

S5E25: Lon Graham

SPEAKERS

Peter Margaritis, Lon Graham

Peter Margaritis

Hey, welcome back, everybody. Man, I'm really excited for my guest today. I've known him for a few years. Met him at a Virginia NSA chapter meeting, I was delivering content on improv, and he actually paid attention. He was awake, which I was surprised. Most everyone had taken a nap, but that's beside the point. So, first and foremost, Lon, thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to spend some time with me on my podcast.

Lon Graham

Looking forward to it. It's always great to see you, so thanks for having me.

Peter Margaritis

Oh, you're more than welcome, and I'm gonna start off with a banger, man. I have told you I am a salesperson that struggles at times. Why is sales so hard? It's easy for some, but most people I talked with, they have a real struggle with it. Why is that?

Lon Graham

Well, sales is hard, and I'll start there's two statistics that prove what you just said. That have resonated with me, and these two statistics are pretty consistent over the last 10 plus years. And the first one is, is that sales has the highest turnover of any profession. To prove your point, a third of the sales profession leave sales every year, and that's 10 points higher than any other profession. So, a third of the sales force leaves sales every year. The second statistic that really resonates with me even more, and part of what contributes to sales being so hard is this. The average tenure of a sales professional is a year and a half. Now, you're an accountant, you're a math guy, so you understand averages and numbers and all those things. So, if you just look at it in terms of a year and a half, the take that, and let's take 10 people and we'll put them in a room. And so, all 10 people don't have a year and a half of sales experience. What you've got is you probably have one person who's got five or more years of sales experience. Which means the other nine have less than a year of sales experience. The reason that matters is this, and this is how I think about it, if you've got nine people out of ten that have less than a year of sales experience, that means that those people maybe talk to a client once and don't come back. Well, your clients not going to be really interested in talking to you the first time because they don't know if you're coming back so why are they going to waste any time with you? And the person that you replaced probably came once. So, why, I mean, there's this history in this trend. So, the hard thing about sales is getting a getting your client to engage with you and getting their attention. What that means is sales is hard. And those two statistics I think, for me resonate the most to reinforce what you said. And I'll use that to lead into this. One of the most powerful lessons I learned about sales was as a kid growing up. And I learned it from my dad, and you'd like my dad. He's a CPA. And actually

I'll brag on him. He passed the CPA exam the first time when I didn't take the whole thing, and it was a written test. So, he's a good dude, but he's also a CPA. So, you guys are, you guys are aligned. But I learned this from him as a kid growing up, and what I learned about sales is, is the power of being nice. There is a transformational power of being nice to people. And so, if you start out your sales career, by just talking to people, it's easier than trying to sell somebody. And I spend my time on my background is in the recurring sales process. I've worked with doctors. I've worked with event planners. I've worked with, you know, a number of people. All of my sales over the last 25 years prior to speaking and coaching was where I would get to work with my clients on a recurring basis. And so, that's where I really focus my energy. But if you start out by being nice to people and talk to them, and spend a little bit of time getting to know them, they're going to be more inclined to want to talk to you, and then they're going to give you a chance to come back. The hard part is, especially young sales professionals earlier in their sales career, is you want to prove that you know so much, so you tell them everything. And they're like Ah, my spouse tells me everything. My kids telling me everything. My business partner is telling me everything. I don't need to hear from you too. And so, they tune out until they have a reason to tune you in. And if it's the first time showing up, they're probably more likely to tune out then tune in. And so, hopefully that helps a little bit. Kind of explain what makes it so hard. And that, and then, we internalize all the other stuff too. But does that make sense?

Peter Margaritis

Right. I've never heard of put in quite a way that I can actually understand it. You know, I get the part of new salespeople reading from the script, and they sound scripted on the phone or even sit across the table from someone. I love what your dad taught you about having a conversation. And remember, Lon, I'm the Accidental Accountant. Really not that good. I can pass an exam. That's the extent of it. So, ah...

Lon Graham

Well, and I'll say this, Peter. Sales professionals, especially early on are taught a script, and they're almost punished for going off script.

Peter Margaritis

Right. And that shouldn't be the case. It's, I have a buddy of mine in pharmaceutical sales. And when he retired, he I mean, he doesn't follow direction very well, especially from bosses. And he's always been that way. I mean, Tom, if you listen, I'm talking about you. And he said, something he always wanted to do so he sat down in front of this doctor, and he was telling the doctor all the side effects from this certain drug.

Lon Graham

Right.

Peter Margaritis

Going on and on and on and on. When he was done, the doc said, why would I want to buy this? And then I told you the bad stuff, let me tell you the good stuff. Flipped that script on him. And guess who ultimately was writing scripts for that drug.

Lon Graham

Right.

Peter Margaritis

So, it's the ability to be able to go off script, read that audience and get a better understanding, but also takes be seasonal for a period of time, not just two weeks at a college and the first sales job. So, I've been in the website, I love your website, LonGraham.com. And you talk about this thing called the four C's. Helped me understand what they are and how they will help anyone who wants to become a better salesperson.

Lon Graham

Well, well, thank you, Peter. Appreciate that. And this, the four C's is a framework I've developed, and it's an experience over you know what I've learned about what I've done wrong. And also what has worked, and it's a combination of both of those things. And the four C's the framework is in the center of I've got a graphic and on the center of it is a heart, and it's what you want. And at the heart of it is what you want. And then to get it, the four C's set you up for that. And the first C is Choice, is Choose. And Choose is where your goal is. How do you choose what it is that you want? The next C is Commit, and it's what do you commit? What steps do you have to take for you to make progress towards that goal. Connect is who do you have to connect with? And the person you want to connect with or have to connect with is the person who either has what you want, is doing what you want or has access to what you want. And that Connect piece is where I spend a lot of time talking especially with keynotes and, and sales talks. When I talk to sales reps, I spend a lot of time there. And then the fourth C is Celebrate, and celebrate is recognizing the progress that you've made and recognizing and acknowledging a win. And I say that to celebrate should be representative of the work that you went into it. So, for example in sales, if your goal is to get a meeting, well if you can get it on the calendar and get that meeting, maybe a celebrate by going to buying a Coke at the 711 on the way out or maybe you go buy an ice cream. But if we go... getting the meeting in bourbon worthy, buddy. Closing the deal is bottle worthy. I saw that look, I got you. But the point of is, and it's a wheel so it continues to allow. And getting out of sales for a minute, I'll use going to college and graduating college as an example. You choose where you're going to go to college, you commit to where you're going to school. You commit to taking the courses. You connect with your professors. You do the work, and then when you graduate, you celebrate. But in college, if we're talking about representative celebration equivalent to the work, well, some people went to college for four years. People like me took quite a bit longer to do that. But when you graduate, they throw a big party and tell you to invite your friends and family to come to this big auditorium, and watch you walk across the stage and shake hands with either the president of the school or the dean of your college, and represent and congratulate you for the work that you did. It took you probably four plus years to do that. And so, they throw a big party and tell you to bring the people that you care to the most about and that care the most about you to celebrate with you. So, that's the same thing right? So, you get a meeting, you get a coke. If you close a deal, you buy a bottle of bourbon. If you graduate from college, you throw a big party. If you get a new... so, it's all equivalent, and it's a wheel and it continues to roll. But I focused on that connection piece, and I'll say this on the sales part of it is in order to get what you want as a sales professional you have to connect with the person who has it. When you're in sales, the person that has what you want is your client, and so you have to connect with your client. Now, what makes sales so hard, is how do you connect with

your clients? Well, you start by meeting your client in their story, and then understanding what they're doing or what they're dealing with. So, that you can provide solutions to the challenges that they face or contribute to them being more productive and more profitable. And then you do that then I could connect with you. And they're gonna help you get what you want. Because once you're both connected, it's hard for them to get good salespeople too, so they're going to do everything they can to keep you coming back.

Peter Margaritis

That makes a lot of sense, and when you just described that, and I can see what the challenge is. And it goes back to, Lon attended, was part of the beta team of my Improv workshop. Great student and by the way.

Lon Graham

That was a lot of fun.

Peter Margaritis

But of the things...What improv has taught me is become a better listener. And I think when you're describing that connect, I think a lot of times we're trying to connect with the prospect client, but we've got a narrative floating in our head, and we're not listening to what they want, they need. We've got the script called and that's where it can also fall apart. Because why do I want to connect with someone who's never really listened to what my needs and wants are? They're just trying to sell me something. So, as I look at this, the Choose be clear about what you want, about that goal that you want, and I think in that stage, you've got to be honest with yourself. Can you share any stories about that honestly, whether it's you or people that you know or scenarios?

Lon Graham

Well, I think one of the problems, one of the challenges, not one of the problems, one of the challenges that we as salespeople face is we tend to look at, and look and I everything that I tell you that I've learned is probably because of a mistake that I've made some more along the way.

Peter Margaritis

Absolutely.

Lon Graham

So, it's something that I've learned, because I did it wrong, more than I did it right? Well, one of the challenges that we face is, is at the beginning of the year, whether you're on a fiscal year, whether you're on a calendar year, we get a number. We get a quota. We get a, you know, in sales, some salespeople call it a nut. We get this, we get this quota that we're responsible for. And we start trying to hit that number in January, or the first month of the year. And so, what we end up doing is we end up going in and clubbing our clients over the head with these sales, trying to sell something immediately. And whether we know him or not. And even if we do know him, we still have to build credibility. We still have to earn their confidence. And we so what the Choose piece is you talk about how do you be realistic? Well, I think the way to be realistic is to build a series of steps, and this four Cs is shaped in the form of a wheel. If you look at on my website, there's a picture of me behind on the front where I've

given a talk that shows this wheel, and it's in the form of a wheel because it's progressive. So, what happens is, is you choose a goal. Well, let's say you want to start working with a client that's at the top of your target list, your ideal client. Maybe know him or her a little bit, but yet, you're not doing any business with them. And so, you want to do business with them. Well, the first thing you got to do is you got to get in and get to meet them.

Peter Margaritis

Right.

Lon Graham

So, set a goal to meet that client in person. Well, how do you do that? Well, then you commit to getting on the calendar. And how do you get on the calendar? Well, you have to connect with the person who's got control of the calendar?

Peter Margaritis

Right.

Lon Graham

When you connect with that, whether it's the scheduler, whether it's I worked with doctors, so PAs, medical assistants, you know, lots of different people have access to their calendar, depending on the physician and their role. But you get on the calendar. You connect with the person who has access to that calendar, and now you've got a meeting. So, you celebrate that. Maybe you walk out and you raise your hand and you go, "Woo!" You do your best Ric Flair, right? And then you set the next goal. Okay, your next goal is, I'm going to get to know this person at the meeting. Well, okay, so your goal is to get to know them, you start by doing a little bit of research on the before you meet with them, so that you have enough to start the conversation. And then when you meet with them is the connect phase. And that's when you connect with them. You get to learn about them, and what they do. And the questions that I really think are so important for sales professionals to know that they don't take the time to get to know enough, especially early on. And even later on, if you've been working with someone for a long time, if you can't answer these questions, you should find a way to learn them, is what does your client or potential client do best? And that is their productivity. So, if you can contribute to them doing more of what they do best, you're making them immediately more productive. And the second question that I like in this format is, who's your ideal client? You know, an orthopedic surgeon operates on people with bone and tissue issues. They don't work on heart patients. And a cardiologist works on heart patients. They don't work on people with bone and joint issues. So, understand who your ideal client, who their ideal client is. And now what you have is, you have an insight into how that potential client thinks because you know, what they do best, which is what they want to do, who their ideal client is, who it's who they want to work with the most. And if you can contribute to them doing more of what they want to do with who their ideal client is, you've just made them more productive and more profitable.

Peter Margaritis

As you were telling that story, as Guy Fieri would say, That's spot on. That's spot on right there. That's money. That's money.

Lon Graham

I wish I had his hair.

Peter Margaritis

Me too. Those of you who are listening to this versus go watch the video. You'll see that Lon has this luxurious thick head of hair, and that's sarcasm.

Lon Graham

If you look at the website is pretty clear. I gotta, I gotta cover the shine.

Peter Margaritis

But it reminded the story, I was out in Phoenix, and I was on another speaking engagement and I want to do more work with the Arizona society CPAs. So, I have to contact the person in advance and say I'm not in Phoenix. I'm done with my thing like 11am. I don't, my flight doesn't leave till 5:00. Love to stop by and say hello. So okay, I'll just that's fine. I just want to let you know that we're already booked for the year. That's okay. Just want to come in to meet you. So, I made that commitment. When the day came I was there, I did my research and stuff. And just sat down and to be to your father's point I was just being nice. I was just being curious. I'm just asking questions and stuff. So, when we were done, I walked out of there with two speaking gigs and the calendar was full.

Lon Graham

Right?

Peter Margaritis

So, it goes to your point. Is to do you research. Don't try to sell them. Just try to understand them. Connect with them. And they will ask you what you do, you're authentic and genuine, and you never know you might walk out with it or you might not....the calendar might be full. However they're gonna remember you.

Lon Graham

Right. It's full now. It's not full forever.

Peter Margaritis

Right. It's full, that's a good point, it's full now not forever, and I will say I did celebrate on the flight back.

Lon Graham

Hopefully, they hopefully what they had on the flight was up to your standard. because I I know a little bit of your background. So it was...

Peter Margaritis

Well, Lon, it was Delta, and Delta serves Woodford Reserve and on a side note. I made a note of Lon is a Woodford Reserve groupie. Lon, what, tell me, you got a pair of boots with what?

Lon Graham

So yeah, this is a fun story. So, the story...so the whole reason I started drinking Woodford Reserve is so, you know Peter, my name is Lon Graham. And so, my initials are LJ. And in Virginia, we have ABC stores. We don't have liquor stores. We've got ABC stores and their state controlled stores. So, I'm in the ABC store, and I'm looking for some bourbon. And this is 25 years ago maybe. I'm looking at this bourbon, and it has a band on it that's got this interlocking LG logo. So. I buy a pint and like even if the Bourbons terrible, I've got a bottle that's got my initials on it, and it makes me look like kind of a big deal, right? So, well it turns out it was really good. And so, I started to give it away for Christmas presents and now me and all my buddies are drinking bourbon is Woodford. So, on this band, they have this interlocking LG logo, which is why my brand isn't an interlocking LG logo because I get sued. But I was in San Antonio for a course about 10 years ago. And I went into this Lucchese outlet, Lucchese boot outlet. And they have it's as big as a Best Buy or as a Target. It's huge. And it's all these different kinds of boots. It's amazing. And so, I'm talking to the manager, the store, and I said, "Hey, is there? Do you guys make custom boots?" He goes, "We don't make custom boots, but we'll customize them". And I was like, "What does that mean?" He says, "Well, we'll, you can pick this skin. You can pick the heel. You can pick the toe. We'll make it to a standard size. And if you want to brand the shaft, you can brand the shaft." I'm like, "So how do I do that?" He goes, "Well just give me a picture." I said, "So, if I go home and take a picture and email it to you, you'll put that on the shaft?" And he goes, "Yeah." So, I went home, took a picture of the interlocking LG logo on a wooden bottle of Woodford Reserve and emailed it to him. And I said, "Can you work with this?? He goes, "Got it." So, I have a pair of dark brown goatskin boots with the interlocking LG logo on the shaft. And it's fabulous. It's, it's perfect.

Peter Margaritis

Yeah. You sent me a picture that, that was I was very impressed, extremely impressed. And anytime to get a little bourbon talking on this podcast that just makes my day right there.

Lon Graham

We could, we could go a long way down that road. We can go as far as you want.

Peter Margaritis

I do want you to share a story, an early story that we talked about before we got started because today is Monday, Tuesday, excuse me after the 2022 National Basketball Association, Collegiate Championship where Kansas defeated North Carolina.

Lon Graham

Right.

Peter Margaritis

I'll leave it with that. You can take it from there.

Lon Graham

Well, so last night was the game. Kansas beat North Carolina, and in a really a great championship game. And I came down to my office. And you can see in the corner here, I've got two framed pictures

on my wall. And one has the Kansas letterhead on it, and the other has a North Carolina letterhead on it. And when I was in college, and I had a big dream to want to coach college basketball. And so, what I decided to do, and this was before email was really available and mobile phones weren't really available. So I, I started a letter writing campaign to coaches that I admired. And I'll actually lead this into part of my framework, because it leads into that framework, is I wrote, at the time, Roy Williams was the head coach at Kansas. And so, I wrote him a letter. And he wrote me back, and in the letter it said, I'm a big fan of you. I'm a big fan of the way your team's play. I'm a big fan of the way that they show up. I'm a big fan of all the things that you do as a coach. I want to coach will you give me some advice? He wrote back. And I've gotten some advice from somebody else too, that said, Hey, if you get an opportunity to work summer camps at these big time colleges, then you should. So, he wrote back and he goes, because we don't really have, we always hire former players, and but at the time I was working in the airline industry. So, I had an opportunity to travel. I said, "I'd love to come see if you'd be willing to sit down with me." He goes, "Well, I don't know when we're in. But if you're going to come in, you know, send the office a note and we'll see if we can get you in." Well, it never worked out that I did that. But he was at Kanas at the time. I wrote Dean Smith, and I also wrote Dean Smith a similar letter. I actually had a chance to meet Dean Smith and shake his hand for about a minute. And he was super, super nice guy. So, I wrote I said, Hey, here's what I met you. You were super nice. It was after a really tough loss. And thank you so much. I love the way you coach. I love the way your teams play. I love the way they show up. I want to coach. What advice would you give me? He wrote me back as well. And they both wrote a little bit of a handwritten note and, and signed it. I framed both of those and a couple others that I did too. But I framed both of those. And on the left is the letter that I wrote, and on the right is their response. And I ended up making a choice at when I graduated from college that I was a little bit further along in my professional career than I was willing to give up and I knew that if I was going to coach in college basketball is gonna go off to go back to the bottom. And I just wasn't willing to go that far back because I was in my early 30s. The point of that is this is that it goes back to the Connect piece of the four C's. And here's what I mean by that. In order to get what you want it, which is at the foundation of everything that we do in our life at the heart of it's what we want. In order to get it, you've got to connect with the person who either has it, is doing it or has access to it. Well, I wrote people that were doing what I wanted to do, and the way you connect with them, it goes back to meeting them in their story first, right, Peter? I said, here's what I like about you, and what you're doing, and the results of the work that you do. I want to do it too. Will you give me some advice? Now, the reason that people like Roy Williams and Dean Smith, and other coaches that I wrote, I'm a Georgia guy, you know, that I wrote Vince Dooley, he wrote me back too. The reason those people are willing to write people back to demonstrate an interest in them and their work is because it establishes legacy for them. It also gives them the opportunity to give back what somebody before them gave them. Because people that are in a role got there because somebody helped them get there. And they're willing to help somebody get to the where they are, for legacy, but also to continue and sustain that profession or that career. Because if they can help build the next generation of people. So. that Connect piece on my four C's is a result of thinking about those letters that I wrote, and a lot of other things that I've done, too. But it's if you have something that you want to do professionally, I talk a lot about sales, because that's my background, you got to connect with the person who has it. And if you connect with them on their terms, they're going to become interested in you. Because they know you're serious about them. Does that make sense?

Peter Margaritis

Absolutely. More than you, more than I care to share right now. Absolutely, But you bring up something very powerful. You sat down and wrote them. You didn't email them. You sat down and a handwritten letter. And I contend that if there's somebody you want to meet at, there's some client that you want to research and do exactly what you did, but do it in a letter not in an email, because they will absolutely open that letter, or the gate keeper will open that letter. And it will get to the person and that will make a bigger impact than sending an email.

Lon Graham

100%. Can I give you, so it's an extension of that story. Can I give you one more?

Peter Margaritis

Absolutely.

Lon Graham

So, at the time I was working, I was going to school full-time. This was the last time that I went to school. I was going to school full-time. And I was working full time. And this was when I was at United Airlines. So. I was working nights and weekends so that I could go to school during the day. And one of the people that I wrote, and this is in the late 90s, one of the people that I wrote was Billy Donovan, and Billy Donovan is now the head coach of the Chicago Bulls. He was he was at the University of Florida at the time.

Peter Margaritis

Yeah.

Lon Graham

And in this letter, I wrote him I was like, hey, you know, he played at Providence. He played for Rick Pitino at Providence. They went to the Final Four in Providence. So, I wrote it was like, hey, you know, I really Gosh, man, you had such a great college career as a player. And now I love seeing what you're doing. And he was a Florida this was seven years or six years before they won back-to-back National Championships at Florida. So, he's just getting started.

Peter Margaritis

Yeah.

Lon Graham

And I wrote him a letter. I was like, Hey, I love what you did as a player. I really like what you're doing as a coach. I think you're going to be amazing. You know, what advice would you give me other people have recommended working camps? Do you recommend that? He wrote me back and said if you want to work our camp, my assistant coach's name is Donnie Jones. And you can call him, and if we can get you in, we will. Well, that's not the best part. The best, and the worst part is, so I was working nights and this is before cell phones. And before digital answering machines. So, we had, you know tapes in the answering machines. This is why I was writing letters. He called one day, called the house. So, I come home from work. I'm hanging out with my roommate on a Saturday afternoon. We're drinking a

beer. He goes, 'Oh yeah, I meant to leave you a note. A couple of days ago, this guy called some guy named Billy.' And I'm like "Billy?" He goes, Billy who? He goes. I said, "Billy Donovan?" He goes, "Yes." I said, "Quit messing with me." He goes, "No, no, he called. He said if you want to call him back. Call him back." So, he called my house. And I'm so mad at my roommate because it took him almost a week to tell me about it. He forgot to write and he was not a basketball guy. He had no idea who Billy Donovan was. And I'm like, oh my Gosh, this is crazy. My point is this is if you connect with people and start out by it, because if you call somebody and say, Hey, look at me, I should do what you do you owe me, they're gonna, they don't have time for you. Same thing with sales, right? If you go in and tell them everything, you know, they don't have time for it. But if you say, here's what I know about you. Here's what I like about you. Here's why I want to learn from you. And here's why I think if you give me some advice, I'm willing to do it, then they're going to help you. But you got to start with them, you got to start in their story. And I'll bring it all back to sales by saying same thing with your client, you got to understand your client and what they're trying to accomplish, and why it matters to them. And then when you can contribute to them doing more of that, they're going to want you around, because finding good salespeople is hard, too. And so, if you connect with them, they're gonna want to make sure that you're still around as long as you can be. Does that make sense?

Peter Margaritis

That makes a lot of sense. But if we stop it there, that story, my audience is gonna kill me because you didn't say if you called Billy Donovan back.

Lon Graham

I did. I did. But it just it ended up going down to went down a rabbit hole. So, I never talked to him. But super, super nice. And all three of these guys, Hall of Fame coaches have won National Championships. And they had, you know, they dictated a letter, but then they also hand wrote a note and signed it. Same thing. So, to your point, you know, people help them get to where they are. And same thing to your audience, right? If there's something you want to do reach out to somebody who's doing it, because somebody helped them get there, and they want to help the next generation, they just don't have time to go looking for him. So, you got to go to them.

Peter Margaritis

Absolutely. So, as we wrap this up, you're a risk taker. You know, salespeople that I know, they're not afraid they're not risk averse. So, over the last few years, is there something, and I'm setting you up. I'm throwing you a softball right here, is there's something that you've done, that a lot of people would never do in their life, but you've kind of thrown yourself into it, and you're still and you're still doing it?

Lon Graham

Yeah, Peter, thank you for asking that question. So right before the pandemic, I signed up for a comedy school class. And I took a stand-up comedy not improv. We've done improv together, which a lot of fun but to do stand-up comedy. And I took a class at the Richmond Funny Bone, which is a national chamber, we have a, I'm in Richmond, Virginia. And we have a Funny Bone here. And so, it was eight weeks of working with a professional comedian, who taught us the structure of jokes, how to write jokes, how to deliver jokes, and we got to practice. And our graduation was, ultimately there were seven of us in the class. And our graduation was, you know, standing up and giving a five minute to 10

minute set of our material in front of an audience of a little over 200 people at the Funny Bone. So, my first experience doing stand-up comedy in front of a live audience is with 200 people sitting at the Richmond Funny Bone. Now, they're all rooting for us because they know it's our graduation. But I can tell you that I was more nervous about that than getting on any stage that I've been on, giving a talk to a group of salespeople who I'm talking about 25 years of my life and trying to share an hour's worth of that experience with them. My heart was about to explode. And I still get more nervous for a five minute set doing an open mic night at a local brewery, and Richmond got an amazing community of stand-up comedy. It's fun. It, you know, talk about raising your heart rate, right? I mean, that's, you know, that's that. Yes. So I did that. I still do it. I still get nervous. And I still love it because when I tell a joke where they laugh. Oh my goodness, like crack it. It's almost as good as a good bottle of Double O. Almost.

Peter Margaritis

You know that there's an old joke in comedy. What's the difference between stand-up and heroin?

Lon Graham

Oh, no.

Peter Margaritis

You can quit heroin. Because you get that belly laugh.

Lon Graham

Oh, my gosh.

Peter Margaritis

When you get that belly laugh, it's addictive. You keep chasing that belly laugh, and I haven't done stand-up in about five plus years, maybe even longer than that. But I have this conversation. I'll go I need to polish up some stuff and see if I can Okay. I tried to do that. I try to use my humor now in my presentations, but I still have that desire and I wanted to go to a comedy club and do an open mic night and see how badly I can bomb.

Lon Graham

Well, it's different. And so, you talk about bombing, right? I was last summer we were, there's a lot. There's a lot of microbrews in Richmond. There's a lot of wineries too in Virginia. And I was hanging out with some friends of mine that actually came to graduation night and come out and once a while support me doing open mic stuff. And we're sitting out there drinking some wine, and we're just cracking up. Just laughing, you know, life, life laugh and stuff. He's having a great time. And my one friend goes, I cannot imagine a world without laughter. And I was like, Oh, I can? Oh, I can. I've been that guy in a roomful of five people, and three of them work there. And trying to get a laugh. Oh, my goodness, I'd rather do stand up in front of a room of 50 than a room of three.

Peter Margaritis

Right. But that teaches you a lot about the public speaking profession. That teaches you a lot about how to read an audience and how to... actually that teaches you how to do a presentation in front of accountants.

Lon Graham

100%

Peter Margaritis

They won't laugh, but you know, they are laughing inside. They just won't let it out. And then what ended on that point, all these letters, Lon, I can't thank you enough. This has been an absolute blast. I love your story. I love your business. People can find you by going to your website, which is... LonGraham.com.

Lon Graham

And your email address at lon@longraham.com. And there's a link that you can you can email me or schedule a call on my website. So...

Peter Margaritis

Perfect. Well, thank you very much for your time. I can't wait till our paths crossed and not have to put third shift on a Woodford.

Lon Graham

100%. That's exactly right. I loved it. I was thank you so much. It was a lot of fun and it's great to see you. I look forward to seeing you again.

Peter Margaritis

Absolutely. I want to thank Lon for sharing his passion for helping sales professionals become better at their craft. We all can be better at our craft of sales. Thank you, Lon. Remember there are people who prefer to say yes and there are people who prefer to say no. Those who say yes are rewarded by their ventures that they have, and those who say no are rewarded by the safety they obtain. Be a yes person. Thank you for listening.