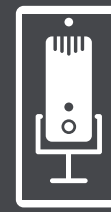


Episode: 30

Dan Clark



THE
**MOBILE
WORKFORCE**
PODCAST

Mike Merrill:

Hello, and welcome to the Mobile Workforce Podcast. Today we are sitting down with a wonderful guest, Mr. Dan Clark. Dan is the founder and CEO of The Art of Significance Leadership Development Company. Over the years, Dan has spoken in all 50 states, 71 countries, six continents, to millions of people everywhere. He's worked with Fortune 500 companies, Super Bowl champions, NASA, MDRT, I think that's Million Dollar Round Table, is that right, Dan?

Dan Clark:

Yeah.

Mike Merrill:

I had to look that one up. The United Nations. He's been on multiple military tribute tours in Iraq, Afghanistan, Africa. Dan has also appeared on Larry King Live, and even Oprah. That's a big one. Aside from all of those wonderful things, Dan does a lot of other stuff that we're going to talk about today. And we just wanted to welcome you on the show today, Dan.

Dan Clark:

Thanks, Mike, you're my hero. As I travel and speak, it's fun to see Mike's company illuminated as one of the most important vendors in the room, suppliers, if you will. And to hear your reputation behind your back, I think that's pretty cool. So, it's an honor for me to be here. And in our stages in life, is not about time management, it's about energy management. And you and I have so many other choices to take our time and our attention today, and we've decided to spend it together, so I honor you and thank you so much. I am excited to talk to you.

Mike Merrill:

Thanks, Dan, I'm really looking forward to it as well. A couple of Dan's favorite topics, believe it or not, are

actually workforce development, safety and culture. That's what we want to talk about today and how those relate to construction leadership. What can you tell us about that, Dan?

Dan Clark:

Probably the most important place to start in any discussion as parents, as coaches of sports teams, as family owned business, leaders, and as leaders of Fortune 500 companies, we all have the same formula in which, or on which, we can create our culture, and it never fluctuates. Every culture is created between the strongest belief, the highest expectation, and the best behavior that the leader lives by, and the weakest belief, the lowest expectation, and the worst behavior that the leader tolerates.

The two operative words are belief and tolerate. And when we can shrink the distance between what we believe, what's our strongest belief, what's our highest expectation, what's our best behavior, and what we're not willing to tolerate, when we shrink the distance between them, we create what I call a culture of significant partner leaders. And then here's the kicker, where self mastery is permanent. We're not the best version of ourselves because it's expected by somebody else. We are becoming better today than we were yesterday, the only person you need to be better than is the person you were yesterday, we're not competing or comparing ourselves with anyone else.

And in a safety construct, well, "He's not wearing his goggles," or, "he didn't follow that protocol." We're always rationalizing ourselves out of peak performance because we're comparing. So we need self mastery to be permanent, and winning to be personal, so that leadership is automatic. We're not just safe because I said so, we're not just going through the motions because some leader or manager's in our presence, we're not trying to be a good kid just because dad is looking over our shoulder. We're not keeping the speed limit and obeying the law because there's a police

officer in our rearview mirror, we're actually taking personal responsibility to become the best version of ourselves.

And therefore leadership is automatic, where we lead with and without a title, especially when in the building trades in the construction business, in the oil and gas, in the mining, where you actually have to hire contractors outside of your corporate culture. And in that day worker, in that organized laborer who shows up as a member of a wonderful union, you have to get them to buy into your culture of safety, you have to get them to buy into your culture of trust and peak performance, or you'll never be able to rise to the occasion to have the quality control that whoever's paying the bill expects of us.

Again, Peter Drucker said, "Once you get the culture right, the rest of the stuff takes care of itself." I thought that would be a perfect formula and foundation to lay as the beginning point for the rest of our discussion here, Michael, I hope that makes sense. And we can dissect that a little bit more or whatever other questions you want to ask about culture. Because when it boils down to what you're not willing to tolerate, it's easier to get people to understand that, and we're going to elevate that. You can't come late, there's no vulgarity, there's no sexism, there's no racism, there's no bigotry or discrimination. Diversity, equity and inclusion become just part of our culture, is not a new conversation we have to have every day. We start elevating what we're not willing to tolerate, everybody agrees on that, and the rest of the culture, and the rest of the stuff, the motivation, the peak performance, the personal accountability takes care of itself.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah, I love everything that you're saying there about the accountability as the individual. And I heard you speak at a AGC safety conference recently. And one of my takeaways was, how critical it is that as individuals, people are making these decisions, that they want to be safe because it's the right thing to do.

Dan Clark:

And it boils down to reputation, the transference of trust. If we're only going through the motions of peak performance, and increasing our personal productivity,

and being safe, when the manager, when the leader, when the safety suite, excuse me, the safety officer in our organizations is around, as soon as they leave, everybody knows if they can trust us or not. And when we lose trust, we lose everything.

Let me ask your listeners, what are people saying behind your back? Illustrates, a army sergeant phones up the commissary and a young private answers the phone. The sergeant says, "Tell me what we got." Private says, "We have 1,500 rifles, 10 tanks and one fat-headed sergeant's Jeep." Sergeant says, "What?" Private says, "1,500 rifles, 10 tanks and one fat-headed sergeant's Jeep." Sergeant says, "Do you know who this is?" Private says, "Nope." Sergeant says, "This is the sergeant." Private says, "Whoa. Do you know who this is?" Sergeant says, "No." He says, "Good. Bye bye fat head."

We have to answer, what do people say behind our back, and realize we can't control that. And when we understand it's indelibly tied to trust, we will go out of our way to never violate someone's trust. And that's the heart and soul of culture, that's the heart and soul of the safety culture, that's the heart and soul of peak performance.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah, and I think, to your point, this really goes back to leadership of the company, those that are in charge, the management, they've got to emulate that first, and I think the employees then can follow suit and be in line right behind them. Is that right?

Dan Clark:

Yeah. Because the purpose of a leader is to grow more leaders who believe what you believe, not generate more followers. And so as I've spoken all these 6,000 speeches and 71 countries, I take a lot of pride in interviewing the CEOs, the leaders of all these organizations, including the military commanders. I just got through speaking at the Pacific Air Force Commanders Conference in Hawaii. And all of these CEOs and the highest level leaders, tell us that the toughest challenge that they have is getting everybody in the organization to care as much about the organization as they do.

And therefore it begins by saying, what do you believe? Here's our expectation, here's our expected behavior, but as you said, I'd rather see a sermon preached in here when any day I'd rather you walk with me than merely point the way. It's not enough for us to just practice what we preach, we must preach only what we practice, which illuminates the real definition of the law of attraction. We don't attract who we want Michael, we attract who we are. We attract what we believe we deserve in employees, in friendships, in a spouse, in a significant other, in an income, in a job title, in a holiday, in a home, in a neighborhood. And we attract individuals into our lives, who will help us make that a reality. We become the average of the five people we associate with the most.

I believe that in my travels, we actually become the average of the five people we associate with the most when it comes to workforce development, and trying to recruit more people into the building industries, more young men and young women to find out what a noble profession it is. You build things, you create communities, you organize the environments wherein we create our memories, you are the most noble profession on the planet.

Oil and Gas, construction, mining, everything goes into the construction construct, if you will, meaning you're providing a way for us to build the infrastructure of our lives so that we can become the full measure of ourselves and make our dreams come true. I honor everyone who's in this podcast. But when it comes to workforce development, we can't think we can recruit people into the building industries, we have to attract them. We become the average of the five people we associate with the most. If you hang around with five broke people, you're going to become the sixth. If you hang around with... When you when you put a hard-to-catch horse in the same field with an easy-to-catch horse, most of the time you end up with two hard-to-catch horses.

When you put a healthy child in the same room with a sick child, most of the time, you end up with two sick children. Moral of the story, to be disciplined, healthy and significant, we must be willing to pay any price and travel any distance to associate with extraordinary human beings. And in order for us to associate with extraordinary human beings, we have to attract extraordinary human beings. And in order for us to

attract these extraordinary human beings, we must first be an extraordinary human being.

Let me step on some toes. If every time I go to a construction site and all I hear are vulgar, sexist jokes, I'm never going to want to work there, and I'm never going to want to hang out with these folks because they don't think like I think or believe what I believe. If that's the culture, what we're going to attract are people who enjoy bigotry, sexism, racism, bad jokes, horrible language, and all of the above. And I don't want you to think I'm a prude. I'm not trying to be self righteous, I'm just making a point that when we build our dream home, when we had our house-warming party when it was finally completed, every individual who worked on our home, the gajillion folks who put on our roof, who spoke broken English, if I can just be graphic, and the framers, and the plumber, and the electrician, these guys from the unions, and the general contractor, the individual came in and poured concrete, we were so amazed at the high quality of human being that they were who just happened to be in the building trades, who just happened to be an extraordinary finished carpenter in my beautiful cherry wood library.

So we don't have to settle. What are you not willing to tolerate? And in this high competitive world in which we live, especially trying to attract people into the building industries, why not put out that good, clean, pure, powerful, positive culture that says, "Wait a minute, we're different. And when you work with us, you actually leave the workplace saying, 'I like me best when I'm with you, I want to see you again.'" You actually leave the construction site, you actually leave the mine saying, "I like me best when I'm with you, I want to see you again." Which immediately converts over to our personal lives, our wives, our significant others, our husbands.

We walk in the door and instead of saying, "Hey, give me a beer, leave me alone, I got to decompress for an hour, turn on the TV." Instead of as kicking the dog, the ones we walk in the house, instead of us hating our job, we actually love our jobs because it's helping us become the best version of ourselves. When we walk in the door we're more loving, we're more understanding, we're calm so we listen, "How is your day, sweetheart? Come here, little buddy, hop up on my lap, tell dad how school was today."

We get ourselves in a mindset where we want to never ever miss one of our kid's games, never miss a school concert, a dance recital. Where our lives becomes so fulfilling because we've set a higher standard of performance based on our belief. I'm telling you what, it's so critically important that we understand when it comes to culture creation, there are certain things we cannot control, so don't worry about them. But we can focus on what we can control.

And let me give you an example. We have four children, one son, three daughters. And as our children became teenagers, we realized that all of their friends were being raised by parents in a different way than we were raising our children. In a perfect utopian world, wouldn't it be cool if we could have a parent's meeting where every one of the parents of our children's friends came together in the same place, and we agreed on how we were going to raise our children.

This belief, highest expectation, best behavior, and what we're not willing to tolerate, but it's never going to happen, that's a pipe dream. We can't control what happens outside of our home, but we can control what happens in our home, when we proactively and on purpose create a culture of excellence, where when anyone walks through our doors, they know our expectation and they know our belief, and we're not prudes, we're not self righteous. We're not saying, "Hey, we're better than you." When someone walks in our door, when our children's friends came in our door as teenagers and young adults in college, immediately they knew they were 100% welcome. They immediately knew non judgmental friendship, unconditional love.

We don't care if you have a purple mohawk on the side of your head. Everybody knew there was no racism, no bigotry, no sexism. Our expectation was kindness, honor, respect. We celebrated the social graces, Mike, please and thank you. When someone say, "Hey, give me that," say, "Hey, what's the magic word?" "Now." No, no, not yet. Obviously, we celebrated please and thank you. And what did we not tolerate? Bad language, sexist jokes. No one smoked in our home, no one drank in our home, we said no. What you do outside of our home is your own business.

But we understand what we can control, and we are inviting everyone to come into our home and live by a higher standard of performance. Especially when you

have three teenage daughters, and the tendency is to gossip or bad mouth. And we tolerated absolutely no gossip, we tolerated absolutely no drama in our homes. And one time I went downstairs to deliver some snacks and some drinks to my daughter's and all of her friends and I interrupted a conversation where they were actually gossiping and bad mouthing two girls who were not in our home that day. What a perfect teaching moment.

I said, "Ladies, remember, we don't have any drama. Remember, we are loyal to those who are not present. If you're talking about some somebody who's not in our home, the second you leave today, you're going to worry and wonder about what people are saying behind your back about you, and that violates trust." And we know that leadership and management and coaching and parenting is the transference of trust. It's such a key ingredient to develop in this culture. And my whole point, Mike, is that now after all these years with our children being adults, we will run into their friends in Costco, we will see them at a ballgame, and they always make a comment of how safe they felt in our home, how special we made them feel, and how exciting they were to come into our positive environment, especially when they were coming from perhaps a dysfunctional family, or a negative situation, where they were not honored as incredible human beings.

So, creating a culture of excellence is such a vitally important part of the law of attraction, of taking our performance and our profitability and our organizations to the next level. And remembering that you can't coach results, you can only coach behavior. You can't say to somebody, "Be safe." What the heck does that mean? As parents we can't say to our children, "You ought to make responsible decisions." What the heck does that mean? A coach can't say to his players, "Go out and win the game." Once the game starts, the coach is stuck on the sideline and he can't do anything about it. Somebody on the field, somebody on the floor, has to make a play.

Now, we equate that to the job site in any aspect of the building industries or the construction industry, in the mine, an oil and gas rig, it does not matter, we need to take personal responsibility, make winning personal, and then again say, the only person, again, believe, the only person we need to be better than is the

person I was yesterday. And when I start taking care of myself through the law of attraction, it's amazing how others around me feel better about themselves, and together we rise.

Mike Merrill:

Wow. I love so much of what you said. And in my mind, the word integrity just kept coming up. I kept thinking, "This feels like, sounds like, smells like integrity." What can you tell us about integrity?

Dan Clark:

Integrity is something that it's the most important... If you made a list of 10 core values and integrity was the first, if you don't have integrity, the other nine don't matter. It's that incredible. It's the old-school my word is my bond, my handshake. We don't need a written contract, even though the attorneys forces to do that. That when we go into a bank for a loan, there's the five C's, I'm only going to talk about character and competence.

Competence is your ability to pay. Obviously, one of the C's is collateral. But the two most important are competence and character. Competence is your ability to pay the loan, but more importantly, character is your willingness to pay back the loan. And without those two, if I'm a banker, I won't give you any money. And so that ties directly into integrity. Who are you when no one's around? And that's a safety message, that's a personal achievement, personal greatness message.

Think about it in terms of this story. I'm flying on Delta Airlines, 757 jet, from San Diego, California, cross country to Tampa Bay, Florida. It's a five-and-a-half-hour flight. 757 jet has 24 first class seats, I always get a window seat. All 24 seats in first class are occupied. And we're now airborne for about an hour and a half of the five-and-a-half-hour flight, I'm on my 16th Diet Coke, and I need a comfort break, I need to go to the bathroom.

I excuse myself from my window seat there in first class, and I go to the front of the plane, and we've all seen the bathrooms on an airplane. With the high cost of tickets, don't you think they ought to splurge for a little bigger room, is that too much to ask? The operating system of the door, it's an accordion, you got

to push in the middle, it folds in. It's so skinny, you got to turn sideways and then you got to scoot in. And the lights don't turn on until you lock the door. So I latch the door lock, the lights flicker on, I turn, and I'm this close to the mirror.

And making its way down the glass is the stinkiest, smelliest, most unidentifiable gunk you have ever seen in your life. And I automatically take into gag reflex. Water splashed from corner to corner. Used paper towels on the floor, crap everywhere. And then it occurs to the person who comes in here right after me, he's going to think I did all this. I start cleaning up, I'm like, "Are you freaking kidding me? Oh my gosh." I finished what I went in there to accomplish, and when I came out, I was livid, I was so freaking mad and grossed out. I've been raised to be a gentleman, so I didn't say anything.

But to the best of my ability, I stood there in front of the other 23 first class passengers until I got eye contact with every single one of them. And to the best of my ability, I communicated, "Okay, which one of you low-budget bums trashed this bathroom, I want to rip your lips off." It was so pathetic. I went back, "Excuse me," I went back to my room, "Excuse me," sat down on my chair in my seat. I'm looking out the window, fuming inside, and then I learned the lesson, you cannot buy class.

Because of the nature of what I do for a living as a speaker, as an entertainer, I'm invited to play golf on some of the greatest golf courses on the planet with CEOs, some of the wealthiest, most powerful CEOs on the planet, who have absolutely no character or class. They think their money and title makes them someone that they're not. They think they're their car, they think their house, or their job, when in reality they're not. And for the listeners who are listening, I want you to understand the place from which I'm coming.

I played football for 13 years, and I was paralyzed in a tackling drill. One day in practice, the coach blew the whistle, two of us ran into each other full speed. The only parts of our bodies that made contact, Lyle's helmet hit my helmet in a violent head on collision. My right shoulder was smashed into the cutting edge of my fiberglass pads, and we slammed to the ground. And when Lyle got off of me, my eye drooped, I had lost

the speech, I couldn't talk anymore. My right side was paralyzed, my arm dangled helplessly at my side.

Coach comes running over, "Clark, Clark, are you all right, what happened?" Rocasho mocasho my rah-rah. He says, "Whoa, are you from Spanish Fork, Utah?" Just kidding. He says, "You better get yourself checked." I said, "Whoa." A doctor that was present on the field, he came over and examined me. Pulls the coach aside, he said, "Clark's got serious nerve damage. In fact, he might even have serious brain damage." The coach look at him and says, "How will we ever know?" Nice guy.

I went back to normal, my speech came back, I could basically talk again, but my right side stayed paralyzed and my arm dangled at my side. I stayed paralyzed for 14 months. I went to 16 of the very, very best doctors in all of North America, 15 of whom told me I would never get any better. And if you ever heard that, and what happens if we believe it, you're never going to get any better.

And my life hit a fast-moving downward spiral, until I hit what I thought was rock bottom, until I hit what I thought was deep depression. And now that I've recovered, serious questions are asked, "Clark, why did you go to so many different doctors?" Answer. I kept going from doctor to doctor until I found one who believed I would get better. We've gone full circle, my friends were back to the formula. Every culture is created between the strongest belief blah, blah, blah.

We have to understand that it's the belief of the leader that creates the leader. It's the belief of the leader that creates the expectation, and it's the expectation that creates the behavior. And because you can't coach results you can only coach behavior, we have to understand that behavior is created and sustained 100% by our belief, which brings me to the second most frequently asked question, "Clark, what took you so long to get better?" If the purpose of this podcast is to elevate people's performance, to give us a mindset shift, a hard shift, a hard set shift, where we click off this podcast and we go be a better human being not because I said so but because you do. If that's the real purpose, please listen in.

I stayed paralyzed for 14 months because I was asking the wrong questions. You see, I was asking the doctors how to get better, when I should have been asking

myself 'why'. And once we answer 'why', figured out the 'how to' becomes clear and simple, not easy. The heart is what makes it great. We still have to do hard things and put in the work. But when we do and focus in on the reason why our organizations exist, why am I coming to work, why should I be a better human being today than I was yesterday, why should I forgive, why should I be kind, why should I be respectful, why should I honor men and women, why should I always be the best version of myself? Once we answer why, figuring out the 'how to' becomes clear and simple.

And here's the tragedy in corporate training. Most of the time, all we do is talk about skill set, "Can you do this? Show me that you can do this." We go through an apprentice program. "Can you do all the things that is required to be an extraordinary electrician, an extraordinary plumber?" Can you do what is required of you to not just mix and pour the cement to the degree and the thickness and the level that we need it to be, but you have the skill set to not just smooth it out and make it a perfect patio, a perfect driveway, a perfect slab, a perfect floor for this huge warehouse or whatever the case may be.

But how are people leaving you, who hire you, who work side by side with you? Are you a class human being that inspires them to be a better performer, a better craftsman, a greater technician? You see, I don't think we should just focus in on the 'how to' because that becomes very simple. And when we come to attracting the right people into our organizations... Do you realize the statistics right now on millennials, is that the average length of time that a millennial spends in one job is two years. And if we invest so much time and so many resources and so much money in training them up, and then they just jump ship for an extra five bucks an hour, based on how they do it. I'm going to hire you away from that company to work for me just because you're a better-skilled worker, we're missing the boat. They'll never hang around, somebody will bribe them away for just a little bit more money.

What we want to do when we build culture, is start with the human being. And I bring this up because I stayed paralyzed for 14 months and hit rock bottom, thinking I was depressed. With suicidal thoughts, so confused like, "What a drag, my life fell apart." And the reason why I went there, my friends, and we must talk about suicide prevention in the building trades because it's

hit an all-time high. Are you listening to me, brothers and sisters?

The reason why I was so confused and hit what I thought was rock bottom, is because I confused who I was with what I did. I thought I was a football player, when in reality, that's just what I did. And when we identify ourselves in terms of what we do instead of who we are, we become a human doing instead of a human being, unacceptable significance is what we seek. My plea to the world, my plea to you on this podcast, is to itemize who you really are right now, not the motions that we go through, not the behaviors that we seem to wave as our flagship that this is who I am, no, no, no. Not what you do. Who are you, really? And this is the best story I can use to illustrate how we can answer that question.

I'm walking through the mall with one of my buddies. And somebody bumps into him and he spills his cup of coffee all over the floor. I said, "What happened?" He said, "I spilled my cup of coffee." I said, "No, you didn't." He said, "What?" I said, "You didn't spill your cup of coffee, you spilled what was in your cup? Had you had tea in your cup, you would have spilled tea, had you had orange juice or water in your cup, you would have spilled orange juice or water." We can only spill what's in our cup.

Let's put it into human performance. Let's insert this whole story into culture creation. Is your culture inspiring people to become the best that they can be? And here's how you find out. If you're negative and the economy bumps into you, if you are negative and something that someone says, or interest rates, or competition, or a significant other, or a spouse, or something in our life bumps into you, what's going to spill out? If you're negative, what spills out is anger and resentment, and, "I want to fight, are you kidding me?" And trying to put somebody else down physically and emotionally, verbally, because our lives are stagnant and stuck. We have to put somebody else down, say something derogatory about someone, gossip about someone, physically hit them to try and make ourselves feel better about who we are.

We're not rising, we're stagnant and stuck, so we have to put others below us to make us feel better about who we are. Isn't that crazy? Now that we've faced the brutal facts of reality, we need to do something about

it. But think about this, my friends, if you're positive, and the economy bumps into you, if you're positive and interest rates, a significant individual, a competitor, anything in life bumps into you, bad weather, whatever the case may be and your positive, what's going to spill out is unconditional love, forgiveness, "Don't worry about it, man, I've spilled on myself before, I'll just take my pants into the cleaners."

A non judgmental friendship. Humility, the list goes on and on, of core values, which brings us to your question, integrity. You can't buy class. What are you doing when no one's around that makes you safe that allows you to return home safely to your family, which is what they want you to do, which they pray for the second you leave the home, in the early morning hours of that work day. It's pretty important that we understand how all these stories and how my message all fits together when we talk about safety.

And let me just throw out a shout out to WorkMax. What you do, Mike, and your company, validates what I'm talking about. You give us the opportunity to increase our frequency of feedback, which allows us to not only change our behavior, but it allows us to pick the most appropriate behavior in every moment, to keep the dream alive, to keep us safe, to keep the profitability rolling, to keep the production moving, to keep the task and delivery date on time. What you do is so attractive to the world, and that's why you're growing your business, and that's why everyone in this podcast, obviously needs to subscribe to you and become a customer.

I'm not just trying to pledge, to, I can't even think of the word, suck up to you. This is refreshing, and that's why I said yes to your podcast, bro, when you approached me and you told me what you did. And then when I spoke at the AGC safety conference, and you had your five or six people back in the booth, paying as an exhibitor to support the conference, we thank you for that, I was intrigued by what you do and why you do it, applies to my message to the world, and how we can fix what's broken in our families and in our communities, in our schools, and especially in our companies, or maybe not, especially in our companies, but especially in our country, to heal America.

What you teach us through WorkMax is what I'm talking about, increase our frequency of feedback, so

that we know when we're not being integral, when we've lost our integrity, when our trust is starting to weigh, it's starting to shift, and somebody that loves us, that cares for us, that admires and respects us because of mutual respect and support says, "Hey, Mike, I don't think you should be doing that. Hey, Dan, your family expects you to come home safe, let's not get complacent on the workplace. I don't think you should climb up on that ladder all by yourself, that's definitely unsafe, bro." Whatever the case may be.

And you know what I learned through the safety conference, Mike, was intriguing. That during the pandemic, there was an organization, a company working in Las Vegas, a construction company. And they were ridiculed and threatened with a huge fine for not wearing their masks when one of their pole climbers, or electricity experts, wasn't even strapped in. That we had lost our focus on safety, to put it on this crazy idea of masking up. We had shifted our focus of what really matters most. And so I challenge all of you to remember that if all of us on this podcast were belly to belly live today, and we were in a room, and we exited the room and entered another room that smelled so badly that our eyes watered, our noses started to bleed, we were in gag reflex, do you realize that we stayed in that smelly, rank, stinky room for five to 10 minutes, it would no longer smell? We had become desensitized, and it now was the new normal.

What has happened during COVID-19 and pandemic, in our families, in our schools, in our communities, in our workforces, in our high standards of performance when it comes to safety and quality? Have we not been desensitized, like this is good enough now? Have we not become complacent, working from home because there's no leader or manager looking at us to make sure that we're the best version of ourselves and doing everything possible to stay safe?

You see, it's what's been so beautiful and wonderful about this pandemic, is that it really has put all the responsibility on ourselves to be self starters, to be class human beings, to focus in on positive things at our families instead of arguing and escalating domestic violence, are you kidding me? This is the time to appreciate and to love, and to forgive, and to make a list of all the things that are going right instead of the things that are going wrong. Because we don't see things as they are, we see things as we are.

If we're all looking out the same window at the same lashing rainstorm in Los Angeles, somebody in our group will complain, "What a horrible day." Someone else in our group will exclaim, "What a wonderful day," and the weather did not change. We don't see things as they are, we see things as we are. Who are you and what's going to come out when you're squeezed, what's going to spill out of you when someone bumps into you. And if it's negative, I aint hanging around with you. If it's negative, you're not on my team, we're here to win the Superbowl. If you're on my team, go find your own team, and in any team.

Mike Merrill:

You've said so many great things, but I also keep coming back to not only were you paralyzed as a football player, but you were a first-round draft choice by the Raiders. This wasn't some high school game or some city league game, you were in the big time and getting ready to go to the big stage. And so to go from that to paralyzed, amazing to come back from that.

Dan Clark:

Yeah. And again, it emphasizes that we can't just put our... I can't speak for women, but I can speak for us men. So many of us live lives of quiet desperation. "Be a big boy, don't cry, I can handle this." We think it's a weakness to seek out for help, especially when it comes to sadness. And when we talked about suicide prevention, I was there. I'm glad you brought that up again. Because I was at the top of my game like everybody else on this podcast, and then something happens, and we get that punch in the gut.

Let's go there, bro. We know so many people, family members, friends, who had COVID. And everybody in my family, my brother and all of his children and blah, blah, blah, my mom, COVID... My mom didn't have COVID but everybody in my family got COVID and they had mild symptoms. I'm invincible, just like I thought I was when I was playing football. Could it happen to you? Nah. Could it happen to me? Nah, no way. No way, I'm invincible, I paid the price, it's going to happen to somebody else.

December 17th, tested positive for COVID, December 21st, I stopped breathing, I'm taken to the hospital. For the next seven days, and heparin shots in my stomach

for blood clots, and Toradol for... My body hurts so badly. Every inch of it all, 65 inches, I hurt so bad. My cough was so brutal. I was waking up deer on Mount Olympus. They're like, in the morning like, "What happened over there in that neighborhood?" And I was sitting home, after seven days, with pneumonia. Now that I've recovered, people are going, "Do you have any lingering symptoms yet?" "Yesterday I coughed up a box of Milk Duds I'd eat in a movie when I was nine."

To battle COVID, and to think I was invincible and ain't going to happen to me, and then to have it just blindsides me. Almost every day, I push on the door, the door knob falls off, I pick up my briefcase, the handle falls off, I'm getting afraid to go to the bathroom. We have got to talk about prevention, not about rehabilitation. And in my situation, what allowed me to get better, was when I finally realized the difference between what I do and who I am. That everybody on this podcast is supposed to be here on this earth at this time. You are somebody very special. And we need to be the best version of ourselves, you're going to make a lousy somebody else.

There's a reason why you weren't born in the 1800s, there's a reason why every single one of us on this podcast was not born 20 years from now. You're on this earth for a reason, we better figure out what that reason is, and not try to live small and hide our light under a bushel, hide it so no one can actually see us. What we have to do is start dreaming a mighty dream. As I said, I hit a downward spiral where I thought I hit a deep depression. In reality, now that I've recovered, you know what I learned? Huge difference between being depressed and being disappointed. Giant difference between being depressed and being discouraged.

Psychologists will remind us about HALTS. When we're hungry, angry, lonely, tired or sad. When we're experiencing any one of those five emotionally distorting and debilitating emotional conditions, we cannot feel, we cannot truly love, we cannot listen. It confuses us, and we start confusing activity with accomplishment, we stop serving others, which is the solution to feeling better about ourselves, and our lives seem to unravel.

But remember, no matter how bad your life is, no one ever hits rock bottom. You hit rock foundation, you hit

rock belief, you hit the baseline core values on which you were raised. And regardless of what happens in the economy, our organizations never hit rock bottom, they hit rock foundation, they hit the baseline governing principles on which they were built, which takes us full circle to how we began, Michael, is still about culture, belief expectation, behavior, and what we're not willing to tolerate. Eliminating the worst behaviors and the weakest beliefs in our organization so that we're all on the same page, the same team, with the same goal. That's how we keep people, that's how we attract people, and that's how we increase profitability, and more importantly, that's how we fulfill the full measure of our existence to become who we were born to be. You're going to make a lousy somebody else.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah. You're talking about laws of attraction, and when I think of the labor market, the construction, especially as you well know, with your involvement with AGC, there's just a huge shortage of good help. And so I think these principles you're talking about now, are probably more critical than ever, that we figure out how to get these things right, so we can start attracting that labor force that we're missing.

Dan Clark:

Yeah. In the dating world, all the surveys worldwide, in different countries and different cultures, every once in a while that pops up on the internet, and I'll read it, it makes me smile. What do you notice first in a person? And the list goes on and on. I always see, "Notice someone's eyes first." Well, in our pandemic, in our mask world, suddenly we realize the eye is the window to the soul. If you pay attention in your own home, if you pay attention in your workplace, you can see if someone's happy, you can see if someone's in pain, you can see if someone's unhappily married, you can see if someone's sad. Let's pay attention.

If the first thing you notice in someone is a smile, someone might be archaic and say, "Well, yeah, I noticed his body, and I noticed her body." Well, I'm old. I'm 60 years old, I used to be chiseled, I used to benchpress way over 400 pounds around the four, 440. And now I'm so sold I'd bend over to pull up my socks and I think, "What else can I accomplish while I'm way

down here?" And I wake up injured and all I did was lay there. "Oh my gosh, I better start stretching out," because apparently, sleeping is a really tough exercise for me, I might pull something at 2:00am.

If we only attract people into our building trades based on their outward appearance, based on their outside skill set, what can you do with your hands? How qualified are you to do what we asked you to do on the 'how to' side? Eventually, they're going to jump ship. We need to attract people not just based on what they look like on the outside or their skill set, but on who they are from the inside and how they make us feel better. The marriages that last the most are not those that originally started as a physical attraction, man, your heart, which is lust.

The relationships that last... I've been married for 41 years to the same woman. I got a buddy who says "Yeah, I've been married 20 years, not all in a row." That's funny. I've been married for 41 years to the same woman. And I'm not a genius in marriage counseling or anything else. That every morning if I wake up and I answer why am I married, and I can come up with a good answer, there's a really good chance I can stay happily married for the next hour.

And if I could ask that question, why am I married, again, I can stay married for two hours. Eventually, a whole day, eventually, a whole week, eventually, a whole month. And if we stay happily married for two years, do you realize we'll set an all-time record in the state of California? There'll be marriage podcast, and talk about marriage counseling. So, let's talk.

Love is a commitment, not a way of feeling. Romance is not love, romance comes from a Greek word that means erotic, so I don't even want to talk about it. If I love my wife because she's beautiful, that's romance. If she's beautiful because I love her, that's real love, it's a value creating love, that inspires both of us to become the best version of ourselves. Yet how many of us confuse love, commit, with romance emotion? What do we say our whole lives? "Oh, I love her so much, she makes me feel differently than I've ever felt before." "Oh, I love him so much, he makes me feel differently than I've ever felt before." So do breakfast burritos.

Maybe you just need a long cold shower and a box of Roloids. What's my point? We can't focus in on

the outside appearance, our skill set and what we do. We must always focus in on who we are and why we do what we do, that begins with integrity, a commitment to service before self, and a definite long-term dedication to excellence in all we do. I challenge everybody on this podcast to not just be safe for work, be safe on your ride home. Are you putting on your seatbelt?

If you're finally off work on Friday and you're excited to take your little guy fishing and you hop in the pickup truck, are you going down the dirt road 60 miles an hour without your seatbelts on because you're having so much fun with your fishing poles and you're talking about what you're going to do that day together? We've got to make sure that we understand the subconscious and the conscious mind, that if we want to change a habit, we have to first identify what we want to change, make it easy to do, and then link it to an existing habit that triggers our desire to do the next habit, to create the new habit, to uplevel our performance, to uplevel our belief.

So, when we talk about safety, do it because I said so, and here's the placard, and OSHA comes in trying to catch us doing something wrong. Let's shift that and catch each other doing something right, because we're doing it because we say so not because it's expected by management or leadership or ownership, we're doing it because it's demanded of ourselves, it's who we really are. You can surgically remove the stripes from a tiger and it's still a tiger.

If you and I, Mike, are roommates in college, and we collectively agree to wake up every single morning at 6:00am, and go to the gym and push ourselves to our ultimate capacity of potential as a human being, and then leave the gym and study together for an hour to prepare for the exams of the day and to prepare ourselves to enlighten our minds, and we do it together, we're only changing our behavior. But if you, Michael, wake up every single morning at 6:00am regardless of I do or not, and we're still roommates, and you go to the gym and you push yourself, and you study for an hour regardless of I do or not, you do it because you say so, that's who you really are. You can take the guy out of the neighborhood, but you cannot take the neighborhood out of the guy. You can surgically remove the stripes from a tiger, and it's still a tiger. In country music what do we say? No matter where you

go, there you are. The geographic relocation doesn't really change much.

How many times do we see a wonderful, wonderful woman doing everything she knows how to do, to get out of a physically and an emotionally abusive relationship, only to jump back into a more dysfunctional relationship with a bigger loser than the bum she just got rid of? It's because she's still exactly the same human being in the law of attraction. We don't attract who we want, we attract who we are. We must be willing to pay any price and travel any distance to associate with extraordinary human beings. In order for us to attract extraordinary human beings, we must first be extraordinary human beings. I thought I better bring that full circle as we wind up our time.

Mike Merrill:

At what point did you connect the dots with this mindset? Because clearly, at some point in your life, and maybe it was when you were young and you were always this guy, but at some point you decided, "I've got to look at things this way." Do you remember when that was, or was it an event, or did it happen naturally?

Dan Clark:

That's such a good question, Mike. I could go really deep on that. But I think as I've... Because of what I do, I've written 35 books. I hope everybody can follow me, danclark.com is my website, obviously, and you can click on Training. And I have online courses on leadership and public speaking, how to tell a story, how to make it funny, provocative and emotional, which helps you in your presentations to win the bid, and you're in the construction world, all of those things.

And we can take a deeper... And I have videotapes and great stories on record and blah, blah, blah. But as I've analyzed, as I've written 35 books, I think it began... My first memory, Mike, is when I was eight years old, battling with cancer in my throat.

Mike Merrill:

Oh goodness.

Dan Clark:

And I don't know what our earliest memories are of anyone on the podcast, but I remember being in the primary children's hospital, and the cancer was on the wall of my vocal cords. And one more day before it was reversed, one more day, a miracle in my life, one more day it would have eaten through that wall and I would have never been able to talk, I would have never been able to sing. You'll see on my website, I've got some gold records in country music. Some of you will love my songs. "Had I shot you when I met you, I'd be out of jail by now. My wife ran off with my best friend and I'm going to miss him dearly." That's a tear jerker. "How can I miss you if you won't go away." I got great songs.

But I would have never been able to record any music or be a professional speaker had that not happened. And so that's my earliest recollection of realizing the significance of personal intensity, personal focus, our personal responsibility to take charge of what it is that we can do to become better, to heal, to do what is necessary, what is required of us.

And when I was 12 years old, I was in a weekly television series. I know that that same mindset came through especially in the audition. I was the voice of a cartoon character. And in high school, I was an alpine ski champion, a motocross champion, a Golden Gloves boxing state champion. This attitude of personal excellence has been part of my DNA, because I was bullied so many times, made fun of as a kid. Because of my athleticism, I was always playing on teams with kids who were older than me or associating with them. And for some reason, out of their insecurities, I would get beat up. I got in a fight every single day in the fourth grade, and it was just defense, it was not me going after this kid.

And to be pulled down and made fun of and told my whole life, "You can't do that," or, "You're not good enough," it accelerated my desire to prove them wrong that, "Yo, yeah, watch me." And so that played out in high school. I got called American football player as a junior in high school, my senior year I got hurt in the third game, and I was worried about getting a scholarship. And I had to battle back in time to make the basketball team, which allowed me to get a football scholarship because they could see my athleticism on the basketball court and see that I had recovered.

And everything in my life is linked. I've connected the dots based on, I really don't care what anybody says to me, I'm going to fire up. I've got so many stories where people have said, "No, you can't, you don't have what it takes." And deep down inside of me, I'm not an angry guy, and I'm not a mouthy disrespectful guy, I'll just say, "Thanks." And then deep down inside, my heart starts to flip and burn. And I start waking up early and staying up late, and I can't wait to prove them wrong.

I ran into this kid who beat the crap out of me. I defended myself, but he fought me every single day in the fourth grade. And when I graduated from high school, I was 372 pounds, state 100-yard dash champion. So skinny I had to jump around in the shower to get wet. And I was the Golden Gloves boxing champion. And in the first two summers after high school graduation, I grew two and a half inches taller and gained 87 pounds. And then one day I ran into this whistle dick. And he was looking at me like, "I sure hope he doesn't remember fourth grade." And he came up to my armpit, he hadn't grown. I gave him the look. I didn't have to say one thing, I'm just looking at him like, "Really?"

Mike Merrill:

It's all you got?

Dan Clark:

"You were so insecure in those days, your life sucks so badly that you had to put me down to make yourself feel better about who you are." And now I am not better than anyone else, don't get me wrong, I'm just fired up to figure out who I really am, and can I do this? Let me see. Can I learn to paint, can I learn to play the piano, can I learn to play the guitar, can I learn how to fix a bad sink, can I fix a broken pipe? What can I do? Why not let curiosity drive me every single day to wake up earlier than most instead of later than most, and make sure I'm the best version of myself so I don't die with my music still in me. And that's my own personal motivation.

And people who just sleep and, "This is who I am," good for you all, but not my circle of influence because I don't leave saying, "I like me best when I'm with you, I want to see you again." I want some inspiration. If I'm the smartest person in the room, I'm in the

wrong room. I need to hang around with people who will push me in the weight room, who will push me in the recording studio, who will push me in the professional speaking world, who will help me become a better author, a better storyteller, a better speaker, a better dad.

You got to stop competing against others, my friend. I don't want to be the best dad in a roomful of dysfunctional deadbeat fathers. If we're playing golf in a golf tournament, and you're playing on an 18-hole course, 72 par, and I shoot 108 and everybody else shoots 120, and I win the tournament because I suck less than you suck, that's a bad system. We've got to compete against ourselves, so when I go out on the golf course, first thing I do is compete against myself, make sure my swing is as good as it can be, then I compete against the golf course one hole at a time. And then, I compete against my buddies in the foursome where we got a little action going on closest to the pin, or whatever we're going to do, on an 18-hole bet. And it's always in that order. It has to be.

And the same thing in the workplace. "Well, he did it, so I can do it," or, "They're not holding her accountable, why should they hold me accountable?" That doesn't matter in the big scheme of things. What we have to do is say, what is the task, what is the requirement, what is my highest strongest belief, my highest expectation, my expected best behavior, what must I do to prepare myself to always do that, be consistent, with integrity, service before self and a commitment to excellence in all I do, and the rest takes care of itself.

And there's some people who don't like me, and I get over it. They don't want to be around me, I get over it. And that's not pompous or windbag at all, that's just basically saying, "Life's short." And I almost died in the hospital with COVID, and I was paralyzed for 14 months playing football. I've had enough kicks in the face, punches in the gut, to remind me, "You got to fight, you got to hang tough, and you got to be the best you can be. Don't ever take one day for granted because we don't know if tomorrow is my last day."

I don't know if this is my last podcast. That's an odd and eerie feeling, but put yourself in my position. In one moment, my entire life was changed, from an athlete, getting all my attention with my body, to a philosopher, if you will, a speaker, a motivational,

inspirational guy trying to fire people up. And that's my greater joy. And let me just say this as we conclude. Now, in retrospect, Mike, my paralysis is one of the best things that ever happened to me. Don't misunderstand. My injury was not one of the best things that happened to me, but who I became as a man, and what I learned about the sanctity of life, and time, and priorities, and relationships as a result of going through that setback, clearly makes it one of the best things that has ever happened to me. We have got to understand that adversity is what introduces us to ourselves. No one will ever know how strong we are, until being strong is our only choice. We really have to get up and go again every single time. Get knocked down seven times, get back up eight. And that day is a pretty good day. And then you hold on and never say never because in two more days, as my song says, in two more days, tomorrow's yesterday. Ladies and gentlemen, don't take your life, ladies and gentlemen, don't give up, ladies and gentlemen, don't think that's the course of action. No one wants to kill themselves, they just want the pain to go away, and there's always ways for us to find the solution. Guaranteed, hold on for one more day.

And I will help you, danclark.com. Follow me on Instagram, danclarkspeaks, and you're going to get some serious videos. Master the morning, own the day. I can't tell you how excited I am for us to keep in touch. Please keep in touch, or this podcast is for not.

Mike Merrill:

I agree with that. You've got a podcast too, what's your podcast called that you've got coming out?

Dan Clark:

It's called Power Players. And now that you know my philosophy of life, I invite intriguing guests, Grammy Award winning songwriters, individuals like Amy Purdy, if you watch Dancing With the Stars. She had both of her legs amputated because of an illness when she was a teenager. And she made it all the way to the finals. Her partner was Derek Hough. So inspirational. Talk about you thinking you had a bad day, look what she's been able to overcome.

I have Olympic champions and sports heroes, and individuals who you can believe, because they all remind us we have to be ordinary before we're extraordinary. Every single amazing human being we've ever met who's inspired us to greatness, was ordinary, they were exactly like us before they became extraordinary. In my podcast, Power Players, I'm going to extract from them, I have extracted from them, stories about resiliency and about how to get back up and go again.

And why each of us has a story to tell, and why each of us is significant, and not better than or less than anyone else. But we are commissioned by God at birth, in my mind, to become the best version of ourselves, that's why we're born into this world. To find out who we really are, what our talents, how can we make the world better so we don't die with our music still in us. Podcast Power Players. I feel like I'm this walking billboard saying, "Okay, now, please, please follow me on Instagram, @danclarkspeaks."

But I have ancillary reasons, I really want to keep in touch. Because anyone who's tuning in to your podcast, will obviously want to tune in to my podcast, knowing that we do become the average of the five people we associate with the most. And what you talk about and who you are as a man, Mike, is so much bigger than the building industries, is so much bigger than the construction industry. And I would hope people would think of me in the same way that what we talk about is not revolutionary, it's bringing us back to what is really right. Those time-tested truths that have never, ever changed, that apply to every generation, Millennials, Gen X'ers, we Baby Boomers. My hair is falling out, I'm growing in places I don't even need it, my only hope is my hair in my right ear will grow long enough, I can comb it up over the top of my head. And apparently, Michael, with all due respect, every time you got a gray hair, you just plucked it out.

Mike Merrill:

I do. Yeah, I do.

Dan Clark:

I don't even want to worry, I don't even want to bother.

Mike Merrill:

Well, Dan, this has been a fantastic time. I've surely enjoyed learning from you and talking with you. I really appreciate you coming on today.

Dan Clark:

Thank you, Michael. And I'm a fan of yours, so we'll definitely connect offline many, many times and see how I can serve you because you're already serving me. Thanks for WorkMax too, I need to plug that one more time. It's intriguing to me how someone like you would start a company based on what you believe. And that's why your company is successful and why it's going to escalate exponentially in growth and the service provided, because it's built on the correct core principles that we've been talking about this entire podcast, so I congratulate you and I encourage everyone to investigate WorkMax and to support you. Because together we rise. You're amazing. Thank you.

Mike Merrill:

Thank you, Dan. I sure appreciate it, and I really look forward to keeping in touch, for sure.

Dan Clark:

Thanks, man.

Mike Merrill:

All right.

Dan Clark:

I was just saying goodnight, goodbye, good morning to everybody.

Mike Merrill:

Love it. Well, thank you to the guests for joining us today on the Mobile Workforce Podcast sponsored by AboutTime Technologies and WorkMax. If you enjoyed the conversation that Dan and I had today, please follow Dan at danclark.com, follow him on all the socials, and check out his content there.

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