

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.

Well, hello, again, welcome to another episode of Let Go, Lean In, your transformational leadership podcast. I'm really excited to bring to you today the crux of why the title of this podcast, why Let Go, Lean In? Well, there are a lot of reasons around it and of course a story, but I also want to give you some tools in the midst of it all, because the essence of let go is change. We cannot be transforming and remain the same, it is impossible.

I used to be an elementary school teacher and in learning how things work and learning about science, we studied caterpillars that transformed into butterflies. Now, I'm sure you know all about the process, this big fat wormy looking thing eats its way through all kinds of vegetation and then forms itself mysteriously, into a chrysalis that hangs ever so tenuously to the branch of a plant. And it hangs there and it doesn't look like anything is happening and then all of a sudden it starts to move on its own, and it's wiggling back and forth, and it's shaking, and then there's a crack, and then out comes the struggle of transformation and that chrysalis becomes a beautiful butterfly, but there's struggle in that transformation.

For us, the struggle is letting go, and what are we letting go of? Well, a lot of times it's self-limiting beliefs, it's also potentially expectations that we have believed to be truths about our leadership, our way of life, the right thing that we're supposed to be doing, the way that we're supposed to be doing things, here that words supposed to, those are externals that we take into ourselves and begin to believe in our thought process, so the idea of let go is based in change.

So today, I want to talk to you specifically about letting go of doing it all. Let me tell you as women, we have the double, double bind, if we are working outside the home, we are often responsible for working inside the home, and we are still trying to make that an equitable partnership. I used to joke with my husband that he's a sensitive new age guy and able to do many things, but the truth of the matter is, it is not an equal partnership, especially not if you have little people in your home, because it's just challenging to be in several roles at the same time. So you're working outside the home, you're in a leadership position, you have people that are looking to you for direction and guidance and responsibilities, and you get home and you have little people looking to you for guidance and responsibilities, and you need to set limits and correct behavior, it's exhausting, let go of thinking you can do it all.

Now, if you are a person of faith and you're here thinking, well, of course I can do it all, Proverbs 31 says, I can. Let me help you with a little bit of what that is truly all about, it is descriptive not prescriptive. The difference is, what we see in this passage of scripture is the description of a woman's lifetime, the course of her entire life, not the day in her life. Reading through it might be a little bit exhausting and especially daunting if you think that, I'm supposed to do all this in one day, this is what my life is supposed to look like and you buy into that, then you are buying into a lie. You cannot physically do all of those things, nor how you intended to.

Every day you're given 24 hours. There are limits within that day intended for your good, limits to rest, limits to restore, limits to give, limits to receive. Learning to let go of the idea that you have to do it all is a huge step in becoming an effective leader. Why? Your people watch you, whether it's your little people at home or the people on your teams at work, you set the stage for what they think they're

supposed to do. So if you model an appropriate rhythm of caring for yourself, of taking a break, a real break for lunch, of gathering together with people to just have conversation, not a meeting, just to spend time with other people time. If you model appropriate number of hours of work, you give yourself permission to unplug, you rest, you give a day of the seven, to not doing anything but relaxing and having fun with your people, drawing closer to God, learning to breathe, these are evidences that people see and they know they have permission to do the same.

If we lead from a place of drivenness, of accomplishment, of deep attention to details with micro-managing behaviors, our people are affected by that and begin to think they can't let down, they can't relax, they can't take a lunch break because you're not. That type of leadership is not soul leadership, it is not caring for yourself as you are wired, and it's not caring for your people and bottom line, it's not sustainable. If your organization is looking to you to lead this team forward, you need to establish what is right for your leadership and for your people's followership. You want to be developing future leaders who have healthy boundaries, who have healthy practices and rhythms that are sustainable. Our current corporate culture is not sustainable and we're seeing it fray at the edges.

Now, you may be in a newer company who has established a culture that allows for some of these practices, give yourself an air high five with an imaginary teammate at this point, since we're in the middle of a pandemic. However, not everybody's situation allows for healthy company culture, but you have the people that you have for this purpose, to lead them well and to do that, you need to lead yourself well.

So how do we let go of the idea that we can do it all? I'm going to over work this probably in every time you hear me talking about it, you need to develop your awareness. You may not do this in every area of your life, maybe you're just driven at work and when you leave work, whenever that might be, you can let it go and then be with your people. Likely though you carry your work with you from one location to the next and it's still impacting you. That needs to change, that's an awareness that you can say, "All right. What strategies can I put in place that allow me to disconnect from my work, so that I can pivot and be with my people?"

There are all kinds of strategies that you can put in place, but often, just the step of growing your awareness begins the questioning, what resources might I be able to find? Who's speaking about this? Is there a book I need to read? Is there a group that I need to be a part of? Do I need to simply practice being unplugged for the evening? When I get home, I put my phone on the charger and don't touch it again. There are so many different strategies, you need to find the one for yourself, that you can begin to let go of the idea that you can do it all. And again, this often does not work in a vacuum, you need to have support. Can you get the support of your team? Can you get the support of upper leadership? Can you get the support of your spouse, your children? Who do you need to have on your team to help you change that mindset, that you can do it all?

These are great questions. And honestly, finding the people that can hear from you without just being a yes person, who can hear from you and encourage you, can even provide some accountability, those are essentials for helping you let go. But it isn't just letting go, because if you can picture that butterfly back in that chrysalis struggling against the chrysalis to get out, what's happening is it's being strengthened in that struggle. And so, as you are recognizing this is a change that needs to happen, there's going to be challenge to that letting go, but you also need to move, so that the change can provide freedom.

How does that happen? Well, as a person of faith, I have ascribed to this passage in Matthew, that is so beautiful, it's an invitation from Jesus. He says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy-laden." And just think about that. That's every single person, there it doesn't matter what your work life is like or your home life, if you're listening to the news, if you're in a family, whether it's a

nuclear family now or your family of origin, there are conflicts, and there are burdens, and it gets very weary. And Jesus says, "Come to me." How do we do that? We can't see him. Through faith, through the eyes of faith, we can see him through his word, through creation, including the voice and love of others.

One of my favorite authors who invites us to be contemplative in our leadership as well as in our life, is the author Ruth Haley Barton. And in her book, *The Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership*, she has several practices built in. And I just want to invite you right now, to engage in this particular practice, because all it requires is breathing and you do that without even thinking about it, but I want you to think about your breathing. This is what she says on page 113, living within limits. Someone has said that we are not human beings trying to become spiritual, but spiritual beings trying to become human. Think about that for a moment. It's true, isn't it? And it raises a great question. How are you doing at being human?

With that question in mind, I want you to take a few moments to breathe deeply and pay particular attention to how the awareness of your breathing helps you be attuned to the life in your body. Take a deep breath, long inhale, now pause at the top, and slowly exhale all the way down to the bottom. Now pause and do that again. Some people call this square breathing, where you inhale for four counts, you hold for four counts, you exhale for four counts, you hold for four counts. This practice can be also applied to a prayer, you can pray on your inhale, on your hold, on your exhale, and on your pause before your next breath. This deep breathing can bring your awareness, not only to the life that you have in your body, to the importance of slowing your pace down. You can begin to quiet your thoughts in that process and develop your awareness of what is around you and what is within you.

Faith is mystery, it's not certainty, except in the things that are not seen, that's what it says in Hebrews. Faith is the evidence of things not seen. So in the practice of quieting breathing, you're expressing trust. The Hebrew name for God, the unspoken name for God in the old Testament is, Yahweh. And that's actually the rhythm of your breath, you inhale Yah, exhale weh, Yah-weh. Pausing to recognize you're not alone in this idea of letting go of the trying to do it all, that you can lean in toward Jesus, is simply a breath away. Grow your awareness, get the tools you need, be equipped, so that you can thrive in this one precious life that you have been given. Your people need you, they're looking for a good leader, they want to be led well, let go and lean in.

I'll share the resources that I mentioned, Ruth Haley Barton's book and where you can find that over in the show notes, which can be found at letgoleaninpodcast.com. And I have a newsletter that I send out twice a month that I emphasize grow, equip, thrive, and I'm sharing very simple tools and resources that you can put into practice very quickly to continue the journey of your transformational leadership. You can find that over at LisaLewiscoaching.com and just sign up for the newsletter it's called get G-E-T in your life, get in your life. I'd love to have you join me over there. And thanks again for being here. Please feel free to share this with others that you know, could benefit from the concepts of letting go and leaning in. Thanks friends.