

Ep 15: Kate McGrath

Title: Winning Through Mindset: Lessons from Sales and Volleyball

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Transcript

Louie Sharp 00:01

Welcome to the Leadership and Love Podcast. We will cover leadership, mindset, personal development, and sales and marketing. You'll experience thought-provoking conversations with both nationally and internationally recognized leaders. Our goal is to inspire you and deliver actionable items that you can implement that will help you accelerate your growth. Get ready to discover the magic and the power when you lead with love.

Louie Sharp 00:32

I'm very, very excited today. I've got a dear friend and just an amazing person all around. It's Kate McGrath. And let me give you a quick intro for Kate. Kate's an independent insurance agent representing Aflac. She's a district sales coordinator, and she works with small businesses supporting them and their employees with amazing benefits. With more than 20 years of experience, Kate has managed many types of teams, from sales and marketing to customer service, as well as coaching both boys and girls' high school volleyball.

Louie Sharp 01:05

She is a passionate leader guiding her teams, whether in business or on the volleyball court, to their ultimate success. I love that sentence, to their ultimate success. She values every relationship. Knowing her personally, I know and have watched her live this. She does value every relationship, as she knows that working with skilled and passionate professionals will provide success for all. She's also the proud mother of two amazing children that she's grown into some perfectly amazing young adults. So Kate, welcome, and thanks for being here today.

Kate McGrath 01:37

Hi, Louie. Thanks so much for having me.

Louie Sharp 01:40

Yeah, it's truly my honor. So I'm really excited because I think this is going to be fascinating. I asked you and you selected Mindset, which is really fascinating to me because and we might have to do a second episode because of your experience and wisdom in sales. But I'd like to start with Mindset. And one of the things I think that's so fascinating about you is that you lead everywhere, right? I mean, you're the single mom who's led these two amazing children. You're this single person who's in a professional career leading a team of salespeople underneath you that's serving small businesses. And if that's not enough, you're a leader in your personal life, coaching volleyball. So what was the first thing you'd like the audience to know about Mindset?

Kate McGrath 02:30

Well, you know, I've been thinking about this leading up to the podcast. And when I was little, even just as a little kid, I used to think I had superpowers because I would think of something or think about something or think of what could happen or what might happen, and then it would happen. And like, I used to think I had spiritual power sometimes, you know, and I was just a kid.

Kate McGrath 02:53

And so I think that truly mindset, you know...they always say we have what, like 70,000 thoughts in our head in a given day, and the majority of them are negative. So it taught me as a young kid, sometimes I would think negative things and they would come true. And I was like, oh my God, I wished this to happen, and this is a terrible situation. And so it taught me really early on to keep those positive thoughts going because what you will to happen, what you think is going to happen, a lot of times happens. So take control of your thoughts so that you're really kind of willing yourself into all these wonderful, great things that can happen to you.

Louie Sharp 03:39

So, that's a great place to start because one of the things I share with people like when I speak and do things like that is I'll ask the room by a show of hands who's had the experience of thinking of somebody and they get a phone call, a text or an email and everybody puts their hand up, right? So we all have the power, we're all creating.

Louie Sharp 03:58

And one of the things that I did as a little kid, I would, so I played trombone in the high school band, I sucked. That's why I ended up on a guitar because I couldn't blow a trombone to save my life. But one of the things that I would do is to remember my trombone, I would tell myself I'd lay in bed at night and I'd say, take your trombone, take your trombone. And I would tell myself whatever I wanted to remember 10 times before I fell asleep and I'd wake up the next morning and bam, I never forgot my trombone.

Louie Sharp 04:28

So you touched on something about positive thoughts, negative thoughts and it's creating. What would your advice be to our listeners on what they can do to start to manage those things and have their thoughts in the direction they want to create the things they want?

Kate McGrath 04:45

Well, I think you can just as a daily practice when you wake up in the morning, kind of start the day off being grateful, right? We've talked about this before. Every day, grateful to be alive, grateful lately here in Chicago to have the sun and warm weather and low traffic, I had yesterday heading to the city. So grateful for those things.

Kate McGrath 05:09

And then I think once you thank the universe for these wonderful things or God or, you know, you start to think positive automatically. So I think when you can start the day off with positive gratefulness, if that's really the best way to describe it, then you can go into what am I gonna

tackle today? I am a huge list person. Even when I was going into an office every day, I got up before my kids got up. And the very first thing I did was list out everything I'm doing that day. Don't worry, it was still on my computer and on my calendar and, you know, all of that. But I got up and reiterated these are the things I gotta get done today. And then I get them up and get them dressed and get them off to school and then I get to work and I tackle those things. So I think it's that waking up, positive energy, and kind of knowing what you're gonna tackle in the day and telling yourself that you did that, that you're gonna do that stuff, first thing.

Louie Sharp 06:16

Gotcha. Yeah, I would agree with that. I just recently read a book called The Magic of Surrender and he said something very powerful in there. He said, it's not only what you think about that creates, it's what you thank about, what you thank about that creates. And so I agree, and you're right, we've talked about the power of gratitude. One of the things I'd like to lead to next is, so you've got your mindset going on, what would you recommend to people who are struggling with a fair amount of negativity in their own, you know, the stuff that goes on our own had that negative self-talk. What would you suggest for them to get over that or past it or improve it so it's headed towards the direction of the things that they want, not what they don't want?

Kate McGrath 06:57

Well, you really have to have belief in yourself, and you have to care for yourself. You have to and that's really something that's hard to tackle for a lot of people is, you know, that self-love, right? Loving yourself and loving the fact that you are in the position you are to create your own destiny.

Louie Sharp 07:18

I gotta interrupt you. So she just dropped two golden nuggets and prior to that a third one. So gratitude, the power of gratitude, but she just dropped two golden nuggets. One, she said the power of self-love, and I didn't call this thing Leadership and Love by accident. I can tell you to lead yourself, you have to love yourself. And the next thing she dropped is that you have the choice to do that. So I'm sorry to interrupt but please go on Kate

Kate McGrath 07:44

Yeah, it's funny you say that, you know, I always told my kids every day, you have the choice to be happy, and the choice to not, right every morning. So like, you can control your mindset, you can control your emotions. And then, you know, loving yourself and taking on tasks, knowing that they're good for you, right? Everything you accomplish is a good thing for you because it gives you energy, it gives you confidence, it gives you those things that you need to be successful throughout the day.

Kate McGrath 08:20

So you're not going to be perfect at everything, you're not going to win at everything. And, you know, that's even something that I've had to learn in my new role. You have to take on so many pitfalls or no's or doors slammed in your face, phones hung up on you. And I've been in sales my

whole life. When I took on this role, I was like, why isn't anybody answering my emails? Why aren't they calling me back? I, you know, I went from an executive position to a sales position again, and I had to remind myself, not everyone's gonna love me, not everyone's gonna want to hear from me. And then you can either take that as a, well, I suck or I'm terrible and nobody likes me, or you can take it as a, I got to keep going.

Kate McGrath 09:07

This is a numbers game. I got to keep trying, keep trying, keep trying. And then when somebody does accept your call or your email or meets you face-to-face, you start feeling like, oh, right, I am, I can do this. I have and those, the good will outweigh the bad. And you will start having more confidence in yourself. You will have more energy, you will have more drive.

Kate McGrath 09:31

You know, I work with new agents. And I, and I know I've been there, I've been there on those days when you're like, I can't make another call. I can't contact somebody who's going to be like, I already talked to somebody like you, leave me alone. But you have to say, okay, I don't care about that person. And you start to feel sorry for them a little bit like, Oh, I feel bad that they're not going to get to work with me because I'm awesome. Right? You have to almost take that mindset that they're feel bad for them, that they're not going to get the products and the services that you're able to offer them and just move on to the next one, and then go back to them in six months.

Kate McGrath 10:10

Every time you get better at something, you create more confidence, you are more passionate about what you're doing. And you can go back to that person and try them again. And if they say no, and slam the phone down again, you try them again, six months later, you mail them something, you know, it's that you have to get over that hurdle of feeling like, Oh, I don't have the confidence. I don't have the skill set. I don't know what I'm doing to taking every win and just building on it.

Kate McGrath 10:39

I always say almost everything is contagious, right? Negative thoughts, contagious. Positive thoughts, contagious. Wins, contagious. I coach volleyball. Missing serves is contagious. All of a sudden, everyone's missing a serve. Getting aces is contagious. Everyone's crushing their serves. So, you know, everything can build on itself.

Kate McGrath 11:02

So you have to let the negative go and just ride the wave of all the positive. And you start to think differently. There's that mindset, you start to not even hear the negatives, right? Somebody slams the phone down, you're like, Okay, bye. You know, you kind of laugh it off. You're like, Oh, well, next. You get on to the next thing. And you do that faster and better and faster and better and with more ease every time.

Louie Sharp 11:30

So I get the Kate, thank you so much. So she just touched on two other golden nuggets that I want to make sure you grasp as audience members, whether you're listening or watching. One of the things that she just said is persistence. You'll notice she said, you keep going, you keep going, you keep going, you keep going. And so remember, it's not about the quantity or quality on any specific day. It's about consistently going at it every day.

Louie Sharp 11:55

One of the other things she said that was very powerful. Now, this is gonna take some practice, and it's gonna lead me to my next question, Kate. But the next thing that she talked about is the ability to spin that thing in her head, right? Did you notice that when she was getting rejected, she didn't, first she didn't take it personally. She didn't think somebody was telling her that she wasn't pretty or that she was stupid or that whatever, whatever that negative self-talk is, she didn't buy into that. And so she didn't take it personally. And then she spun it to the what she wanted to hear. So she said, I feel bad for them that they don't get to work with me.

Louie Sharp 12:32

And that's that self-love, right? So that's amazing stuff, Kate. So what I'd like to just share, if you would, let's start with what do you do? What are your practices and habits for self-love to help your mindset and your self-esteem to take care of you?

Kate McGrath 12:50

Um, so, you know, you gave me that question up front, and I had to think about like, what, what do I do for self-love? Um, and it's kind of a blanket answer, but I do what makes me happy, right? What brings me joy? And it can be the most simple thing, silly thing, um, like mowing the lawn, okay? Everyone says to me, why are you wasting your time mowing your lawn? You're, you're running your own business. You got to be working all the time. Don't waste your time doing that. And I say, well, I put in a podcast. Sometimes I'm mowing the lawn laughing at whatever it is. Sometimes I'm listening to music, and I'm dancing while I'm mowing the lawn. And I'm sure my neighbors think I'm crazy, but I love it.

Kate McGrath 13:35

I love getting up, taking something that is an utter mess or what it looks like as an utter mess at the end of the week and cleaning it up, making it look good and, you know, just kind of wanting to, to hang out in my backyard for a little bit and the peace and quiet. Sometimes I don't listen to anything. It's just quiet for me. And, um, I do that because I enjoy it. So I do things that bring me happiness, and it can be going to a random basketball game that I know is going to be an exciting game between two high school teams that I don't have anybody in the race. I don't know anyone on the teams, right? And everyone's like, why would you go?

Louie Sharp 14:15

Right.

Kate McGrath 14:15

I thought it was fun, right? So my self-love comes from doing the things that make me happy. Sometimes it's just buying flowers for myself, you know? I don't do it that often, but every now and then I'm like, you know what, I just feel like I want to have some flowers in the kitchen.

Kate McGrath 14:33

But it's, it's, I'm, I, sometimes I tell people I live large, but I do the things that bring me joy. So I go to visit my kids, I'm going to see my daughter this weekend, that will bring me so much joy to spend a weekend to do that, right? I don't care what it costs in the moment, I do those things that bring me joy. And what, you have to figure out what those things are for you. It may be sitting down and reading a book and you know, and taking the time out of your busy schedule to do that. But you, everybody needs to find what brings them joy and do it, and do it without caring what other people think. Right?

Louie Sharp 15:20

Without a doubt. And so I'd like to...you're on fire, Kate. I knew this was gonna go all kinds of really cool places. So one of the things I'd like to share with the audience is Kate said another, and this one's a goal mine, right? This is the main vein. You wanna really tap into this. Have fun every day. I tell people, if you're not having fun every day, this thing called life is precious and it's short.

Louie Sharp 15:45

So, and I love what Kate said. So I'd like to give everybody something to do today before the end of the day. I want you to make two lists. I want you to make a list of the things that you love to do, much like Kate talked about. I've got a friend of mine that she loves to cut the grass to, and she loves to do it barefoot. But I'd like you to make two lists today. I'd like you to make a list of the things that are fun for you, that don't take any money. And that could be sitting and reading a book. That could be sitting in the yard, walking in the grass barefoot.

Louie Sharp 16:15

One of my things I love to do probably costs money, but it's not huge, but I love to take a hot shower until it runs out of hot water. I mean, I just, it's just, that's relaxing to me. It's meditative; I really enjoy it. And then the second list is things that you love to do that you have, it's gonna cost you money. It's gonna cost you something, right? You have to spend time or money to make those things happen. But at that point, you've got two lists and not having money is not an excuse not to have fun. Because like Kate said, and again, this is a goldmine here, is that you can do stuff that's fun, that doesn't take any money. And often for me, and Kate, you may be able to speak to this too, often those things are some of the most fun that you can have because you're not spending a lot of money, and it just simultaneously breaks into some really good times.

Louie Sharp 17:04

The next question I'd like to lead into is as a leader, both in business for your sales teams that you're building and as a volleyball coach and you're a prior player as well, what would you

suggest to our listeners as a leader to help the people that were leading change or become aware of their mindset?

Kate McGrath 17:30

Well, I think a lot of times you can help guide them by example, right? If you show up every day and you're like, isn't it an awesome day, even though it's like a blizzard outside or whatever, I mean, we have our market leader for Aflac here, Joanna Rockwell, she's amazing. And she would have these Friday morning meetings at seven in the morning, and everyone's half awake, and she's listing off what everyone did for the week. And then she's like, all right guys, go out there. Today is a great day to market, right? To get out in the field, it could be a blizzard out. And then some days she'll be like, today's really a good day because it's sunny and it's 70 to get out there. But even, you know, so if you lead by the energy, by the positivity, it will, like I said, it's contagious, right?

Kate McGrath 18:22

It will lead off into your team, your staff, you know, to steal a phrase from Ted Lasso, with my volleyball players, I always said, be a goldfish, right? Let it go. Let the last five seconds go. You have a memory of five seconds. That's key to volleyball. Volleyball is a game of errors. And the team that wins is the team that makes fewer errors and comes together, but you gotta forget it. You gotta forget it. You can't be perfect. You gotta forget it and move on to the next thing.

Kate McGrath 18:54

But I think, you know, teaching them positivity, right? Like just constant positivity, finding the people too around you that you work with that are positive, right? Energy builds energy, builds excitement. You definitely will have negative people that you work with in your life, on your team. And you've gotta kinda push them out and suck in all the energy from the positive ones. I know we've meant to talk about this before too. I love talking to people who give me energy. And there are certainly people who take energy, right? And so you gotta surround yourself and build off those that just ricochet energy off of you. And it starts with you.

Kate McGrath 19:45

As a leader, it starts with you. When I was on an executive team for a company and we would meet, the leadership team would meet, I would tell them they have a moral obligation to be positive and happy every day that they come to work. And some of them would laugh at me, and I could tell you they were never 100% positive. But I would say you have an obligation. You have a team. If you work for yourself, fine. I don't care if you're positive with yourself or not, but you have a team. So every morning you have to come in, and you have to say, today's a great day. Let's knock this out of the park, right? Let's just do our job and do it well. And I'm here to support you, and I'm here to give you whatever tools you need to be successful, but we're gonna rock this day. This is gonna be an awesome day. And if you can't, as a leader, show up and do that, then you're either not in the right position or you need to take the day off and do some self-love and get yourself back to having that positive energy, right?

Kate McGrath 20:42

So as a leader, you really, you gotta lead by example. You gotta just permeate just tons of energy and excitement about what you do. And if you're a leader who loves what you do, which I hope you are, because why are you in this position if you don't love what you do?

Kate McGrath 21:00

And that goes back to the leadership and love. But if you are not in love with what you're doing, it's gonna be hard for you to have that energy. So find what you love, do what you love, and then lead with the energy and the positivity that you get from just being a part of whatever organization it is or doing whatever it is you're doing.

Louie Sharp 21:23

So again, you're on fire. So, she shares something really powerful right there. And they've actually done research, and nobody has a bigger impact on a team than the leader with that mental positive mental attitude, the morale, all those kinds of things. So she's hitting the nail on the head where you need to realize if you're walking in, everybody's going to hang on your mood. If you walk in down in the dumps, it's going to spread like wildfire.

Louie Sharp 21:53

And you keep using the word contagious. And that's a great word because it's true. Kate, it's all it's contagious. You're we're all contagious. The other thing you talked about was people that are positive and negative. And it's one of the reasons why, you know, you and I kind of hit it off right off the bat. And so what I'd like you to share is what would your advice and coaching be to somebody? So there's somebody on their team. At what point do you coach, try and coach them up? At what point do you cut them free?

Kate McGrath 22:26

Good question. You know, it's funny as you were leading into that question, I was like, well, I don't keep people on my team who have negative energy. But yeah, I mean, you've got to see, and it's interesting because as a coach, you know, I'm a freshman high school coach, okay, which I love, I love that level. And I get 70 or 80 girls trying out every year. Right? I keep 24 this year, I kept 31 or last year, I kept 31, which is the most ever, right? And I do weed out the negative energy, right? Okay, I look at skill level, I look at everything, because negative energy can cause a terrible effect and terrible outcomes.

Kate McGrath 23:16

But there are definitely players that will come in, and they'll get frustrated. And I know they have the talent, and they'll get frustrated because things aren't going their way or a sales rep works really hard and starts getting down, right? And you see them really start to kind of become negative and kind of closed up. And the thing that works most for me is helping them get little wins. Right? Let's find those little wins, but always telling them that I believe in them. Right?

Louie Sharp 23:54

Ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, I gotta interrupt, I gotta interrupt. Repeat those two things, please. That's gold too.

Kate McGrath 24:01

So giving them, finding ways to help them get little wins, right? So if it's on the volleyball court and it's a kid who's not playing as much, and I put them in and I know they're gonna be successful in whatever role I put them in in that moment, right? I gotta find you a win, whether it's going into just serve two balls, whatever. Find that little win and then help them believe in themselves, right?

Kate McGrath 24:29

Because I believe in them. And when you continue to believe in someone, especially if they're struggling, they start to believe in themselves to be able to do it. And I think of one of the players I had last year, just she really struggled throughout the season, and I would sit down with her, and I would say this is all mental, back to mindset.

Kate McGrath 24:51

I would say this is mental because I know you have the skillset, and I know you can do this. I know, that's why I kept you on your team. I don't keep kids on my team, I don't believe in. So anyway, but she pulled it together, had just an amazing game. I put her in a position that was a pretty important position, and I said, I need you to do this, and I know you can. And she did it and from that point on, she never had any doubts that she belonged where she was, she belonged on the team, she belonged on the court, she could do anything I asked her to do.

Kate McGrath 25:32

But it was just...so believe in them, tell them you believe in them so that they start to believe in themselves and then find ways to give them little wins, because the more they win, the more they can celebrate and celebrate them, too, publicly, right? Like I'm big on that too. Reward, celebrate, really keep everyone engaged with those that are succeeding at every level of the position that they're in because the more they get those little wins, the more they're gonna want those little wins.

Kate McGrath 26:09

And I've said this before too, that I don't babysit whether it's in business or in volleyball, right? I'm not your leader to babysit and watch everything you do. I put you on my team because I trust that you will do these things, and I trust and I know that you will and you have the ability to succeed. And so when you put those people in those roles and you believe in them and you trust in them, they start to trust in themselves, and you become more successful as a leader, as a team because everybody's doing their own thing. They're doing what they're being asked to do and you don't have to babysit them and take care of them. But every now and then you do have to get them over some hurdles, and it's kind of fun to do it. It's kind of a little challenge in there.

Louie Sharp 27:00

Yeah. So, again, Kate touched on a couple of things I think very, very important. And one of them is and I've worked with enough teams over the years to know it's amazing how one negative person could suck a whole team down. Right? And so at some point you have to make that hard decision. But to your point, Kate, the sooner and the faster you make it, the easier the whole team is going to be better.

Louie Sharp 27:22

The other thing that Kate talked about is something I think is very important that most leaders don't take the time to do on a regular basis. There's a great book I read a while back called, Well Done. But one of the things that Kate was just talking about is, are you on a regular basis looking for your people doing things right? Are you appreciating them in public for the things that they're doing right? Because what Kate was talking about is how she builds up their self-esteem and their self-confidence and their self-worth. And one of the things from some of the research that I've done and read is that most people in the workplace, the thing they're longing for the most is acknowledgement and appreciation.

Louie Sharp 28:02

And so when you're doing those things, Kate, I think that's very powerful. One of the things I think that's also very interesting that you touched on is when you have that person, is there something specific you'd like to share with our listeners about how you kind of approach them? Because it's not the same with every player, right? Some players, like if you got a Michael Jordan, that's a whole different approach to what you got to appreciate and do with him versus somebody that's maybe like a Ron Harper. So could you talk about that a little bit?

Kate McGrath 28:37

Well, definitely as a leader, you do need to know how to approach each individual. And I learned that early on when I was in college playing volleyball, my coach sat me down and I was a freshman and she said, how do you want me to coach you? Do you want me to yell at you and get in your face and you know, all of that or, you know, and it was so funny. I was taken aback by it because I was like, well, I don't know if nobody's ever asked me that before. Right? And then I had to think, I was like, what do I want? Well, I don't need you yelling at me. I'm a grown up. I'm an adult. Talk to me, right? Tell me. So you have to know what motivates each person.

Kate McGrath 29:16

And there are those people that, yeah, they want you to get in your face, right? They want it to be a hard, hey, suck it up. Let's go. Let's do this. You got to fix X, Y, and Z, you know? And then there are those people that really need to kind of, you almost, this is not going to sound right. So I don't think I'm going to actually say it, but you almost need to alter their mindset in kind of a different, obviously a different way and a different demeanor, but you have to talk to them, right? I'm also very big on full transparency and checking in with whether it's my 14 year old player or my 40 year old agent, right?

Kate McGrath 30:02

Like checking in with your team and the more you do that, the more you get to know them, the more you get to understand how they respond to things, right? And then you can alter how you boost them, how they need your energy, right? And sometimes it's not all in your face and huge public acknowledgement. Sometimes it's just a little note, right? Thank you. You're kicking butt, you know, like keep doing what you're doing. Just a note. That's huge. It's powerful.

Kate McGrath 30:35

Like you said, people respond to that in a very powerful way when they just get some recognition for what they're doing. But it is critical to know how, you know, sometimes, and I'm trying to think of where we did this, but I once did an exercise and it was a leadership program and it was you had to ask everyone on your team what was a reward to them, you know, it could be a cup of coffee. It could be if you did X, Y, and Z, what would be a great reward for you? And just to see the difference in what everybody would like. It's the same thing for motivating, right? Try to figure out what motivates them and what they want in recognition because it's going to be different.

Kate McGrath 31:25

It's going to be different. I have one sales rep who I used to have and I'm trying to get him back. He just crazy energy, right? Big guy, loud, funny. He wants you to do cartwheels across the company 70 times to let everyone know he got a big sale, right? And he'll do a dance, and he'll put music on, and it'll be a big to do. And he'll do that for anyone, right? Anyone in the company. But he is loud energy. And then you have agents and sales reps who are like, you know, just a high five is all I need.

Kate McGrath 32:07

That's great, you know, and I'll get to the next one. And they're worker bees, and they're just going, going, going, and they don't need as much. So so, yeah, I mean, I think it's really understanding who your team is and how they respond. And that's really...you just got to get to know them.

Kate McGrath 32:25

I mean, I love getting to know my staff, but I love getting to know my policyholders, right? Know them, talk to them, even the ones that don't aren't my policyholders. Every time I sit down with someone, I want to take away something that helps me understand who they are, how they interact, how they want to be talked to or communicated to and what motivates them. Because I think we get away from that personal interaction way too much in the world today. And I think there's a whole generation that doesn't know how to talk to individuals because they're stuck on their cell phones. And so having that personal interaction to really understand how to motivate and how to reward everyone on your team is critical.

Louie Sharp 33:19

So that's more great stuff. And so I want to put a couple of things together for you that Kate's talked about. And I'd like to tie this with what she talked about earlier about when somebody

says no in a sales, put her two pieces of wisdom together, and that is take the time to get to know people. And then whatever they may give you back, don't take it personally, right?

Louie Sharp 33:42

It's just an exchange of what's going on. And it's your attempt to learn to get to know them on a deeper level, because you touched on something really powerful, Kate. Most leaders think, especially in the workplace, that everybody's motivated by money. It's not the truth. It's not the truth. And some people really care about the quality of the work. And if you acknowledge them for that, then it's gonna go a lot further than giving them a bonus or some a raise or those kinds of things.

Louie Sharp 34:10

The other thing I thought was fascinating I like to share with everybody. There's a very powerful question that I'd like to share with everybody. You brought this to mind, Kate, and that is on a scale of one to 10. So I've asked my teammates, people that work for me on a regular basis on a scale of one to 10, how am I doing as the leader? One being shoot me in the head now, two, it couldn't be any better. And, but then, and I learned this from Jack Canfield, but at that point, anything less than a 10 gets a follow-up question. And that follow-up question is simply, and now you check your ego at the door, right? You check your ego at the door and say, what would it take to make it a 10?

Louie Sharp 34:49

And so you're absolutely right. When you go to your players and say, hey, how would you like me to coach you? And how's that working for you on a scale of one to 10? And they say, it's a seven. And you ask, you check your ego at the door. You don't go to that place. Well, she's uncoachable, she never listens, blah, blah. You say, what would it take to make it a 10? They're gonna tell you. And then all you have to do is do what they just told you, and you're a 10. And that works in every relationship.

Louie Sharp 35:15

To your point, you can ask your policy holders that. You can ask your teammates, you can ask your family members, very powerful. One of the....what I'd like to ask you now is, what's something like a secret of yours or a question of yours that you have, like when you're interacting with somebody to kind of get to know them at a deeper level, instead of the surface, how's work, how's the weather. What's something that you do to get to know whether it's a player, a policy holder, somebody on your sales team, what are the things that you do or the questions you ask to get that relationship to go deeper?

Kate McGrath 35:51

Well, I love to learn about people's families. Family is so important to me. My kids are so important to me, my extended family. And so a lot of times I will just ask, and I think it's funny when I work with newer agents, they're like kind of taken back by my questions about family because I'll say, you know, hey, are you married? Do you have any kids? And sometimes I'm asking like an 18 year old. I go, I know you're young, but who am I to assume you don't, right?

So it's treating each person the same way and saying, tell me about your family. Tell me about your hobbies, right? What are you into? But for me, the family question always gets them, helps me understand what drives them, right? What's important to them because the family is important to everyone.

Kate McGrath 36:41

And then we talk about it, right? Oh, you've got two kids, awesome. What are they into? That's so cool. And then you say, oh, well, my, you know, they're into the band, great. My daughter played the clarinet. She used to play the clarinet in her, riding around the house in her, what are they? Her rollerblades, playing the clarinet, zooming all through the house, right? So I tell a funny story, right? But then they're like, oh, I know, my kid does this, that, and the other. So you start connecting because you have similar things, right? And it doesn't have to necessarily be kids. It can be their job. How's your day? It's cloudy out, it's cold, it's windy. We both made it here, awesome. We are similar, right? So it's connecting to every single person, whether it's, you know, an agent that works with me or a policyholder or a business owner or an athlete. Understanding the connections that we have because we all have them. There are ways that we can connect. And then, oh no, did I already just, did I just check off one more box for you there?

Louie Sharp 37:57

Go ahead. Keep going. I got something to add to this. I want to ice the cake here in a minute.

Kate McGrath 38:00

We do. We all connect in in many different ways. And until we start talking to people and still till we start getting to know them, we don't know how we connect. And then, you know, it always leads to, oh, my gosh, we grew up in the same town, or we went to the same school, or I know someone that, you know, I mean, that six degrees of separation truly exists. You know, it's just it leads to a bond and of a relationship that could go anywhere. And it doesn't mean, like I said, it doesn't mean that, oh, you closed the sale, right? It doesn't mean that. It means you just built a relationship and it can change your life.

Kate McGrath 38:43

It can change all through your day. It can change what you were planning to do tomorrow. There's always benefits to getting to know people because you just don't know who's gonna make a difference in your life every day. So I'm a big believer. You know, I do a lot of networking. I'm a big believer in meeting people. You know, if I hear that anyone in my network has a child who plays volleyball or wants to play volleyball, I'm like, oh, let's sit down, let's talk. Let's have a cup of coffee. What do they want out of it? Let me help you get there. Let me teach your child some skills. I'll meet them on a Saturday. We grab coffee, and I'll teach them something. You know, it's those connections can just lead to so many different things. So it's finding ways to connect with everyone you interact with on a day-to-day basis, and it will enrich your life and your job.

Louie Sharp 39:39

So one of the things for those of you that are just listening to that watching, I kind of I didn't say anything, but I was pumping both my fists in the air when Kate was talking because this connection thing is again why I love these conversations and people have no idea the depth of their wisdom but one of the things that Kate just told you and this is like a sledgehammer between the eyes, it's about heart. Your family is about heart.

Louie Sharp 40:05

She's connecting with people here for those of you again just listening and not watching, I got both my hands on my heart. She's not going after their head, the thing between their ears. She's connecting on a heart level. Who do they care about? Who do they love? Who are they passionate about? Who are the passion those people have? Because you're right Kate when you start talking about people and their kids and you get on the things that kids have accomplished, people light up right and they could talk for hours. But then to Kate's point you have that connection. So Kate is there anything that I haven't asked you that you'd like to talk about or share with the audience?

Kate McGrath 40:43

Oh gosh I don't. I think I shared a lot so.

Louie Sharp 40:46

Well, so I'd like to touch on one other thing that I know about Kate that I'd like you to talk about. And so another great way to be able to connect is to read, right? So then you've got a little something to say about any topic. Will you talk a little bit about how often do you read? What do you read? Why do you read?

Kate McGrath 41:07

Sure, I am, I am not the best reader. I will be honest about that. So I do enjoy reading some of the business books, some of the leadership books, any of the books that there's, God, what is, it's sitting on my bookshelf right here, but I was just reading, and it's about how the military would lead, right? And how crucial that is because if something goes wrong, somebody dies, right? And so leadership books are amazing. I read sports books, and then I read a ton of articles. I do. I'm constantly trying to stay in touch with things that are important to my career, but, you know, I'm passionate about my career. So those are things that are important to me. And that's, you know, health in this country, sports.

Kate McGrath 42:05

And, you know, I do a lot of research because I'm always trying to figure out better ways to coach, better ways to lead. And, you know, I'm curious, so I'm constantly learning. And I think as a leader, you have to constantly learn too, because the world is changing faster than, you know, we can even, you were teaching me things before too that I'd never use. So, I mean, we're in this whole new technology world too. So it's just anything that brings you joy, read, and anything that teaches you something, which there's so many books out there for leadership, business, sales, coaching, you know, you name it. I'm the worst at reading though, because I

have a million books, and I've read the first like hundred pages of all of them. And then I'm like, okay, this one just came up, but still read and learn. It's crucial to growing for sure.

Louie Sharp 43:03

So I would agree with that. And even if you read the first 100 pages or something out, somebody told me the analogy was like putting your hand in a jar of honey, right? Something's gonna stick. Even if it's 100 pages, something's gonna stick on the way out.

Louie Sharp 43:16

You touched on something that just came back to mind and I'd like you to speak on it. And that was, as a leader, you have to love what you're doing. What would your advice be or your coaching be to somebody that's in a position, either whether they're leading a company, at a managerial position, or in a job or on a team of some sort, and they're not loving it. What would your advice be to them?

Kate McGrath 43:38

I would tell them to find something they love, truly. I know a lot of people who maybe in a job that they don't love, or it wasn't their dream job, it wasn't what they thought they were gonna end up doing, but they got, we all take jobs to get us going, right? And then they get stuck in those jobs because they do, they work hard, they do a nice job, and then they get a raise. And then they're like, oh, that's kind of nice, I'm gonna stay. And then they get another raise. And they're just going through the motions. And they might be making a lot of money after a few years, and they're just going through the motions. I mean, it really comes down to what you had just said too.

Kate McGrath 44:16

Some people want the money and the recognition, and some people want purpose. Some people want something completely different. And so it's like, you kind of have to find that balance. And sometimes it's hard, you don't know what you don't know, right? If you're like, I have a good job, I make a good amount of money, I'm supporting my family. I never thought I would go work for myself, ever. I was the steady paycheck, paying the mortgage, everything on time. I like consistency, and I love that, I'm done. I'm always gonna work for someone. And then when I started working for myself, everyone I was working with was like, oh, I'll never work for a company again. And I was like, why? It's nice to get a paycheck. Because then you're limited to that and only that, right? And now I work for myself, and the sky is the limit. I can do anything I want. I can start a business tomorrow, right? And I'm finding a way to make the money, but that's not the most important thing.

Kate McGrath 45:22

There's flexibility, there's purpose, there's unlimited earning potential because I can do anything I want. So I think it's really hard to get out of that steady paycheck, that job, the job, right? It's not, to me, that's not your career. It's not your dream, it's your job. And so sometimes I think that it's really hard for people to walk away from it. You know, I recruit agents, I recruit sales people, and they'll be like, I need to make 200,000 a year. And I'll say, I'm not trying to make you

money. I'm trying to create a dream job for you where you become wealthy doing something you love and working for yourself. That's what I want for you. And you may not see it right away.

Kate McGrath 46:10

Trust me, I didn't see it right away either. And then I started seeing it, and I said, I gotta make this work because I love what I do. I love who I work with and who I work for. And I have the flexibility to be there for my family, which is the most important thing to me, right? So I guess my advice would be find somebody who motivates you to get out of your comfort zone, to do something that you love or brings purpose to your life, affects the community, right? You are there to make your community better and do it for yourself and your family and not do it for somebody else, because we all can get bogged down in the big corporate job, in the fancy corporate job.

Kate McGrath 47:03

And not to say they're terrible because there are some amazing corporations out there and amazing jobs out there and people are happy. But if you are not fulfilled and not happy in what you're doing, go find something else.

Kate McGrath 47:15

There's always something there to help you be feel fulfilled and make a living and take care of your family and love what you do every day because it certainly makes it a lot easier to go to work every day.

Louie Sharp 47:29

Yeah, I completely agree with that. And I'd like to add a little something to what Kate just talked about. She said something very important, very powerful. And you've been on fire the whole time. And that is you get that first job it's to get you some experience.

Louie Sharp 47:44

But what happens is when people get a raise, they raise their standard of living and then they get another raise and they raise and then they're trapped in that job. Right? Because they got the big house, they got the two car payments. They got all the clothes, the vacations, the credit card bills. And now they think there's no way out of that. And they they've built that cage one bar at a time. Right? Because every time they got a pay raise, they raise their standard of living.

Louie Sharp 48:09

When you get a pay raise, but I don't want to go. I'll just leave it at that. Don't spend everything you're making, because that's what ties you to a job. That's a job. And I love your distinction between a job and a career and what you love to do and what you have to go do because you have to pay the bills. So you and I, we could go on for a while, but I'd like to I'd like to ask you two questions. These are my favorite questions to ask to end. First one is, so if you could recommend one book, what would one book be that you you'd like to recommend to the readers?

Kate McGrath 48:45

So this is totally just based on true stories, but it's a book that for me probably touched me emotionally, more than any book ever. I mean, just very emotional book, and it's A Thousand Splendid Suns.

Kate McGrath 49:05

And I can't think of the author right now, but it's the same writer who wrote Kite Runner. I don't know if you've heard of it. Both books are pretty old, okay? Or 20, 30 years. But it's just, it's about relationships, okay? I don't wanna give too much information, but it's two young girls living in Afghanistan. And it's about bonds and building bonds between individuals.

Kate McGrath 49:36

And we always have the love story and stuff, but this is friendship, this is life, this is survival. And it's just really kind of a powerful book. And for me, this is probably why I struggle to finish books is because I'll read them and I'll be like, okay, it's not hitting me as hard as I'd like it to, right? Like I want to be so engrossed in the book, and there's a million great books out there, but that for me was one that, it just really was a powerful message. And especially as a female, I think it was really powerful. So that would be one that I would.

Louie Sharp 50:19

Okay, and then my last question is what's something that you love either about being a sales team leader or a volleyball coach. What's something that you love about them, either one of those?

Kate McGrath 50:33

Well, I'd have to say with a volleyball, I love being able to influence young women. I'm very big on self-love and...but I'm also very big on creating your own path and choosing happiness along the way, because I think high school girls can have a rough go of it, right?

Kate McGrath 50:57

High school is not easy for most. It's certainly not easy for girls. And so if I can help them be so secure in who they are and happy with who they are and not get bogged down into the nonsense of the world that is around us. And I think that that could be anyone, right? We all get distracted by social media and who's doing what and all of that. But I think if you are focused on yourself and working to build the best self, you can that you you don't get stuck in these little dark tunnels that can bring you down. And so I am rewarded every day when I can help them understand right from wrong and understand a path to happiness and, you know, choosing those around you who help build you up and get you there.

Louie Sharp 51:53

Awesome, so before we go, if our listeners would like to reach out to you or connect with you in some way to gain some more wisdom or learn more about what you do, how can they get ahold of you?

Kate McGrath 52:03

So my email is Kate_McGrath@us.aflac.com, and then my cell phone number is 773-251-3686.

Louie Sharp 52:18

Thank you. And for your listeners, we're also going to put all that information in the meeting notes. So you're welcome to reach out to Kate for, again, just a bucket of information, wisdom and experience. And I love your quick smile and your stories. So, Kate, thanks again for being a guest today, and we really appreciate it. And I hope you enjoy the rest of your day.

Kate McGrath 52:40

Thanks, Louie. Appreciate it.

Louie Sharp 52:42

Thanks again for joining us and listening to this episode of Leadership & Love. I would like to challenge you to ask yourself what's one thing that you heard today that you can implement immediately to improve your leadership and accelerate your growth. If you've gotten value out of this episode or learned something that you can implement today, we'd ask that you please share it with those that you care about. Our goal is to create more leaders who are leading with love.