Peter Margaritis: Hey, welcome back everybody. So, I get a lot of requests from podcast brokers or other folks to be guests on my show, and I sift through these. And I received an email from one of my listeners, which always raises my eyebrows, like, okay, it's not my Mom. So there's actually somebody other than my mom who's listening to this. And I read this gentleman's introduction to me and I said, I gotta have this guy on my show. So first and foremost, Don. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to be part of my podcast and thank you for being a listener.

Don Craig: Oh, thanks. It's a true pleasure to be here. It's something I've been waiting…

hoping to get a chance to do. Hoping I had a something compelling to talk to you about that one day I could join you on this. I'm very excited and I get a chance to do it on Zoom and actually see you, so this is nice.

Peter Margaritis: This is nice. And before we get into some of the details. As I was doing some research on you, I went to your LinkedIn profile. And when you're talking about yourself, there was a sentences as key strengths and communication and public speaking. Expand the ability to effectively deliver key messages when doing presentations or leading training. I went, I need to look that up. He's the CFO. He has his credentials from Canada. You’re Canadian. You don’t see that very often, a CPA or CMA or Canadian or US and that also intrigued me about you. So, I had to have you on my podcast. So, I do know a little bit about you. Let's go back to January of this year. Seems like it was like yesterday, but then again it seems like it was five years ago. So, what were you doing around January of this year?

Don Craig: Wow, yeah. I do feel like I was five years younger at that point. Actually, if I can advance it. I'll tell you what I was doing in February. January was pretty boring. January was a typical January in Boston. So, we were probably just complaining about the weather and things like that. But in February, I actually went to Ethiopia. And the reason I did that was, my sister's 50th birthday, and she goes there. Gosh, probably a dozen times doing mission work, and I thought well for 50th birthday. Best gift I can give her, so I'll go join her and help her and see what she does there. And so I was actually working in Addis Ababa and having, you know, just a truly life changing experience, and working with various missions that work with street kids. Bringing street kids into places where they can be safe and then transitioned into just whether it's families or reunited with families, and just was incredibly humbling.

Don Craig: And as a runner. I also run. I also got to do some runs in Ethiopia with Ethiopians. So, that was true bucket list type of thing. And it did allow me that chances to kind of reflect a little bit of, okay…What do I do in life, where do I add value, do I have meaning? It was, it was kind of one of those strange and really valuable times. And so we spent nine days there. And then I came back. And one of the things that I got when I came back was a call from a headhunter, out of the blue. Who's said, ‘Would you be interested in this role with this company. It's a CFO role?’ And I, you know, said okay. They said send me a resume, and like I don't have a resume. I haven’t had to apply for a job in 20 years. So anyway, they went on to the same LinkedIn profile that you saw. Maybe was that same line that you read that they liked. I'm not sure. But started meeting with this company called Haley & Aldrich. And in the same firm. So it was with a company called Stantec which 20,000 person engineering firm that took me from Canada to the US. And I spent about 15 years there, and worked my way up to senior vice president of finance for our North American operations. So, I was leading a team of 390 people in the finance group. Supporting $3.6 billion of revenue as an organization. And through talking with this headhunter and then with the people at this other company, I got intrigued by the idea of reflecting back to my time in Ethiopia. Where can I add more value? Have I become a little bit complacent in various parts of my life. And that's when I thought, well, maybe you should try this. Maybe I should give this a shot. And I think I'll regret it in five years. And that's kind of a key thing. What do you think you might regret down the road? And so, yeah. On March. So, we went into lockdown in Boston. On March 24 or so. And March 28 I agreed to accept their offer.

Don Craig: With a caveat that I would start June 1st. And, you know, so I had that eight so weeks to transition, and to work through that. And, you know, it was interesting because it's one of those things I was thinking of your, you know, there’s just a couple of points there is, you know, opportunities are going to arise, even in the midst of chaos.

Peter Margaritis: Right.

Don Craig: But one of the things I was thinking of was one of the improv activities that you actually do. The one about the ‘Yes and…” or the ‘No because.’ And I was really pondering that of, okay, I could say no to this because it's an absolutely crap time of a world right now to be doing something. And, you know, because I might not be the right guy for this and I really tried hard to change that into…Yes, and this could be really exciting. And yes, this could reenergize me. And yes, I could maybe influenced some more different people. Maybe I had, you know, I've kind of did that with the team I had at Stantec. Maybe it's time to try it with the team here at Haley and Aldrich. And so that was kind of a, you know, an interesting way to look at it. But the question was, was this courageous or crazy?

Peter Margaritis: Is the jury's still out?

Don Craig: The jury’s still out. I don't think the jury will be fully in for four or five years, but I'm going with courageous for now. But people were asking me, half the people would say, You're crazy. And half the people would say that's kind of a courageous thing to do.

Peter Margaritis: Changing jobs in the middle of a pandemic. Yeah, yeah. In Boston, and your thick Boston accent just…

Don Craig: Permeates through here. It's a combo of the Canadian accent and the Boston accent. So we kind of do, Havard, eh? I'm not sure. I still don't get the accent here.

Peter Margaritis: My wife's from Wooster. Yeah. What's the we haven't been there about a year with everything. But if she goes up and spends three days that she's talking ‘parkin’ the car in the yard’ when she gets home.

Don Craig: I haven't quite figured out how it went, that the R’s move to the end, and we've tried to resist it. There was a day, my daughter came to me and said, Dad, ‘I have a great idear.’ I said no you don't.

Peter Margaritis: Yeah, I don't know how the r’s move to the end either because I hear when I early on when I was in the banking business my administrative assistant from the upper east coast would put an R at the end of Atlanta. Atlantar. Just, No. There’s not an R at the end of that at all.

Don Craig: Just ended at A. You can do that. That's fine.

Peter Margaritis: That’s the Canadian way.

Don Craig: That’s the Candian way, end in A.

Peter Margaritis: So. my first question. So, you put in your notice. You're there for eight weeks in the middle of this pandemic. All the while, are you, do you have your toe in over here at Haley & Aldrich, or is it completely separate at that point?

Don Craig: You know, between you and me and your listeners. Yeah, there was a toe in there. I really wanted to use the opportunity because it was so much time. That I felt it was good to get to know the organization. And frankly because, you know, I was saving time that I would have normally been commuting or traveling somewhere. Like, I think I've got some capacity to do this, and I think that was, you know, really helpful. I know it's not always doable when you go through a career transition. But I really feel like getting just that chance to create a few contacts, let people know who you are, and get through some of that initial learning was really helpful so that when I hit the ground… Well, hit the zoom calls on June 1st.

Don Craig: You know that I could start this speak the same language. I could transition the acronyms. You know, I no longer was saying whip, I was saying nbr and those kind of things.

And so I really do feel that that was helpful at the same point, I was able to spend the time diligently transitioning my old role. And I feel as finance leaders, it's really critical, you know that you don't want to burn bridges and when you've been with an organization, a long time and you care about it. You really feel that need to leave it in a good place. So, I was very diligent around how I left and I told the CFO that you know I was going to do it in a way that when I left nobody would notice. And hopefully I managed to do that there. So, it was a good balance.

Peter Margaritis: Okay, So. When this pandemic hit and Boston shut down. Massachusetts shut down. What was the biggest challenge you had in your role at that point in time, other than trying to maintain sanity?

Don Craig: I think there were two. One is, you know, transitioning a team, you know, again, going back to Stantec. I was had a team of 390 of which 388 didn't used to work from home. So, within three, like because my team was around North America, but pretty much when Boston shut down all of my team was starting to work from home. So that was really the biggest transition is what's going to happen when all these people are just working from home or they can just be sitting in their pajamas all day. Yeah, I started just think worrying about everything from their health to their sanity to their productivity. And, you know, so I think that was just the biggest challenges. Just that concern of how would people react to this. And I was really impressed, and you may have seen this, I was really impressed with how well people have done through this. How they've been able to respond to it, how they've been able to be productive and take advantage of the time. For me at work the other way. I found I was actually working longer because I could no longer delineate work from home. And it really took some time to realize that I had to try and figure out a way to do that, to block that off. So, that was probably the big challenge. And I think just the, you know, suddenly things just stop. Things that you had planned to do with work had stopped. And how do you recreate those. And I think companies are really still trying to figure that out.

Peter Margaritis: Yeah, I believe they are. As people keep saying. So, you know, we went into a recession. We kind of know about the timeframe that might come out of that. We knew that. What we didn't know during 911. That was an event that sparked a lot of things, but we kind of had an idea where this might get back to some normal. We don’t have that idea right down. This is a lot of people saying that the coming, coming to realize this isn't a two week event. This is a two month event. This could…this more than likely, from what I'm hearing from the experts, we’re going to be in 2021. It's some point before, maybe we get back to what it was before. But if they can about your 388 people working from home. My one question is, because I think of engineers. I think I'm with the big screens and they're doing the… Did you have to go out and purchase laptops for everybody, as a company, so they can work remotely?

Don Craig: There was some of that. We definitely did have to make some quick actions to be able to facilitate people to work from home. The craziest thing I remember both seeing and hearing was most people, okay. They had a laptop. Great. But they didn't have, you know, multiple monitors, enough cameras. So, I remember being in the Boston office during one of the last days, and just this seeing people wheeling the monitors on chairs out to their cars they transition it. So, yeah yeah, you're dealing with monitor. You're dealing with docking stations. Dealing with cameras. Dealing with these microphones that we have. And yeah, that takes a significant, you know, dollar wise is not a massive investment but just the time. And then you got to worry about how people use it. Because you've been on the infamous Zoom or Skype or Teams calls where people don't know where the mute button is. They should have had it on and maybe sometimes they shouldn't have had on. So yeah, so you have to make those things. Now I'm with you in terms of the duration of this. And, what I find interesting is, yeah, that people are kind of adapting to it and they're actually enjoying it more or less. I mean, unless you have young kids. I'm fortunate that I don't have the, you know, the two and four year olds running around, as if this would have happened 12 years ago.

Don Craig: But you know, I think the good thing if it's if there's a positive of this whole thing. It's that the tools are available today. If this would have happened in go all the way back to, you know, 2001 we had 911, you know, the tools weren't there to try and do this. So now it is and I think people are able to learn the tools quickly and realize how that can engage with people. So there's, it's different relationship different engagement going on. And that's, you know, one of the interesting challenges of starting with something new is I have yet to meet the person who hired me the CEO, Haley & Aldrich, so he keeps on quipping that though he hired a CFO virtually and we've established a relationship. Unfortunately, he thinks I'm two feet four inches tall because we will never meet on Skype.

Don Craig: But one day we'll meet, and you have had to meet my whole team. I've now gone from a team of 390 to a team of 33. And I've started to meet them all virtually and, you know, we were starting to establish some of that. And I've heard of companies doing cool things like, you know, Zoom happy hours and just things like that. Zoom coffee break. Zoom, you know, watercooler talks and sorry to keep using Zoom. I don't they sponsor the podcast or not, but

I think those are new norms that people are going to come up with that enable us to get through 2021. Hopefully one piece.

Peter Margaritis: It’s something interesting I’ve have been hearing from organizations from firms to even those in business. Okay, to your point, I thought, everybody's gonna be home in their slippers, the pajamas, eating bon bons, watching Ellen and not being productive.

But they have found themselves realizing my people might be even more productive now than they were where they are in the office. So, do I need this overhead? Do I need this real estate footprint that can we mirror what we're doing now when we get back to that point? Can I shed some of this overhead and do something else with it? I think that's a really interesting conversation that's happening. But on the other side, there's companies out there that need their people in house. But for at least for maybe a short period of time or even sometimes even act that, they'll need more room because they might not want to be even sitting that close to each other. Maybe we don't need six feet, but let people spread out a little bit more, and then might need more commercial real estate. So, it in 2022-23, it'll be interesting with the commercial real estate markets doing and companies like yourself and professional service firms. I mean, people can work from home. We don't have to be gathered in one space.

Don Craig: Yeah, it is interesting. And I've heard that a lot, and I'm on the fence. I'll be honest with this. So, you know we talked about even the space that Haley & Aldrich has, and start looking at that. And, the natural instinct that comes up is, yeah, we should only need half the space going forward because people can, you know, work from home or hotel or whatever. And I, and I do see that. I guess the part that I'll be interested to see is, do people still need that connection? Do people still need to see each other face to face? To walk down the hall and have those ad hoc conversations and establish the relationships where I get to know you know your family because there's a picture of, you know, somebody you know on your desk. And, I asked a question about that. And I guess I'm not old school in many ways at all. I consider myself to be younger than I am, but I just tend to think that people will want that. And I think have to find a way to accommodate it. So I'm not in a rush to slash office space or anything like that. One just the economic implications of that I'm a little bit worried about. But, but, too, is I think we just need to take some time, because I don't think we're going to see that kind of change happens so quickly, but it does change the dynamics. And I do know some people on my team are adamant of maybe it's just fear right now, but they don't want to go back to working in an office with 50 people in on the floor.

Peter Margaritis: Right, and I agree with you on the thing that's missing is a true networking, a true human interaction. And I think I, I think it might turn into more of a blended type of environment because there's some folks in our profession, who really don't want to don't like people. Who like the numbers and the spreadsheets and stuff and don't really want to have that interaction, and there's others who do. So, it might be this interesting blend that occurs and evolves over time. But let me ask you this question. What challenges do you see moving forward?

Don Craig: Like you mean with staffing and with…

Peter Margaritis: Well, yeah. From the staffing perspective Okay, what new challenges do you see moving forward?

Don Craig: I see a couple. That's a great question. I think that just three real ones. If you think about your role as, you know, leader of people. One is to hire the right people. So how does that change the hiring, and I think that is a, you know, a new challenge. Yes, I got hired remotely so I'm going to learn a lot about that. But, you know, being able to understand fit and all that, that you get from an in person interview, etc. So, hiring is going to be a key one. Now that also creates interesting opportunities where maybe that person doesn't have to be, you know, based in Boston. I could go find the person out there in Kentucky. The second one is around how do you manage people. So how do you really know what they're doing all day if you can't, you know, travel to see them, etc. So, working on establishing that rhythm of knowing what people are doing and are they working on the things you want to do. It's really going to be critical on how you are communicating expectations and getting that feedback from people.

Don Craig: And then, you know, I think the third one is just how do you establish the priorities and progress as a team. We're working on right now and implementation of a new ERP at Haley & Aldrich. And normally, you would have, you know, 50 people in a room doing user training, this is all going to be virtual, and this is new for the vendor as well. But how do we establish and coordinate that, when everybody's working from home, everybody's doing it. And I don't know if you know it's different to be in a six hour training room live and going through something. Six hours Teams call it going through training is a lot different. So I think those are the big challenges we're going to have.

Peter Margaritis: Yeah, I agree. And as you were saying that my mind went to the way I see the world of applied improvisation as the foundation of respect, trust and support. Because you mean, how do I trust that you're doing supposed to be doing because I don't have my eyes on you.

Peter Margaritis: I do I tell the story. When I first got my first job, as my father said real job, because Greek and restaurants, but working in an office and working in a bank. He said, well, you get there before you boss gets there. You go to the bathroom, you pick up a file and you walk with it and you be the last one out, or at least after your boss, so they see that visibility. And now we don't have that. So it really becomes setting those expectations holding people accountable will help build that that trust level. And it will also determine areas that we need to focus on and people need to focus on to help figure out what's getting in the way. They may have young children at home. So how do you multitask? Oh, excuse me, there's no such thing. Especially when it comes to the deep work. The hard work that we need to do. And I think that's all there as well as I had to flip one of my presentations. And we couldn't find I wanted it was an eight hour I wanted to put it into pieces on two different days. We couldn't make it work. So I had to do the full eight hours on Zoom to 15 people. And I've been doing this for a long time, and I just went, I could keep them engaged. I know the tools and stuff to keep them engaged. Send them to a breakout room. Have them do chat. Have them do all of this other stuff. Get the conversation going. But because I've been doing this for five years. But those were just now getting into this and have no idea. That's where another challenges is. How they keep your team engaged, even for two hour training. Four hour training. And you know what ERP stands for, don't you?

Don Craig: What?

Peter Margaritis: Entities reoccurring problem. Because I've never seen an ERP system go smoothly from the get go.

Don Craig: Yeah, yeah. And yeah, this is the first time I'm doing one virtually. I hate using that term virtua.l I think between that and social distancing those two terms I can't wait to unload in 2022. But your point around the improv is what really works in improv is that immediate feedback, whether that's a laugh or a groan or applause or booing, whatever it might be. And it's hard to replicate that in your Teams and in doing presentations. So yeah, when I've been doing presentations now. And everybody's on mute. So even if you say something you're not getting a response. And I'm finding that really challenging because that's part of the key part of my engagement is how do I connect with people. And how do I get them to respond to what I want them to hear. And that absence, sometimes you get the person takes off mute.. and haha. But that's just not as effective. So I'm hoping that we'll learn to figure out ways to do that. I'm going to be interested to learn from people like you on, you know, how do you, how can you make that work a little better? How can you adapt that style in the absence of that normal feedback?

Peter Margaritis: Well, I was trained and I started years ago, many years ago, doing stand up. And when I would tell a joke, early on, it was crickets. So I'm kind of used to that. So what I do is, especially if it's a good joke that I have used in the past that got a laugh, and I know you guys are on mute, you're laughing hysterically inside. Because we tend to be introverts. You're just all laughing right here inside and just kind of, you know, just kind of playing with it. And just viewing, even though they're there on Zoom or Cisco WebEx or GoToMeeting, if you can keep them engaged through your tone, through humor, through how you structure your, your slides. If you use it them. They'll pay attention at least 80% of the time. It's just getting them to focus that 20% that will probably be the challenge for bit, especially as it relates to Virtual Training.

Don Craig: Absolutely. And I'll be very curious to get the lessons out of this over the next little while, and I think the main thing that we're trying to apply is what you were mentioning earlier just, okay, how do we break things up in a logical way so that people can take something digest it. And then be able to provide some feedback at a later point, you know, the next day or whatever. So we'll work that and joys of working from home, you hear my dog, so my apologies.

Peter Margaritis: No, no. What, what type of dog?

Don Craig: That is our mini golden doodle.

Peter Margaritis: Mini golden doodle.

Don Craig: Many golden doodle Tucker. So yeah, He's a cute for ball but if there's a UPS guy, a male person, random dog. That's what will happen so my apologies on that but this is what happens now.

Peter Margaritis: No worries. I have a chocolate lab and a black lab and same thing. UPS, anybody walks by, they think they see somebody walking by, they'll start barking. I know it's UPS or FedEx if the barking gets louder and louder, louder. Okay, that's who that is, just not some random person walking down the street or anything like that. So, in thinking about all of this and moving forward. I mean, you're two months into this new job. Into this, we’ll call it an experiment.

Don Craig: Okay. I like that.

Peter Margaritis: But, but it sounds like that you've assimilated rather well. I love the approach that you took. Let me get into and understand their language. Because you used WEP, you use another acronym that they use. And that's always a big challenge is every organization has a different language. Different acronyms. I did some work for target construction a couple years ago, and I try to understand their language. I say, can you see me a list of acronyms that you guys have? Eight pages, oh eight pages and some of them were STD. And I didn't want to ask. Oh, there were some interesting ones. And I turned it with some help from comedic friends we turn that into some humor, but it's you kind of had the curve by not having one look commute by having that that somebody free time that you could start networking your way into the organization to have that to understand their language. So when you get there, you're already ahead of the game versus just trying to get ramped up.

Don Craig: Yeah, I think, I think especially when you're at this level. I think it's just important that you're demonstrating the willingness and the commitment to what you've signed up for. And that's really what I was trying to do with it is…And you know it's tough. Here you're trying to balance two things there, but I just felt, you know, organizations are so different, even though you're in the same industry. You do see that there are those differences, especially when you're going from, you know, 22,000 people to 650. So I can't do the math right now, whatever that is. It’s 1/15th the size, and somebody's going to correct me on that. But I also have to think about that, like, how do I transition? You know, I'm used to thinking, okay, when this happens, it goes to this department and four people there will take care of it. Well, now when I come on over here, I gotta think when that happens, it's actually going to be.. hmm that's going to be me that’s going to be taking that. So I need to be prepared for that right from the start. Now, you know, I will say, I've been blessed with, you know, the outgoing CFO is retiring, but he's sticking around to the end of the year to lead this ERP integration and to hold my hand. Um, so that's been great. And so that gives me a lot of comfort. But yeah, it's been, it has been a very interesting two months. I'd say the most interesting or the weirdest part of it. Let me say the weirdest part, and just to tie up the pandemic thing, is in my last day at Stantec work until about 5:30 that day. My wife thought I was crazy your last day and you're working to 5:30.

Don Craig: I took a computer and I logged off and I moved it over to the left. And I took a computer out of the box on Monday morning off the right and I put it on the same spot. And I logged on as Haley & Aldrich. And it was, you know, there wasn't the goodbye beers. There wasn't the, you know, the slap on the backs and don't let the door hit you kind of thing. And then, there wasn't the big welcome Don, you know, into the office and spend an hour shaking people's hands. Can you remember shaking hands? I haven't shaken a hand in months. So yeah, so, you know, those things were different, but all I can suggest you know for people might be listening because I know this hasn't been, you know, I'm not unique in this. Is, you know, crisis sometimes creates different opportunities and it's, you know, I think you still got to take advantage of those and look at those even during these times. It is strange, it is difficult. I'd like it to be different. But you got to work within the box that you have and as accountants, we tend to do that really well. So, you know, I think I feel great about the decision because I think in all this. It's actually given me this new purpose in this new energy that maybe I wouldn't have had if I just would have been staying with my existing role and doing good work at Stantec. But I think this has been helpful for my mental state during this. So again, if you can find something during this that changes you, excites you. I'd really encourage people to do that.

Peter Margaritis: Absolutely. There's always a silver lining out there, and innovation and creativity have been…people have gotten very creative with something they've seen things through a brighter lens and so okay well let's accept this fact. How can we make it better? What can we do? And I've been working on my business and my speaking businesses down considerably. But I haven't been in an airplane since January, and I don't plan on being in an airplane until maybe late 2021, but I'm okay with this. I think the biggest challenge that we're having is my wife is seeing a lot more of me than she ever has over the last 10 plus years because I'm home more often than not. And I tease her. I say, “you're not go to Home Depot today for shovel, are you?” She says, “No but if you asked me one more time, I'm going to.” And through us that there's a lot of things that we can innovate and if you just take that approach that, ‘Yes, and…’ what can we do with it, versus I can't do this. Because some reason. You mentioned earlier that you were a runner or have you always been a runner?

Don Craig: No, so you know, first of all, I was the I was the fat geeky kid growing up. So, the only sport I did in Canada growing up, I was actually really good at it, was curling.

Peter Margaritis: Really?

Don Craig: If you ever need a curling lessons. I'm your guy.

Peter Margaritis: Okay.

Don Craig: It's used to be the only sport where you could bring your drink on the ice. But anyway. So, but no, when I moved to… I didn't run and then I moved to Boston and people run here. There's a little event that goes on. So I kind of got the bug when I got here, and I turned 40 and when I moved her. And I thought well maybe I should start running. A guy I know he got me into it. I’ll blame him, and yeah, just started almost like Forrest Gump. Like well, I just started run. And I started doing, you know, half marathons and just started liking that and just started liking that. When I travel normally in normal world, I would travel a fair bit so it's the easiest thing to do when you go to a different cities, just throwing your runners and go, go for a run. So yes, that's when I started was really here and I've never been an athlete or anything like that have just been me, average middle aged guy.

Peter Margaritis: So you've been running, you said half marathons and you've run the Boston Marathon.

Don Craig: I did. So I've actually ran it twice. So , ss part of, you know, you remember the bombings happened obviously in 2013. And living here that had a big impact on me. So, I actually got into the lottery in New York City. And in 2013 I thought I'll run that And then I finished it across the finish line said never doing that again. Absolutely. Never. But then I got thinking is there was so much excitement about people was wanting to restart the marathon that I thought, I wonder if I could run the Boston Marathon. And so I put my head down and set a goal. And this, this is something I like to do, and I do it in work and do it in life is… Okay, well I'll set a goal. So remember, you know, that the post-it note, if I wanted to get the top mark in Canada. So this time I wrote the time down, 322. That was gonna be my finish time. I need to 325 to qualify. And so I went to…you'll never guess this, of all places I decided I was going to run it in Fargo.

Peter Margaritis: There you go. If there's a place to run a marathon, Fargo is the place.

Don Craig: Fargo. What is the flattest place I could think of to run a marathon. So anyway, I did it. Fargo. And so the coolest thing was running the marathon, and I turned down the last street. I think it's Broadway in Fargo. And 200 yards ahead is the finish line. And as I got closer the clock switch from 321 the 322. And I finished in 323:30 so I qualified. And I ran it in 2015. I ran Boston in 2015, the worst weather in 10 years. So. we'll fast forward a bit here. I was done with marathons. Why would I ever do that again? Then I read a newspaper article saying that the 2018 Boston Marathon was going to be on April 16, my 50th birthday. So I thought, what better way to celebrate your 50th birthday then run 26.2 Miles. Yeah, everybody likes to do that. So, I trained and I qualified again in Houston, flat place. Anyway, so I got to run it in 2018. Unfortunately, I was injured in the training so April 16 2018 comes up everybody's really excited for me to run the Boston Marathon on my 50th birthday. And wake up it’s the worst weather in the marathon's history. 25 to 40 mile an hour headwinds. It felt like 3 Celsius. That's my Canadian. Sorry. 33 Fahrenheit. And pouring rain. And it was the first time ever, I was in the starting corral, and the sense of dread. So I no longer had the visualization. This is when I realized how important this is. I couldn't visualize all I could think of was the dread of the only way out of this is to run 26.2 miles to Boylston And so I had a great time. I had bibs on my shirts that said it was my 50th birthday. So thousands of people saying to me and gave me kudos. But I was dying. And I hit mile, just before mile 17, I saw my family and I still couldn't believe that I said it. But I said, you know, I'm done. Let's go celebrate. And for the first time ever walked off a race course, and I was like that was a strange thing to do. So 100 days later I got better and I trained. And I went to that exact same spot, and I started from there. And I finished the last 9.7 miles of the marathon. And so I think my time of 100 days, three hours and 45 minutes makes me the slowest Boston Marathon finisher ever. Unofficially unofficially.

Peter Margaritis: That’s a great story. You should find out from Guinness for a world record. But I love the determination, I mean. So was it a hamstring injury? Was it your back?

Don Craig: Ah, no, it was, it was like it was Achilles. Achilles and then just, you know, had it been a nice day. I probably could have just walked it and I just would have been fine but in those conditions like…’Oh my gosh, I can't be out here. I don't want to be out here for two more hours limping my way through.’ Well, so yeah, so it's, you know, it was one of the happiest days and one of the saddest days, all in one. But, you know ,it's you just gotta kind of to our, our discussions, how you just got to sometimes roll with what you've got, and uou know, that was another one of those Yes, Yes and, and No because, and I still kind of came off saying, you know, when I did not finish it was…Yes, and I get to now go celebrate, and I'll be healthy and I'll finish this again at another time.

Peter Margaritis: That is the beauty of improv because it's really a failure is held at bay, and it's okay, especially if you're injured and if you need to come off the course. But I love the fact that you got did all that. But then came back from that spot finish albeit in 100 days. But you weren't gonna let that go. That was a determination. And you weren't just gonna say, ‘Okay well that's it.’

Don Craig: Yep. Yeah, the greatest part was when I finished that Sunday after Sunday morning

there at the Boston Marathon Finish line and there were these tourists from, I can't remember where I don't want to guess what country, but they saw me cross the finish line. And so they thought it was something so they started cheering. So instead of a million people, I had four nice people from Scandinavia, or something. But it was, it was just as good. I liked it.

Peter Margaritis: It was an intimate setting.

Don Craig: There's an intimate setting, an intimate marathon that time. Yeah, so no. So yes, I was. That was fun.

Peter Margaritis: Well, Don, I have to thank you. I've enjoyed this conversation. I love your approach, your attitude, your thought process. When this all gets past, we have to meet at some point time face to face without Zoom. I meet a lot of people, and for the first time when I meet somebody for the first time this thought goes through my head, I have to follow through. I can see drinking bourbon with you. Sipping on a nice Kentucky bourbon. Laughing and telling stories.

Don Craig: I can't wait. No, I love your approach again when I saw you speaking in Denver in June, you know, we've gone through presentations about Capitalizing lease payments or something like that. And then you came in and you were, you know, one of the speakers in the afternoon and I just immediately thought, oh, this this resonates with me. This guy gets me and

I was so happy walking out of there and having a chance to listen to you. And it just you know re energize me a little bit in terms of this is what you can bring in the improv angle and just the comedic angle. I think it's critical for finance people to see have that, you know, we can have such an influence on organizations. But to do it, you have to do it in a way that will connect and and I think humor is the thing that binds all of us, so you know, the more we can do that, the more we can understand how we bring that, the more will be effective and it's worked for me, it's obviously worked for you. And, you know, I'm eager to see what I can do with it now in a in a CFO role, hopefully CFO is Chief Funny Officer. I don't know. I'll figure out something.

Peter Margaritis: Please make it Chief Funny Officer. Don't make its CFNOs.

Don Craig: Definitely will not do that. But thank you for having me on. This has been a true treat for me. I appreciate and thank you for putting me a contact with you. I've enjoyed the conversation loved meeting you and I can't wait to do it again.