

Lisa Lewis:

Welcome to Let Go, Lean In, my podcast designed with transformational leaders like you in mind. I'm Lisa Lewis, your transformational leadership coach. In each episode, you'll find help growing awareness of your mindset as a leader, be equipped with a tool to let go of unrealistic expectations and self-limiting beliefs that get in the way of your one precious life. My goal is for you to thrive as you lean in toward the leadership call God has put on your life. Join me and other leaders as we let go and lean in together.

Lisa Lewis:

Hi there. This is Lisa again, and I'm really excited to be with you today to talk a little bit about what leadership is and what leadership isn't. A lot of times, women do not see themselves as leaders unless their job has the title leader in it. And yet I want to talk about the through line in your life, where you potentially have demonstrated leadership, but might not have been recognized as a leader or as being able to be a leader.

Lisa Lewis:

Let's get honest. There are still many places where women do not have respect in the leadership realm. That's becoming less and less. And my hope is that this generation, and by this, I mean the millennials and those that are coming into their careers that are younger, that they're going to be able to be who they are regardless of their gender. Leadership is leadership.

Lisa Lewis:

What makes a leader? A leader wants to see things changed. A leader is a person who can envision how something can be and has ideas about how to take action to get to that place, that change in a family, in an organization. So leaders have vision and leaders can inspire. And by inspire, I mean, they come around, rally people and say, "Hey, look, come on. We can do this. Come on with me. Let's go there." And they paint the picture. They point the way.

Lisa Lewis:

Here's what leaders aren't. Leaders are not people who hang onto the status quo and say, "This is the way it's always been so we're going to keep it that way." Those are called managers. Now I don't have anything against management. However management is to maintain. So let's say an organization has a particular culture. And in that culture, there are limits to new ideas because new ideas rock the boat potentially, and could cause an interruption for lack of a better word in what the company, the organization is all about.

Lisa Lewis:

Managers help maintain the way things are supposed to be. Please pretend you can see me doing air quotes, supposed to be. Leaders, if they're in the role of management, find this place of angst with this knowing that there's a way to do something differently and not being able to take a step toward bringing that change, that idea into reality. If you find yourself in a role where you have ideas, how things could improve, how things could be done differently, perhaps a new workflow, and you are not being given opportunity to voice those ideas, to put them into practice, to try it out, then you are finding yourself frustrated because I've said countless times leaders have got to lead. On the other thing that you know whether or not you're a leader is whether or not people follow you. So you have a great idea and you share it with the people who are in the change leadership role in your organization. If your idea

falls flat, and yet it gets implemented by others than you, let me tell you, not only did they steal your idea, but they're also following your leadership.

Lisa Lewis:

And I would say if you're in a situation like that, look for another place because the true culture that is going to foster your leadership is going to give you the opportunity to try things out. In the words of the famous Ms. Frizzle of The Magic School Bus, get messy, make mistakes. If you're not making mistakes, you're not doing anything, to quote John Wooden. As a leader, you are going to want to bring people along and you're going to want to influence and inspire people. The other thing a leader is going to want to do is equip their people to be able to bring this idea into reality. And as they give them the tools that are needed, there's going to be encouragement that goes along with it way beyond the attaboy or the attagirl. There is the encouragement specifically to the individuals that are on the team that are putting in the extra time, that are putting in that focus and brain power.

Lisa Lewis:

A transformational leader is about the business of change, changing the organization, changing the way things are being done, but also changing yourself because that's the beauty of transformational leadership. You're modeling it. You are showing that you are being inspired by something, perhaps a podcast that you're listening to, or a book you're reading, or a course that you've recently taken, or the fact that you're working with a coach and are finding new and inspiring ideas to lean toward. You model that for your people. They see that it's possible and they want to follow what your doing.

Lisa Lewis:

And the last aspect of a leader, a transformational leader, is that you are growing and you're helping your people grow as well. And truly, it's not just about your work growth. It's about your life growth and your faith within your life. I've said many times that my passion is about helping women connect the dots of their work, their life and their faith. Because for so many years, we've had this idea that we have to live a bifurcated life, where work is on one side of us and the rest of life is on the other and never the twain shall meet.

Lisa Lewis:

That's not authentic leadership. To be an authentic leader, you are going to be fully who you are wherever you are. That means you're integrating your life and your faith into the person that you are as a leader. Your people will get inspired as they see you being fully who you are, because all of us are changing all the time, whether or not we want to acknowledge it. The opportunities that you find yourself in, in the midst of these crazy times in 2020, give you the chance to be fully who you are, to lean in toward the way that you're wired, the ideas that come for problems that are in the organization or in your company, or even in your family and recognizing we need resources.

Lisa Lewis:

You seek out how to best equip your people to succeed, to move toward the goal that you have in mind. And collectively you're building toward that because yes, you're leading, but you're also bringing them along. You're also inspiring them to recognize they're a part of what you're doing. It's not just your idea. You are inspiring them that this is their idea, their work, their input. All of those things are valuable.

Lisa Lewis:

Recently on a podcast with Kirsten Powers, Marie Forleo gave a quote or a prompt rather for journaling that really stuck with me. And I wanted to share it with you here, because this is so germane to leadership. And the question that she posed for reflection is what are the lessons you don't want to forget from this time? Let me say that one again. What are the lessons you don't want to forget from this time?

Lisa Lewis:

Now we have been in shelter in place for going on 11 weeks. That's 77 days. That's a long time and it hasn't been easy. There have been ups and downs and I'm certain you have experienced them as well. As a leader you are looking for opportunities. You're looking for those opportunities to encourage your people, to inspire them, to equip them so that they can grow, your company can grow, the organization, and you are modeling that growth. So in the quiet where there seems to be much more time for reflection than there has been in recent years, you have the opportunity to listen deeply for what the spirit is stirring in you. Who are you becoming? What can your leadership look like? What are the next steps that you want to bring your team to? And many, many other questions, because here's the thing.

Lisa Lewis:

If anything matters, everything matters. God has put a call on your life as a leader. And as you reflect on that, I bet you can look all the way back to when you were a little girl. And you have examples of when you stood out as a leader. If you're anything like me, you might have been called bossy. And I love the quote, "I'm not bossy. I have leadership skills." I'll put a picture of two little kids that I came across one time on Instagram that just delighted me so much with that quote.

Lisa Lewis:

When you think about your leadership, when you think about what you offer, when you think about the goals that you have for yourself personally and professionally, change is a big part of it. And here's what I want to tell you about change. It's hard. You're experiencing it right now. You know that change is hard, but if you're willing to look for the opportunities that change brings, change can be good. Change is hard, but change is good. So leadership is a part of who you are. And you know that this is a time to lean in, to let go of the things that have held you back from truly believing that you're a leader and lean in toward the unique call that God has on your life. I like to think of the passage of Matthew 11:28 through 30, where Jesus talks about and invites us, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Lisa Lewis:

He goes on and says, "Take my yoke upon you." And a yoke is something we don't know a lot about in our non-agrarian society, but it's actually a device that would partner an older, more experienced ox with a younger one that was learning how to do this pulling and plowing thing. And so Jesus talks about his yoke, which means he's the stronger of the two. And he's going to teach us how. And I love to think about that. And that's why I say lean in. We lean in toward Jesus because he knows who you are going to be, not only who you are right now. But as you continue to grow and you let go of self limiting beliefs and the things that hold you back, you are going to become more of who he intends for you to be. So that leadership call is priceless, it is precious, and it's profound. Lean in my friends. Thanks for being here today.