



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. I'm your cohost today, and I'm sitting in the studio with Michael Hyatt. Hey there, Michael!

Michael Hyatt: Hello, Michele!

Michele: Well, none of us enjoy criticism. Do you agree?

Michael: No. I totally agree. I don't.

Michele: It is really honestly probably my least favorite pastime, and yet it's impossible to avoid, because as long as we're interacting with other human beings...

Michael: We're going to get it.

Michele: Whether in work or family or whatever, criticism and confrontation are going to be inevitable.

Michael: Yep.

Michele: It's just part of the process.

Michael: It is, especially if you're a platform builder of any kind, if you have any kind of social media presence. You're going to draw fire. The higher your visibility, the more criticism you're going to get.

Michele: Well, yeah. You have more exposure. That means more people.

Michael: That's right.

Michele: Any time you add more people to the mix, the incidence of criticism or confrontation goes way up.

Michael: It's just math.

Michele: Yes, but it doesn't have to be negative all the time.

Michael: That's right.

Michele: That's what we're going to talk about today. We're going to teach you *how to receive criticism or some kind of confrontation and turn it to your advantage*. I'm looking forward to this because honestly, I have a lot to learn when it comes to this subject.

Michael: Well, I kind of need the reminder too because I face ongoing criticism, and I have it pretty easy, I think. I don't get that much criticism, but it still stinks. I'm the kind of guy who can get 1,000 positive blog comments and get one negative one, and guess which one I focus on?

Michele: You lie in bed all night worried about the one, right?

Michael: Yeah. This is even worse and more dysfunctional. I'll spend all night composing a response to that one.

Michele: Oh, I've been there and done that.

Michael: Yeah. Oh jeez.

Michele: In fact, there have been a lot of unwritten responses I've generated in my head. It's probably good that they didn't get sent.

Michael: I know.

Michele: I want to ask you right as we begin whether or not you have always been... You seem to be pretty gracious with handling it. Have you always been, or has that been a learned discipline for you?

Michael: Well, I'd say it has been a learned discipline. I would also say I'm not perfect. A lot of it even today depends on how you find me. If I'm tired or it's something I'm particularly sensitive to, I may give a less than gracious response, but I do try to think about it in the larger context. We've talked about this before, but whenever you're acting as the leader, you're not just acting on behalf of yourself. There are always a lot of people who are watching.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: So you're creating culture. I think about that, for example, on my blog when I get criticism. How I deal with it... There are a lot of people who are just browsing. They're just looking. They're not people who are even entering into the conversation, but they're watching how I respond. If I don't give a gracious answer, if I'm short or angry or small, people take note of that.

It can really do harm to your brand. I've also noticed in the world of social media how a lot of big brands do this astonishingly well. Even though they may take real criticism because people are angry in the moment and they're not getting their service or they didn't receive their product or whatever, there's just a way to deflect that, and good customer service personnel know that. We can learn a lot from those people.

Michele: Absolutely true. Now I have one more question for you before we dive into kind of the disciplines we're going to talk about: How important is this skill for leaders? I mean, on the ranking of different skills you really need to have as an effective leader, where would this rank in your mind?

Michael: Pretty high, because it will determine whether or not people trust your character. How you deal with criticism is a window into your character, and I can think back... In recent weeks, there was a very prominent politician (I won't mention who it was) who snapped back at somebody in the media. He was really rude. I mean, he kind of shut down that person and was borderline belligerent.

Michele: That says something.

Michael: It does say something. This was somebody who had aspirations of higher office. Let me just say that. I think he pretty much shot himself in the foot, because you don't want somebody who has that short a fuse to have a lot of responsibility.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: You don't want somebody who can't be a little bit more in control of themselves and a little bit more thoughtful about their response. There's a lot at stake.

Michele: Oh, so powerful. You know, I tend to think your ability to handle criticism goes up with your maturity.

Michael: Yes.

Michele: I see them as being very much kind of parallel. They kind of go up at the same time, so it's so funny that at times when I was younger, I felt like I was so grown up and so mature, yet I could not handle any criticism or any kind of confrontation without being extremely defensive or angry in response or shutting down or whatever it may be. To me that was a good sign that there was still some maturity I needed to develop.

Michael: Yeah. It's true. I think that even when you get mature, it's still going to sting.

Michele: Yeah, absolutely.

Michael: I still get stung from criticism, and I have a ways to go on this. But I remember that one of the things Dr. Covey (I've referred to him a lot in our podcast, but he has had a real impact on me) talked about in what I think was *The Seven Habits* was the idea that the measure of maturity is the measure of our ability to put a pause between the stimulus and the response.

Michele: Oh! Okay. That's so good. I'm actually going to write this down while you're saying it. Say that one more time.

Michael: Yeah. The measure of your maturity is whether or not you have the ability to put a pause between the stimulus and the response, so if something happens to you, immaturity is when you just react without thinking it all the way through. We may snap back or we might hit back, but we do something that we regret later. But the mature person is able to take a deep breath and realize in that moment, "I have a choice."

My humanity is displayed in that moment. The thing that makes me different from the animals is that I have the choice to not respond, and I can be proactive in my response and thoughtful about it and not

just be caught up in that vicious cycle of reacting. This has probably never happened to you and Troy, but you get into an argument with your spouse...

Michele: Oh. It has never happened to us? Really? Yeah. Never. Never. (Today.)

Michael: You're caught in this vicious cycle. Emerson Eggerichs calls this the Crazy Cycle, where you're just reacting to each other and nobody is putting in a pause. If you can just put that pause in there and really listen to what the other person is saying...

Michele: It changes everything.

Michael: Yeah, it changes everything. The same thing is true in handling any kind of criticism.

Michele: So true. So true. Okay, let's talk about these disciplines. You're going to give us four different disciplines today to help us know how to be able to turn criticism or confrontation to our advantage rather than it just being a negative. What's the very first discipline?

Michael: I'd say it's to *listen without being defensive*.

Michele: Oh. That's where the breakdown always happens, it seems like.

Michael: It is, and it's crucial to put that pause there so we don't rush to our own defense before we've heard what has been said. What I like to do when I'm being the best version of myself (again, I don't always do this) is listen carefully with empathy, and I want to be able to repeat to the other person what they just said so it's clear to them that I understand the issue they're raising.

Because so often the person who's leveling the criticism just wants to know that you get it, that you've heard what they have to say even if you disagree with it later on, even if you don't accept it later on. But it's critical at the very first point to make sure you've listened carefully and understand what the critique is, because it just might be...

Even if it's delivered poorly, even if it's delivered unjustly, even if there's only a little bit of truth in it and only 10 percent of what they're saying is true, it's important for you to hear that. I think it's helpful if we can see that as a gift.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: And not something that is out to destroy us, but... In my own worldview, I believe God sends me messages all the time, and oftentimes it's disguised as criticism through someone who looks like an enemy. But if we can receive that, there may just be something there that would prevent us from having a bigger fall or further damage.

Michele: True. The other thing I've found is that if I can listen and kind of validate that I've heard what the other person said, in so many cases they just want to be heard.

Michael: Yep.

Michele: If I can just do that, in many cases they actually end up then backtracking just a little bit, because what they really wanted was to be heard, and once I do that for them, they're like, "Well, you know, it's really not so bad. I just wanted to be able to tell you this," or, "I just needed to get it off my chest." So it becomes a much smaller issue once I just simply listen.

Michael: Yes. Well, you and I have had this discussion several times about when we're on the giving end of criticism or we're having to confront somebody and how difficult that is because we hate conflict. We have to build up a head of steam, and it's not unusual for people who are offering criticism to overstate the case because they've had to kind of work up and gin up the energy.

Michele: Yes. Oh goodness, I've done that.

Michael: So sometimes just letting them talk will diffuse that, and then (like you said) the other person will back up from it because they'll realize that they've overstated the case, that maybe they were just trying to get enough energy to say it to you. So to just listen and not be so quick to rush to our own defense...

Michele: It's such an important first discipline. So listen without being defensive. What is the second one?

Michael: I think it's to *evaluate without shame*. Now there are a couple of things to be said about this. First of all, I don't want to shame the person who gave me the information. Now it doesn't mean everybody is legit in what they're offering, but I've really tried to go to school on Brené Brown and what she teaches about shame. Shame never makes the situation better.

Michele: Correct.

Michael: So if I make that person feel... Like if I say something like, "Really? You're going to be that petty? You're going to bring up that little thing? You're not going to see the whole scope of my work...?"

Michele: "After all I've done for you..."

Michael: Yeah. "After all I've done for you..." or whatever. To shame them isn't good, but by the same token (this is where I go, and I bet you do too, because we're a lot alike in this regard), I shame myself.

Michele: Oh. Oh yeah. If I get any kind of criticism or confrontation, I almost always instantly believe it as truth and don't usually go through an evaluation process, and then I beat myself up.

Michael: Yep.

Michele: Like, "How could I do that? I'm just such a..."

Michael: Well, it triggers something.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: Maybe there was that experience you had with Mrs. Oldecker when you were in kindergarten (not that I'm saying I did). She's gone now, but...

Michele: I was going to say, I hope she's not listening.

Michael: But maybe there's something somebody said that triggered a response, and now it's out of proportion. Your response is out of proportion.

Michele: Because you're really responding to multiple things, not this one conversation in front of you.

Michael: Yeah, that's right. So there's the shame thing that goes off in us, and I think part of maturity is to become more self-aware and realize that's all going on. Again, this is the benefit of space, putting the pause in the equation.

Michele: We keep coming back to that, but you're absolutely right.

Michael: So we can be thoughtful.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: In the world of email and Twitter and all of that, there's a tendency to want to instantly respond. By the way, I'm preaching to myself now because I like to be responsive, and I feel like I have to respond immediately. But it's better if I can wait, if I can sleep on it.

This is a little odd, but my business partner got a criticism (this was two decades ago) from somebody, and they were very critical of my business partner. I took up an offense and felt I needed to defend my business partner. So I wrote the person who offered the criticism (I'm not making this up) a 14-page letter.

Michele: Oh my goodness.

Michael: I defended my business partner, and I...

Michele: I have to say I love your loyalty. I mean, that's really commendable and I love that.

Michael: It was a little over-the-top, though.

Michele: But 14 pages might be excessive.

Michael: It was like a legal brief. I mean, I had him dead to rights. I went through all of this stuff about why my partner was right and this guy was wrong, and I went through the whole thing. Do you know what kind of response I got to it? Absolutely nothing. He didn't respond at all. This was back before the world of email. I overnighted the response to him, so I knew he had it. I didn't see him for about three months. He came up, graciously hugged me, and never, ever (to this day) mentioned it.

Michele: Really?

Michael: Yeah. I think that was just him overlooking an offense. I mean, that was so over-the-top that it wasn't worthy of...

Michele: The fact that he came up to you and hugged you, though... I mean, he was really letting it go.

Michael: Yeah. He really was.

Michele: I'm sitting here thinking, "Okay, that's maturity right there."

Michael: That was maturity.

Michele: His ability to just let it go...

Michael: Just to overlook it.

Michele: I hope you feel better for those 14 pages.

Michael: I mean, I needed therapy. I didn't need to write that letter. But when we respond like that, when we're too off-the-cuff, when we just react, when we feel the need to defend ourselves... I mean, I should have asked (this would have been to have real self-awareness at the time) myself, "Why do I feel the need to defend my business partner? First of all, he can defend himself if he wants to defend himself."

Michele: Yes, he's able to. Mm-hmm.

Michael: But why would I feel the need...? You know how long it takes to write something like that.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: It was like a two-day thing. It was all-consuming. Everything else got put on hold. What was going on in my life?

Michele: You know, it's likely that emotion was just hijacking your entire day.

Michael: Right.

Michele: Your life was hijacked by emotion, which is really what's so key with this step of evaluating without shame. At some point, you need to evaluate and take all of the emotion of the experience. Kind of box it up, put it to the side for a minute, and try to be as objective as possible. That takes some of that shame factor out of it if you can just try to be objective.

Michael: It does. I think there's another distinction that's helpful, Michele. I've written about this before, but I think you have to discern in the moment you're getting this criticism what type of person is bringing it to you. I wasn't aware of this before the world of the Internet, but there's a whole category of people that I would call *trolls*.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: These are people who, because they have access to a microphone or they can leave an anonymous post on your blog... You don't know them, they don't have a following, but they can leave something on social media. They're not out to help you. They're not out to even right a wrong. They're just out to taunt you.

They don't have your best interests at heart. They're not worthy of a response. The best thing you can do is completely let it go. So those are trolls. They're not worthy of a response. In fact, the bad thing about trolls is that the more you engage them, the stronger and more emboldened they get.

Michele: Yes. They almost feed off of it.

Michael: They do!

Michele: Because they really like the drama and the conflict that results.

Michael: That's right.

Michele: It's not even really about the criticism or the issue. It's really about the drama that results from it.

Michael: Well, it's because it creates significance for them.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: When you respond to them and acknowledge them, all of a sudden they go from anonymity to being somebody. You feed it.

Michele: It's basically like giving them a microphone.

Michael: That's right. So it's not helpful. There's a second category of people, though, who I would just call critics. These are people who don't hate you. They're not out to get you. They didn't wake up to make your day miserable. They just disagree with you. That's all. They may not be as respectful as you would like, but they're not out to get you.

They probably have a valid point of view, and those people need to be listened to. Sometimes you can engage with those people to find out more, and they will be very helpful. I get those people occasionally, and I'm grateful that I do. I hope I always have critics in my life, and I'm saying that by faith. Then there are just friends.

They're the people who come to you and you know (because you're in a relationship and they love you) that if they're going out of their way to risk this, to risk the relationship (because it's always a risk) and share something with you that you may react to... Those are people who you really have to affirm and encourage so they don't stop.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: You want to create an environment for those people (friends, family, and colleagues) where it's safe for dissent, because those people will see things in your life that you can't see for yourself. If you muzzle them...

Michele: Oh, that's like shooting yourself. I mean, really.

Michael: You're shooting yourself in the foot, because you need those people to see areas of your life that you can't see, because you don't have a 360-degree view of your life. So those people have to be affirmed, so when those people come to you and offer criticism, you have to say something like, "Wow. It must have been hard for you to come to me. I just want to thank you so much for loving me enough to share that with me."

Michele: "Thank you so much." Yes.

Michael: Really reaffirm them in that so they don't feel like they just did something foolish and regret having shared with you. Now the other thing about doing that in the context of leadership and why it's important is that other people are watching.

Michele: Yes. True.

Michael: If somebody offers criticism of you in a group setting, here's how it usually works. Take an executive team. Say you're leading the team. Somebody will risk dissent. They might challenge you on something or criticize you on something, and what they're really doing is not giving you the full thing. They're just kind of testing the waters to see how you're going to react.

If you overreact, you don't just shut down that person; you shut down dissent from the whole team, probably forever. So you have to draw it out. Encourage them to go deeper, because you want to get the fullness of what they see so you can act on it, remediate it, or whatever you need to do.

Michele: This is such good information here, and we have so much more to come. However, we're going to take a short break. Stick with us. We'll be right back.

Michael: As a busy and successful blogger, podcaster, author, speaker, and consultant, I'm constantly asked about the tools I use to get it all done. Now for the first time, I'm going to pull back the curtain and let you peek inside my toolbox to see the software and hardware I use for everything from blogging and podcasting to productivity, social media, and speaking, plus so much more. You can't buy *Inside My Toolbox*, but you can get it for free by subscribing to my free email newsletter.

When you subscribe, you'll receive my newest content right in your inbox. You'll never have to worry about missing an important post or update again. To get your free copy of the *Inside My Toolbox* ebook, visit michaelhyatt.com and enter your name and email address into the form on the page. Don't waste any more time or money using the wrong tools. Sign up today at michaelhyatt.com.

Michele: All right. Today we're talking about how you can receive criticism or some kind of confrontation with grace, how you can turn it to your advantage by developing four disciplines. So far we've talked about two of them. The first one is to listen without being defensive. We could all use a little more practice on that.

Michael: Including me.

Michele: Me too. The second is to evaluate without shame. What I thought was so fascinating about the second discipline was... It's two parts. First of all, we need to get rid of the shame element, so we need to take all of that emotion of shame that we either project onto the other person or own ourselves and put it to the side so we can honestly, objectively evaluate the feedback we're receiving.

Michael: Yep.

Michele: Now that evaluation (as you were saying just a moment ago) is really two parts. First, evaluate the criticism itself, the validity of that. But you were also talking about evaluating the critic, the person delivering it.

Michael: Yes.

Michele: There are really three different types of people we run into. The first type is the troll, and really, they just love slinging mud. I mean, they just love doing whatever they can to pick at other people. They love the drama that comes as a result or the attention they get as a result of throwing criticism, and honestly, you just have to disregard them, right?

Michael: You do. Just ignore them.

Michele: They're haters. I call them haters.

Michael: Yep. Don't feed them.

Michele: They're not going to be satisfied.

Michael: Don't feed the trolls.

Michele: Don't feed the trolls. So we're not going to feed the trolls. The second type is the critic. Those are people who have some kind of criticism but aren't out to get you. They're not trying to attack you. They just have an opinion, and they disagree with you.

Michael: That's right.

Michele: I have learned (I'm 43 now) that it is okay for people to disagree! Did you know?

Michael: Well, shockingly, we're not always right!

Michele: What? I'm shocked! The critics are actually people we want to welcome.

Michael: Yes.

Michele: Because they have good insights, and they may not always be right, or they may be right, so it's worth our time. Then, of course, we have the friends. Those are people who truly love us and have

our best interests at heart, and if they have mustered up the courage to confront us or criticize something, then we need to affirm that, because we need those people to be safe enough to speak.

Michael: That's right.

Michele: Those two disciplines are so critical. Let's move on to the third one. What's the third discipline?

Michael: The third one is to *accept responsibility without blame*. Few leaders do this well. Part of it is because we have poor examples in our culture. We see (particularly in the political realm) politicians unwilling to take responsibility. There's always some reason for their behavior or some reason why they made this decision.

Michele: Some excuse.

Michael: There's some excuse rather than them just owning it full on and saying, "You know what? You're right. I did make that decision." The important thing is to not deflect it or blame. Any time you find yourself owning something but then using the conjunction *but*, that should go off like a...

Michele: That's a red flag, like *ding, ding, ding*.

Michael: That's a red flag. That's exactly right. It's like a red light going off on your dashboard. No, you don't want to go there, because then you're about to offer an excuse.

Michele: Because that's just really not responsibility.

Michael: Yeah, that's right. Somebody might confront you and say, "Michele, look. This is a small thing, but you always seem to be late to meetings. I just want to say something to you because I think it's disrespectful to me. I think it's disrespectful to our team." You say, "You know what? You're right. But I have a 3-year-old toddler," or, "But the traffic was just really bad," or, "But..." No. That's an excuse.

Michele: Uh-huh. You just need to say, "You're right. You're right. I was late. You're absolutely right."

Michael: That's right. Don't blame anything else. Nobody cares, you know?

Michele: Yeah, they really don't.

Michael: Everybody else has bad traffic. Everybody else has the issues they're dealing with. Everybody else apparently got to the meeting on time. Whatever the issue is, to accept responsibility for that and really own it is key. Here's the thing about responsibility: You can't change anything until you own it.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: As long as the problem is out there, it's unfixable. It's beyond your control. Once you own it, suddenly things can be different. You can leave earlier. You can find different childcare or whatever it

is to get to the meeting on time, but you have to own it first. That's what the person who's offering the criticism wants to see.

Michele: Oh, true.

Michael: Because what happens when somebody doesn't own it? Then it escalates.

Michele: Oh, then what started out as a tiny frustration actually starts to just shoot up and shoot up. I mean, I have noticed this in family relationships as well as work relationships.

Michael: Yeah.

Michele: If you don't own it and take responsibility, the other person's frustration really goes up quickly.

Michael: Well, the crazy thing about it is... I have a friend who was caught in an affair and never even to this day has really owned it. What he thinks it's about is that other people are intolerant of his sin. He says, "Look, yes, I did have this affair. People just need to get over it, and they need to forgive me." "Well, it's because you haven't owned it, really."

Michele: Yes. It's that responsibility.

Michael: The issue is not the sin. That's never a reason why somebody escalates anything. The reason is the unwillingness to deal with it.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: If he would just say, "You know what? I totally screwed up. It's my fault. There's nobody to blame. I'm 100 percent responsible," guess what? All of his friends would be hugging him and saying, "Buddy, look. It could have been me. Let's work through this together." But instead, everybody still feels like they have to prove the point because he doesn't get it.

Michele: Yes. Yes. That's such a key point in leadership because you really undermine your own leadership if you are a leader who does not know how to accept responsibility.

Michael: You do. The best way to end a conversation and stop the criticism is to accept responsibility. That doesn't mean, by the way, that you have to agree with it.

Michele: True.

Michael: There are times when somebody may say something and you just disagree. There's just a difference of opinion, or it's a difference of approach. I had that recently when I launched my mastermind group. Somebody was very upset with me because of one of the components of the group, so they felt the need to comment on my blog. After processing it, after talking about it with my team, I came right back to where I was.

I said, "No. This is intentional. It's strategic. This is why we're doing what we're doing." I just had to say, "Look, I hear what you're saying. I disagree with it, but I want you to know I've heard you." Usually (it didn't happen in this case) that's enough if you have somebody who's well-intentioned and mature on the other end of it. That's usually the end of a conversation.

Michele: Most times it really is.

Michael: It is, but with this guy, that wasn't the end. He felt the need to keep pressing it, and I finally had to delete his comment and ban him from my blog, but usually that'll end it.

Michele: You know, I love how owning it or listening to it does not always mean agreement, but there are even times to say (I've done this before), "I see how you arrived at that conclusion. I can totally see how you got there. I'm in a different place," or, "I don't necessarily agree with it, but I can see how you arrived." Just try to put yourself in their shoes and kind of empathize a little bit.

Michael: That's right. Be as empathetic as you can. There are also times when you need to explain but not excuse. I will usually use language like this. I'm going to say, "Look. You're 100 percent right. Let me offer something by way of explanation. This does not excuse it, because I own what you shared with me, but here's the explanation." Sometimes that's helpful to the whole conversation too so that they have a bigger perspective, but you have to be a little careful with this.

Michele: Yes, you do. I've actually asked for permission. "Can I give you just a little background that you aren't familiar with that might give you a little bit broader of a perspective on what's going on?"

Michael: Yeah.

Michele: I just ask them. If they're like, "No, I really don't care to know," and they just want to be heard, I say, "Okay. That's fine. I hear you. I validate you."

Michael: "I own it."

Michele: "I own it. Life goes on." But even asking, "Can I give you just a little bit of background information so you understand what's happening here?" can be helpful.

Michael: And usually there is more to the story than what we see.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: When I'm criticizing somebody, I try to be cognizant of that, so I'm saying to the other person, "Look. I don't know the whole story. All I know is what I see, and here's how it looks to me. There may be a perfectly reasonable explanation for this that I don't see, but I want to share with you what I see just in the event that this would be helpful to you." Sometimes you have to do that.

Michele: All right, so the first discipline is to listen without being defensive. The second is to evaluate without shame. The third is to accept responsibility without blame. What is the fourth discipline?

Michael: *Change without delay.* You know, the meaning of the word *repentance* from the original Greek is a change in direction. If you've really received it, if you've done these other things, if you've listened, if you've evaluated... Let's say you've recognized that this is a valid criticism and then you've accepted responsibility for it. You have to adjust your behavior.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: Otherwise you really haven't listened, evaluated, and accepted responsibility. You're just manipulating. You're hoping it goes away. But the whole benefit of this... If you're going to really turn criticism to your advantage, you have to use that as information that informs your behavior.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: Because if your behavior doesn't change, you really haven't heard. You really haven't learned.

Michele: What a waste!

Michael: What a waste!

Michele: I mean, this is all valuable education for your life, and you're disregarding it.

Michael: It'll usually get you into trouble. Again, I was saying earlier that I think (in my worldview) God is constantly sending us messages, trying to communicate with us. I don't mean it's some kind of mysterious audible voice, but I think everything in the universe comes to us as a message that can inform us.

So the question is, "Okay, that person has come to me, and if I'm not going to be a good steward of their courage, the information they've given that has now given me clarity, how many more times do I have to hear that message?" Or maybe... We've all experienced this too, and we've probably been on the side of it where we've just said, "You know what? I've said my piece. I'm not going to say any more. That person is just going to have to go through a tough fall."

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: I've done that with my kids.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: You try to persuade your kids to take that one course of action.

Michele: They don't listen, and...

Michael: You just sit back and go, "Okay. Let's see how that works out." You know what's in store for them, and what you don't want to be is guilty of that on the other side of the equation. So I think that to change, to act, to modify your behavior without delay and be a good steward of it... That also

encourages the other person that you're serious about it. I was using the example of your theoretically being late to meetings, and I criticized you.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: Well, if you suddenly change your behavior and suddenly become punctual, that lets me know you're serious. That lets me know you're somebody who I can speak to truthfully.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: And we can have a relationship at a deeper level.

Michele: Absolutely. I mean, those are the keys that actually take an acquaintance-level relationship and turn it into more of a true, deeper friendship.

Michael: Yeah.

Michele: So to wrap up today with one more little question (it's not really little)... These disciplines you're talking about today apply so far beyond just the workplace and work interactions.

Michael: Totally.

Michele: I mean, we can use this with our spouses.

Michael: Mm-hmm.

Michele: We can use this with children and other family members. I was even thinking about how the same process... When my children (I have children who are older now) come to me and have some kind of frustration... Gosh, sometimes we don't want to have to receive this from our children, because they're our children.

Michael: Because we raised them, right?

Michele: Yeah. "We raised you. Don't give me feedback! I'm not asking you for your opinion!"

Michael: Yeah.

Michele: But as you're talking, I'm thinking, "I could do this with them as well."

Michael: Totally.

Michele: How powerful that would be for the relationship, to listen without being defensive, to evaluate without shame, to accept responsibility and then change without delay. I mean, this could really be transformative for so many relationships.

Michael: It could be, and you're modeling to them... How are they going to learn how to receive criticism? It's probably not by you giving them a copy of this podcast and just saying, "Listen to this

and you'll be fine," but the more powerful way to teach anything (whether it's your leadership at work or leadership at home) is to model the behavior you want to see replicated in the lives of those you lead. This is no different.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: Think to yourself... If you were offering the criticism, how would you want the other person to respond? Now just do that as you're responding to somebody else's criticism.

Michele: You know, if we want to raise children who are leaders, this is honestly a skill we really should teach our kids.

Michael: Yeah.

Michele: Because it's not automatic, and I keep thinking how this was something I had to kind of learn the hard way, unfortunately. I didn't know how to do this, and I'm more and more convinced that if we can train our children or our younger employees or anybody we mentor with this one particular skill, we can really set them up for better leadership down the road.

Michael: We really can. I think this can be huge for our country, for our institutions.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: You know, when you watch people model the exact opposite of this night after night, just slinging mud at each other... Nobody is listening to anyone. The nation gets polarized. It all loops right back to the first discipline, which is listening without being defensive.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: It's really trying to hear what the other person is saying.

Michele: Such a great episode. I really enjoyed this content, Michael. If you enjoyed today's conversation as well, you can get all of the show notes and a full transcript of the entire episode at michaelhyatt.com. In addition, if you'd prefer to watch rather than just listen, you can find the entire video also posted at michaelhyatt.com.

We'd love for you to do us one favor if you don't mind. If you could please head over to iTunes today and rate this program, we would so appreciate it. It's really the best way to get this content into as many hands as possible. That's really how we change things. Do you have any final thoughts?

Michael: Yeah. I think that being able to do this well is the essence of humility. To purpose to be a different kind of leader, a leader who leads out of a place of strength but also humility, challenges me, and I think that's what the world needs more of.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: I would just encourage our listeners to be humble leaders, receive criticism, and use it to their advantage.

Michele: Great. Thank you, Michael. Thank you for being with us today.

Until next time, remember: Your life is a gift. Do what matters.