

Leadership Reimagined: Why Human Connection Still Wins

Tony Rubleski: Ep #544



Tony Rubleski:

You've got children like I do David, one of my key drivers every day is, I don't want to leave this world worse off for my three kids. I mean, what a disgrace that if we're going to say, you know what, I'm going to retire. You guys figure it out. Really what message are we sending as leaders to hand off the baton to the next generation? So I take that personally, it's one of my core drivers to go out and write and teach and inspire, and I look at that and say, you know what? I've got to have a vision. I think of my children. What legacy am I going to leave for them?

Dr. David Phelps:

Decades ago, I hustled to grow my dental practice and real estate Empire Society patted me on the back and every new deal and patient reinforced the success they said I had. Then my daughter, Jenna was diagnosed with leukemia. Nine years, several intense chemo treatments and years of epileptic seizures. My daughter was given one more miracle, a lifesaving liver transplant. In that hospital. I realized I wasn't successful. I had money, I had real estate assets and a business. But the only thing that mattered was time with my daughter. In that hospital room, I decided to sell my business, leave active income, and sustain my lifestyle with my real estate assets. Now Jenna is healthy and all grown up and me. I am teaching others to do what I did and I continue to uncover the principles, strategies and lessons we can apply in business and investing to create ultimate freedom for what matters most to each of us. Welcome to the Freedom Founders Podcast.

What does it mean to lead in a world that's shifting faster than most could keep up with? In this episode, I sit down with longtime friend, author, and leadership strategist, Tony Rubleski, whose book Trailblazers is more relevant today than when it first released. Tony dives into the seven traits of powerful leadership, why vision matters now more than ever, and how to lead boldly even when you are misunderstood. We unpack lessons from Jeff Bezos, Dan Kennedy and other innovators, discuss the future of AI and explore the critical need for human connection in an increasingly digital world. Whether you're leading a team, a business, or your family, this episode will light a fire under you. So buckle up. Tony brings the heat and you're going to lean into every second.

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Tony, my friend, it is always great to have you back. Wish we could be live today, but we're doing the next best thing, which is virtual, which I'll take it any day of the week. We good friends, going back, was it 2012 when we were in Vegas with our friend Jim Palmer? I mean we were connecting back then. So we've got a run rate of 12, 13 years and I have to tell you, it's always been a highlight to be amongst your influence, amongst your leadership, and that's a big part of what we want to talk about today because you've been riding that particular aspect of your life, who you are leadership and the book that you wrote, it's been half dozen years ago when Trailblazers came out.

Tony Rubleski:

Yeah, you're correct. So you

Dr. David Phelps:

Can go to Amazon, put the link in the notes, but the book Trailblazers leadership lessons from 12 pioneers who beat the odds and influenced millions. And so let's just start out with a big thing that we were talking about earlier is in so many aspects of our lives, our desires to live a life more by design. I think we just talked about that looking like by design, some of the characteristics which come into play with it, it's your family, it's your community. It could be your business Rotary club, it could be your church, your tribe. If you lead a tribe, your team, your business leadership is something, is a word that's thrown around all the time. But let's go into your world and what have you found? What are you finding in your communications with other people who ascribe also to improve not only their lives, but other people's lives? What's it take? What's leadership all about?

Tony Rubleski:

Well, David, first off, it's a pleasure to be back and you and I go back at least 12 or 13 years to Jim Palmer's events and let give a quick plug to you because you've had me speak to your group a couple of times live. So it's always an honor. First off, congrats on what you're doing. You've built Freedom Founders up the books you sent in your latest book, which is wonderful. So I'm inspired by other great leaders to start this out. To answer your question, to kick this thing off, and again, I want to thank everyone that's listening there live or shifting or time shifting is this, it's how do you get people to take action? Really, that's my definition. How do you inspire them? There's the same adjectives to describe the same function. We're all saying, look, where have all the leaders gone?

David and I think the last five years we're adults here, there's been sort of this strange ma lace attitude in the marketplace. The core leaders that go back in time of seeing these patterns or trends. You and I have been through these rodeos, but more and more people are calling me the last 12 months. Ironic, we're doing the interview on this topic, on this book that I wrote six years ago, and what's old is new again, as many of our mentors have taught us. So I love talking about the topic but also saying what are current leaders doing

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differently and what can emerging leaders do? What are some traits that we can learn from? This is my perception. The book trailblazers on the topic and I'm one of several thousandths David that I've written on the topic. So it's not new. It's my perception of what I've seen in 30 years in business and consulting hundreds of companies and several startups I've been a part of. What are the successful clues they're leaving because we can continually learn from the wisdom of those in front of us and also my team. I have young leaders that work for me. So I'm always learning. It's that constant people are giving me a hand up, my mentors and coaches and I'm pulling people up at the same time with leadership, if that makes sense.

Dr. David Phelps:

No, it totally does. So when you were putting this book together over six years ago and determining which 12 trailblazers you were going to interview, number one, how did you select them and a little bit of what was the process like? I mean the book's all about the takeaways of course. So people just need to get the book. But maybe were there any surprises or revelations that came to you just by having some conversations with people that maybe you had always wanted to have conversations with and find out what they attributed to their success in leadership to?

Tony Rubleski:

Well, the first part of your question, it's a good one, is how do we curate over 150 interviews? I've been doing podcast interviews for 10, 15 years around the time we had met. So one of my coaches, Jim Palmer at the time, who you not. So I met you said, you've got all these interviews sitting there, why don't you go back and mine that gold? So we went through it and we said, all right, let's narrow it down. It was difficult. There were several big interviews, big names I didn't put in the book. It would've been easy to do that. I thought, let's go with some folks you may not have heard of. Let's not just focus on business. What are people doing in the religious space? Wm Paul Young who wrote a book called The Shack, 30 million copies, major motion picture. How did he get that book to go big and viral before viral was a big term to a gentleman that won the Stanley Cup as a rookie head coach in the NHL.

So I pulled from a wide range and we curated down to 12 trailblazers. One is another mutual mentor of ours, Dan Kennedy. So Dan was my last trailblazer David, and he had to pull him for years to let me interview him. I said, Dan, we're going to rerelease the book. It's going to go number one. We're going to New York publish it. He goes, all right, I'll let you interview me. He'd already interview, interviewed me three times, David. So Mike, come on, let me return the favor. So Dan Kennedy was our last trailblazer in the book, but here's what I wanted to do, find patterns. Tony Robbins, I call him the other Tony are in my live talks. He says, success leaves clues. So the whole goal of the book is let's reveal what the clues are. So instead of teasing me, and there's nothing wrong with a live event where you get all fired up and you get a few ideas, but give me some blueprint or these successful clues or characteristics that we found that these trailblazers all possess and we found seven of them. So I'm a big pattern guy, David, you're into trends with your tribe and you're looking

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ahead with the crystal ball, but what are the patterns that continually show up in these trailblazers? And that's what we uncovered.

Dr. David Phelps:

You also have spoken about a time when you met Jeff Bezos 2007 at some event in la, and there was some particular lesson that you took away from Jeff. Can you give us a little bit of insight into what that was?

Tony Rubleski:

Well, it's one of those Gump moments to start with on the road. You and I meet interesting people, and it was one of those days my publisher brought me to Book Expo America to promote our second book, and I didn't know that day that Jeff Bezos was a keynote speaker also. He was there to roll out a brand new product called Kindle. So that day he started the digital revolution, sort of like what Steve Jobs did with the iPod and the technology breakthroughs. Apple did. But I got a chance to meet him briefly in the hallway and he had an entourage, he had his handlers, and this was back long before COVID, before he became a household name, but I had a feeling something big was afoot. So I went in the room with about 800 people watched and was mesmerized. It was almost like a TEDx talk he gave about we think this application he had a tablet could do well, it might have a future and the rest is history.

Now what, 15, 16 years later, David? So it was one of those lightning in a bottle moments where you're in the right room, right place, but you have to show up. And here's what he said at the end of his keynote that I'll never forget. He looked at the room point blank and he said, sometimes you have to be willing to be misunderstood, and I've never forgotten it. I wrote it down. I use it in all my keynotes now on this topic in particular, this book, because that's where we're going to be placed now. We're at a very unique intersection as we tape this interview midway through 25. That technology right now, for many reasons, AI especially has got so many people either confused, they're head in the sand thinking forward or completely scared. So my approach to it is you look at what Bezos said is those of us that are leaders, we're going to be misunderstood because we continually have to be at what I call healthy paranoid.

It's like a rookie in training camp every year. I'm like, what live event we've got to up our game if we're publishing and creating, what new book do we want to put into the marketplace every year to 18 months that adds value and more importantly, what's relevant, David? So I didn't know six years ago this book charted number one in print. We didn't give away a free ebook, nothing wrong with that, but people legitimately said, Hey, we want this book, and they bought it, which is difficult to do an Amazon circles. We were getting ready to go out and tour on it and COVID hits. So literally I talked to three CEOs today, one's a bank president, the other is our local Chamber of commerce director, and this topic came up on this book. I couldn't give away this talk the first two or three years during COVID.

No one wanted it. But all the sudden cyclical patterns come around and people are like, all right, we're

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starting to stabilize now. We thought now we have COVID. Now we think, okay, we're through COVID now we have ai. Then we also have all sorts of global upheaval, which you've written about brilliantly, David, and you're constantly sharing with your members, and I've been to your events, so I've seen this firsthand. Where are we trending? Where do you need to be? So I also get around people smarter in the room than me. David. That's another thing is that I don't know it all, but I'm around a lot of very intelligent people from hundreds of sectors. Another big mentor of mine is Jay Abraham. So I've been very blessed and fortunate to consult and speak in hundreds of industries, and I'm always learning that their events, you're interviewing the CEOs or the top salespeople, what do you see in trendline? Thus, that fuses into the book or what Jeff Bezos was saying Back to your question is that now we're going to be misunderstood because we're going to be the leaders that are going to be bold and brave to say, Hey, you know what? It's not the time to give up. We have to adapt, improvise, overcome. And that's straight out of the movie Heart Breakage with Clint Eastwood. So I like to give credit to my mentors. As you know, especially in the world of ai, you can verify these things. They're true.

Dr. David Phelps:

If you're ready to break free from the conventional financial treadmill, the Path to Freedom newsletter is your roadmap. Every quarter you'll receive my free digital newsletter packed with powerful alternative investment strategies, timely economic insights and uncommon wisdom to help you create more freedom, autonomy, and impact in your business and in life. As a subscriber, you'll also get weekly blog insights from decoding market shifts to building generational wealth, to crafting a business that doesn't run you. It's not just information, it's insight that leads to action. Join a community of like-minded entrepreneurs and practitioners who are choosing the road less traveled. Sign up today@freedomfounders.com slash digital newsletter one and start your path to true freedom. That's freedom founders.com/digital newsletter one. So is that what you're saying? The misunderstanding is that you believe in something. Don't be afraid to put it out there, even though probably the majority initially will not really understand what it is you're talking about and we'll dismiss you just like you didn't have anybody really wanting your talk back during COVID, right?

Tony Rubleski:

When you're out trying new things, another mentor had said, be prepared as you go up the ladder of success. You'll be shot full in the bud of arrows and he had other adjectives,

Dr. David Phelps:

But

Tony Rubleski:

To keep it PC under 18, if there's people listening because you have a lot of your clients bring their kids to the events. So it's one of those things that if someone's 15 years old listening to this interview now or a year from

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now or 10 years because of time shifting archives, that it's a lessons that I learned luckily with great mentors that I paid to be in the room with some that mentored me for free. I was always naturally curious, but as you move up and you make big moves or try ideas, you will get shot full of criticism. Let me throw this out there that it hit me about five, six years ago. Oftentimes the biggest critics we have, David, are those closest to us. It doesn't mean you get rid of all your family. I'm not making very blanket statements like go out and if it's an ex-wife or a brother-in-law, you don't like remove 'em and don't ever talk to 'em.

There's a lot of people online saying that stuff, and that to me is garbage. My faith walk as a believer a Christian is you're supposed to do unto others as you have do unto you. However, I limit the time I'm around them. There's a big difference, and I just posted today about sometimes with your critics, I'll paraphrasing go out there and do it anyway and give them one heck of a show. So some of my influences are from people that have laughed at me and it's never from a revenge space subconsciously. It's like, okay, you've given me more fuel to actually go try the idea. Now, I have several family members and friends that still don't know what I do. They're like, what do you really do? And I don't get an explanations over Thanksgiving or Easter or church about it, but I'm like, you know what?

That's okay to be misunderstood. Where we have to be careful, especially in social media, is people that sit in the gallery, that watch online and never comment, and as soon as they disagree, something that challenges the world, they get all mean with you. My best advice to your audience, and I share this with my clients all over the world, is any negative comments you get if they continue, you can silently message someone privately or you block or you unfollow 'em. It's simple, but if someone occasionally throws a jab at you and you just go like it, the positive comments I just do and it freaks 'em out. I don't know how to respond because I'll not get into a online match with somebody to waste valuable clock time to share things that aren't always going to hit. I have thousands of followers like you, and sometimes people think that's exactly how I feel or I'm thinking at that moment, no, this is a broader audience that I share these concepts and I want people to think for themselves. David, critical thinking it's a lost art.

Dr. David Phelps:

Yeah, no question. We're talking about leaders who have a vision. Why is it important to have a vision in that same vein, how difficult can it be sometimes for a leader, a visionary, to get buy-in for that vision?

Tony Rubleski:

Well, it's one of the seven characteristics that we found of all these trailblazers as we coin these great leaders, and the third one is vision. Looking at the list here, okay, the third trait is vision, but it goes back to several great books. In my faith, walk the Bible without vision, you shall perish. So this is ancient wisdom that's nothing really new, but in the modern age of an eight second attention span, really want to share this with your audience. In particular, my forte is teaching. How do you get attention the last 25 years or mind

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capture which we built the brand and the book series on? We're now down to eight seconds, David, the Microsoft data is alarming. So for people to listen to a long form podcast, I'm grateful when they say, I listened to your interview. I'm like, you stay the whole way.

They're like, yeah, because it's incredibly difficult to get attention or mind capture, hold the time and then establish credibility where someone says, Hey, I want to keep listening and listening a little bit more. We're now down to that eight second window. The vision's important because you have to have a boat. You have to have the rudder to guide the boat to get to the destination point A to point B. Some of the challenges is you and I are entrepreneurs, we coach and work with lots of entrepreneurs. It's the loneliest job in the world at times. So I'm always reinvigorated when I go to mastermind meeting that I'm either I'm leading or I'm a member of. I'm still in both sides of that and I'm around other leaders like you. When I read your books or listen to your podcast or I speak at your events, I get inspired that I'm not alone out there.

There are other crazy ones or those that are misunderstood that are moving the needle forward. You've got children. I do David, one of my key drivers every day is, I don't want to leave this world worse off for my three kids. I mean, what a disgrace that if we're going to say, you know what? I'm going to retire. You guys figure it out. Really what message are we sending as leaders to hand off the baton to the next generation? So I take that personally, it's one of my core drivers to go out and write and teach and inspire, and I look at that and say, you know what? I've got to have a vision. I think of my children. What legacy am I going to leave for them?

Dr. David Phelps:

There's been a lot of leadership foibles that we can name, but there's I guess one that's kind of near and dear to people who travel like you do, right? You want to lay that one out? I think I know which one you're talking about, but go right ahead.

Tony Rubleski:

Well, there are lessons and when I'm doing a presentation, I share the successes and what are the lessons from those companies that have done it right? And what are the ones that failed? How the mighty have fallen? They get too cocky, too big, too arrogant, too big to fail. And the most recent one, David, is Southwest Airlines and full disclosure, I flew them a lot last month, sometimes just easier. But I love the airline. Here's what I don't like is the lack of leadership the last six months and my 2 cents on it, and again, it's just a strong opinion. They went and got venture capital. I don't know their finances, none of my business, but they went and got private equity. That private equity firm is known to do this. They go in, they raid the assets, they sell it off, they crank up shareholder value, they cash out in two to five years and they got the company I'm hoping, again, I don't have a crystal ball, they do not do that to Southwest.

But they essentially came out and I saw the video. I watched about two minutes and I had to shut it off with

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the new CEO saying, we're going to get rid of bags, fly free. And he came up with all these reasons. In the short time I watched it about what's in it for us, for us, for us. Not a damn concern for the customer. Rapid rewards members like me. And it's very practical if you have a lot of kids and lots of luggage to use Southwest and they got a good routing and great customer service. So I thought it was an absolute travesty to what they built. Their unique point of differentiation. The USP was bags fly free. They used to put it on their airplane movers. They had it on all their marketing, and that's a huge draw for lots of different flyers based on their needs at the time.

So what they've done is they've took 30 or 40 years and I'm sure Herb Kelleher's just turning his grave thinking, what did you do? And now they're like everybody else. So in a world of airlines, which are primarily, I call either vanilla or chocolate, there's two options. They were the Neapolitan, they were the third element that had an option that made it affordable and you'd love the bags fly free and they joke with you, they had fun culture that's dying. And I've talked to Southwest flight attendants and some of the captains, I'm always gracious like, Hey, my life's in your hands. Thank you for the great landing. And the flight attendants are doing the best they can dealing with the public, which isn't easy, and they're telling me on flights last few months, they're like, man, we're sorry. So I have a sense that unless they change direction, it's at the end of May.

That's when it was ending. I can't imagine right now, June, going forward, what they're dealing with right now is we do this interview, what the gate agents are dealing with. People are going to be mad for a while, but now they've just made themselves like every other carrier. So it's sad to see mismanagement at such a high level. It's like, are you that far in the ivory tower? Now again, I've just killed any chance of doing a speech for self airlines. We went online and found an interview. I don't care anymore, David, because here's the deal, it's common sense. I don't know if I'd want to put my brand with theirs right now. It goes both directions. I can pick and choose who I work with. I have freedom of choice, but what a tactical, massive blunder for short term gain for long-term, what I call really extinction if they don't change their ways,

Dr. David Phelps:

You remember the moment you were sitting in your office, patients lined up calendar packed months ahead, the numbers looked fine, but something inside you whispered, is this really freedom? Now imagine walking into a room of people who've asked the same question and found a better answer as the conversation sparks something in you. They're not about grinding harder, they're about building smarter, replacing earned income with predictable cashflow, creating margin and options in your schedule for your family, your purpose, your life. You hear real stories, not sales pitches, and for the first time you see a clear path forward, not someday. Now this isn't theory. It's a blueprint and is built for people like you, high achievers who are done waiting for retirement to live free. The next Freedom Founders event is coming up this October. Your seat's waiting. Will you take it? Learn more and register by scheduling a call at freedomfounders.com/discover. That's freedom

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founders.com/discover. Here's my big question for you Tony, and this is on my mind and probably everybody else's, but ai, artificial intelligence has really made its inroads, it's been around for a long time, but really for users, retail users like me and anybody else today, chat GBTs out there, many iterations, what's that going to do for leadership overall? What's the impact that you see? It's going to have positive, negative. How do we know?

Tony Rubleski:

Well, I've listened to other thought leaders from Simon Sinek to those that have founded ai. I've listened to podcasts the last year. I've sat in audiences I've either gone on before, after an AI instructor and some of our phenomenal some. I'm again looking for patterns and here's my quick answer and then I'll give some predictions. I don't know. I don't know where it's going to go. If I did, you and I would be buying all the stocks of all the companies that are going to make all the infrastructure, but there's a lot of what if. But here's what I see as patterns and trend lines. What I'm gathering from those that are smarter than me, that are in it full-time and what I'm seeing with my clients, don't ignore it. I think it's a great tool that don't get shiny objects where you're spending your entire day or you're going to take six months to learn it. You still have a business to run and human to human will never go away.

Strong opinion. You've heard me say it in front of your live groups. Social distance to me was the biggest failure in human history. We are built for social connection, David, it's been thousands of years. So what I'm going to see is that it's going to keep evolving and shifting where I'm concerned as a marketing and from a historical perspective, I'm a history geek. I went to college, be a history teacher and change majors to business. So maybe that's why I love patterns, but it's changing so fast that to ignore it is foolish. So I'll give you an example of what we're doing to address it in our company. I just got off the phone this morning, no joke with Jonathan Mast, arguably he calls himself the white beard strategist fan of mine for a decade. Real good web guy. He's become like in the last two years, one of the top AI guys in the world.

He's going to be at my event this fall. I just talked to him. I said, Jonathan, we are delighted. We want you to break down what you're seeing at such a high, high level globally. Break it down for a small business in Main Street for my audience of two 300 this fall at bootcamp. And he's like, okay, we're doing breakfast next week because he splits time in Alabama and he comes back to Michigan the summer. And I said, what if we added on a bonus half day the day after bootcamp where we did sort of a meet and greet with Jonathan, you do a half day class, David, he could fill up two 300 people that would fly in just for that because he's got the hot topic, he's doing it and he's teaching it to Main Street. I'm saying I'll be like a fly on the wall in five months in the back of the room taking all kinds of notes.

My gut says, we'll likely do a half day, oh, I'll be there with our entire team recording and taking notes and then say, what are the three things we're going to implement right away based on Jonathan? And oh, by the way, Jonathan, do you have a mentorship program that our team can get involved with to ongoing consult

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with or coach be coached by group dynamic. So I'm not ignoring it, but I'm also not ignoring the black and white blocking and tackling meeting. Before I talked to Jonathan was our local chamber of commerce director, he said, Hey, we're doing leadership training. We like the Trailblazers book. It's timely. We want you to go talk with, check this out, our young professional group about communication skills like Dale Carnegie stuff, how to win friends and Influence people. How do you give a presentation? How do you look people in the eye?

How do you show your value? How do you tell a story? How do you give a presentation to a live group? A lot of the group under 30 don't know how to communicate like we're doing. It's all text, email or have AI write the email. People are starting to catch onto that. So the human element, here's the really good news is never going to go away. It's just going to keep modifying. The speed of change though does concern. It's going to happen so rapidly. The bandwidth, the computing power, Moore's law, it's so, so fast that to ignore it, please know, I think the next year or two people are very wisely advised to start researching or spend it, find a good coach, get into an AI program, mentor mastermind program, and they're very affordable. David, I did a coaching program last year with Joel Bauer.

Shameless plug for him. He's 25 grand an hour if you can get him. He offered a group training program on Facebook and 70 of us jumped on for seven straight days with him and David. He's so far, it was 30 bucks, it was a 29 offer. I'm like, I took Paige's notes. I was like, that is the best \$29 I've ever spent on a group coaching program on communication and speaking from stage was with Joel Bower's group. So I'm trying to share with your audience, if you believe in the value, make time, you'll get your team involved. Doesn't have to spend 3 million to coach with the highest they do group training and absorb and absorb and then take a few points and integrate it into your successful business so you don't fall behind. So lots of stuff thrown in there, but I just think it's going to be one of those things I don't want to be left behind, not fear of missing out where I'm like, oh my God, it's going to replace everything but the speed of it's going to catch a lot of people off guard.

Dr. David Phelps:

Yeah, I totally agree. Stay engaged. Yeah, do something with it, right? Do something. Alright, let's finish with this. You authored the Trailblazer book six years ago. Who are a couple of trailblazers or mentors that you look up to? You mentioned a couple of people already just in the last few minutes, but is there anybody else in particular that you really put as a north star for you?

Tony Rubleski:

There's several, but two come to mind immediately and they didn't make the book and then some, if we do a follow-up, I've had many people say, why don't you put out volume two, update it. Bezos is up there and I think that chance encounter, it's one of those rare lifetime moments where you're in the right room and you

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actually get to meet 'em. That was a very pivotal day because that's timeless wisdom. Little did I know he'd become one of the richest men in the world financially and Amazon would become a household name 16, 17 years ago when I met him. So that was right place, right time, and just absorbed. Another leader that is from the real estate industry is Tammy. She's now the co-chair of Exit Realty out of Toronto. She was the CEO of North America. She's spoken at a couple of my bootcamps, full disclosure, but every time I've been around her, she's a great giver.

She'll jump in after she gives a keynote, sit at our round tables, David, and work mastermind with our attendees. And that to me is a selfless leader that says, you know what? I'm no better than you. I have the position, I had the chop. She's won all kinds of world records in real estate sales before she became a CEO and now co-chairman, but she's the highest ranking in that industry. She is a Go-Giver, as Bob Berg would say. She just gives, and I've gotten thank you notes from her, she's mailed me thank you books, stuff that you and I do. You would never expect a leader that's that busy in such a cutthroat industry to do the little details. And I gave her a little shameless plug. I went and saw her speak two months ago in Lansing here in Michigan, and she gave a talk to about 50 exit agents and she said, look, I do a thing called the Dirty Dozen.

That's her mastermind David. She has 12 people, and since I brought her to my events many years ago, she's now expanded to her dirty 24. So she's masterminding with 24 people, not in real estate every quarter. They're in different sectors, which to me you talk about brilliant, she's getting trend lines and data points from other industries to see what's going on, to exchange obviously information to help each other, but picking up trend lines before that can impact real estate positively or negatively. So the lesson there is you would think the high achievers have it made. They're continually learning and they're often the biggest givers. They're teachers, David, and that's what drew me to you many years ago when we first met. You have a good soul and it's been fun to watch you build Freedom Founders from that crazy vision like I've done with my live event where people are like, you shouldn't do live events.

And I'm like, there are days I'm like, why do I do it? But you future pace out five months to our event and there's 250 people in the room and people are like, wow, this was incredible. It's worth it. But when you're trying to sell it in the summertime when people are distracted and there's wars going on in ai, there are days you go, man, I can make money a lot easier. But it's about contribution back and the alliances, the book deals, the joint ventures that happen out, my live events similar to Freedom Founders at the end of the day going, you know what? That's impact far above and beyond the books and the consulting that we write and we teach is to watch people forge those relationships. So Tammy Benell is definitely one. Jeff Bezos is one in a much macro, larger picture that I look up to. And again, success leaves the clues. David, and I appreciate you pulling and curating wisdom from other people like myself to bring back to Freedom Founders. I read your newsletters when they come in. Yes, you use printed. I read the paper at Ink. I love your books and I've referred people to you. So it's the give and take of exchange of value. That's what we're about.

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Dr. David Phelps:

Yep. I will often repeat the mantra. Your network is your net worth.

Tony Rubleski:

Amen.

Dr. David Phelps:

Well, Tony, it's always great to have you. We'll do it again. We'll do it again before too long. Great updates. It's good to see you just give off the great work as the trailblazer that you are

Tony Rubleski:

A pleasure, my friend. Thank you.

Dr. David Phelps:

Some people want to know how am I using AI or artificial intelligence in my leadership roles and development today leading my teams or really just creating greater provocations. I'm not very technical, but I have entered into the world of AI and utilized some of the various platforms to lay out some of my more provocative thinking, some challenges I have or how I can better state a case to people I'm trying to lead or influence in a positive way. That's primarily how I've used ai. I know there's so many deeper ways that people can use it way greater than I can do it, but I just found it to be a little bit of a set of outside eyes. You can't rely on AI for everything, but sometimes it does fill a gap or a void when sometimes my thinking hits sort of a brick wall and I'm a little bit in a vacuum and I'm not sure exactly where to go next.

If I type up some things, some thoughts, some questions or challenges into ai, oftentimes I get something back that sparks my next thinking. So that's how I've used it to date. Obviously, it's something we have to all learn how to incorporate it into our lives, our businesses at some form or fashion, everybody's going to find a different way, a different case. Some people are more innovative than others. I sit probably on the slower adoptability side, but that doesn't mean I don't get involved. I think we all have to stay on the forefront of a rapidly changing world today, and it's just that important. Since Tony Leski and I came from a connection through another mastermind group, some 10 or 12 years ago, we both obviously embraced the idea of a network of putting ourselves in an environment. Investing into environments many times is the case so that we can be around other people that help sharpen our thinking, to challenge our thinking, to provide themselves as oftentimes guides in certain parts of our lives where we have challenges, where we are not sure of ourselves or where there may be risk factors that other people already are aware of that we could learn from before we step into the deep murky waters of something that we shouldn't do.

I find that that type of environment is invaluable. And I would say that any circle that I put myself in, I want to

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make sure that there are plenty of people there that have an unbiased agenda. In other words, they're there for the same intense and purposes that I'm there to collaborate, to connect, to give feedback when desired or asked for, and to create some level of accountability. I've found some lifelong friends in some of the networks and communities and mastermind groups that I have invested in over the years, lifelong friends that I wouldn't have found otherwise. It's not that you can't have good people around you in your social circles and your peer group, your profession, but I think we have to go outside to a deeper degree when you can, as you evolve, as you grow my world, it's the key to all the growth I've had, and it's helped sustain me during times when I wasn't sure exactly what moves to make.

And it's not that I let anybody tell me what to do, but I like to again, get feedback from people to see where my blind spots may be, and that's what gives me the confidence to make decisions. If we don't make decisions, we're probably taking the biggest risk of all. We have to make decisions constantly in our lives. Otherwise we become stagnant and stagnation doesn't lead to anything that's admirable in ins life. Thanks for watching or listening For those interested in learning how to create exceptional and life-changing results to step back or exit entirely from practice, then schedule a call with my team at [freedom founders.com/discover](https://freedomfounders.com/discover). That's [freedom founders.com/discover](https://freedomfounders.com/discover). We'll dig into your financial situation and let you know your best next steps. And as always, be sure to hit the subscribe or follow button wherever you're watching and listening so you don't miss a single episode of the Freedom Founders Podcast. I'll see you next time.