



Don Yaeger

Kim, thanks so much for joining us.

Kim McHugh

Thanks for having me. I'm really excited about this topic and what you're doing. I can't thank you enough, Don. I really do mean that I never think I'm that special. And then you do this and I'm like, I feel really special today.

Don Yaeger

You are really special.

Kim McHugh

I even did my hair for you guys, it's just a recording. So, very passionate on this one.

Don Yaeger

Well, you know, I think you and I, we've had enough time together and we've talked in this conversation enough that I think our listeners today are going to be riveted by some of what you learned on your journey, and it will help maybe some of your employees who might listen to this to understand Kim just a little better, so it's always exciting. So, volleyball, your sport of choice. I know you played other sports, what led you to volleyball? And what was it about the game of volleyball that was so attractive to you?

Kim McHugh

Yeah. So yeah, I did play multiple sports, golf, I played basketball, volleyball, but when I got ready to go to college, I tried out for the basketball team, Stephen F. Austin at the time. I remember being pushed around a lot on the court. I'm six feet tall and even then, was being pushed around. And in volleyball, I

like that it's not a physical contact sport, but the other part I really liked about it was the team atmosphere. You can't win a volleyball game by yourself. There's just no way. And the plays it was almost like a dance, going through and running the plays, and the strength of it and accuracy. I just I really enjoyed the intricacies of volleyball relative to any other sport I played.

Don Yaeger

It's funny, I went to college and had a really good volleyball team bowl state, a very good men's team. I don't think I fully appreciated it as, I would guess most don't, how precise you actually have to be. I mean, if your hands are actually not in the right slot by just a smidgen, the ball is headed in directions you never intended. You're an engineer at heart. That ability to be so precise and to have a lot.

Kim McHugh

And you know, the other interesting thing is you if you think about it from a sporting aspect, it's the one game where there are two referees watching everything and they're right on the net. So that precision is so important because they're watching at all times, where a lot of other sports, like basketball, you have one ref running up and down and they can miss some of the plays and what's going on. You really don't miss in volleyball because when the ball comes to you both are watching you. You've got people watching the lines. It's a very precise sport, and it's not subjective. I like that part of it. I think that's an engineer and me that you talked about. It's not a subjective sport.

Don Yaeger

Yeah. I know killing it in high school. You came down to two schools. I love the recruiting story because your dad's a big Aggie, right? Big Texas A&M guy. But you were leaning toward – the enemy.

Kim McHugh

I was leaning towards LSU, Yep. Yep. I went over there for my tryout. So, I actually graduated high school a year early. So, I didn't have my senior year I decided in March of my junior year to graduate so I had to go try out because I hadn't been recruited. So, I went to Baton Rouge to try it out and I absolutely loved it. Loved the coach, Ruth Nelson was the coach at the time. She brought in Rose Majors who was a big time LSU Olympic type volleyball player at my tryout. So, I was just in awe. They took me for some great food right off campus. My mom had gone with me and we went back home at the time my parents were living in Lafayette, Louisiana. So, we went back and my dad didn't talk to me for two weeks before the signing date. I mean, literally did not talk to me. He would just, "Hi." And he was thinking, because I had A&M also, I had done my tryout at A&M. Loved it too, but really impressed with the facilities and everything at LSU. So, he didn't talk to me. And it came down to signing day and he came in the kitchen from work and he goes, well, I guess you're going to go to LSU, aren't you? And so, you might want to look at the paperwork. And I had signed with A&M, great decision. Best decision I could have made but without that influence from him, I definitely would have signed at LSU. So, it's funny where life takes you. And it wasn't just him, I have to say I also was going into petroleum engineering, and at the time A&M was the number one petroleum engineering school in the nation. So, I decided I'm not going to play sports, there weren't pro sports for women. So, I definitely need to take care of my after-college life too. So that had some bearing on the decision, but I have to say probably 75% was him.

Don Yaeger

Well he did such a great influence on you, but your coach at A&M, Terry Condon, inducted the volleyball coaches Hall of Fame. Her peers said she was not only known for investing in the growth of her players, but in the game. I mean, she wanted the game to grow. Now, what did you learn most playing for Coach Condon?

Kim McHugh

Two things come up. One thing I learned that I really credit her with, and she probably doesn't even know at the time how it impacted me, but we played a game against Rice and we were ranked much higher than Rice; we should have beaten them soundly and we ended up I think, going three out of five games. So, she made us go up to the locker room after the game. She had our workout clothes laying on the bench. This is long before a lot of the NCAA rules there today, so nobody gets upset. And she told us to put on our workout clothes, we're like, but we're done. We won, I mean, we were in the locker room, joking around, ready to go. And she said, put on the clothes and get down on the court. So, we all put on our workout clothes and went out on the court and she said that was embarrassing. You did not show up 100% of the team you are and we're not going to play to the level of our opponents, we're going to play to the level that we can play. You're going to work out now because you didn't play hard enough. I want to say we worked out till about one o'clock in the morning. We were exhausted and we were done. And you know, you have tests and homework, and all that stuff. But I remember that embedded in my mind going, "if you're going to do it, you're going to do it 100% no matter what, every time", and that carried into work, right. You get a project and it's not an exciting project, it seems like something that's kind of beneath you, you didn't want to do, but you're going to do it and you're going to do it 100%. And you're going to give everything you've got into that. Such a small -- that one night, and she never did it to us again. And I remember complaining and limping back to the dorm room and how mean is she and all, but the lesson was there, it was a life lesson. She was a brilliant volleyball mind, I learned so much on the court and about the game. But that was the thing that really resonated as positive that I've carried on. Now the flip side is you always learn something from people right that you don't ever want to do. So, I remember the one thing that I learned is when you make a rule, it's got to be distributed evenly all the time to everyone. And I think in sports often we see where people who are maybe more talented, the rules don't always apply equally across. And that was a leadership lesson I took away that I was like when I have that opportunity, if I'm going to, I've got to treat everybody the same. And that's a tough one. And I know it's tough in sports, but it just resonated with me. And then life's not fair; I think you learn that through sports, because there's always somebody faster, stronger, better, and you can give 110% in practice and on the court every day, and somebody else still may be starting ahead of you. And Terry did teach me that when you're on the bench, you are in the game and you are part of that team, and you have to be fully engaged and cheering and all that. And she demanded that. I never really understood why.

Don Yaeger

How would she demand that? I love this.

Kim McHugh

Because it all relates to a story, right? We played a game and I will admit it was my freshman year. And I thought I should have gotten on the court. You know, we all leave high school, like you're one of the

studs. Now you come into college and you're not the stud anymore, and everybody's really good. But anyway, I really did. So, I shut down that game where normally I was really the one on the bench yelling, really excited for the team and picking everybody else up, and I just shut down and was quieter. And we lost that game. And I remember her coming to me looking me right in the face, and she said, "you own part of that loss." And I thought, "what? I wasn't on the court, what do you-- ?." You know? Now granted, I didn't say that to her. I was smarter than that. But I remember asking the assistant coach, why am I getting blamed for that loss when I wasn't even out there? And she said, you know, Terry expects you to be fully engaged all the time. You can't check out. So regardless of what you think and how this thing should be done and what you think needs to be done, you have to be fully engaged. And again, that was an Aha, that at the time, you really don't know what you're learning. I mean, that's why these interviews are so fun because you step back and you go, what did I really learn that I've tried to instill in my kids? Or when I've coached young kids that I want them to know? And you need to know that, yeah, there's six people on the court, there's twelve people on the team. It's the team. We win together or we lose together. And she was really good at that. I can tell you I never checked out again, ever.

Don Yaeger

Yeah, what a valuable lesson and what a place to learn it right. I mean, you learned something on the bench, right? That had you been so good that you could have never avoided the court, you wouldn't have learned that on the bench. And so, there's something really good there. One of the most important lessons you learn. You own part of that loss. I mean, what a great line. A great leader knows when to say the right things too. What a powerful lesson there. You mentioned that you're playing at A&M. Your team was pretty good, 32 and 13, made the NCAA Tournament. What do you remember most about that season?

Kim McHugh

Well, one, it was fun.

Don Yaeger

Winning is fun.

Kim McHugh

Winning is always fun. Winning is a blast. I also always remember losing to the University of Texas, which I hated that every time. But you know what I do remember about that team, we had a lot of older players. So, we had quite a few seniors and juniors at the time. And though there were a few freshmen -- Sherry Brinkman was a middle blocker for us; she was incredibly strong, and I was behind Sherry. So, I was a middle blocker and she's just brilliant to play with her. But they were a great leadership group. You know what I'm saying? You had a lot of leadership and they had brought a woman in that had played on the Olympic team and she redshirted so she was more mature than we were. And she had this calmness about her. And I remember that because I remember how she would take us through tough games and really lead us and that season, we benefited so much from her guidance and her skills. Also, Terry really did a great job of getting us in shape. I will tell you, I remember some hard, really hard runs and weightlifting, and things like that. So, I remember that season we were prepped. I think for the tournament, that sweet 16, just the awe of the fact is oh my gosh, we're here. Like we're

here, we're that good. And you don't know at the time when you're playing that you ranked down the top 16 in the nation. I just remember being in all of that and also thinking, "we need to do this again." And it's really hard. You got to have a lot of respect for teams that repeat year on year on year and can backfill with players because you start to realize how those bricks come together and build that foundation. You lose a few you got to replace them with in kind. We didn't repeat, but I'm telling you-- it just-- my freshman year was so brutal physically and it was fun. I just-- I love game time. I remember that you go through all these practices and it just was so hard and brutal hours for game time.

Don Yaeger

And the crazy part is that the fans and everybody else shows up for game time, right?

Kim McHugh

Oh yeah, and well my brother went to A&M. So, funny story, my brother was at A&M. He's two years older than I am and he lived in one of the dorms there, so he got all the guys to come to our game. So, you have to remember back in the 80s, women's sports weren't that big a deal. My brother would bring his whole dorm to our games. And you know, when fans get involved and get excited-- I've just watched that over the years-- it just changes the dynamics and it's so much more fun to play. And even that, you go to the sweet 16, they're filled. Because Texas wasn't a big volleyball state at the time, but you could go to California and Illinois and those are volleyball states and the gym fills up and it's a very different atmosphere and dynamic. And I think that's why that was so fun. Thank goodness for him and he brought a bunch of guys with him and filled that stand for us. So, we did get a few fans each week.

Don Yaeger

I love it. You know, we interviewed for this podcast, a really amazing leader guy by the name of Bill George. He was the longtime CEO of Medtronic and played tennis at Georgia Tech. He now teaches at Harvard and a lot of what he does is he talks about leadership and the lessons he's learned while studying leaders. And one thing he said that really stood out was that "women's team sports have grown so exponentially since that late 70s", right title nine, and he's so believes in this concept that sports and business intersect that he projects that there will be a far greater pool of female talent at the seed level or in the executive opportunities because it's a trailer, right, by a certain number of years. When they had these opportunities exposed to them, do you believe that as well?

Kim McHugh

Absolutely, absolutely. I went to an event, a lady was speaking it was in New York, G.E. did it, and they brought three to 400 women executives, various industries all together. Dawn Hudson was speaking, and she talked about how she played sports, right, in college and in high school. So, she asked the room, how many of you in this room have played sports, either at the collegiate level, high school, but you were involved in sports? Almost everyone stood up. I mean, it was that obvious. Just remember watching the room thinking, "wow, somebody should take a picture right now because this is powerful", and you start to see it. So, I do think there is a connection there. I think sports you learn the leadership, you learn the teamwork, and watching my daughter who, in 10 years from now, you need to be interviewing my daughter. That kid is-- she will put me in the dust I'm telling you, but it's the work ethic that is built in there as a swimmer and my daughter swam at University of Arizona and I thought I had it bad when I was going through school with practice and then you watch this, you know, getting up at

5:30, and in the pool and then to class and in the pool again in the afternoon, in the weight room and Saturdays and all that stuff. There's a work ethic there, you can't do that, and not really be able to handle the grind, and put in the time to get the results. And then there's that whole leadership component. I do think honestly, as you look at the world and what they're asking for leaders now, a lot of the attributes, empathy, trust, relationship, it's very different than in the past of a command and control, right. And I think not all the time, hate a broad brush, but those tend to be female traits. And even through sports, you learned how to use those to lead a team of women. You don't lead a team of women the same way you lead a team of men. It's just you don't, but yet the tenacity and the drive and hey, we're type A. Don't think it's not strong and all that, but there is a different leadership style and I think through sports, you learn some of that. You learn the tenacity; you learn your body can do more than you thought you could do. It's your mind that stops you. So, I think all of that, you learn through athletics. So, I think you'll see more women in the C suite and I think that trend is going to continue whether it's an individual sport or a team sport. There are learnings in both. I can relate a lot more to the team sport, but the individual you know, I watched her through swimming and what she had to do. And I've got another daughter who's getting ready to go to college and her sport of choices is dance. The time she's going to have to put in and the mental-- I mean it's different, but it is it's the work ethic. One of the questions in the thing around when you interview "so you have maybe a lower grade point average, but you played sports." Yeah, you get a leg up because I understand the time commitment, the tenacity, what you had to go through. And most people don't get paid to play, right? They play for the love of the sport. And even when I was telling my daughter about OU that she's going to dance. She's like "I need it." So, she'll double major in mechanical engineering and modern dance performance. And she said, "I need that, that left brain, right brain and that release." And I think for some of us, too, it was the release, right? I mean, just the grunting and the sweating. It just, I don't know, I just believe and I'm with him, your friend at Harvard that you will continue to see an increase and it's this next generation coming behind mine.

Don Yaeger

Yeah, the opportunity is there. Our leadership community looks better, right? So, we're looking through the Texas A&M yearbooks. Sorry, I prepped you for this right. The volleyball photos and the 80s hairdos were great, but I have to say my favorite photo of you was when we stumbled upon this Society of Petroleum Engineers, and unless you send me a Chevron gas card, we put the picture in the show notes. But this picture shows US treasurer and this other guy as president, so they were college and you're getting a chance to grow not just through sports, but through your chosen profession. And the other guy?

Kim McHugh

That is Dennis McHugh. He is my husband.

Don Yaeger

Yeah. I love it. It was such a great picture. And the idea that the young both of you.

Kim McHugh

Yeah, and we're both in the same industry, too, so it's really funny.

Don Yaeger

As was your father. So awesome. The work in the petroleum industry is certainly family tradition. Who was the greatest influence on your sports journey that you still think about? Someone who taught you lessons, and I know we've talked about coach Condon already. Who else?

Kim McHugh

So, I would have to you have to go back to a freshman in high school. Yeah, the woman's name was Diane Reid and to tell you the truth I went into high school not playing sports. So, I was a dancer. Had spent many many years dancing. And that's what I did. Again, remember, I'm six feet. I've been this height since I was a freshman in high school. So too tall to dance back then there's a height that you couldn't. And so, I was walking down the hallway on the first week of school my freshman year, and coach Reid was coming down the hallway and she stopped me. And she asked me, "why weren't you at volleyball tryouts." And I said, "Oh, I'm sorry, I'm not a I'm not an athlete, I'm a dancer." And she goes, "that's for me to decide. I want you to come to practice this afternoon." That woman who was the varsity coach believed in me and I was a dancer, but there's a lot of commonality. And I'll go back to this precision right, so I had the-- people would laugh, maybe that know me-- the grace, but I understood the footwork to put a dance together so once you teach me the steps on what to do to spike, I could jump. I had all those skill sets and she took the time and spent the time with me to develop in my sophomore year, I was varsity. And it was a very quick jump. And because of her, all these other things were able to fall into place. You know, it just, it was that belief. And if she hadn't taken the time to stop a long, lanky girl walking down the hallway, and she used to laugh about it, because when I graduated, she had left at that time, but contacted me because she heard I was going to play. And I said, I don't know why you did it. She said, "Oh be very clear. That was personal. I saw six feet and I was going to take advantage of six feet." And I really liked that. But yeah, so she is somebody that I think of often because it changed my path. Although I wasn't-- I was a good kid, I had great parents, it's not that, but it opened up an ability that I got to participate, go to A&M and play volleyball and I just think the outcome would have been different. I would have still had a college degree and gone on, but I don't know that I would have been the same person if it hadn't been for her.

Don Yaeger

It has been a few years since you played at A&M. And for most people I know who have been athletes at some stage in their life, the competitive nature never goes away. How do you express it today?

Kim McHugh

Yeah, it's harder today. Right? Fortunately, life takes over. So, my husband I ran a marathon because I heard other people can do it. Well, heck, I can do it if you did it. Very painful, by the way, don't recommend, but I did it. We did a triathlon to say we could still do it. I'm going to start picking up golf again. A lot of my competitive nature now is through work. The performance and making sure our teams are performing at their best. I feel a lot of satisfaction when the teams are really performing right. I just can step back and watch them and it fills that competitive nature in me. But also, I do like periodically to run the half here in Houston and that sort of thing, but age catches up with you. And running may not be your sport of choice so you find some other things, but I have to tell you, Don, helping teams, helping them set their goals, deliver on those metrics, really push them out of their comfort zone, again, goes back to you can do more than you think you can. I find a lot of time teams set

targets that are achievable, or they're close to achievable. And you raise that bar even higher, and you get them uncomfortable. They get there. They just didn't know they could get there. That to me is just so satisfying to watch that. I don't have to do it; I can live through them.

Don Yaeger

That's a perfect pivot for us of what we do on this podcast, is we ask you to tell us a story or to share a lesson where sports and the world that you lived in and grew through helped impact now your leadership journey. So, you said that right? You love nothing more than actually getting a chance to watch your teams perform well and inspiring and helping them. What are some lessons that you've learned along the way that you execute on in driving better performance for the teams you have?

Kim McHugh

It's going to tie back to that you can do more than you think you can. And I can remember Terry Condon talking to me about a jump serve at the time, that was a newer thing. And I thought that's a-- no way. That is just-- the mechanics of it and the ability to screw this thing up, I don't really want to learn how to do this jump serve. And she was no, no, no, you've got to swing, you've got all that you need to do this. And she kept pushing me and I would mess it up and she kept pushing me. But in time, I got very proficient at it and very strong, it was very effective. That's the same thing. When I work with a team and if in my world, they set a time target, you know, they're going to drill so many feet per day, and then you can look around at what are others doing in that same thing and go, you know what, you're not really at the top quartile, you're really kind of shooting for the middle. Let's go ahead and set this target. We don't know how we're going to get there, but we're going to get there. We're going to put a plan together and having people set those targets to deliver to be the best. Set your target because if you set it high enough, and you don't get there, that's at least better than setting a low target that you achieve and you're comfortable with. And I've been using that since I got out of college. When I was an engineer working with the rigs and setting targets and then today in my role supporting other leaders with their teams is really getting them to that uncomfortable space. And it's okay not to get there initially or not to know how you're going to get there. So that for me is one that has resonated and continues to resonate.

Don Yaeger

You know, I had the honor of being there with you as you were transitioning into this leadership role. You are replacing a man with a very different leadership style, but a great man, Dave Payne and in doing so, one of the things that you wanted your team to be aware of was how your leadership styles could impact them. So, you were so open in your communication with them like you wanted to explain to them, here's how to get the best from you as a leader and I loved that idea. Somewhere along the line, you learn that leadership trait, that willingness to speak openly so that people understood why you were drawing them to some new way of being. Can you share with me?

Kim McHugh

Don, I think a lot of it comes from being the only woman in a room. My dad, when I talked to people about his leadership, they always talked about his honesty, his ethics, his transparency, so I have to say some of that I would have gotten from him, but being in a room with a lot of men, a lot of women try to be a man. It just doesn't work. I'm not a guy, and I'm not going to pretend to be. That's why I think

you find where I really like to tell them, this is who I am as a leader. This is how I'm different. You know, one of the things I always tell them is "don't ask if you don't want to know because I will answer you very transparently." But also, I like to think with people. In a lot of times, if you're a leader and you're working with a group and you're kind of sharing your ideas, they think you're at an answer. And they go into action on that, when really, I just want to think with someone else, I think better talking it out with someone else. And I really have to let people know that because that's not a common style of leadership. That's why this, this fills my bucket, this is completely, you know where some things drain you and for some people, this may be it, I love I could talk to you all day long. Because that for me is fun. And I love going back through thinking all these things over but having someone who has told you I like to think with you, once you set that tone, then you're one of the team. It's all I want to be. I just want to be one of the team and my job is to take away the barriers. Being that transparent with them, it's made me more effective through my career. I'm not trying to be something I'm not. And look, I take feedback. It's not always easy. I'll tell you that thing somebody used to say you know, "feedback is a gift." I prefer the one that's "feedback's a food." I don't like to eat some things, but I know it's good for me, where a gift always has a pleasant connotation to it. But I think that helps. And you're right, Dave and I were, you know, chalk and cheese in some ways that we lead. We think a lot alike, but we don't necessarily deliver it in the same manner. I always like the people that would say, you know, "you got big shoes to fill." That's what they would always say, coming behind Dave, "you got big shoes to fill." And I said, "well, I've got big feet, I just wear different style of shoes." You know, I think that's the best kind of leadership. So, I think that's just an evolution over time. And I would say early in my career, I tried to lead exactly like others, and I started to realize I can't do that. It's exhausting for one, and I'm not as effective as if I'm just me, I'll be the best me I can be. Only promise I can make.

Don Yaeger

Yeah. The one thing that struck me too, just looking at your role, obviously highest-ranking Woman in the drilling industry today, which is pretty amazing, right? Think about that. I know how proud that makes your dad. But the idea that you work at Chevron. Chevron has recently been recognized as one of the great companies for inclusion. But sports are the ultimate inclusive society, right? I love that. I don't care where you came from. I don't care what color your parents are. I don't care. Can we win together? Right. That's what matters. I'm wondering, did sports teach you things about inclusion that you're able to draw into your day to day leadership behaviors?

Kim McHugh Oh, yeah, definitely. Because you put this team together. And if there's animosity, if there's cliques that develop within that team, the machine doesn't work. It can't work. Now, you don't have to be the best friends outside the court or whatever, but you have to support one another. You are equals you don't see the color. You're a team, you're working together. And I think sports does teach you that. It's the great equalizer. You can come from a very affluent background and you still sit in the bench, right? So it goes back to that, hey, we all come out of high school as studs and we come together and the pecking order changes all over again and you find out where you fit, but I think it's also part of that inclusion is really having empathy, being able to relate to others. And we've all had it in sports, you know, maybe men don't treat it the same way, but if somebody is having a bad day or they get hurt and they're having to sit down, you empathize, you work with them, you relate. It's that relationship building. I remember, Terry always made us come together right before we went into two-a-day's in the fall, and we all went in the lounge and we shared about ourselves and our families and that

was the first time we all met. When the new recruits came in, it was that relationship building that made us come together. And I think that's that inclusive part of sports because if you're excluded, then you're not in the team. And you have to watch that. You also have to watch favoritism in sports, right. You see it, you know what I'm talking about. It's one kid gets suspended because they do it, but the next kid gets a slap on the wrist because of where they may fit in the pecking order. So, in work, you can find yourself favoring one employee over another because they think like you, you can relate more to them, maybe you don't relate to the other one. Like I'm not a hunter. So, if they want to talk hunting, I'm left out of that conversation. And I could find myself relating to somebody more who wants to talk about volleyball, or A&M or whatever. And you've got to watch for that and make sure that you are not showing that favoritism, that people are getting opportunities, that you are fairly assessing their work and the way their behaviors and all of that. Sports is a little bit easier. I was let people use sports analogies with me all the time, right? That's everyone's favorite thing and then when you can push against the sports analogy is even more fun. So right now, people will tell me well, "it doesn't matter what your color or your sexual orientation or whatever, everybody gets a fair chance when they are put up for a job." And I said, "well", and they'll tell me "like on a basketball team, you always pick your top five players to go on the court." I said, "yeah, you're right. I agree with you. But in basketball, everyone gets to shoot and practice. Everyone gets to run the drills; you get to show what you do. In work, if everyone doesn't get projects and gets exposure and the opportunity to speak in front of a group and all of that..."

Don Yaeger

Then you may never get the chance to start.

Kim McHugh

Exactly! And then they don't get the chance. So, you got to test yourself as a leader. Is everybody getting to shoot? Is everybody getting to run on the track? Because if you don't, then what happens?

Don Yaeger

They get left behind.

Kim McHugh

Yeah, like I would call myself a dark horse to sit in the seat I sit today because 20 years ago, would somebody have gone? Yes, Kim McHugh someday is going to be the Vice President of drilling and completions. No. They probably would have said she's really great engineer, and she gets lucky. But people started to see what I could do. And Dave was one of those people that could see the potential when we met in the work, I did for him. So, I think that giving everybody a chance to shoot in sports than in work, you got to apply that same logic.

Don Yaeger

Same principle. You referenced several times, empathy being a trait, a gift that some leaders are gifted in more than others and its role sometimes in sports, right, our ability to play makes us better teammates. What practical advice would you give to a young leader on how to develop a more empathetic mind or soul?

Kim McHugh

I would say first, don't confuse empathy with sympathy. Those are very common, and I found I was probably better sympathetic than empathetic until I learned that difference because you can't solve everyone's problems. But you can sit and listen. You can offer resources, but with sympathy you go "oh Don, I'm sorry, that's really bad" and then you go on about your day. But if I sit there with empathy, and listen, really listen to what you're telling me and say, "you know what, I've never had that experience happen. I can imagine it's got to be really tough. Here is a resource that you can go to, you know, how can I help you? What do you need?" That's very different than just, "hey man-- You know, just telling you-- you're right, Don, that's awful. Good on you, I'm going on down the hallway." I think to young leaders, the best advice I got is, leaders learn. And that is a trait. People do not equate with leaders. If you ask people what makes a good leader, they're going to go through some things, but they never call them learners and leaders learn. And I think a young leader who wants to understand the difference between empathy and sympathy. Go and find out. You know, Brene' Brown does a great job at talking about empathy, and what does that look like? But you've also got to be willing to take coaching, you got to take feedback. And that's feedback from those that you're trying to practice this skill on. So it goes back, if I were to tell you, "hey Don, look, I'm working on empathy and this is what it should look like, so when you see me, and I don't portray these behaviors, could you give me some feedback? Could you let me know? And if I do a good job, would you let me know?" So, you get people to help you, it goes back to sports. How do you get better? Even the greatest golfers in the world still have coaches.

Don Yaeger

Exactly right.

Kim McHugh

So even an NBA team, they still have a coach and they're still teaching them. So, if you ever get to the point in your career, that you are not getting feedback, that you aren't learning, that you can't tell yourself "these people are teaching me," you probably should quit because you're never there. And that's sports, you're never there. You're never good enough. You're constantly having to continue to practice.

Don Yaeger

In our office we say, "feedback is the breakfast of champions."

Kim McHugh

That's great, I'm glad you refer to it as food.

Don Yaeger

Exactly. Yeah well, Kim McHugh you've been a gift to me over the years. I've learned so much from you today. What an honor to get to share some of what I've learned and what you've learned along your journey with our listeners. I'm honored to have had you and I can't wait for our paths to cross again.

Kim McHugh

Absolutely. Thank you. It's an honor to be asked to do this, honestly. So, thank you so much.