

Lauren Schieffer EP11

SPEAKERS

Peter Margaritis, Lauren Schieffer

Peter Margaritis

Hey, welcome back, everybody. I'm pleased to have my good friend, Laura Schieffer, with me on this podcast episode. And she has just written a brand-new book, *Help Others Grow First: How Smart Leaders Attract and Retain Great Employees*. And it's coming out right after this episode on June 1st. So, first and foremost, Lauren, thank you very much for taking time out of your busy schedule to spend some time with me talking to me about your book.

Lauren Schieffer

Thank you so much for having me. It is so good to see you again.

Peter Margaritis

Always great to see you. It's been way too long. Pre-pandemic.

Lauren Schieffer

Pre-pandemic.

Peter Margaritis

Pre-pandemic, I do believe.

Lauren Schieffer

Yeah.

Peter Margaritis

And, boy, that pandemic was a fun time, wasn't it? Not.

Lauren Schieffer

You know, I think our lives will forever be separated by pre-pandemic and post-pandemic.

Peter Margaritis

Absolutely, I think so too. So, in this book, I, you sent the manuscript out a while back, and I want to again apologize for not able to, it kind of got lost in my inbox, because I now have another business inbox, and I got managing two inboxes. When I found it, and I said, let's get you on the podcast. So, I'm looking through the manuscript and you write in here, it's possible to attract, retain, energize and grow top notch employees, regardless of their external economic or cultural conditions. And the first thought that went to my mind was, how in the heck can you do that, because it seems to be such a huge challenge out in today's workforce.

Lauren Schieffer

It is. It seems that the greatest issue facing leaders today is how to attract and retain great employees. And for most people, it feels like an uphill, a constant uphill battle. And that's because employees today are looking for something completely different out of their working environment than ever before. They're looking for something more than success. They're looking for a level of significance. So, how we attract, engage, retain great employees, is to offer them that significance. Significant leadership is the way forward for leadership in the workforce today.

Peter Margaritis

You've talked about significant leadership in the past couple of times that we have done a podcast together and but for those who may have never heard that, what's the difference between significant leaders and I think use the term successful leaders of success leaders?

Lauren Schieffer

So, let me start by saying that the hierarchical, generic leadership that bled out of the 20th century into the beginning of the 21st century, has been failing the American workforce for some time. The pandemic actually just shoved a situation that that was simmering underneath the surface, through a wormhole and into our laps, seemingly overnight. Most people are programmed to chase success. Now, success is inwardly focused. Success is about how much money I make, what my title is, what my accolades are, what accomplishments I can claim, what letters are behind my name. It's all about me. Significance, on the other hand, is outwardly focused. It has nothing whatsoever to do with compensation packages and parking spots. Significance is about how many lives I touch and the manner in which I choose to impact them. Significance is about we. And so, significant leadership is a term I coined. It takes the highest, previously what the highest standard of leadership has been and that is servant leadership. Many people are familiar with the concept of servant leadership. Servant leadership asks for nothing in return. And that is noble. significant leadership asks the world in return because significant leadership expects that those I breathe into my leadership into will take that and breathe that into others and continue building significant leaders like ripples on a pond. That's my concept of significant leadership. Growing others first.

Peter Margaritis

So, when we think of significant leadership, and I think if we'd have had this conversation 10 years ago, okay, success was still very much the buzzword. And we've seen over the years, it has now taken significant leadership and servant leadership, has taken, has moved forward. But I think the one thing that in order to have significant or even servant leadership, you have to create a culture within the organization that's not toxic.

Lauren Schieffer

Yes.

Peter Margaritis

So, if you could expand on that.

Lauren Schieffer

So in, in my perception, because my perception is my reality. And it's, and it's what I teach and believe, the best way to do that is with the nine essentials of significant leadership. That's the foundation of this book. I've been teaching the nine essentials for almost a decade. But I'd never put it in book form before where I could hand someone a book and say, here are your nine essentials of significant leadership. They are at their base of 40,000-foot view of the non-essential characteristics of significant leaders. And my experience has proven to me that the day-to-day deliverables of management and leadership. Those would be increased productivity, increased profitability, increased market share, customer service, decreased attrition. All of those deliverables will fall in line naturally, if the leader focuses all of their efforts, efforts through the lens of the nine essentials of significant leadership. So, if you'd like I can go through them very quickly.

Peter Margaritis

Well, actually, oh, yeah, let's go through rather quickly. But I think there's a few of them that want you to go more deeper into.

Lauren Schieffer

Your driving the bus. All right, Essential #1: Understand your own value. We need to have a solid self-esteem. We cannot treat other people with respect if we don't respect ourselves. You need to know what you bring to the table as a human being and as a leader. So, understand your own value. Essential #2: Treat all people with respect.

Peter Margaritis

Wouldn't that be a novel concept.

Lauren Schieffer

Whether or not I like what they think say or do.

Peter Margaritis

Right? Exactly.

Lauren Schieffer

There is a difference between respect for someone and respect to someone. The Colonel used to say, you don't have to respect everyone, Lauren Anne. You have no right to disrespect anyone, young lady. So, I don't have to respect you, in order to treat you with respect. And that's what that second essential is treating all people with respect. Essential #3: Act with integrity at all times. Even when you think no one's looking. Because someone is always looking, even if it's your own subconscious. So, act with integrity. The great sage, Anonymous, said integrity is what happens in the dark.

Peter Margaritis

Right.

Lauren Schieffer

Right? Essential #4: Open your mind to new possibilities. A closed mind cannot grow and a closed mind cannot lead. So, open your mind to new possibilities. Essential #5: Craft a vision. But that vision, crafting the vision may seem like leadership one on one material. But for significant leadership, it goes beyond. It's not about my vision for my life, which is important, or my vision for the company, which is important. Significant leaders expand that and communicate to each and every person that they lead. What's it matter to them? What's it going to look like, feel like, be like, smell like when we as a team get to the end of the rainbow to this vision? Why does it matter to them? Which means you have to know your team well enough to know what matters to them. So, craft division, Essential number next I think it's six, #6: Communicate respectfully. And the best definition of respectful communication that I've ever heard in my life, came not from me, I wish I could claim it. It came from Merrill Runyon, in her book, Power Phrases. And that is, "Say what you mean. Mean what you say. Don't be mean when you say it."

Peter Margaritis

Ooo, I like that.

Lauren Schieffer

It's profound in its simplicity. Right? So, communicate respectfully. Number 7: Lead by example, in all things, in all places, because your team will follow your example whether you want them to or not. So, that means not just in the office, but how you treat the cashier at the grocery store. How you treat the busboy at the restaurant, or the person that you accidentally, that accidentally bumps into you on the street. Lead by example, all the time. Alright. Number 8: Celebrate the results of others. Significant leaders do not look to achieve accolades. They look to offer accolades. And Number nine: Work for your replacement. Our primary job as leaders, is to replace ourselves. So, those are your nine essentials of significant leadership.

Peter Margaritis

I love them. So, the first one I wrote down was number four, open your mind to new possibilities. Easier said than done. I think you will agree.

Lauren Schieffer

Yes.

Peter Margaritis

Because that that involves the word change. So, how do you get people who don't want to change? Who look at change as a threat versus an opportunity? How do you get them to open their mind to possibilities when they'd rather have the status quo?

Lauren Schieffer

Well, first off, we have to create an environment where there is a measure of safety in change. Because most people hate change, because they don't know how it's going to affect. I don't know how it's gonna affect me. I don't know if it's going to upset my stability and my equilibrium. Is it a threat to me? So, if we can create an environment where there's a measure of safety in the change, communication is essential in all change. I worked with a company not long ago, actually, it was a, it was a dental

practice, that had purchased another dental practice. And the research that I did in helping them showed that in merger situations when one entity acquires another entity, if there is a, if there is no clear communication plan between the entities, the attrition and the acquired entity runs out on average about 42%. If there is a clear and well-executed communication plan, that attrition drops to 7%. So, people have to feel safe. Now opening your mind to new possibilities requires the understanding that different does not mean wrong.

Peter Margaritis

Thank you.

Lauren Schieffer

It merely means different. If we cannot push ourselves, I was gonna say force ourselves, but that's a little harsh. If we can't push ourselves to try and understand things from a different perspective, we prevent ourselves from having any impact on anyone who thinks believes, looks, smells, dresses, loves differently than we do. So, it requires the ability to understand that there are three sides to every story Yours, Mine and the truth. All of these are hard. Leadership wasn't intended to be easy. It's very fulfilling. It's not always easy.

Peter Margaritis

That's true.

Lauren Schieffer

It also, and opening your mind to new possibilities also requires that we are willing to learn from our own mistakes and our own misfortunes. I mean, think about what we have lived through in the last three years. And I don't mean to make light of any of it. I mean, I have lost some really good friends. I mean literally lost some really good friends. But what if we could take the lessons that we've learned from the misfortune or the lessons that we learned from the mistake and turn them into steps forward? You know, when, as so many people, when the pandemic hit, I lost my income, like completely. I watched my entire what remaining of my annual income slide off of my calendar and 72 consecutive hours. And I did what any good Colonels daughter would do, I curled up in a corner and I sucked my thumb for three days. You know, I just, I didn't know what to do. But the, the Colonel always said, use what you've got kid and just show up? Is this going to be a stumbling block or a steppingstone? The choice is yours. If we can take the stumbling blocks for anything in our lives, some of them are massive. Others are little speed bumps and turn them into steppingstones. If it's a massive stumbling block, and you can get on the top of that massive stumbling block to see the vision from there. What kind of a stepping stone could you turn that into? Opening your mind to new possibilities is, none of these are easy. When we get right down to it. None of the nine essentials are easy when we get right right down to it.

Peter Margaritis

I think with opening your mind to new possibilities, you also have to open your mind to that this new possibility might fail.

Lauren Schieffer

Yeah, and be okay with that.

Peter Margaritis

And be okay with that. And I think a lot of people when they open their mind to new possibilities, especially in from a leader's perspective, and it fails, what's the first thing they do? Point fingers and blame? Like, like,

Lauren Schieffer

Not if they're significant leaders, but yes.

Peter Margaritis

Yes. Yeah. And but then, because, like they're always right. But they're not. And it said passing the judgments, that passing of one's ego, and going, I could have done that better that. I knew this was what do, you hear it all the time. And it's like, it's like, okay, now you back to success. Now you're back to blaming and you're pointing fingers, and that's that leadership. But oh, no, I get the title. I have the title. Yeah. Well, it is leadership. No, it's not.

Lauren Schieffer

No, no, it's not. I have met many managers and people with leadership titles, um, who are in no way leaders.

Peter Margaritis

Right.

Lauren Schieffer

You know, Dad used to say failure is never fatal, kid. The only failure is to not try

Peter Margaritis

It hurts.

Lauren Schieffer

Yeah, of course it does.

Peter Margaritis

What is it? Doesn't kill you, doesn't kill you makes you stronger? Right?

Lauren Schieffer

Yeah. Indeed.

Peter Margaritis

I could, I could, we could talk for quite a bit on this whole possibilities. But I wanted to go to number six, communicate respectfully. We see it in a variety different forms. And a lot of it is unrespectful. And we have, we have so called leaders who, that's what they're making their stick on.

Lauren Schieffer

And it breaks my heart. It has been absolutely, disrespect has been normalized. More so in the last six to nine years than I, than I've ever seen. But we can't blame it entirely on politics. I think a lot of it has to do with social media as well. Because with the rise of social media, you could, you can people will say things on social media that they would never say to your face.

Peter Margaritis

Oh, absolutely. And

Lauren Schieffer

And so, so I think social media had a lot to do with it. I think cable television.

Peter Margaritis

Yes.

Lauren Schieffer

Had a lot to do with it. There. because, and I know this is gonna make me sound old and I don't mean to sound old. But there was a time when there were standards and practices in broadcast television. Even in, you know, in politics, there was a time when news agencies were required to show both sides of an issue in discussing a political campaign or a bill that's before Congress or whatever. That went out the window. So, that concept of, of not having an open mind to new possibilities, and communicating disrespectfully has been growing for some time. Politics just really again shoved that through a wormhole and dumped it into our laps faster than, gosh, I would have hoped. I wish I could tell you that I have a solution for bringing it back. My only solution is as a leader modeling the way. Leading by example, by communicating respectfully, at all times in all things. And challenging the leaders that I consult with, that I coach, that I train that I speak to, and the people that I lead, to do the same. Anyone who has ever worked with me has understood that there is no disrespect in anyone in any way at any time for any reason, in my presence. Leading by example is all I can do with that.

Peter Margaritis

So, let's lead by example. We'll get to lead by example, that was the next one, but does communicate respectfully, but because of everything that you just described, that is part of the problem. And it has filtered its way into our youth. And I've seen it in a very short period of time, at the college level, that that level of respect, and communicate respectfully, it's kind of gone out the window. And it's not ran, at Oklahoma, everyone knows I'm at Oklahoma State University. It's not rampant.

Lauren Schieffer

Yeah. OSU helps. With them knowing that. Yeah.

Peter Margaritis

Yeah. Well, except for people in Columbus, Ohio.

Lauren Schieffer

Yes. But see, there there. It's emblazoned across your chest right now. So.

Peter Margaritis

Yeah, yeah. When I go back to Columbus, Ohio, they go wrong colors, wrong brand.

Lauren Schieffer

True.

Peter Margaritis

I'm gonna get some Scarlet and gray and paint it over you. Thank you very much. But it's a little bit concerning that that level, we've lost that level of respect.

Lauren Schieffer

I would agree with that and I would challenge you. I would challenge you to set a standard in your classroom.

Peter Margaritis

What would I do?

Lauren Schieffer

You as a leader in your classroom, you have to set the standard. And that's by communicating expectations. And the expectation is when you walk into my classroom, you leave disrespectful words and behaviors, I cannot govern your thoughts, but you leave disrespectful words and behaviors at the door with you. Leave it at the door. Chances are pretty good they're still going to be there when we're done with our class. You can pick them up on your way out. Setting expectation. It's all, it's all we can do.

Peter Margaritis

Right. It's all we can do. And it's just gonna take a village to get back to a more respectful way of life.

Lauren Schieffer

Yeah. You know, you talk about youth. And it's really, it's really easy, for every generation, it has been really easy to hammer on the younger generation. I see a lot of hope in the younger generations, and the leaders, the millennials, and now I've got Gen Zeds that I'm coaching and leadership in, in their ability to see the world from a global perspective, to see the world from a position of acceptance, rather than from prejudice. I see a lot of hope in that direction. I think we just have to survive our generation working through the system and being done. I will not see it because it's my generation. If my generation is gone, I'm not going to be here to see it. But I do have hope. I have a lot of hope. I see it in the people that I counsel and coach.

Peter Margaritis

And it's what we leave behind.

Lauren Schieffer

Yeah.

Peter Margaritis

It's what we leave behind for that, that from the communicate respectfully, and lead by example. I love that. So, one of my first, at the other OSU, like people in Columbus, Ohio, like, how I like to call it, is I try to talk to everybody. And we've got this woman who does the cleaning and bathrooms and all that stuff. And one, I just spotted and said I one day is the early on and I had this Hawaiian OSU branded shirts. She goes, I really liked your shirt. So, well, thank you. What's your name? My name is Mary. I said, Mary, I'm Pete. Well, you're new here, aren't you? Yes, ma'am, I am. And if you ever, my office is right over here. She comes by every day says hello and we have a conversation and stuff. And we were talking one day and she goes, you know, I got some friends here in this building. Some won't even talk to me. I have some friends in this building who talked to me who communicate with me, tell me what you're doing, Pete. Not doing that. But then there's other people in this building and won't even talk to me. Won't even look at me. Won't even, you know. And I'm just like going well, good think you've got a lot of friends, Mary, And that just, that to me, just breaks my heart.

Lauren Schieffer

Yeah, see people, you people like you and I, I just don't I, we don't understand that. Because I've never met a stranger.

Peter Margaritis

Right. Right? I've met strange people.

Lauren Schieffer

I certainly have met strange people and good on them. Because they have added color.

Peter Margaritis

Yes.

Lauren Schieffer

In my life. They've created stories for me on stage. So, yeah, I don't get that.

Peter Margaritis

But here's the thing about Mary. One day she goes, you know, I paint. So, what houses? No, I paint and she was showing me her artwork. And it was damn good. And most people in that building have no idea. All you have to do is talk to people, and treat them respectfully, and communicate respectfully. and lead by example. Why is it so hard? Why is it so hard for people to do that?

Lauren Schieffer

Well, that's a great cosmic question. I'm not sure I have an answer to that. Well, you wrote the book. You know, that's sarcasm. Just having some fun. I wrote the book on what we should all aspire to do. Not on why people don't do it.

Peter Margaritis

So, I love that, that you put that in your book as lead by example, and everyone should really do a better job of doing that.

Lauren Schieffer

Because people, people are watching you.

Peter Margaritis

Yeah.

Lauren Schieffer

Not so much anymore. I've mellowed. I've mellowed quite a bit. There was a time in my life, that when I saw people disrespecting others, and they were easily identifiable to a company or a school, or a church, or, I would reach out to the organization and call them out. They're representing you and they're being disrespectful when they're doing it. I've mellowed a lot. I don't do that so much anymore. And it's possible. No, it's, it's probable that I do that less because society is so engaged now in filming each other and the canceled culture and I'm not speaking for or against canceled culture. I think there are some infractions that are worthy of being called out. But I pick and choose them much more carefully now.

Peter Margaritis

Yeah, yeah. I had a couple of students go and be Professor Margaritis, you want to come over for Cigar Wednesdays? I went, No. Oh, come on. No, no, no, no, you got phones. You've got this. I love my job. All it takes is that one video. And there's no way. Now, graduate, graduate, that'd be happy to come to Cigar Wednesdays or Bourbon Thursday. So whatever.

Lauren Schieffer

See. And for me, I would be, to me that, in my mind, I don't make judgments for anyone else, that would be promoting my promoting smoking cigars. Which is harmful to their health. It's harmful to my health. It's harmful to their health. Why would I promote that? And I have many friends that smoke cigars. I'm a member of Cigar PAG with National Speakers Association. Don't say Lauren is ragging on cigars. I'm not, I'm not what I'm saying is that especially if it was students, I wouldn't support that activity because I know that it's harmful to them.

Peter Margaritis

Right. Right. So, the other one just want to briefly touch on his work for your replacement. Yeah, I'm irreplaceable. That's just the ego of a leader at times. Nobody can replace me. We're all replaceable.

Lauren Schieffer

Absolutely. And if you have raised them up well and mentored them to be significant leaders, they may even be better than you were. How amazing would that be?

Peter Margaritis

No, they can't. I want to be the legacy of the organization.

Lauren Schieffer

You know what? We can be a legacy in the hearts and minds of people who we have mentored. All legacies are forgotten at some point or another. And that may sound cynical and sad. But if we are carrying on the concepts in the hearts and minds of others, it is less likely. I think of the late great Mary Kay Ash, who is the founder and chairman emeritus, now passed of Mary Kay Cosmetics. And there was a particular way that she ran her business and expected all of her beauty consultants, sales directors and national sales directors to conduct themselves. And no one would dream of stepping outside of those boundaries during her lifetime. She passed in 2001. And almost the day after she passed, people started pushing the boundaries, breaking the rules, rewriting the rules, and some of the standards that that were set in the Mary Kay way, Mary Kay way, have been abandoned completely. The only way you maintain a legacy is securing the concepts in the hearts and the minds of the people that you that you lead.

Peter Margaritis

And have it resonate.

Lauren Schieffer

Oh, absolutely.

Peter Margaritis

Continually.

Lauren Schieffer

It doesn't, it doesn't get secured in the hearts and the minds if it doesn't resonate with them.

Peter Margaritis

Right. So.

Lauren Schieffer

So, just as a for instance, I had the privilege of learning from some very significant leaders. In addition to my father, because of who my father was and what he did for the Air Force, I had the privilege of meeting some people. The privilege of meeting working on his very first campaign and learning from the late John McCain. And when I was in junior high school, I went to a Take Your Child to Work Day. My father was the Division Chief of the Flight Dynamics Laboratory at Wright Patterson Air Force Base. And at the time, he and his team, were working on the advanced composite materials that would absorb radar, that now the F, the the B Series bombers, and the F series fighter jets are now made of. And on that, Take Your Daughter to Work Day, there was a visiting officer from the Washington School of War, who had come to consult with my father. The two days happened to coincide. So, there I sat at lunch between Daddy and then Lieutenant Colonel Colin Powell. And then Colonel Powell asked me about my life, and what interested me. And he listened to my opinion. And he asked me questions that were big girl questions, not little girl questions. And I was absolutely certain that he and I were going to be fast friends for the rest of my life. And while I never had the opportunity to be in that great man's presence again, I followed his career. I clipped out newspaper articles about him. I read all of his books.

And I learned from him because he set an example for me when I was 13 years old that resonated in my heart and my mind. That's our job. And we can't be responsible for who it lands with. We can just do our best to lead by example and grow others first.

Peter Margaritis

And what a way to somewhat almost completely wrap up this interview with that wonderful story. And I did read that in the book and I was hoping you were gonna get that on your own without me having to bring that because it's a great story. So, the book comes out on June 1, which is if this comes out on Monday, that is, what is June 1st, like a Wednesday? just completely lost track of the calendar.

Lauren Schieffer

June 1st is a Thursday

Peter Margaritis

Is the Thursday.

Lauren Schieffer

Is a Thursday.

Peter Margaritis

So, this episode will be live Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. So, is the book and beyond Amazon?

Lauren Schieffer

The book is on Amazon. It is also available for pre-orders on LaurenSchieffer.com, forward slash books.

Peter Margaritis

LaurenSchieffer.com and spell your last name for everybody.

Lauren Schieffer

S C H I E F F E R.

Peter Margaritis

So, are you taking pre-orders now? Or does it pre-orders open like two weeks before?

Lauren Schieffer

No, I'm taking pre-orders now.

Peter Margaritis

Okay.

Lauren Schieffer

When this comes out the days before. So, when this comes out, it will certainly but I'm taking pr- orders right now.

Peter Margaritis

Okay.

Lauren Schieffer

As we record.

Peter Margaritis

Perfect. And just on a side note, I will, with your permission, I probably should have asked you beforehand. But we've done this before, I'd love to have this the video portion on my website. And for those of you who do watch this episode, look behind Lauren, on the left. There's a portrait on the wall. I'm not gonna say anything more about it. I'm not gonna say anything more about it. It caught my eye right when we first started. And it took me a moment to adjust my eyes. And I caught the silhouette and I caught the whole thing. And what a wonderful brand. What a wonderful photo. It's not even a photo.

Lauren Schieffer

That is, that is the logo of my brand, the Colonel's Daughter, and the image of the girl inside the Colonel is actually a silhouette of me. Yeah, back in the 60s, parents did the silhouettes of of their kids. And so, that is actually a silhouette of me. So.

Peter Margaritis

Go watch the episode on YouTube. It'll be a few weeks before I get it out there. But that's, that's one of the coolest logos I think I've ever seen. And I love how you've blown it up in the background. So, it's always wonderful to see. Hopefully I will see you soon in person. I might be at Influence this year. Right now, I'm not scheduled to go. But I might be making a last-minute change and trying to work a few things out.

Lauren Schieffer

It is the 50th anniversary celebration for National Speakers Association. You've got to be there.

Peter Margaritis

That'd be a party.

Lauren Schieffer

Yeah.

Peter Margaritis

Well, thank you so very much for taking time out of your schedule.

Lauren Schieffer

Thank you for having me!

Peter Margaritis

And I can't wait to our paths crossed again. And I'm gonna go pre-order the book.

Lauren Schieffer

Oh! All right. Thank you so much.

Peter Margaritis

Oh, you're welcome. Thank you. I would like to thank Lauren for sharing the stories that went into her book help others grow first and be the next or the first one to order her book from Amazon. Remember, there are people who prefer to say yes, and there are people who prefer to say no. Those who say yes are awarded by the adventures that they have. And those who say no are awarded by the safety they attain. Be a yes person and thank you for listening.