. But living without relationships doesn't work.

Michele: Yes. This has been a powerful episode for me personally. I know we've been doing this as a recording for others, but also, I mean just for me personally, this is something that is daily. We have to constantly be re-engaging and choosing to invest in the heart. I really appreciate your authenticity. I know it's not always easy to go there to the tough places, but it has been very valuable for all of us.

Just a recap... For those of you who have been in a place where you have felt wounded in a relationship and you really have shut down, it doesn't have to end here. There is more for you and your leadership, both for the people you're leading and you personally if you can have the courage to push through and re-engage your heart.

You can do that with one of these four practices: Understand the importance of your heart, become aware of the condition of your heart, don't be afraid to give voice to whatever wounded your heart, and then develop these ongoing disciplines that cultivate the heart. If you have enjoyed today's episode or you want to get more information about this... Maybe you missed some of those practices or wanted to research those disciplines that Michael talked about.

You can get all of the show notes and the full transcript for this entire episode at www.michaelhyatt.com. In addition, if you want to actually feel like you're sitting with us in the studio and watch it, you can watch the video of today's program right there on his website...again, www.michaelhyatt.com. Any final thoughts, Michael?

Michael: I just think this is one area that's too important to miss. I mean, stop what you're doing and give attention to this, because the heart is, as Solomon said, the wellspring of life. That means it's the source of everything else in your life and your leadership. It starts with your heart.

Michele: Mm-hmm. Thank you, Michael. Until next time, remember: Your life is a gift. Now do what matters.