

EPISODE 20

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:05] ANNOUNCER: You're listening to 10,000 Swamp Leaders, leadership conversations that explore adapting and thriving in a complex world, with Rick Torseth and guests.

[INTERVIEW]

[00:00:20] RT: Welcome, everybody. This is Rick Torseth. And this is 10,000 Swamp Leaders. This is the podcast where we have conversations with leaders to discuss what it's like to deal with complexity, hard, wicked, or what we call here swamp problems.

Today is a new ground for 10,000 Swamp Leaders for anybody who's listened over the last five or six months. You know that, normally, I have a one guest, and on one occasion I've had two guests. Today, this podcast may be its own swampy issue, because I don't have just one, I don't have just two, or three. I actually have four guests with me on this episode.

Also, what makes this cool and unique for me are these four people that I have known I would say mostly for my entire life. They are a huge part of who I am in the world. A big influence on how I show up. They know a heck of a lot about leading and teams, which is going to be our conversation here. And we'll put it in a proper context in a moment.

But first, I'm going to introduce them all and give each of them a chance to get their voice in the conversation and tell you a little bit about who they are. So, my guests are Bryan Garinger, Kevin Olson, Mark Eathorne and Rick Walker.

And so, with that, I'm going to have Bryan. Why don't you go first? Give a little introduction. Tell people who you are and what you think you want them to know about you.

[00:01:41] BG: Okay. Thanks, Rick. My name is Bryan Garinger. I grew up – As Rick said, I've known Rick since probably kindergarten or first grade. I have a picture of him before he went off the Star of the Sea. So, I've known him quite a while.

Started my career after high school playing basketball with all these guys. I went off to college down in Arizona. Graduated from there and went to work for a place called Boeing. A little manufacturer and an airplane company. Spent my entire career practically with them. I spent 35 years there. Started off as just an engineer, and then made my way up into management. And at the end, was a senior manager working on airplane development primarily.

Most of that time was working on military airplanes B-1B aircraft, F-22s, Joint Strike Fighters. Then I spent some time on the 777 program when it was being developed. And then went back to military. Finished off my career working on the KC-46 tanker.

So, 35 years with Boeing. I retired early. It was just not fun anymore. And since then, I've just been traveling around. So, that's kind of me in a nutshell.

[00:03:00] RT: Thank you. Okay, Kevin.

[00:03:01] KO: All right. My name's Kevin Olson. And this is kind of fun to learn about people I grew up with. And it's kind of interesting that you got five of us on here, Rick, because that's what a team of basketball is made up of. So, that'll be interesting how we coordinate our talk for the next hour.

I grew up in Bremerton like the rest of these guys. And I've known these guys forever. I went off to school and went to Washington State University for a couple of years and then transferred to the University of Puget Sound and graduated in physical therapy.

And so, my background is in medicine. And I worked at another small place here in Seattle called Harborview Medical Center and was there for almost 41 years. Started out as a staff physical therapist and worked my way up as a lead therapist, and then supervisor of an outpatient physical therapy clinic. I was interim manager of the department for about a year. So, I've held a lot of different hats during my time at Harborview.

I retired almost two years ago now and have been spending my time – Actually spent some time with Rick. We do a lot of bicycling, and golfing together, and chatting. And so, it's kind of fun to

get back together with all these guys today and find out a little bit more about each other as well as what we do now.

[00:04:24] RT: Fantastic. Mark.

[00:04:25] ME: My name is Mark Eathorne. And I think I figured out there were two houses growing up that separated myself from the Torseth household. And we lived in this little circular neighborhood that was just the epitome of the of the mid-century type housing developments.

The luck of the draw, I think of all the kids that lived in the neighborhood, I think 17 of them were boys. So, we became a really sports-oriented, because we could always get somebody to play.

Kevin Olson, I met in kindergarten. And Brian Garinger probably a little bit later. Rick Walker I met – Our introduction to him was when one of his brothers I think kicked in a sliding glass door because his brothers wouldn't let him in the basement. And we heard the racket. We go, "Oh, we got new neighbors." And the Walker's home was a wonderful place, especially its basement. That was like the neighborhood cheers hang out for little kids. Just a really good time.

I graduated from East High School with these guys in 1974. Went to Washington State University. Got my bachelor's degree there. Got my master's at Central Washington. I was a school teacher for 38 years in the same building. I taught about I don't know how many subjects, because of when I graduated my certificate allowed me to. Today's people are pigeonholed. But I was allowed to teach basically whatever they needed me for.

I retired six years ago, and it's been wonderful. I just love retirement. I can hardly remember what I used to do. It's so nice not having to tell people what to do or coerce people into doing things that they don't want to do. It's so nice to be away from that.

[00:06:11] RT: All right. Let's get Rick in here. Rick Walker.

[00:06:14] RW: Yes. I'm Rick Walker and I've known these guys, yeah, most of my life like what they were saying. Significant things I've worked at is I've been an educator at a private Christian school, coached basketball there as well for 20 something years. And then I was involved with a

sports ministry called Sports Beyond that I started up in 1989. And we're still the executive director. We have two staff people who put on camps and clinics for kids.

Also, help manage another non-profit called Joy Ministries where we do student exchange from Basque country English immersion programs. And that we also travel over there. This September, we're going to take a group over of about a dozen people to walk the Camino for four or five days and then tour around Basque country enjoying the food, and the drink, and culture of the Basque culture.

So, I have been married for just about, well, close to 50 years. We're getting close to that.

[00:07:21] RT: Oh, get out.

[00:07:22] RW: Two kids, about 45, 48, and seven grandchildren.

[00:07:28] RT: Seven grandchildren. All right. So, let me establish a particular pointed context for listeners here because they're probably still sitting here right now saying what in the world you got going here with these guys? And where are we going with this? Because this is 10,000 Swamp Leaders. And it's about leading teams.

There's lots of ties that bind us together starting with a very early age. But I don't think there's any doubt that a major connection point for the five of us was the two years we played basketball at East High School. And we won two State Championships. We won 51 out of 53 games. That was a signature moment in the City of Bremerton. It still is. We were blessed and fortunate to be part of that in big and small ways.

And I've often thought that most everything that you need to know, that I need to know about how to be on a team and function on a team, I learned most of it playing basketball at East High School with you guys. And we would be remiss in this conversation – And those who are listening, don't worry. This is not going to be a trip down memory lane about the glory days of East basketball. But we would be remiss if we did not include in this conversation and the influence of our coach. Les Eathorne, who is Mark's father. And he was a guiding light for many,

many students at East Bremerton, and athletes, and basketball players in particular. And he, no doubt, influenced all of us in many ways. That's all fair game for the conversation here.

But, guys, what I really want us to talk about here is what you know about life, and leading, and managing, and working with kids and people that you picked up along the journey here. Because to the extent that it stems from our experience in high school playing basketball, it's useful to make those connections.

So, what I'm interested in, I have a few questions here. I don't know if we'll stick with all of them. But I'm going to give you each a chance to weigh in, say what you got to say about this thing. But based on your experience, what is the value and the opportunity that comes with being on teams for you? What have you learned? Why does it make a difference? Why does it matter in your life to have spent time, say, in high school being on teams? Where have you carried that forward?

So, I'm just going to call out names here to start with, find a rhythm. So, Kevin, why don't you go first?

[00:09:37] KO: Wow! Okay. Well, I think working on a team, I think I realized early on that I wasn't smart enough to do things on my own and that I needed a team to really help get – Whether it was projects or whatever we were doing at the time to get things completed. And so, trying to bring everybody on board and working in the same direction for the same goal set was really important and not being an authoritarian person in position of the lead therapist at a clinic. But getting everybody to buy into the project and get the team involved.

And everybody has their own strengths and weaknesses I think is the other part of that. And using a basketball metaphor, I mean, the smallest guy, Mark Eathorne, wasn't going to be your power forward. And Rick Walker more than likely was not going to be your point guard.

And so, with the team as well, you need to find everybody's strength and weaknesses so you put them in a position to succeed. I think those are probably a couple of items as far as teamwork.

[00:10:38] RT: Great. And Mark, I mean, you grew up with your father as a father and then also as a basketball coach. So, you lived in this world way before the rest of us did directly. So, what do you carry forward from all that experience?

[00:10:51] ME: In what regard?

[00:10:52] RT: As a teacher. And you didn't mention this in your intro. But you're also a basketball coach at the school for a while, too. So, you stepped into that legacy realm as well.

[00:11:00] ME: Again, I worked at the middle school. So, I didn't really consider myself the basketball coach. I also coached girls' volleyball, JV football. I did baseball for nine years. You're a teacher, and you need the money. That's just what it boils down to.

And at the middle school level, two hours after school you were done. There was no night game or trips to Canada or anything like that. So, it was just kind of a convenient little deal. But, yeah, to your point, I was very familiar with coaching.

Now, with my dad, he was very different than me. Because my daughter would tell you this. My job and my home life were two different things. And when I went to work, I behaved in a certain way, I spoke a certain way. I had to adhere to the standards of of that job. And when I came home, it wasn't really me. I was just a different person.

My dad, on the other hand, he was kind of the same guy. The guy you saw at school and at the gym was the same guy telling me to pick my underwear up off the floor or do whatever. And so, it's interesting to me what you guys always have to say about him, because I know him in a different way. And I hear people say things about him, like, "Oh, I was in the hospital once and he came to my room." Or just these stories and I'm like, "Wow! Maybe that's why he wasn't home that much because he was out doing all these things." But that's really all I can say on that as far as the way he worked was the way he lived. I could just put it that way. He wasn't a folly about it at all. He genuinely believed every single thing that he told you.

[00:12:38] RT: Yeah, I believe that too. Rick, what do you say about teams?

[00:12:43] RW: Yeah. I think I came from – I've played three years with the team where it came in second my sophomore year. So, we played in three championship games in three years and won two out of three of them.

But what I understood about teams, and it didn't really hit me until you had us think about this, Rick, is that I was pretty insecure coming from a family. We had four boys and not really sure of myself. And started playing against – As a sophomore, even a freshman, against these seniors and seeing some success. And Coach Eathorne kind of saying, "Hang in there."

[00:13:29] RT: Brian, how about you?

[00:13:32] BG: Well. So, I share your viewpoint on what we learned from playing basketball. In fact, about the middle of my career, we had an off-site, a team building off-site and we were asked to bring a symbol of what teamwork meant to you. My symbol was a basketball, because I felt everything, I know about teamwork was encompassed in our days playing ball together. I mean, we played basketball together since eighth grade practically. So, how to get along with people? How to – Like, Kevin's talked about, the strengths, the weaknesses. Just getting together and just forming and accomplishing everything that we were set out to do. Helping each other out. Making that extra pass. All those things that Les taught us always came through in in the business environment. And I believe that to be true. I mean, like you said, there's lots of things I learned after that fact. But I think that was the core value that carried through in business.

[00:14:33] RT: Rick, anything you want to add before you got cut off here a little bit with the connection? So, you want to finish what you're saying before we move ahead a little bit?

[00:14:40] RW: Yeah. I think being a part of a team, it gave me value. It boosted my self-esteem because these guys depended and trusted me with handling the ball, or shooting, or putting on the press and depending on each other to be in the right place at the right time. That's carried over quite a bit in my coaching in the high school level and also leading in an organization. So, it's important that the hearing from the coach or hearing from the other players really gives a person tremendous value.

[00:15:15] RT: Yeah. You know, guys, I hadn't really – I gave some thought to traveling the road. And I'm now going to travel. And I had decided I wouldn't go down this road, but I'm going to now. I'm changing my mind. So, I'm adapting here. Before I do that, there's a guy named Keith Grint, and he's a highly regarded leadership guy out of England. He's written about it for years. He's an expert he's written a small book.

But anyway, he says about leaders – He's read all this stuff. He's confused about it. Then he's got religion about it. And he finally says, he says, "Indeed, it might be that the simplest definition of leadership is having followers," which I think is really spot on.

The reason I bring this up right now is because I hadn't really intended to talk about Les. But I'm finding it unavoidable because he was such a significant influence on us in the conversation of teams to the point that Rick's raising about building your own self-esteem and confidence in yourself, and doing a lot of that by just flat out challenging you to do better.

And so, I'm interested in kicking that around from that perspective. So, what is it about the time being led by our basketball coach? What lessons did you learn on the basketball court that you then brought forward into life that you've used to lead and manage other people? I'm going to circle back around. Kevin, what do you got?

[00:16:32] KO: Wow! A couple of things I guess, Rick. Thinking of what we learned in basketball and brought towards my work life. I think preparation is probably a big one. Never let somebody else out-prepare you. Whether it was working with staff. Or I had to do a lot of interactions with physicians, and nursing staff, all these different professionals in the hospital. And you had to be able to justify what you were doing, whether it was through your history of what you had done at work, or through clinical trials. And you had to be prepared going into every meeting. And so, I think preparation was a big one.

And I think the other one, which goes along with that, is accountability. And I think Les always made us be accountable for what we were doing, whether it was during practice, or games. And I think we can all get a chuckle about one of our road trips where one of the starters on the team missed the bus. And you don't treat the starters versus the benchwarmers. You treat everybody the same. And everybody has to be accountable for their actions. And there are consequences

to that. And so, I think those are probably a couple of big things that I brought forward from our time at East basketball, preparation and accountability.

[00:17:47] RT: So, Mark, this is may be a little harder question for you. But if you just keep in the context of playing basketball at East, and God knows you knew what that meant long before we did. But when you're actually in that role doing that, what is it about the coach of that basketball team brought forward for you that you carry forward?

[00:18:06] ME: Much different experience than you guys had, no doubt. But, Rick Torseth, I was thinking of this. Was there ever a time in our lives when we weren't on a team? Seems like we were just born into being on teams all the time.

[00:18:22] RT: I agree.

[00:18:22] ME: We had some really, really good leaders coaches along the way. Hardly ever had a bad. One once in a while. It's going to happen. But for the most, part we were lucky.

My favorite coach I ever had, and I have to exclude my dad because he was my dad, was Bill Sturgeon, my first coach I ever had and a baseball coach. I looked up to that guy so much. He was just so – Like, you know, he stressed fundamentals. But he was just nice, and he was fair, and he could be stern if you're doing the wrong thing. But he was just a morally wonderful person. And I thought, "That's great."

Now, when I came to coaching myself, almost every action I had, everything I did, I was embarrassingly just like my dad. And, like, sometimes I'd be watching my dad coach and thinking, "Oh, come on. Sit down. Quit getting on the wrap for doing this." And then I end up doing the exact same thing. So, his influence was huge on me.

High school, in general, though, I don't know how you guys felt in high school. But I was so full of anxiety and uncertainty. And like when Rick Walker said insecurity or just feeling down about yourself, shoot, I'm looking at four years of that pretty much. It was kind of tough to put all that aside and just think about the basketball team.

But again, as I've said earlier, we've been on teams forever. And that system we had going was great. Our open gyms, all the things we did, like, Kevin said to prepare.

I remember before our senior year, Kevin Olson in open gym was just tearing it up. And my dad was telling anybody who would listen, he's going to be – Walker is a great player. But Olson, is just going to be – He's going to be the guy. You wait and see. And then his knee disagreed with that. But that's a whole other story.

But, yeah, just fun times. Good preparation. And you guys know, my dad's famous – Every time I left the house, do you know right from wrong, all right? That was every time I left the house. He probably said it at practice, too. Who knows? But that was him bottom line.

[00:20:28] RT: Yeah. Bryan, what'd you carry forward from the coach?

[00:20:33] BG: I agree with everything that Kevin and Mark were saying as well. But one of the things that I caught from Les was the way he communicated. He was able to sit us down around the big E in the floor and he would just – The way in which he communicated. He encouraged people. He disciplined people. He was one of those people that somebody once said that they would run off the end of the ferry if Les asked them to. We do anything that Les asked us to because we wanted to play for him. And so, he is just a great leader in that aspect. He was great at doing a lot of things. And so, we definitely follow him anywhere.

[00:21:12] RT: It's an interesting point you make, Bryan. And I agree with it. And I think, also, probably what you're saying is we would also run off the ferry because we trusted him that he was going to put us in a place where we could succeed in running off the ferry so to speak. We never had to doubt his intentions or what he was asking us.

Rick, I'm going to let you get in here in a second. But one of the thoughts that I have about playing for him was his toughness and his ability to make us tough. And we all know we spent an enormous amount of time running lines. And we knew we were running more lines than anybody else probably in the state. But just when we thought we were done for the night, he'd raise the bar on us, and away we'd go again. Away – He seemed to know how to pull us back and take us forward and keep expanding our capacity to endure and be tough and struggle

together. He was quite willing, I think, to be the bad guy in the gym as long as the 12 guys were all together not liking the bad guy in the gym. He understood that dynamic about how to keep us as a team. And I often thought line running was a big part of how we bonded together, because we'd go back into the locker room and go, "Bloody hell. I don't ever want to do that again." Of course, knowing the next night we're going to do it again.

So, Richard?

[00:22:21] RW: I agree. I think part of it, too, is the players. Like Mark alluded to, we were part of teams our whole life. And so, we knew that what the coach said was the gospel. I mean, we had to be carried out. And that accountability that Kevin was talking about, if we all did our part, whether on the press, or in the zone, or playing a man, or whatever, we're going to have success. And he was able to mold these – Well, I think we already had it in our DNA because we had great coaches prior to even coming to high school. But he was able to channel that in a way that allowed us to be successful. And he had the players in the right position. We knew our roles. And that all fit together. And we had a lot of success.

[00:23:12] RT: There's a whole thing in the world that I live in now around agile work. And it's a great model about how you can get innovative work done in teams. But again, back to my notion that most of what everything I knew about teams I learned in high school playing basketball.

The other thing that people who are listening here, we haven't spoken to yet, was the style of play that we had was really pretty much wide open, straight up intuitive basketball. There were very few plays we ran. You had to know your position. You had to know everybody else's position. You had to know the basic rules that Les lived by. And if you were willing to do that, you could have a heck of a lot of fun playing this game in a natural way.

And in a way, we were one of the first agile basketball teams that ever come along in high school, I think, because Les is insistent that we're going to score more points than you because scoring was more fun than playing defense, which I always thought was just a wonderful insight for a man who had had to play for a guy in his high school days who was nothing but defense. And for him to transform himself and completely reverse the script I thought was outstanding.

So, let's make a segue here, though, so we don't dwell too long on a period of time that's almost 50 years past. So, as you sit here today and thinking knowing that there's probably people listening to this who are a little further back on this journey than we are – I note for the record, I'm the only one still working here. And for the listeners, these guys all know, "Well, that's because you're just about finally to get into the game with three minutes to go after we've done all the hard work to get the thing in the bank."

So, help these people. This is a chance for you to be a wisdom keeper if you will. So, for people who are trying to figure out this deal about leading, about being on effective teams, what advice do you have that you've learned from way back when we're talking or from the time we graduate high school till today that you think are useful that you've used in your parenting, or your work, or in your community?

Mark, how about you go first?

[00:25:13] ME: Well, I would say you need to have the ability to read the room. If you're a leader, who are you leading? What are you leading them to? And are you helping them? Or are you hurting them?

Some leaders I've seen in my profession, they got their position of leadership through methods that had nothing to do with ability to lead. They might be good at an interview. Or they might they might look good on paper, whatever the case may be. But when it comes to actually doing the job, the people they're trying to lead have no respect for them. And if you get yourself in that situation, you're going to have to learn to deal with that. Again, read the room.

[00:25:50] RT: Yeah. So, Mark, help them out. Who don't know? What does, in action, reading the room actually entail?

[00:25:57] ME: Well, just know your audience. I'm looking out here and I see this group of – If it's a team, a basketball team, I see the group of people I'm leading. I've got to know something about them. I got to know what they like to do. What they don't like to do? What they will do? What they won't do? But I also need them to know that I understand their position.

For example, if I'm a school principal, they need to know that I understand how hard it is to be a teacher. And so, that all my interactions with them will be, "Hey, I'm here to help you. I'm here to help you do this incredibly hard job." Rather than, "I'm here to tell you when you're doing the wrong thing." That's just poor leadership. It never works. It never works in sports, business, I don't think in anything.

[00:26:43] RT: It doesn't work anywhere. Rick, what do you got?

[00:26:46] RW: Each coach or leader has a structure, and that structure has to be flexible. And like Mark said, you got to know your audience, too.

I tried to apply the principles of the East High style basketball to Kings West where I was coaching. I didn't have the players to do that. And I had to adapt. So, I had to know my players. We couldn't do the full court press all the time. So, I had to adapt. And I had to find the player's ability and then match whatever – Adapt our offense and our strategy according to those abilities and not force it on a certain style on a team. And that required for me to lead in a humble way. I just can't get my way.

But throughout the structure, here's the form and here's some freedom you have as a player to work within that form. And the same thing applies in leading other coaches. Give the structure. Give the form. But allow their personality, their creativity to have some freedom in that outcome.

[00:27:54] RT: Great. Bryan, you spent a lot of time at Boeing managing, leading people. So, what is it you think about when you're giving advice and counsel to people who are trying to learn this stuff?

[00:28:07] BG: I did spend a lot of time there, and I had the opportunity to see a lot of good leaders there. One of the guys that I worked with, the leader of the 777 program, was Alan Mulally, who went on to become CEO of Ford. He was a great leader in the fact that he did do like Mark and Rick are saying. He wasn't the expert at everything, but he knew how to use the people he had.

So, Alan was recognized as the leader just because of the style in which he led. He was more collaborative. He was not a dictator and pounding the table and saying, "You got to get these things done." There are other guys that were like that, too. And I saw some that just worked all that good.

But one of the things that we always were able to do is you never stop learning. You just keep on learning those skills that you need. You look at the technology you had to work with. And so, it's just a continuous learning experience throughout my whole career. And I think that's one of the things that helped leaders as well, because you just aren't born a leader you have to look at other people and see their leadership style and adapt it to your own.

[00:29:21] RT: Yup. Kevin?

[00:29:23] KO: Wow! I think Mark hit a couple of things that I'll hit on. In the medical field, a lot of times you get promoted based on your clinical work. So, if you're a good physical therapist or if you're a good nurse, you get promoted to the next level. And it doesn't necessarily mean you're a good leader. But you get promoted and then you try to learn how to lead.

I think some of the things I learned, and Mark hit on a little bit, is you need to know your staff's strengths and weaknesses. Know their background. What are their interest level? When you have a plan that you want to promote a new program, you want to put people in a position to succeed. So, you need to know what they like to do and what they don't like to do. But you also need to say that these are the actions that we have to complete. So, you want to set them up to succeed. So, I think that's a big thing.

The other thing that when I first got into my clinical supervisor position at the hospital, one of the physicians sent me a quote with an unknown author. But it says, "I don't know the secret to success. But the secret to failure is trying to please everyone." I think that's one of the things that I live by that you really can't please everybody. That somebody's not going to be happy no matter what. Try to minimize that. You just have to know that everybody is not going to be on the same page at some time and realize that trying to work everybody even if they don't agree to get them to work towards the goal that you have set. So, those are a couple things that I would tell people.

[00:30:55] RT: So, Kevin gives me a segue here, because this was the next question, but he sort of broached it for us.

[00:31:01] KO: Excellent.

[00:31:02] RT: So, it's also so that we tend to learn more about our leadership capacities through our failures than our successes. So, share with – And by the way guys, this is a question I ask everybody on this podcast. What's a leadership failure or a non-success that you had in your professional life that stayed with you and informed you about how to lead more effectively? Rick Walker?

[00:31:31] RW: That's a tough one. I see challenges. Not so much as failures.

[00:31:36] RT: Okay. That's fine.

[00:31:37] RW: But I know that when I first set up Sports Beyond to put on camps and clinics, I hoped it to be a full-time position where I would be able to pay the bills and support my family with that. And it didn't turn out to be that way. And so, I had to adapt. And I worked full time and continued to put in the camps and the clinics and the tournaments whenever I had the opportunity. And so, I just had to adapt what my vision was and what reality was.

[00:32:17] RT: Great. Thank you. Mark?

[00:32:19] ME: Well, yeah, that's a tough one. But I think, like, all of us, I've done some things wrong and paid the price for it, and honestly have learned. But as far as leadership goes, that's a tough one.

I can remember one team I had one year that I could not get a relationship going with them. The kids didn't fit me. And it was a group of really talented people. But they were really individuals. And it was at an era when – I'd have to ask you guys this. Could a leader like Les Eathorne that we talked about, would that even be possible now with the access that parents and outside influences have on them? Like, what Rick was explaining that he wanted to do a certain thing at

a certain school and he couldn't do it. Well, he could do it if he was a legacy leader like Les Eathorne was. If you've proven yourself over so much time that you can get the job done, people will give you a little bit more leeway when things don't go as well. But for young people starting out, and with the pressure that people are allowed to put on you now, whole different story, I think.

[00:33:25] RT: Yeah. Bryan?

[00:33:28] BG: Well, I've had failures throughout my career primarily driven by my own desire to do things. I think I let my emotions get away with me sometimes. And that was a downfall of mine.

I had an opportunity to advance in my career, but I just didn't have the demeanor nor was I willing to put in the time that it would take to be recognized as that executive within the Boeing company.

I think that's my biggest downfall and things I had to learn, is I had to make a choice between what's important in life? Is it family? Or is it moving on up the ladder within an organization? I mean, I would have loved to retired as an executive because they essentially get full pay. But that wasn't going to fit me. I didn't have the demeanor for it. And I don't think that it was going to help my family. Because in the end, I'd rather be helping raise the family than the rest.

[00:34:25] RT: Yeah, great. Kevin?

[00:34:27] KO: Well, it's a tough one, Rick. But Bryan hit a little bit about sometimes I let my emotions take over. And I hear people all the time say, "Oh, it's not personal. It's business." Well, everything is personal, whether it's related to business or not. And trying to keep that emotional component out of it.

I can remember back, we're trying to bring different staff together into one program. And there was one therapist that was really bucking our heads at meetings and not wanting to move forward. And I let that get more personal. And I got a little emotional and we went back and forth.

And I think what I learned from that was you know trying to listen to people a little bit more about what they wanted to do. And if we could incorporate that into a program and not be so steadfast that one way is the right way. Because there are other ways to get in to find your end product. So, I think that's probably one of the things that I learned.

[00:35:26] RT: Great. Thanks. All right. So, we're coming down to the end here. I have one last question. And then after this round through the question, I'll give you an opportunity to say whatever you want to say to be finished here. But here's the question, what have you never said about what playing together has meant to you? What have you never said about what playing together has meant to you?

And since I came up with this question and it's been sitting on my desk for a week, which by the way doesn't mean I actually paid any attention to it until about two hours ago, I'll go first.

So, what it's meant to me is – And I should say on behalf of all of us, there's a whole bunch of other guys that we played with who aren't on this call. But we are the five remaining guys who played together on two teams. And that's the marker here for us. And we know we lost Ray many years ago. But what playing together for me has meant with you all is a kind of permanent legacy about what's possible when people get on together and are willing to work hard together. I never have to question whether or not it's possible that a group of people could do something incredible.

I also had a pretty good feeling of what it's like to have to do that, go through the work, to be able to pull that off. But I will say, in my entire life since then, I've never had as much fun doing hard work in a team as I did with you four guys. And it's stayed with me forever. It pops up all the time in my life in small ways. And so, I'm just eternally grateful for each of you to be a contributor to making me slightly better person that had been had I never played with you.

So, who wants to go next?

[00:37:11] KO: I'll pop in. What's playing together meant to me? You know, that's a great question, Rick. And we've known each other, the five of us, for most of our lives. So, not just

playing together East High basketball, but some of us played for peewee teams together. We went to grade school together. We played on the playground together. And I think what it's meant to me is the longevity of our friendship that it's lasted for that long.

And we might not see each other for years or talk to each other for months on end. But then when we do get together, we're still friends for life. And we can count on each other when we really need to have something done. And I think that's probably one of the biggest things that has meant to me.

[00:38:00] RT: Thank you.

[00:38:01] BG: In my mind, those days are first and foremost on my mind probably every day. And so, it was just a very special time in our lives. Like Kevin says, we can always get back together. And it's just like we haven't lost a beat. We could probably still go do the three band weave just like we learned it many years ago.

But when I look back in that time, I sometimes feel like I'm an imposter or that it didn't really happen. I can't believe that we accomplished what we accomplished. And I had a part in it. And I sometimes doubt that I had any part of it whatsoever. But it just remains one of those special times in my life that I'll just never, ever forget.

[00:38:49] RT: Mark?

[00:38:50] ME: We did something really special, let's admit it. We did something really special, something that can't really be done in these days with cable TV and professional sports and everything. That we were the biggest show in town. We were big fish in a really small pond, I guess.

And when you do something great, it's a lot better to share it with people than it is to do it by yourself. And so, the shared experience of what we did is, yeah, that lasts forever.

I played basketball until I was about 52-years-old. And then finally, my hip had to be replaced. So, I've been on a lot of teams and done a lot of things. But, yeah, nothing compares to that at all. Not even close.

[00:39:31] RT: Richard Arthur Walker.

[00:39:33] RW: I think the experience, a sense of loyalty, of trust, of people that has carried on for a lifetime. We've been able to do things, like Mark was saying, that most people have never experienced. And to be able to be reminded of that as we get together to put on the golf tournament, to play golf, to have coffee, to play basketball, it just is a way of sharing that experience over and over again.

[00:40:07] RT: All right. So, we're at the end here, guys. So, I'm going to give you each of you a last chance to say anything you want to say to be finished here before we wrap this baby up. So, Rick, since you're sort of hobbling here, I'm going to let you go first in case we lose you. So, anything you want to say to be finished in this podcast episode in the swamp?

[00:40:24] RW: Yeah. Rick, I appreciate you being able to bring us together and to talk about those shared experiences. I think one thing that has always been on my mind when I lead is how can I make other people be better?

[00:40:40] RT: Kevin?

[00:40:41] KO: Well, I think Rick just hit on what I was thinking about, is that as a leader in the physical therapy clinic at Harborview, when I got new staff and trying to train them and teach them to become good physical therapists, I always wanted them to become better than me. You guys can do this. I've set a standard for myself. You guys need to set the standard for yourselves and try to go beyond what I've done. And put those people into positions to succeed to be able to do that.

[00:41:15] RT: Great. Thank you. Mark?

[00:41:17] ME: Kevin Olson's father was a dentist. And I went to him until he quit. And he was such a great guy that he's a dentist and yet you didn't mind going to his office. And believe me, if I went in there, there was going to be some drilling going on. And I'm thinking that if a dentist can do that, any leader can do that. Make people feel good when they're in your presence, I guess. Do it that way.

[00:41:43] RT: Thank you. Bryan?

[00:41:45] BG: Well, I guess what came to my mind is, to be a good leader, sometimes you have to learn and see what it's like to be a follower. And so, sometimes changing those roles around helps you to become that better leader that you can be.

Like I had said earlier, I think continuously learning about yourself about how to work with teams, about the technology that you're dealing with, it's just a continuous experience. And I just think that's the way it goes.

[00:42:15] RT: All right, guys. So, this turned out to be easier than I thought it would be. I didn't know how it was going to go down. It's just, A, really good to see you all. And for the listeners to know that a few of you, when I asked you to do this, were really dubious you had anything to offer. And I think that's all been debunked now. So, thanks for bringing your life wisdom, your professional wisdom and all the other stuff that you brought here to this conversation. It's really damn glad to see you all again. So, thank you very much for being on 10,000 Swamp Leaders.

[00:42:45] BG: Thanks, Rick.

[OUTRO]

[00:42:48] ANNOUNCER: Thank you for listening to 10,000 Swamp Leaders with Rick Torseth. Please take this moment and hit subscribe to follow more leadership swamp conversations.

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