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Dr. David Phelps

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David Phelps: Good day, everyone. This is Dr. David Phelps of the

Freedom Founders Mastermind Community and Dentist Freedom Blueprint Podcast. Today, my guest is Mr. Ben

Glass. Ben, how are you, sir?

Ben Glass: Good morning, David. Well, we're cold up here in the DC

area, probably colder than where you are. We're getting

through January, but I—

David Phelps: Making it through. Good deal, good deal. Well, for our

listeners, Ben is not a dentist and that's on purpose today. Probably on purpose in his own life as well. I don't know if

you ever had some choices to make but Ben—oh,

goodness. Well, Ben and I have known each other for a good number of years, and I have full respect for Ben.

And the reason I wanted to have him here today is

because, like so many of us that are getting that grey and

salt and pepper hair, we learn a lot in life, and we're willing to look at some of the lessons we've learned, through our families, through the communities that we serve, through other business owners that we've had the

privilege and blessing to help. There's a lot of similarities, and I know you're passion about life, Ben, is so great.

David Phelps:

I'm going to give people a little bit of your background because they'll appreciate this. But Ben not only has a law practice, has had for many years, but he also helps other attorneys and lawyers with their practices. But not just with their practice, but also blending who Ben is. Ben is about life, and building businesses, and doing things on purpose with intention, so that you can actually have a life to live. Ben is also the author, I'm holding it up. You're listening to us so you're not seeing this, but I'm holding up one of his many books, this most recent one, Play Left Fullback. We'll talk a little bit about that today.

David Phelps:

But just to give you a little bit of a background on Ben, among my many things, he is also the father of nine, yeah, count it, nine children. I mean, right there Ben, that's amazing. You and your wife are so blessed, but four of them were adopted from China. You are, as I said earlier, very much a small business advocate, specializing in your area, the legal field, but we love small businesses. Non-profit and charity supporter, a soccer referee, which also is going to be part of your next book, because all the lessons you've learned there in refereeing in those games, and other people's kids. In addition to being one of the top reviewed attorneys in the area, in the Annandale and DC area, Virginia, serves on the board of directors, long time supporter of Love without Boundaries, an international charity that provides hope and healing to orphan and vulnerable children.

David Phelps:

I'm just flipping through some of your amazing feats here, Ben. You've got your firm, your company that helps other

lawyers, the Ben Glass Center for Growth and Innovation, graduated in 1983. That's the same year I graduated from dental school, so we're right on track here, '83 from George Mason University School of Law, attended William and Mary for undergraduate work. You focus your practice on personal injury, medical malpractice, private disability, insurance law. You're also really become, I think, a life coach. So, let's take all the things that you are. So, I don't know, who is Ben Glass today? With everything you've done, with all the life lessons, through your family, and the community, and the practice, and the many small business owners that you've helped, who are you today and where are you going, Ben? What's your future thinking about how you want to continue to have impact in the world, in the places and with the people you love to serve?

Ben Glass:

It's a really great question, David, and thanks for having me on. So next month, so in February I'll be 63, and I'm loving what I do. So, I get to do really, really interesting work, both in the law practice, and that's shifted the work I do so we can talk about that. Working in the coaching business, that is shifting. But I always say, look, I'm Dad to nine, entrepreneur, soccer referee, Sandy and I will celebrate 40 years of marriage this June. And I fully acknowledge, and realize, and gratified and give gratitude for the fact that it's good. I wake up every morning pretty excited about the day, I do CrossFit, and I get to... My favorite place to be would be on a soccer field with a crowd, with a rivalry high school game. That beats all, and then I need three days to recover, from the physical side of that.

Ben Glass:

So, I'm leading a cool operation here at the law firm. My son joined me in the practice a couple of years ago, Brian. He's a very good lawyer, and as we were saying before we went live, he brings some talents in terms of financial and spreadsheets and stuff, that's not me. I'm the visionary, I can see marketing, I see the world through the eyes of the consumer who maybe is in need of legal services. And that's the niche I've carved out in the coaching world, is just reinforcing what is that whole experience like, and how can we lawyers eliminate the friction there? Because people are going online to buy cars in 15 minutes, and some professions still make it, and lawyers are famous for this, still make it really hard to deal with us.

Ben Glass:

So, that's where I am. We have only two kids at home now. My youngest turned 19, but it got crowded when they were all home. I have three in college, they were home from Thanksgiving until last weekend, that was a lot of moving parts. I'm ready to spend some time with Sandy, some quiet time. But I have grandkids too, and I'm ready to go back to the little league fields and the soccer fields with them as well.

David Phelps:

So Ben, so many of us have difficulty just keeping up with all that we think we need to keep up with. And I think we tend to limit our options early in life, at least thinking back when I got started, I didn't have nine kids, so I can't even relate except just you have to bow to you and Sandy, and just say, my goodness, what a blessing. God doesn't give us more than we can handle, and he looked at you too and said, "I'm going to give you nine kids to raise." But when you're early in your career, getting out of school, and you're starting life and maybe you're getting married,

and young family, there's a tendency to focus on the expertise, and the degree, and the license in this case, to go practice and do our thing. So, we really focus and channel in.

David Phelps:

How did you, obviously you're a very curious person, curiosity about other things and people, and looking at things at different standpoints. You're a visionary, as you said. But how are you able to keep different channels open, and pursue different things, while the hardest part is just generating enough capital to pay the business and the debts of the business as you're getting started, and the family. How do you relate to young people today, if you're talking to them about how to live a life with purpose and intention, and not get in this rut that so many people get into?

Ben Glass:

Yeah. Okay, so the most important thing is this is something that can be learned. So, you just described it exactly. You get out of the professional school, whatever it is, for most of us. And you're never even introduced to these other alleys of entrepreneurism, of giving yourself permission to not climb that ladder, the specific ladder of the profession. And I was there, I was absolutely there until I started my own practice. And that came because I was coaching three soccer teams, and my commute was too long, and I was a pretty good lawyer. And I said, "How hard could it be to run a law practice? I'm good, I'm good at the doing of the thing." And then of course, little did I know, like all of the other things you have to be good at in business.

Ben Glass:

And because I was curious, David, I was a subscriber for many years to the Nightingale Conant products. I had

tapes, tapes first and then CDs, and Zig Ziglar and Jim Rome. And I would listen to this stuff, and I didn't even know how to apply some of it to the law. But through that, I got that letter from Dan Kennedy saying, "Here's magnetic marketing. Gee, how would you like to have a line of people outside your door?" And when I got that product, which was the most expensive quote book, it was \$300, and I didn't have much money. And I read it, and I listened to it. I think what's important here for young folks particularly, is I didn't understand half of what he was saying. But somehow I knew if I could figure it out, it would change my life.

Ben Glass:

And so, I am curious, and I'm a student. And I read 60, 70, 80 books a year with intention, like note keeping and everything. And so, I just went all in to going, oh my gosh, no one has ever shown me this. And in legal, we have so many rules about advertising and stuff, and I just started doing it. So, the two big points are, one, this is learned, so no matter where you are in your life, you can find this new alley. And David, I come across a lot of attorneys who are 50 and 60 years old, and we have actually reinvigorated them in their love for the practice of law, and for the living of life.

Ben Glass:

But that's my long answer to your short question: be curious, and just know that for any problem that you think you have, there's someone out there who's solved it already. They're there, they exist, there are no new problems in the world. The challenge is finding that person. And you get that, I believe, by going outside of your network, if you're a dentist, outside of dentistry, outside of law, and hanging out with entrepreneurs. That's how you and I met many years ago.

David Phelps:

Absolutely, yeah. So true, so true. Just as you said, early in my career I was very much focused on doing the thing, improving my efficiency of clinical expertise, diagnosis, and treatment plan. And also trying to become a better business owner. Fortunately, back when I was doing it, there was a lot of margin and I could screw a lot of things up and still float the boat. Today, different story for a lot of reasons. And so, we have to have skillsets that we didn't have to have maybe when you and I first started our own practice, but are still important today. But what you just said was something, again, that I didn't appreciate until later in life. And what you said was, getting outside of our specific industry or our trade association where we focus everything, because that's what we're told to do. But the entrepreneurial aspects that are, I think within probably just about everybody to some degree, many times that gets bottled up and suppressed when we go through the rigors of the advancing our degrees, and it gets suppressed. It was in me until I got outside.

David Phelps:

And for me, initially it was with real estate people, whole different group of people that looked at life differently. Not that not that the life as a dentist is a bad thing or a lawyer is a bad thing, but they look at life differently. And I started learning, and started seeing things, hearing things and visualizing things a different way. And for me, that was my first catalyst that said, David, there's more. Do what you're doing, do a good job, but there's more to all this. And then it's the psychology of human behavior, and the things that I never appreciated early on that you've grown to appreciate, as you said, reinvigorates people wherever they are in their career path, to expand their insights and what they're able to do, rather than just whatever's become mundane and routine.

David Phelps:

So, I guess I'm getting back to the point, is getting outside your group. You and I both know that there's... Certainly, you can read a lot today, read books as you said. Now, today you can listen to podcasts, and there's lots of ways to take in information, but also there's a point where you kind of have to, again, continue to invest in yourself, pay to play. Pay to find the other groups that can stimulate that thinking and stimulate the aspiration to be able to do more, to be a different person, I guess is what we have to do. And we get that through other people, that we can say, gosh, there is more out there. Other than all the books that you read, what else inspired you to continue this pathway? Because you're in a lot of different groups, as you said, that's where we met. What inspired you to continue that path?

Ben Glass:

So, a couple of things. So, you said pay to play, and this is important because there's a lot of stuff that is activity masquerading as accomplishment. And in the beginning, I didn't have a lot of money to devote to this. But as I would go to events and meet people like you and others who are in our circle, and I was really invigorated by their general love of life first. So, most of the people... So if you're paying a lot of money to go to a group or to go to a conference, you're usually not the unhappy one who's paying a lot of money to travel and do that, or the unhappy one who's paying to be a member of somebody's mastermind group. I have found the people there to be happy. Okay, cool.

Ben Glass:

And then the big thing they taught me was it's okay to be happy. It's okay to live your own life, and to design something that serves you, serves your family. Because David, what I teach is, if the owners are good, they're

happy, and then the people you attract to your business are good, and they like the place and they like coming into work, then the clients, the patients, the customers, they're better off. And what the professions do, is they kind of switch this. At least in law, everything is supposed to be self-sacrificial for the client. And we're like, no, let's build something that makes the owners happy, again, makes the people come to my office, they like working here. They attract other people like them to come work here. Well, when I've got a team like that, clients are really well-served, better than when it was just me.

Ben Glass:

So, that's what it was for me, when I just started showing up and going, wow, they're nice. Most of them are doing well in business. And the third thing I find with people who attend high-end more expensive events, is they're willing to share. They don't have this closed mind, that if I know something I'm supposed to keep it from you, even if they're in the same specialty, or the geographic area. I've always been a very open book, I have lawyers from Northern Virginia come here, and I'll show them. We run seminars here. Everyone's going to have a different flavor, a different way of doing things. And as we know, most people aren't going to execute to the same level that A plus people execute. But this is what I found, is that there was a real abundance thinking that you won't find at a local free meet and greet, we're going to go to Hardee's and have lunch together. I went to some of those things, no. It's not the same level.

David Phelps:

Not the same at all. No, you're right. I love the book that you authored and published last year, Play Left Fullback. It's really a book about life, and there's so many great tenets here. One is chapter five, I'm just looking at right

now: "My most important belief, family first. Everything else follows from there." We typically, I raise my hand high, was the other way around early on, until I had some wake up calls and things that changed my perspective. But again, especially to younger people who are maybe just getting started, they're early in career life, with the stresses of making enough money to pay the bills, which is where we all start out, give them some of your wisdom and philosophy today that would help them put the family first. And not this mystical, "Someday, when I get this and this right, or this much money in the bank, or my business is doing X, Y, Z, then I'll start living life, and then I'll start spending time with the family." Which never happens.

Ben Glass:

I'll give you a habit. So, the simplest habit that will improve this, and I like to say, if I followed you around for a week, you're saying family first, but if I followed you around for a week... The simplest habit would be, when you walk in the door and I'm holding up my cell phone, is to turn that stuff off, and just be present. We have allowed these devices to overtake our lives. So yeah, especially early in career, we're working, we're maybe building a portfolio. Oftentimes you're working for someone else, and you might not have total control over your time. Although I would say this, so the young lawyers and folks in business, who have their MBAs who say, "Look, they expect me to work 50, 60, 70 hours a week." I'm like, you just haven't seen the right alley. Because they want you to believe that that's the way it is, but it's not. So, I would give you that too.

Ben Glass:

But being present and listening, are skills. And I still work on this, it's not perfect. I get on the phone every couple of weeks, I have my own sort of mindset coach, Sandy has

her own mindset coach. Because there's a lot of moving parts in our household, and it's good to have somebody who's on your shoulder, and in your ear telling you both, "That's good, good. Here's another way to language that, or here's some ideas." And again, you probably have a coach, I spend a lot of money still on coaching. Business, I have a mindset coach, I have someone who coaches my business and my leadership team. And of course, and I'm a part of at least two other groups that I can think of right now, that are led by other gurus and thought leaders.

David Phelps:

So you talked about in your practice, in your firm, is how you show up and therefore how you magnetically attract the right people who also enjoy being there, they enjoy the comradery. And that also filters down to the clients, the people you serve from a legal standpoint. So, let's talk a little bit, with all the things that you you've managed, you've had to become a really good leader and a communicator. What are some of the keys to getting a lot done, or having your fingers, I guess, your impact into so many other areas? Starting with family, and then community, and soccer referee and helping other smaller law firms or small businesses grow. As you started doing this at a young age, obviously this didn't just start 10 years ago, you started doing all this at a young age. What were some of the keys to that? Is it the people, is it your attitude? How do you balance, bad word, but how do you put all this together?

Ben Glass:

So, there's a couple things. So, on a personal habit level, I'm an early riser guy. So, most mornings 4:40, and many mornings I'm at the gym, kind of depends on where we are in the season and what games and stuff I'm doing. I love, I crave that quiet time, where I can think, where I

can write, where I can plan. On a—about managing your leadership team here, I think the best thing we've ever done is to say to our leadership team, "How much money do you want to make?" And I'm talking lawyers and non lawyers, "How much money do you want to make in the next three to five years? Just tell me, be honest." I can't promise a yes, but my next question is going to be, "Now, show me how we're going to do that. Because you know how the money flows, and if you want to make as a non lawyer, a quarter million dollars a year working as a senior paralegal, which is an amazing salary in legal, perfect. Model this, be entrepreneurial."

Ben Glass:

And so, part of that then is giving up control. And so, one of the keys is learning. Here's the mindset thing, David, is I used to think I was the only one that could write a brief, I was the only one that could talk to clients, I was the only one that could... Well, showing up in court, you do have to be a licensed lawyer. No. And my coach said, I said, "Nobody will ever be able to learn this." He says, "Well, how do we know? We haven't asked the universe yet. We haven't gone out there." And what I discovered was there's really good people.

Ben Glass:

So, in your business, and Dan Sullivan is teaching this, he's got a great book, Who, Not How. Which is like, oh, I need this done. We're in a worldwide economy. COVID has taught us, I don't need to be anywhere near you, you and I are not near each other to have this conversation. But David, if you're really good at something and you like doing it, and it's something I need, we can probably do a deal for that. And so, getting your own ego out of the way is important. And then when you're talking to not the leadership team, but the other folks who work here, our

question is always, you have to advocate for yourself, David. What do you need from leadership to get your job done better? Again, I can't promise you I'll just say yes to everything.

Ben Glass:

So, early in COVID we have single moms with kids at home. While the kids were home because school wasn't in, this was going to be challenging. And at first I thought, I need to solve this, I need to figure this out. Wrong answer, wrong thought. David, you're the mom or the dad, you've got kids at home. You think about this: what would be perfect for you? How could we support you? Again, I can't guarantee I'll say yes to everything. But if I have you, and Suzy and Billy and Bonnie all thinking about this, that's where all the good ideas are going to come from. So, I guess a lot of that, David, is just E-G-O, it's ego. And many of us who run businesses, we are smart, we're curious, we've accomplished a lot, we've done a lot. And then we get stuck at, "Gee, nobody could do this as good as I can." That's just not true.

Ben Glass:

So, those are some of the ways that I get stuff done. And I say no to a lot, like I do this for you because I like you. But I get pitched on a lot of stuff, and I have a little, on my whiteboard it says, why? Why would I say yes to this? Figuring out the big rocks and putting them in your plate, in your calendar, just makes it easier then, to say no to a lot of the little stuff. And it can sound arrogant, but I think that the world needs entrepreneurs, David. The world needs good people who are running good companies, who move the needle of the world forward. I think I'm involved in that, I know that you're involved in that. That's what wakes us up, drives us in the morning. We are, arrogant is not the right word, but it's the best word I can

think of. It, is a boldness that no matter what is going on politically in the world, which a lot of people get distracted by, I just don't get distracted by it.

Ben Glass:

I can build my own castle, I can build my own universe, and it's okay to do that. Because my employees are much better off working for me, than there are most other lawyers' cesspools, legal cesspools. And our clients are really well served, because I've got a great team. Again, I'm not talking to all of them. Maybe a little different when you're in a healthcare profession, there's more hands-on. But even that, if you're a dentist, building a business where you're attracting other experienced dentists who are good at what they do, who like what they do, but maybe they don't like the business side at all, but you're really good at that. And you get the clinical staff that supports the dentist, and you're really good at attracting them. That dentist who comes, he or she is going to be really happy, because they don't have to deal with all the stuff that the leader has to, but they're happy.

Ben Glass:

And so anyway, again, I think the important thing for young people is just to know, there's models like you and there's models like me, and you and I could point, easily we could go 20 names right now across the professions, across the occupations, of guys and gals that we know, who think like this, who are successful, who are running businesses that have an impact on the world, and more people are happy because of it. And so, we could say, "Go look at so-and-so in real estate, go look at so-and-so in carpet cleaning, go look at so-and-so running an advertising company." That's what you want to do as a young person. You want to find the David Phelps and Ben Glass's of the world, and don't waste our time. Show me

that if I give you some advice, you will act on it because then I love you, and I'll I will help you. And I know David, you would help people, right?

David Phelps: Absolutely.

Ben Glass: That's who we're looking for. We're looking for the young

people in the world, who will go and do something, break something sometimes, that's okay. That's who I love. I

hate wasting my time.

David Phelps: It's boldly protecting your time, in the willingness to say

no, more often than you say yes. And as you said, having filters when there's a decision to be made, which is going to potentially take your time, is this the best use of my time? And boldly guarding, judiciously, arrogantly, as you said, guarding that time. Because it's like when you get on

the plane, Ben, what do they say? When the oxygen masks drop down, put yours on first. If you're not

protecting yourself, then you can't be the person you need

to be for all the people that depend upon you, your leadership, and the impact that you want to have.

Ben Glass: And you're making a great point, because that's why for

me, it's so important to have CrossFit, to have my church community, to have my soccer refereeing, that brings me joy, although it stresses a lot of people out. And so, the young folks that get sucked into, and I mentor some, and

some of my kids are married to some, these jobs and

occupations where they're not given any space to develop spiritual, physical, mental side, that's sad. And I just try to disconnect them, I give them the courage to disconnect

and go find a better place.

David Phelps:

So, last couple of minutes here. It's always fun as a little bit of an outset, but to talk a little bit about what you've learned, and your joy, your passion for refereeing. I know you've got tons of stories and things, but what would you tell us, for those of us who are not referees, what's that world look like, and what has it taught you?

Ben Glass:

So. I do it because I love the physical challenge and the psychological challenge. And what it's taught me, I think, is how to better respond when the temperature of a game goes up, you can be the force that at least stays calm. And it's hard to do until you have a lot of confidence of doing games and dealing with people, but when I'm going to deal with a coach, David, it's a slow walk, and I'm running through my head, calm, calm, hand signals, "Hey, we're good." It's listening, like, "Okay, I understand why you're upset," or, "What did you see that I didn't see?" Or, "I'll explain to you what I think I saw." And I think I'm pretty humble about that. And I will often use this line with a coach, particularly in a high school game, which is, "Send me the video later, I'm happy to look at it." And David, here's what you have to realize: sometimes when I look at the video, it's the exact opposite of what I thought I saw in the field at the time.

Ben Glass:

And so, that's what I've learned, is that smiling a lot helps. Not being, "Hey, I have this shirt on, so I'm God and you have to obey me," that's not my style at all. And then I've used it as a tool, again, you mentioned earlier, the next book, I'm using it as a tool to help teenagers develop confidence, you can make money doing this, you have to understand how to deal with people that are knuckleheads, who are screaming at you. But I'm using it as a tool to teach life lessons about showing up, being

prepared, having your uniform on, not relying on your mom and dad to wash your shorts before you have to go, all that stuff, for young kids. And that's what I really like doing. The law kind of just supports all my other fun habits.

David Phelps:

That's a great way to look at life, right? Again, have a business that supports what you really are passionate about in life, and do that business well also, by having other people, and the culture, leadership that you have. It's a great way to look at life, Ben. You've got so much wisdom and experience. As I said, the book I'm looking at today, which is one of many books that you've written, but Play Left Fullback, people can pick that up, if they'd like to. Where's the best place to go?

Ben Glass:

Just go on Amazon. And then read the chapter that explains where the title come from, because that's a weird title for a philosophy... But you're right, David. It is a philosophy book, it's written for lawyers, the subtitle is about lawyers, it is a life philosophy book, and it has gotten a great response from people who go, "Wow, I thought I was the only one who was even thinking of these ideas, and now I know there's more people who think that you can build, as a lawyer, a life that's fulfilling to you and interesting." And this means, I'll never retire. I retire from things and people every day, that I don't like dealing with, but the stuff that I find interesting, and the needles that I can move in the world, I'll still be here probably doing that in some form, for a long, long time.

David Phelps:

Ben, I know you will. And I love what you just said, I just had to write it down, "I retire fairly often from things and people I'm tired of," that's a great way to look at it. So, if

you ever want to retire, just look at it that way, but never fully retire. No, you're impactful. Well Ben, you're a person that lives your life the way you speak about it, and I think people would do themselves a lot of good if they would stay in touch, follow you, pick up the book, Play Left Fullback and stay in touch, because Ben, you're always doing great things.

Ben Glass:

Leave a review, if you think that it's worthy of helping you move your life forward. Yeah, absolutely. And it's always fun to talk to you, my friend. We would see each other a couple of times a year at live events, of course that's been really curtailed in the last year or so. And I can't wait. My friends are craving live, entrepreneur events.

David Phelps: Yeah, absolutely. Well, Ben Glass. Thank you so much,

sir. It's been fun today.

Ben Glass: All right, David.

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