

>> Hello, and welcome to The Valley Today.

I am your host, Janet Michael.

We are recording today's show from  
a classroom in the Corron Center. Is it the Corron Center?

>> Corron.

>> I've never understood how you pronounce that.

>> I'm not really sure either.

>> That is Guy Curtis, if you don't recognize his voice.

He is with Lord Fairfax Community College's Workforce Solutions.

We are going to have a conversation today about leadership,  
that is a continuation of a conversation we had a few months ago.

>> Yeah, exactly, the Part 2.

We are continuing to see a leadership crisis across the country and in our area,  
and we're here to talk about those opportunities,  
how to be a better leader in your organization or your home,  
or in your community areas you work in,  
and how to do that here at the college.

So we have a few options for you.

>> Kenny Smith is here. You are a leadership instructor, is that right?

>> That's correct, yeah. I've been with LFCC for about two years  
as a part-time adjunct instructor here,  
teaching mostly soft skill stuff,  
everything from leadership development,  
diversity and inclusion, process management,

time management, you name it.

I've covered all of it.

>> Because it all does come under the leadership umbrella.

>> Absolutely. This is a very dynamic environment.

Just like Guy is talking about,

we've been around this a long time and seeing different leadership principles,

and there's the leadership styles,

and how do you take those things that you've seen over your life and

be able to apply them to your leadership life,

into your workforce, and be able to do things better for yourself?

>> Can you teach somebody to be a leader?

Obviously, you can because you're an instructor,

but how does that work,

teaching somebody to be a leader?

>> Yeah, absolutely. There's a couple of thoughts on looking at leadership,

and the first thing I always emphasize to the folks is,

you've been around this for your entire life.

Mrs. Williams, who was my kindergarten bus driver,

who took us from Ferry Farm Elementary to all over Stafford County there,

taught us about leadership, taught us how to manage

40 snot-nosed kids on a bus there, and brought us home.

My middle-school and high-school soccer coach,

they taught us about leadership.

Just reminding folks that you've seen all this stuff before,

and how do I take what I've seen,  
take my personal perspectives on things,  
and then just apply them to the scenario that I'm in?  
Like I said, whether it's at home,  
or it's in my workplace,  
or it's on the football field,  
or wherever it may be, how do I take those principles and  
now plug and play those into the environments that I'm in?

>> We were talking before we turned on the mics.

Leadership itself, the principles of it,  
hasn't really changed over the last 100 years, so to speak.

>> Yeah, I always say George Washington knew his why,  
which is a Simon Sinek statement.

Henry Ford had his financial peace,  
which is a Dave Ramsey perspective on things.

These principles have not changed in millennia,  
how we deal with and manage people, manage processes.

It's really the struggle that businesses have,  
the struggle that individuals have.

I have the structural struggle as, most of the time,  
when we're promoting folks from what I call a doer perspective to a manager perspective,  
it's based on their ability to do the job.

That's important. I don't want to under-emphasize that  
someone in a leadership position has to have credibility.

Because you don't want someone who's not credible in  
a position trying to tell me what to do.

But in the process of their credibility,  
you've got to understand personality,  
and that my way may be a way,  
but not necessarily be the right way.

The example that I always point to is Michael Jordan,  
probably the best basketball player to ever live.

Take a look at how the [inaudible] is doing right now. Not the greatest.

I'm not picking on Michael Jordan at all.

It's just an example of how you need to be deliberate as you translate  
from the execution side of the house to the leadership and management side of the house.

>> That's not always easy to spot.

Because you think of people that are doers as,  
this person's going to get this job done,  
and that isn't always the case.

>> Yeah, absolutely. At the end of the day,  
what you really want to have is an environment where leadership development,  
leadership processes, are an integral piece of your development of your people.

What we offer here at LFCC is an exemplar of that.

When I'm teaching a class, I'm always cognizant of the folks  
that are there and applaud them for taking the time, because it's a sunk cost.

When you come in and spend four hours with us at LFCC,  
or something we offer that Guy will talk about here in a little bit,

whether it's a week-long course or it's a 11-month course,  
that's time that you're taking away from generating revenue for your company.

Whether it's a government organization, we're not serving the people.

You're in here trying to get yourself better.

But it's important because once you take  
those steps and get a better understanding of yourself,

how you lead, how you manage,

that's just going to pay it forward inside  
your organization and make things better in the long run.

>> Yeah. It's definitely one of those skill sets that you may  
not be able to immediately put your finger on how well it worked,  
but you can very quickly point to how bad it is if you don't have it.

>> One of the courses I teach is on accountability.

The group of folks that we're talking to, they're fantastic individuals.

But I remember in one of the breaks, it was a class on accountability,  
and an individual said, "Hey,

how are you going to teach me how to hold someone accountable?"

I said, "Well, what are you doing to hold yourself accountable?"

Because if I can't get it right,

if I can't look at myself and say that I have some pride in what I do and how I do it,  
but I also have faults.

I have things that I'm going to fail at.

So I need to know what those things are.

Everyone, when they make a decision,

thinks it's the right decision.

If you don't believe that, then the next time you get cut off in traffic, and you think,

"That individual just cut me off," and you start giving signs that are inappropriate,

or honking your horn and stuff, but you don't know what happened.

I need to have some self-awareness.

I need to be able to step back from the situation and go, "Hey, yeah,

maybe I did screw this up,

or maybe I'm partially at fault," and that's what this leadership journey is about.

It's learning about how you think,

what your trends are,

what are your tendencies,

what are those things that are effective,

what are those things that can be derailers.

Because everything that I do well can derail my career at the same time.

How do I look at those things and be

cognizant of those so when I actually get into a situation,

I know that, "Hey,

I have a tendency to do X,

Y, and Z. I'll fail at this if I continue to move forward that way.

I need change my posture." I am not a detail-oriented guy.

I used to think that I was.

I spent 25 years in the Air Force,

was a fighter pilot,

did a lot of really cool stuff and very

down to the nanosecond on some of the things that we did,  
but I learned over time that I don't get in the details very well.

If you're not thinking details of some of  
the things that we're doing, you're going to hurt somebody.

So you need to have a self-awareness.

Someone who's very detail-oriented,  
that helps them in certain situations,  
but you get so behind the details,  
you forget the big picture on stuff.

>> You lose creativity in other pieces that you  
need all of them in order to provide that strong leadership.

>> Absolutely.

Yeah. Like you said at the beginning, I mean,  
this leadership paradigm, this leadership journey that folks are walking on.  
They're going to walk on it their entire lives.

I'm halfway through my 50th lap around this life.

That means I'll be 50 this summer.

I find myself still learning even the class that I teach.

I learn from my students when they're talking.

I don't consider them students,  
they're colleagues at the end of the day.

They'll teach me something, I'll go, "Yeah,

I'll remember that next time I go do something."

I'm growing through the process,

so it's a growth journey.

>> Guy from a business perspective.

I mean, this has got to be up there with

not just training employees to work the floor if they're in manufacturing,  
or customer service if they're on the front lines at a hotel or a retail store.

This leadership aspect has got to be a solid foundation

from a lot of the businesses that you probably work with in Workforce Solutions.

>> Oh, absolutely. In terms of any different level that there could

be in terms of a supervisor role or a leadership role,  
executive level, leadership is applied to everywhere.

I think for me, personally,

I coach a couple of youth teams,

I coach travel baseball team with a few other coaches.

We're learning how to be leaders among young men,

young boys, and teach them the game,

but also teaching the skills to be a better leader themselves,

a better community member.

So just the thought of just the different businesses that we serve

to the people that we impact personally and professionally,

leadership is always ongoing.

Kenny was mentioning earlier about how leadership never really stops.

It's always something you do annually.

We see tremendous success and attendance in lot of our events

because people see the value of coming back to leadership programs,

you're in, you're out.

It's something that every year you do grab a lot of new nuggets and details of how to approach leadership.

But for me, it's like you never stop learning leadership.

You always are taught something new every day while you're at work or at home, leading your family or leading a youth group that you work with.

Leadership, yes, for the employers that are in our area, we understand some of their pain points they're going through and some of the issues that they're facing.

We have a lot of younger individuals being pushed into supervisory roles for the first time. How do you address that?

Whether they're a millennial or Gen Z and now supervising maybe an older workforce, or maybe they're now supervising peers.

They were buddies before.

So how to approach that.

But also different approaches of leadership, such as just understanding how to communicate.

I was fortunate to attend another instructor course of our communication, the key to getting results,

and that was based around Simon Sinek, Why book.

Our great instructor, Jay Foreman leads that one as well.

But yeah, just understanding from a leader's perspective why you're promoting, and doing what you're doing and having everyone have a greater understanding of what your approach is,

it just helps leadership so much easier with that.

There's a few examples that Kenny teaches as well as Jay and others.

We have an awesome Disney leadership program every year called the Disney Institute, and it's actually coming back again this year for the 10th time.

>> Wow.

>> We've had over 1,400 visuals attend.

This is our 10th institutes,

so it's just every year to sell out.

People know that leadership is very important,

and it's not just a one and done type of thing.

You have to continue to build yourself and groom yourself every year.

The other program too that we're bringing back,

I think it's the 9th year.

Our leadership program called Leadercast,

that's rebroadcast of a number of amazing speakers.

Andy Stanley is usually the front runner with it.

Just the other day, for example,

he's got a great podcast that's out there that you listen to and learn leadership.

But that kind of stuff is just stuff you should always

try if you have 10 minutes in the car, podcast it,

listen to it, or pick at the latest greatest book another thing,

or if you're able to come to one of our classes and talk to Kenny firsthand.

Some of their real-world firsthand experiences applied to some of

the books and teachings that they have is just invaluable.

It's priceless. The investments by far more worth it.

Because we know across the area that unemployment slow,  
people are looking at new opportunities to go from company to company.

In some cases, it's tough to keep  
those good employees because they know that they can find a better opportunity for pay.

But a lot of times that I can't recall the exact step,  
but people are most likely to leave a promotion because of their employer,  
not because of the money that's coming in.

It's their leader.

If you have strong leadership,  
most likely you'll retain the staff that you have.

I will attest that work on here at the college,  
who have been ranked again,  
and I think we've mentioned this before,  
as far as being a great place to work for.

Personally, I've seen so much benefit of the professional development we've received.

Its kept me engaged,  
its kept our team engaged,  
and we're performing at a very high level because  
the college is re-investing back into its employees.

It really does come down to the leadership aspect of strong leadership and,  
of course, that professional development opportunity that you have.

Of course, we walk and talk at here and breathe it.

But, yeah, it's a great thing to learn something new every year.

The programs that we offer in the class that  
Kenny teaches are great examples to get started.

>> Well, let's take a break when we come back.

Kenny, can we talk a little bit about leadership and how it varies by generation?

Guy touched on it a minute ago about millennials and  
baby boomers and some of them having to work together and over each other,  
which isn't always a great thing.

Then Guy, can we talk in a little bit more detail,  
maybe run through some of Kenny's classes,  
and how I can get registered for them if I want to take them,  
even if my employer doesn't necessarily see the light from that perspective?

>> Absolutely.

>> Okay. We'll do all of that when we come back.

We are recording today's show from a classroom actually  
at the Corron Center at Lord Fairfax Community College.

Guy Curtis is here having a conversation with me along with Kenny Smith.

He's one of their leadership instructors.

I am Janet Michael and you are listening to the Valley Today.

Me again, I bet you were expecting to hear a commercial.

Well, that's what this is.

First though, I want to thank you for listening to the Valley Today podcast.

You're one of thousands who listened to the show this way every month.

Sometimes it's because our listeners didn't know that if they're away from the radio,  
they can still listen on our website via the TuneIn app on their phone or even on Alexa.

The podcast is available every afternoon on [theriver953.com](http://theriver953.com),  
in the Apple podcast app,  
the Google podcast app, and on Spotify.

Pretty much anywhere you can listen to a podcast.

By the way, you can subscribe using any of those apps for free.

But sometimes our listeners are just busy,  
and they want to listen when it fits their schedule,  
or it's a guest of the show and they want to hear  
what they sounded like when they were on the radio.

Most of my guests share their podcast via their website and social media outlets.

So then their family, friends,  
and customers can also hear the interview.

We even have a few binge listeners,  
who listened to a week's worth at a time.

Can you even imagine?

So if you want those people,  
your potential customers, to hear your message,  
this could have been your ad.

The bonus, your commercial isn't restricted just 30 or 60 seconds,  
plus there's even the opportunity to be  
the exclusive sponsor of the Valley Today podcast.

That gets you on air mentions at the end of every show.

If any of this sounds interesting to you,  
give me a call at the station,

540-635-4121, or send me an email to Janet@theriver953.com, and keep listen.

Welcome back to the Valley Today.

I am your host Janet Michael.

We are recording today's show from a classroom  
at the Corron Center at Lord Fairfax Community College.

Guy Curtis is here.

Because it is Lord Fairfax Community College day,

Kenny Smith is here as well.

He is a leadership instructor.

We had a really cool conversation during the break  
about 100 different topics, I will say.

But one of the things that Kenny brought up, Guy,  
when we were talking is about customizing leadership classes and programs.

Because while the principles are pretty much the same,  
how you deliver them and implement them is different.

Is that something that you do through  
workforce services or solutions that somebody can call you up and say,  
"Hey, I don't really know what I need,  
but I needed I think differently than what is textbook."

>> Absolutely. We have a couple outreach folks,  
and our instructors will assess the needs of an organization if it is something  
very specific they are trying to address and maybe deliver that message,  
that training at their location or here onsite at the college,  
or maybe at a more neutral place.

But we do offer a number of courses and programs that are scheduled on our course catalog, and many are familiar with that catalog as it goes out.

But the customized corporate training programs that we do offer around leadership and other areas are very customized for that individual or corporation.

Kenny's done quite a few of those actually for us.

I don't know if Kenny want to speak to a few of those opportunities we've addressed.

>> Absolutely. Typically, the way it will go down is our marketing folks will go out and talk to organization.

It really doesn't matter who it is.

That could be a group or an organization, or it could be a private organization, a group of individuals that want to come to us, and they'll say, "Hey, we have these.

These are the options that we have for you, and there's a plethora of different things that we have."

>> Here's what we think our problems are, so to speak.

>> Exactly. I will get a phone call, "Hey, Kenny, can you teach a class on," let's just make up something.

Say they teach a class on multi-generational workforce.

I'm like, "Sure. I'll be happy to do that."

The wheels start spinning in my head, and every instructor is the same way, this is how we think about this.

Multi-generational workforce, I can drive a truck through that concept.

My first question to Guy, or to Larry,

or anybody else is, "Can I get the POC for the class?"

I'll give them a call, and go, "Okay, copy.

You want a class on multi-generational workforces, what's your issues?

What's going on?" They'll give me their laundry list,

and I'll take the curriculum that we have.

I'll adjust it if I need to,

or sometimes I'll just rewrite it because I think the concepts are the same,

but how you're presenting the information and who

the audience is, we're sensitive to that.

We're going to make sure we get that right.

If I'm teaching a class to a manufacturing company versus somebody making doughnuts

versus a government organization versus

just an individual group that wants to learn more about some concept,

that information is going to be presented properly.

It's going to be presented in a way it's going to resonate with the folks.

I'll go in and make those changes,

make those tweaks, change the stories, change the examples,

change the games or activities that we'll do during the course,

and move forward from there.

It seems to go pretty well at the end of the day.

The folks appreciate that attention,

appreciate the desire to make

the courses resonate with

the individuals that are in the room, and that's what we try to do.

>> Guy, on the flip side of that,

say it's a small business owner,

and I'll use Andrew,

our station owner as an example.

Say, he decides that he wants everyone at the station to have a,

I don't know, greater ownership mentality or something along those lines.

You have programs that are already

structured and put together that Andrew could come on board,

and say, "I'd like my staff to participate in this particular course."

That comes out of the course catalog as well?

>> Absolutely. We have a number of courses that

are four hours to maybe eight hours in a day,

one day workshops, if you will,

that allow for small organizations to afford a few individuals that go and send to.

Whether it's a class that's on learning to lead from body to boss or learning to lead,

keeping the good ones, communication to key,

getting a results, Kennedy's class of Accountability and Performance Management.

Another great one, Servant Leadership: How to Create

an Amazing Team Culture talked by Aaron Weekly.

Servant leadership is another big topic that's going on right now.

Then another program that we have coming back for

the ninth year is our leader cast program.

That's going to be at three different locations in June in our ever popular or 10th anniversary for Disney Institute is coming back, which is Leadership Excellence.

Those are just a few tastes, quick programs that an organization could bring someone to.

You easily can register online through our website, or call our offices, or come in to register for those.

Just keep in mind, the smaller business owners who have a few employees they want to send, but they can't afford maybe a customized piece, but we do get up to the higher leadership levels.

When we get into corporate training, we look at other areas that corporations have been getting involved with which is our leadership institute.

That's a nine-month program for cohort individuals that starts in April, and that's for initial leaders, supervisors starting their roles and wanting to progress to move further.

We just concluded recently our Leadership Excellence Program, which has much higher leadership cohort program.

That was an awesome program that just finished up last month.

Whether you're looking for a four-hour class to very long leadership program or a one-day event, we have a lot of ways to address the leadership challenges that employers face.

>> I don't even necessarily need Andrew to call you,

and say, "Hey, I want my staff to come."

I can also, as just a person, as an employee,  
or as someone who wants to be a better, stronger leader,  
take any of these classes individually on my own, right?

>> Absolutely. As an individual,  
if you're leading a small group or team or want to  
understand how to lead better at home and as an individual, you can sign up.

But I think there are some creative ways too.

We do have some information to help individuals if they want to  
express their interests and that investment for their employer,  
maybe get their employer to help purchase that for them.

We can help them with that.

Definitely reach out, let us know how we can help them do that.

But as an individual, Janet,  
if you just want to come take a leadership course for yourself just  
to round out your skills and look at the fresh topics for this year,  
you can do that yourself individually.

>> Kenny, do you find with some of the students  
in your classes that they are excited about  
taking these classes and learning this whereas  
their employers may have thought it was going to be a burden?

Because I think that sometimes employers think,

"My staff doesn't want to go do that."

Meanwhile, staff is like,

"Oh my gosh, I would love to go and do this."

>> Yeah. Honestly, you see both.

It really just depends on the group of folks.

"You don't need to teach me that stuff, I get all of it."

Then I'll throw a scenario, and I'm going to go, let me think about that.

Now granted, I remind folks at the beginning of the classic like I said before,

"You've seen all this before.

What you haven't seen is the way I'm going to show it to you,

so what I'm asking you to do is just remove yourself

and look at this from the lens I'm going to show it to you,

and you get some growth from it."

The employers frankly understand that the value,

like Guy is talking about,

I love the fact that someone wants to come in and take

one class and get an idea about something. That's great.

I want you to walk forever in a leadership paradigm,

we want to walk with you.

We as LFCC want to walk with you in

this leadership paradigm to continue to show you the latest trends,

the latest ways of thinking about it.

I'll use diversity as an example.

Diversity is a hot-button issue.

There's a lot of things that come along with that,

and you have to be honest because that's

how you're going to build trust in those environments.

But the workforces are getting more diverse.

The workforce of the 1950s where the husband went out and went to work,  
and the wife stayed at home,  
and take care of the kids does not exist today.

>> It really doesn't.

>> Although there are organizations that want to believe so,  
how do you deal with that?

How do you manage? Because the workforce still needs to move forward.

How did you deal with things that look and smell like that?

Multi-generational things, these things are constantly evolving.

Innovation is constantly moving forward.

We would love organizations,

love individuals to have this posture of continual learning when

it comes to these topics because they're

constantly changing, they're constantly evolving.

>> The other key is from an employer perspective,

when you're putting that type of education in front of your staff,

not only are you benefiting because you're getting a better employee and

a better worker that ultimately will hopefully feed out into the rest of your staff.

But you're getting someone who now may take those leadership skills

to the board of a non-profit to coach a high school team,

to do all of these other things in the community,

and then everybody, what is it they say a rising tide?

I know you're an Air Force, Guy, but a rising tide.

>> All boats rise.

>> Yes.

>> Yeah. Those are all boats rise.

That's a great, great statement.

Here's an example. I was teaching a class,

we were talking about core values.

I have the individuals go out and develop their own core values,

so there's an exercise I put them through.

I'm actually going to teach this class next month.

As I'm walking them through the core value development process,

and I talk about exporting your core values and taking them home.

An individual tell me, "Well,

my work core values are different than my home core values."

Of course, and then you can't see on the radio right now,

but her eyes just went.

>> How does that work?

>> I'm like, "How do you have different core values?"

When my wife and I do our budget,

I expect her to be extremely professional,

and she expects me to be extremely professional,

which is no different than when I was

managing a big [inaudible] program for the Air Force."

Yes. Those core values translate.

That statement that you just said right there,  
her or his ability to understand that  
core values translate across their lives will not only affect the work environment,  
but they'll affect their home environment,  
they'll affect in their church environment,  
clubs, non-profits, whatever else.

All those things resonate across their lives,  
so that's absolutely right.

>> You're building a better community, Guy Curtis?

>> One step at a time.

>> Yeah, right. Just following him. I follow his leadership.

>> If somebody is listening today,

where can they A,

get their hands on the catalog?

What do they do to reach out to you?

Should they go to their employer first?

Can they come to you, and say, "Hey,

I want to go to my employer and talk to him about this."

What process?

How do they start the process?

>> Sure. Our catalog is sprinkled across our service region,

but in case you can't get your hands on one,

you can come to our college campus to find one,

or sometimes our community libraries have them too.

But as far as just a great place is our website to start, [lfccworkforce.com](http://lfccworkforce.com),  
or you can give us a call at 540-868-7021,  
and talk with our staff  
regarding corporate development or business development if you are an organization.

But if you're just an individual,  
you can talk to anyone in the office about  
those leadership programs and other areas of customer service or HR.

Any trainings that we offer and get more information about these programs.

But some of the websites are great places to start to  
get more details and where to get started.

But if you're also looking for that assistance on how to convince your employer,  
we can help with that in some way or form as well too.

Just the help individuals convince their boss,  
it is worse investment if  
your employer is not necessarily on the sensor or on board, or other way.

But the thought is yes,  
we have a number of ways to help you out,  
and our website's a great place to start.

If you can get a hold of our catalog, that's a great way to start too.

>> Fantastic. I know you mentioned earlier,

Disney Institute's coming March 26th.

You'll be back again because this is January,

Brandy will be in February.

You'll be back in early March,

and I assume we'll talk a little bit more about Disney Institute then.

>> Well, there's a good chance, it will be sold out by then.

>> That's something else, if somebody's interested, go now.

>> Yes, exactly. We have an early bird rate that's expiring on February 15th.

Actually it's the 14th, which is Valentine's Day.

We usually sell out Disney about that time frame.

If you are interested in actually experiencing Disney or

sending employees to that program for the first time,

it's a tremendous experience to experience what

Disney does and how they do their things in terms of the resorts and so forth.

We know they have excellent leadership there,

so it's a great place to learn.

Definitely do that before,

so we may not be talking about it more.

We're probably sold out.

>> We will be talking about what everybody has missed out on.

Well Guy, thank you for hosting me at the college today, I appreciate it.

>> Yes. Thank you for coming in, and Happy New Year to you and everyone.

>> Absolutely. Kenny, it has been a phenomenal conversation,

and you and I are totally going to talk about a leadership like this.

>> I'm so down. Thank you so much, it's been great.

>> We're going to wrap up today's episode.

We have in chatting with Guy Curtis from

Lord Fairfax Community College Workforce Solutions.

Kenny Smith is a leadership instructor,

he was in on the conversation as well.

I will be back in the studio for a conversation tomorrow.

Elise is coming from United Way of Northern Shenandoah Valley.

We are going to talk about in a bit.

They've got coming up on January 23rd called Project Connect.

You are not going to want to miss the details of that event.

Meet me back here on the air just a few minutes after noon.

Remember, if you can't get to your radio,

you can click to listen live at [theriver95th3.com](http://theriver95th3.com).

You can use the tuning app on your phone,

or you can say Alexa,

play The River 953, and you'll get to hear me.

>> Oh my God.

>> I'll meet you back here tomorrow.