

Roxanne: [00:00:00] Every single one of us has a great leader inside of us. We just need to find a way to unleash it.

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Peter: [00:00:16] Welcome to improv is no joke podcast. It's all about becoming a more effective communicator by embracing the principles of improvisation. I'm your host Peter Margarita's the self-proclaimed chief edutainment officer of my business the accidental account. My goal is to provide you with thought provoking interviews with business leaders so you can become an effective improviser which will lead to building stronger relationships with clients customers colleagues and even your family. So let's start to show.

[music]

Peter: [00:00:47] Welcome to episode number 60, and today my guest is Roxanne Kaufman Elliott, who's a founder and president of ProLaureate Ltd., a transformational leadership development firm. Roxanne is an i3 Leadership Master, a professional speaker, and a member of the National Speaker's Association, and on the board of the Ohio chapter of the National Speaker's Association. She's also a certified executive coach, facilitator, and an award-winning business marketing strategist. She is the author of the book *Never Wear Red*, a leadership love story, which can be found on Amazon.com. Before we get to the interview, I'd like to talk about Listen, learn, and learn. I have partnered with the Maryland Association of CPAs and the Business Learning Institute to bring [an exciting new learning opportunity for accounting professionals to earn CPE credits](#). You can earn up to one CPE credit for each completed podcast episode purchased for only \$29 through the American Association of CPAs and the Business Learning Institute [self-study website](#). The podcast episodes are mobile friendly. Open your browser on your smartphone, tablet, or computer, Go to the MACPA and BLI self-study account, and listen to an episode. Take the review and final exam while you're working out or after listening to an episode on your commute to and from work - It's that easy! While all Improv is no Joke podcasts are available on my website, only those purchased through the MACPA and BLI self-study Web site are eligible for CPE credit. You can get detailed instructions by visiting my website at www.PeterMargaritis.com and clicking on the graphic "Improv is no Joke for CPE credit" on my home page. OK now let's get to the interview with Roxanne.

Peter: [00:03:05] Roxanne, welcome and thank you for taking time out of your crazy schedule to be a guest on my podcast today.

Roxanne: [00:03:12] Thank you. No thank you for taking time to talk with me. I'm excited. Been looking forward to it.

Peter: [00:03:18] I have myself been looking forward to this ever since our meeting at the National Speakers Association Ohio board retreat, really the first time I met you get to know other but you intrigued me with your background in leadership and if you could kind of give us your story. Tell us about yourself so the audience can get an idea of who Roxanne is and what you have built up over these years.

Roxanne: [00:03:44] I would love to do that and I could make this the saga over over many days but I won't go there. I promise to keep it short and to the point. But but I think the

background is really important in all of our stories and it certainly is in mine. So in a nutshell the journey has gone kind of like this. I've had three very separate and very different careers in my lifetime. The first part of my career was in the performing arts. I was an actor. I studied it in school I majored in theater. I worked semiprofessionally for many years and then started working in the administration of theater. So I traveled all over the place. We did a lot of historic restoration. But through all of this what I was learning was really the art and science of business, not only in for profit organizations but in nonprofits as well. And I found that my theater training and my background in the performing arts was a huge asset to the work that I started to do when I went into administration and management of running performing arts centers, one of which was connected to the Jackie Gleason Center for Performing Arts down in Miami Beach Florida. I worked on a restoration project down there on the Colony Theatre, which was a huge learning experience. So all of that was great and it just formed a foundation of really thinking about what is leadership and what does it got to do with success and failure happiness in life, and in our professional areas. So that's that question started to bubble up in my mind. And then I made a giant leap away from nonprofits and, of all things, I went to work for what was then a very small company in New England that was a manufacturer of specialty resin systems in the construction industry. Believe it or not.

Peter: [00:05:42] Wow.

Roxanne: [00:05:42] [laughs] I know. But I just wanted to do something differently. Got a little bit tired of eating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, to be honest about it. I wanted to see what it was like to you know go into the corporate ranks and see what that was all about. So I took all of my experience in helping nonprofits and performing artists and arts organizations, and in helping them create successful businesses. I took that into this little company and something kind of very cool was going on. And I don't think we even realized that at the time but we were Musketeers. We were all for one one for all. We were a band of brothers and me, and we built an incredibly successful business over the course of about seven years, and then we were bought out by a huge global conglomerate. And the company started to fail because of a different way of looking at business. And it was from a European organization. So they were not American-based. But just a whole different philosophy, a whole different style, a whole different way of looking at talent within organizations. At people. I don't think they ever understood the concept of leadership, and it was heartbreaking for me because it was a life-changing moment. I saw what happened when leadership, unbeknownst to us, which is what we were doing from the very beginning when we went to work together in this small group, was our highest priority. Collaboration, cooperation, really understanding other people's point of views; really communicating with people; making it about the relationship and helping others to succeed. And then all that went away and everything failed, and I found I had to make a decision. I couldn't have any influence anymore within the company after we had been bought out. And I was so heartbroken by it all, and yet so incredibly grateful for the learning experience. I traveled all over the world. I worked in all of these different kinds of organizations with people from all different cultures and socio economic background and business expertise and so forth. It was fascinating and I thought oh wait a minute. What have I done all of my life where I have succeeded? And it wasn't because I was a performing artist or an actor or an administrator. It wasn't because I was an executive on a team that formed this great little company. It was because of what I believed in, and that is that every single one of us has a great leader inside of us. We just need to find a way to unleash it. So I left the company. I resigned. I came back to Ohio, where I live now in Cleveland, and I formed my own company called ProLaureate, and people asked me what does

that really mean. Well if you think about laureate, laureates is a term that came from the ancient Greeks when they were teaching people an expertise (men, primarily, all men of course) in various forms of endeavors, whether they be academic or scientific or whatever. And when they reached the pinnacle of their expertise, they were crowned as laureate, with laurel leaves. That's where they came from in the Olympics. We still use that today in the Olympics. So I was thinking there's baccalaureate, there's poet laureate, there are Nobel laureates. Why not professional laureate? Because that's where genuine leadership comes from. So I hope that wasn't too much of a ramble but that's how I got here.

Peter: [00:09:41] No, no. Well I'm fascinated in all aspects. One, the Performing Arts, which I had no clue, which kind of blew me away. And I'm sitting here trying to remember... there was an interview with Kevin Spacey recently. He left and went to England to manage that theater looking for something new. It was a great leadership... do you remember what that was from? What publication that was from?

Roxanne: [00:10:04] No I don't. I saw it on television I think. There was a I think that was maybe it was a different one with him but he's one of my favorite actors of all time. But I don't remember what that was connected to.

Peter: [00:10:15] In reading this article, and between now and the time this goes live I'll see if I can find it and put it in the show notes. But he talked about... he wanted something new, something different, and he learned a lot about leadership and helping to build this theater company profitable. Once it became very profitable, He kind of walked away to find something different. That aspect fascinates me, but the the culture change within a manufacturing company. And you said a foreign company came in and purchased you guys.

Roxanne: [00:10:46] Correct yeah.

Peter: [00:10:48] Where was the headquarters located?

Roxanne: [00:10:50] Of the company who bought us? Germany.

Peter: [00:10:53] Germany, and how many years ago was this?

Roxanne: [00:10:56] I left the company in 2003. The merger took place four years prior to that.

Peter: [00:11:05] So the headquarters was now moved to Germany. But you guys were located in New England.

Roxanne: [00:11:14] In Waterbury, Connecticut, yeah.

Peter: [00:11:15] Did they bring anybody over from the parent company to help through this transition?

Roxanne: [00:11:22] Great question. Yes they did. They brought some of their folks over. I would use the word help loosely. [laughs] If I'm being really honest, and I'm not mentioning any names, and by the way this story is in my book because it was such a pivotal time in my life and I've lived with it ever since. The lessons learned and the takeaways, and it's really helped me to

become very successful in my own business. But yes they did bring people over and brought them in and planted them in our headquarters in Waterbury, Connecticut, and that created all kinds of interesting scenarios.

Peter: [00:12:04] Yeah, actually last week I was at a client, and a fairly large client, but they were telling a story about when a Luxembourg company purchased them some years ago, and the struggle in culture change. Especially when it's across the water. Completely different culture. And they've been one company now for a number of years, about 10, but there's still this whole underlying leadership culture, foreign culture, you know it's trying to assimilate into U.S. culture. U.S. culture is trying to assimilate into a European culture. And as you said, the view of leadership is viewed very differently.

Roxanne: [00:12:47] Yes it is. And that can make or break any kind of a merger acquisition. I've seen it go both ways. When when cultural due diligence is made as high a priority, and as important as financial due diligence and all of the other due diligence that we do in mergers and acquisitions, then you have a success. When it's ignored, as it was in my experience by all the people who are involved, you can't win. You cannot win. This is also one of the reasons why... really 2005 is when I incorporated. I was doing some consulting those first two years, 2003 to 2005, and then firmly established my firm and just went totally 100 percent into it in 2005. And then right around that time is when I discovered these two fellows who are scholars in leadership worldwide. They are so well known and I looked them up and reached out to them and started to immerse myself in the work that they have been doing. Their names are Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner. They're the authors of The Leadership Challenge, now in its sixth edition. This has gone worldwide. This is in nonprofits. It's in schools, churches, huge corporations. Fortune 50 corporations and everything in between. And it's really a movement, and there are... I don't know probably... I mean there are lots of people who use material, and then there are those of us who have gone through the certification programs and all of that to use the materials. And this is culture building, and what it does is level the field of what is leadership. It's not about what country you live in, your gender, your background, your socioeconomic status, your educational levels, and so forth. It's about authentic genuine leadership and building that within organizations. As You can tell, I mean this is a passion of mine. I love it. So this is just one aspect. I have three areas that I work in, in my firm, that are all of course very closely related. But the leadership challenge work, Barry and Jim's work, and they've been doing research on this worldwide for almost 40 years now. So it's empirical data. I mean it's all it's all studied and proven. It's pretty amazing.

Peter: [00:15:17] To look at the information and think about leadership... is there a way of of summing their work up and in like a sentence?

Roxanne: [00:15:29] Yeah. Through all of their research, everything that they have done, they discovered that there are five practices of exemplary leadership that guide organizations and people to leadership success. It's to model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. Over and over and over again, those five practices, and the development of the leadership behavior around each one of them, are what brings leadership success to cultures and organizations and individuals more than a sentence, I apologize. But that's it. And each one of those five practices are the very tip of an iceberg that goes really really really deep into developing our own personal leadership, which always comes first, and then our ability to lead others. And one of the things that I love about

these guys, and what first just captured me in learning more about it and becoming a certified coach, facilitator, consultant, etc. in this work is one of the things that they say. You know they say the key to success, in anything that we do, is to be in love. And that stopped me dead in the track. I went what?! this is so cool. Of course. Because think about it: when we're in love, we're passionate about what it is we are in love with. And in this case, it's our business; it's our people; it's the work that we do; it's the impact that we make; it's the change that we bring. And that's what really is the fire within it.

Peter: [00:17:11] So that explains the title of your book, Never Wear Red: A leadership LOVE story.

Roxanne: [00:17:18] Exactly right! Exactly. It's all about the love thing, and a lot of executives, When I first say this, they go oh come on don't get all warm and fuzzy on it. Oh no. Guys and gals this is the heart of it all. This is the passion that brings success to everything we do. Hence the name of my book, like you said Pete.

Peter: [00:17:40] So what's the Never Wear Red aspect from the title of the book? That was one of my questions on my list. Where did that come from?

Roxanne: [00:17:49] Well all of us grow up with things that we hear from people all the time and we don't realize how they embed themselves in our subconscious minds. And a lot of those things are harmless, seemingly harmless when they are said, but they really create obstacles to our success, and it creates those things we allow to get in our own way. Well everybody who's listening to this probably doesn't know this but I'm a redhead, and a redhead all my life. So when I was growing up, everyone told me, especially all my my women (my mom grandmothers and everybody), said Roxanne never wear red. Never ever ever wear red. It just doesn't work for you. It clashes with your hair. It's ugly. Well that manifested in my brain. Oh my gosh I better be really careful about what I do, what I say, how I act, who I present myself to be so that I'm not ugly and that I'm not clashing with myself. So this becomes not a conscious thought but it kind of sits in your brain. And I will never forget the day that I decided to resign my position in my corporate life and start my business. I got up I walked in to my closet and I had a big mirror on the door, a full length mirror on the door, and I looked at myself and I said "girl it's about time you started wearing red."

Peter: [00:19:17] Hahaha!

Roxanne: [00:19:18] Break down the barriers. Get rid of them. Figure out who you really are, authentically and genuinely, and for crying out loud - go out and be that! Some people aren't going to like it and that's their problem. Don't worry about it. Be who you are. So that's why you know when I'm doing book sales or I'm at an event or whatever people come up and they go oh my god I have my red suit or my red shoes or my red. Yes. Please wear more of that! And I explain what the title means.

Peter: [00:19:47] I'm glad you did because a colleague of mine wears, at every speaking event, a red blazer. And I had to figure out how to tell her you're never supposed to wear red, but I'm glad you clarified that for me so I don't have to tell her that.

Roxanne: [00:20:03] Well the first thing I did after I looked in the mirror and said to myself... I went out that day and I bought myself the most gorgeous pair of red high heels and I wear them for every speaking engagement. [laughs]

Peter: [00:20:15] OK there you go! I have a pair of red high heels too... But it's a whole different story.

Roxanne: [00:20:23] Hahaha! I'm not sure you can share that one.

Peter: [00:20:23] But I'll wear them to the next National Speakers Association Ohio chapter meeting.

Roxanne: [00:20:31] Yeah great. I can't wait to see it. Awesome.

Peter: [00:20:35] My mother's probably listening to this going Oh my god what happened? But moving forward... So let's go back to the these five pieces that that you talked about. If you can to a little bit depth because I think my audience would be a intrigued - because I'm extremely intrigued - Maybe a little bit depth in each one of the five?

Roxanne: [00:20:56] Sure. Absolutely. OK. So Jim and Barry went out and did all this research. They've gone around the world. And there's also another piece of this. Based on the research, they created a 360 degree instrument. It's an assessment. I think most people are familiar with 360's. And it's called the Leadership Practices Inventory, and what this does is measure each one of these five practices. So it sets up... so there's a leader. Let's say you're the CEO of a company and you want to take this 360 degree assessment. So you take a self-assessment and then you arrange for the other people that you want to take it. What they're doing is they're going to go through this 360 and they're going to be six behavioral statements for each one of the five practices. And what they're asking you, when you do this, is how often do you do this? Very rarely, seldom, every now and then, or almost always. So it goes through a range. So there are 60 statements that are constantly being tested to make sure they're still valid, and then you get a rating of the frequency of behavior. We all do all five, all of the time, but we want to understand how we can increase our leadership behaviors based on the statements in each one of these practices to increase our effectiveness as a leader. So each one of the five practices has two statements that make up the 10 commitments of leadership that help guide us in understanding what each of the five practices is. So the first one is model the way. Simply put, Walk your talk.

Peter: [00:22:47] Okay.

Roxanne: [00:22:47] How many times have we had leaders say one thing and do another? So the two commitments for that practice are first to clarify your values by finding your voice, and then affirming shared values. So it's saying out loud "these are my core values. What are yours? What do we share? How are we different?" And then secondly, do what you say you're going to do. Set your example with your own behavior of aligning your actions with your values, and with the shared values that you have with your constituent. The second is to inspire a shared vision. This is so critically important because most people struggle so much with vision statements and really sharing visions and getting other people to buy in. So this is where it's really really important that a vision has inspiration behind it. The two commitments for this are two envision

and talk about the future by really getting in people's imaginations, getting them excited, and ennobling possibilities. Think about how far we can go. There's a famous monk - and I'm sorry... It's Frederick and it's escaping me at the moment - But he said You will never be bigger than the vision that you create for yourself. I'm paraphrasing, but it's true. When you make a vision for something, make it pretty big because otherwise you're going to be held to the limits that you create. And secondly, for envisioning, it's talk with others. Ask them what is their vision. Share yours. And where do you intersect? What is similar? What is different? This is what creates those great relationships with people. The third one is challenge the process, and I'll kind of go quickly over these two, but these are the guidelines. These are the foundations. When you challenge the process, this is a tough one for human beings, it's looking for new ways. It's looking for innovation; ways to improve. You know the old thing if it ain't broke don't fix it? Well if it ain't broke, break it - and see if you can make it better. That's what this is about. Experimenting, taking risks. Enable others to act. When you are enabling others to act, give away your power. Give away your tools/ Because it comes back to you a hundred times over. So you want to foster collaboration, building trust, and you want to strengthen others by helping them to develop their own competencies. Understand what people's strengths are, give them the tools to get even stronger, understand what they need to do that maybe they're not so good at and get good people around them to help. That's how we all succeed. And then finally the last one: encourage the heart. This is my favorite. It's so important. A handshake, a twinkle in your eye, a genuine appreciation and smile, and saying thank you... they go further than just about anything else. It's great to get promotions. We all love to get more money. But I'll tell you what... those day to day encouragements bring people onboard in a way that the loyalty just goes on for ever. So it's just recognizing people for their contribution and then celebrating values, and celebrating victory. Celebrating accomplishments, especially the little ones.

Peter: [00:26:22] OK. Now you've got me even more intrigued. You know this whole thing... I mean the first one: model; walk your talk. There's so many examples of where it has gone wrong, where the CEO has not walked their talk, but they've created a culture that people think, unless you're doing the right thing... I'll just say Wells Fargo, I'll just say Enron, WorldCom, all these companies that leadership... They have those things out there, but they're not walking the talk and they go they go awry. It's very prevalent. But this also helped me understand your business because I also know, in doing my homework, that you are - these words might not be correct - but you are certified in DiSC training, as well as strength finders and the like.

Roxanne: [00:27:14] Right. Right. All of those. Yeah.

Peter: [00:27:16] So I think when you were talking about understanding your audience and giving them support, you have to be able to understand... well these tools help you understand because all leaders are different. All people were made up of different-- we think differently, we act differently. Correct me if I'm wrong, but what I'm seeing is it helps you tailor your programming so they get the biggest bang, or you make the biggest impact, based on their personality style.

Roxanne: [00:27:45] Absolutely. That's exactly right. You know you put that together precisely the way that it's meant to. There are really three very specific things that I do within my business. One is the leadership challenge, and that's primarily cultural development. So I work with organizations and many times go through the entire corporate population to really build a common language of leadership, and to help people really understand what it takes to have that

foundation of leadership and to share, like we were talking about, different countries, different kinds of leadership. But to really get everybody on the same page with that. So that's one thing. And I also do some individual work with that. But I also am an i3 master. i3 is an executive coaching program. It's one-on-one, and it also has a small group component to it for executive teams that want to do strategic leadership and really get into not only leadership development but strategy development. So i3 is I to the power of three. And this goes more to the left brain development of organizations. So the three I's are inspire, ignite, and impact. So each one of these coaching programs, or small group development programs, is built around those three segments. So the inspire piece is getting to that vision - is really getting to the heart and soul of the business, and this is a really deep dive into it. This is where we do the assessments, The Hartman color code, and the Kilmann conflict instrument to really understand the dynamic of the groups that are working together - individual strengths and weaknesses - to build a very clear and easy to understand communication. So we break down silos and then get teams working together. The second segment then goes into ignite. This is where we ignite that inspiration with left brain planning and thinking. It's strategy, goals, short term, long term, all built around driving the success of the vision - of the organization's shared vision of the people within the organization. And then the third I is impact. And this is the action step. This is where we sit down and we lay out the plan. OK what's going to happen when, Who's going to do it, who is accountable and how are we going to stay on track? and what are the red flags we need to recognize if we've got project creep or we're going off the edge here or we hit barriers or an obstacle. So that's executive coaching, and then the executive team coaching in small groups. So that's one and two: the leadership challenge and i3. And then the third thing is my speaking work, and that's ROXTalks.

Peter: [00:31:04] Hahaha!

Roxanne: [00:31:04] So ROXTalks is the whole speaking thing, which as you know is just great fun getting in front of groups and just talking about all this stuff. But again everything is totally customized to each and every client each and every group.

Peter: [00:31:21] I can imagine when you're doing a speaking engagement that, as you are assessing the audience, as you are going through your keynote or whatever, you have to get a lot of satisfaction just because... I bet you see a bit you see that Scooby-Doo kind of look that they're giving you.

Roxanne: [00:31:40] Yeah! I love it. Yes. I've never heard anybody put it quite that way. But that's exactly - it is Scooby Doo.

Peter: [00:31:49] And I'll bet you the big Scooby Doo moment is when you're when you talk about love, and they're thinking what? But after you explain it I'm sure they go ohhhh yeah.

Roxanne: [00:32:05] That's right. And what I do is I save that. One of my keynotes that I do that that focuses in on that - I call it the secret sauce.

Peter: [00:32:15] OK.

Roxanne: [00:32:15] And that's what it is. It's the love piece, and I introduce that by saying OK I'm going to give you the secret now, but I want you all to prepare yourself. It's a four-letter word.

And a lot of people get really offended, and I go on and on about this and build it all up and then you know I spell it out for them and everybody goes Ah ha.

Peter: [00:32:40] Yeah I can imagine you do get a lot of that, as you're laying this out, because I think I've had a couple of Scooby Doo moments just in listening to what you do, and acquainting it to leadership. I also see a lot of parallels, as it relates to improvisation, because you mentioned something about giving people the tools that they need to survive; give them the tools they need to be successful. And that's one of the aspects of Improv: providing support. Throughout this whole conversation, you have a tremendous amount of respect for your audience and they have a tremendous amount of respect for you. There's a lot of listening, a lot of focus, so there's a lot of parallels. But I love the the the aspect that you've added to this... OK so I'm going to say this. It sounds so simple, but we know it's so hard.

Roxanne: [00:33:36] It is. It's so true. Yeah.

Peter: [00:33:39] And my one question is, and I don't know you share a similar frustration, but even when you come into executive coaching there's a stop date. When you go in to do a presentation, there's a stop date. So I look at that as OK so we've had an event, but you're not there. I could tell by your voice you're not there for the event. You're there for the process. And I imagine that is somewhat of a challenge in all of our businesses when we when we work with others in other organizations. When that end day comes, is to keep that process moving forward. Do you have a way that you try to do that?

Roxanne: [00:34:18] I do, yeah. I do. And what you said is just again right on because leadership is is not an event. A lot of people think it is. I'm going to go to this two day training program or whatever it is. Nope. You know what if you're doing that, great, you're getting new knowledge, but that is an event. That's that's not self-development. Self-development is a lifelong goal. It's a lifelong effort. It's really being passionate about being the best that you can be - becoming that truly authentic genuine person that you're meant to be. So when I do with most of my clients is I do put everybody in a SIT file, a stay in touch file.

Peter: [00:34:54] OK. Thank you.

Roxanne: [00:34:55] Yep yep. Stay in touch. And so everyone I work with knows - I get permission of course - and when that's granted they go in my SIT file. And that file is a monthly video blog that goes out. I need to get you on that list, Pete.

Peter: [00:35:14] OK.

Roxanne: [00:35:15] It's going out Monday. We postponed July just to Mondays because the holiday. But it's a video blog. The series that's going out right now is all based in the leadership challenge work. So these are reminders. It's called a minute with Rox, and they are one minute. Pretty much a one minute, no more than you know 65 seconds anyway, that just touch on something that we've talked about, that we've coached about, that we've worked on to remind you to keep that up with others. So I do that for everybody. I also do quarterly check in. As we go along, I'll just drop a note. I will make a phone call. And then I started using the Moodleroom. This is for clients that want to stay connected in more of a formal way, but only now and then. Maybe once a quarter, maybe twice a year. So we will do the Moodleroom, which is where you

can create your own area for this group where you can go in and ask questions and have dialogue and carry on, and I can send them updates and even a little homework now and then. We can share books and articles and so forth. And it's kind of a private little group thing. It's cool. And then the other thing I do is I will go back in, if they would like to do this. I've been doing this with several of my clients right now. I just schedule time to go back in on a quarterly basis, or twice a year, just to have a couple of hours with the folks that I've worked with, whether it be the individual coachees, or the teams that I've worked with, or maybe we do a whole company. You know hour to two hour hey let's go to the big room and have an interaction, let's have some conversation. Let's talk about what's working and let's talk about what isn't, and what you can do.

Peter: [00:37:06] That's great.

Roxanne: [00:37:06] There's all different kinds of ways. Yeah.

Peter: [00:37:08] That's great because I think that's a challenge that a lot of us have. And I love your ideas and I'll just go on the record: I'm probably still one or two of them because I love that.

Roxanne: [00:37:22] Please do.

Peter: [00:37:22] When I talk to audiences, I point them to the podcast. I point them to my newsletter. I point them to my writing, the articles and blogs and stuff, and just challenge them to read it; to kind of stay abreast and just kind of keep that... you know I always said it takes 21 days to create a habit, but I found out that was wrong. It's really 66 days to create a habit.

Roxanne: [00:37:45] [laughs] I would say yes. Yes that would be right.

Peter: [00:37:47] So it takes a little bit longer than we wanted to, but in order... you know 66 days really isn't that long. The hard part of it is maintaining that habit, after that time.

Roxanne: [00:38:00] That's right. And I think a little prodding, and always ask. My suggestion would be that, when you do reach out... you know we all have social media, we all have the blogs and whatever we're doing to keep people engaged, but they have to generate the energy and the concentration and the priority to do that. And in our world today, we're just inundated every single minute, every single day, from so many different directions. Here's here's my suggestion, in two parts. First, take time every single day to turn off the noise. Go quiet. It's so important to give your brain a rest from this. You're overworking that computer inside your head right. Silence, And just going quiet and just allowing yourself to stop for a moment and just be grateful. Be thankful. Be thoughtful. Whatever it may be. When you go back to it, the second thing I would suggest you do is, when when you're reaching out, make an ask every single time. Almost everything that I do - I can't say it's everything - but almost everything I do, especially in my little blogs that I do my written blogs that go out, the last sentence is always a question.

Peter: [00:39:19] Hm.

Roxanne: [00:39:19] It's always a question. I make a statement. I share a view or an experience or whatever, and it always has to do with self-development or leadership in one way or another.

And then my last sentence is always. So what are you doing today to make more of an impact on the world? What will you do today? Write it down.

Peter: [00:39:39] I love that, and I'll just do a quick rewind here because, as you said, you have to want to do this. You know it's an individual thing, and to put it into your words: you got to love this to do this. You have to put your heart into it, you get to put the passion into it, which is a driving force. And if you don't have that passion, you don't have the drive, you don't have that love... you're not going to make headway. You're not going to get better. You are you going to be stuck in that rut. So I love that aspect of it. And you know you can take the horse to water but you can't make him drink.

Roxanne: [00:40:15] That's exactly right. That's exactly right. To find out what the horse likes to drink and then put it out there and he'll find it himself.

Peter: [00:40:23] Well that is always up to a whole world of opportunities now.

Roxanne: [00:40:30] There you go! [laughs]

Peter: [00:40:33] And when we're done I am going to subscribe to your newsletter because I want to see the stuff that you're writing and the stuff that you're doing. How can people find you?

Roxanne: [00:40:45] Well in two ways. The Web site is www.ProLaureate.com They can go there. They can also go to LinkedIn. And I have a professional Facebook page and all that kind of stuff. And if they want to reach out to me directly, the best way to do that is through email really. And the best email for that would be Roxanne @ ProLaureate dot com.

Peter: [00:41:23] Simple enough. Lots of social media. I love your web site, and I love how you use the power of three. There's a lot of threes in everything that you do. The i3 and on your Web site it's inspire, emerge, transform. You're a pro at the 3s.

Roxanne: [00:41:47] Well I'll tell you why: I learned many many years ago the power of three. People, the human brain, a lot of my trade of occasions and training are based in behavioral psychology. I don't have any big letters or numbers after my name, but that is just fascinating stuff to me. It's it's been a part of my development and my leadership stuff. But the power of three - think of headlines day in the news. They usually will mention that the top three leading headlines. Three leaf clovers are an Irish tradition based on the Trinity. 3. Mind body spirit. All of these things come in threes and the human brain is attracted to that. It loves seeing three things. It's easy to remember. By the way, just as a aside, if you're doing a presentation of any kind... If you can chunk it into three main areas of conversation - start with you know topics, go through details, and then wrap up with key points - Your audience will remember it better. The power of three is amazing. So everything just about that I do has some sort of that kind of format to it. Even my speaking. When I put a keynote together, I'm doing workshops and seminars, It's usually you know what guys? I'd like to talk to you about three things today, and here they are. One two three. Let's start with one.

Peter: [00:43:17] Yeah I do that too. I start a little executive summary. And then I go boom boom boom. I mean I've done stand up my day, and I know the power of three helps with the

misdirection and helps with the joke. And I start thinking you have three bean salad, you have the three stages, a stop light has three three colors.

Roxanne: [00:43:37] [laughs] Exactly!

Peter: [00:43:37] Like Goldilocks and the three bears.

Roxanne: [00:43:41] Now you got it.

Peter: [00:43:41] The Nina, the Pinta, and the Santamaria. I mean there's threes everywhere.

Roxanne: [00:43:46] Yeah!

Peter: [00:43:47] And because it's easy to remember, and when I even thought I go quit thinking-- I was working with a client and they had 12 things on their core principles within their organization, and I went can we just find out what your top three are, focus on those, and we'll keep these others out there. But your people aren't going to remember all 12, and they've had this up there for about 10 years and then I took the liberty of proposing - I didn't check with the client beforehand - and they actually took me up on it. And we spent some time figuring out what the top three were, and they were making changes along those lines. So yes there is a lot to be to be said about the power of threes.

Roxanne: [00:44:29] Outstanding. Love it.

Peter: [00:44:31] Well Roxanne I can't thank you enough. I've learned a tremendous amount from our conversation and I know my audience will take away a lot of... you've left so many nuggets out there for them to harvest and apply, and I would suggest to my audience to find Roxanne on the web. Connect with her and learn more about how she could help you. So thank you so very much for your time.

Roxanne: [00:45:00] Thank you. This has been just a great time. I love chatting with you and thanks again. Thank you so much. Been a real privilege and honor. I appreciate it.

Peter: [00:45:08] Oh you're more than welcome.

Peter: [00:45:13] I would like to thank again Roxanne for being a guest today and sharing her insights into leadership and how we can become stronger leaders. You can find Roxanne's book, *Never Wear Red: A Leadership Love Story*, on Amazon.com. I'd like to talk about Listen, Learn, and Earn. I have partnered with the Maryland Association of CPAs and the Business Learning Institute to bring [an exciting new learning opportunity for accounting professionals to earn CPE credits](#). You can earn up to one CPE credit for each completed podcast episode purchased for only \$29 through the American Association of CPAs and the Business Learning Institute [self-study website](#). The podcast episodes are mobile friendly. Open your browser on your smartphone, tablet, or computer, Go to the MACPA and BLI self-study account, and listen to an episode. Take the review and final exam while you're working out or after listening to an episode on your commute to and from work - It's that easy! While all Improv is no Joke podcasts are available on my website, only those purchased through the MACPA and BLI self-study Web site are eligible for CPE credit. You can get detailed instructions by visiting my website at

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