

**EPISODE 82**

[INTRODUCTION]

**[0:00:06] ANNOUNCER:** You are listening to 10,000 Swamp Leaders, leadership conversations that explore adapting and thriving in a complex world, with Rick Torseth and guests.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:00:20] RT:** Hi, everybody. This is Rick Torseth, and this is 10,000 Swamp Leaders, the podcast where we have conversations with individuals who've made a decision in their life and in their profession to raise their hand and choose to lead on issues that matter to them. Today, my guest is Mau Espinosa. Mau has some pretty interesting conversations ahead for us about his journey to the work that he does. He's written a book which we're going to get into in a little bit. He is a leadership coach. He does leadership consulting and he has a vast professional experience that he pulls from to do that work with the clients he works with. Without further ado, Mau, first of all, welcome to the Swamp. It's good to have you, man.

**[0:00:59] ME:** Thank you. Thank you.

**[0:01:01] RT:** Before we get into the questions that I've prepared, what do you want people to know about Mau that you think will help establish context and understanding for the journey we're going to go on for the next little bit of time?

**[0:01:12] ME:** Thank you. That's a great question. I think I'm someone that have lived a transformation for a long time, and now I try to teach that. I'm an immigrant who rebuilt his life from the ground up, for sure, more than once. I have succeeded, I have failed, I have started over, I have learned the hard ways. Some most challenging personal and professional moments of my life have taught me many lessons that that's basically what I try to bring to leaders around me. That's where probably the model of the book that, *LET It Happen: Logic Emotion and Tactics* was created and a lot of that.

Most of all, I think I want people to know that I'm not used a regular coach, or consultant that stands on the sidelines. I like to get in the trenches with the leaders. I like to help them think, feel, execute differently, dig inside themselves to find the real vision and mission that they're looking for.

**[0:02:13] RT:** I read the book. We're going to put a link in the show notes to the book, so people can chase it down if they want. I'm going to encourage people to do just that. I read it and I'm going to begin, and you just said, have alluded to this, but I'd like for you to begin a little bit with the journey. You started Mexico and you are now living in Kansas City, which can't be any more central United States geographically than we can find. Give people a sense of the journey that you've made from your homeland to the United States and what was involved with that.

**[0:02:43] ME:** Yeah. I think, I like belly bottoms, because I was living in Querétaro, which is the very center of the country, too. I go from the very center to the very center. Just the way things work. I grew up in Mexico. I was born in Mexico City. I grew up in a city called Querétaro, which is two hours north of Mexico City. From there, I mean, I had a pretty decent life as far as a middle-class Mexican person growing up and there were different challenges as far as losing some people at a very young age. I have to deal with that.

Then moving into the US in '96, that's when I immigrated to the US. I came here as a financial analyst and assistant to the international operations director of company. That built me into this world of consulting and coaching. From there, I was able to grow into creating my own business.

**[0:03:42] RT:** Okay. That was not a smooth transition and a journey here. Do you get yourself situated in the United States? You've had a few setbacks along the way, and you're very candid in your book about those setbacks. Would you give people, because I think it's useful for people to understand, give of what you're trying to help people accomplish, that you have some experience in your own life to overcome some things that have been quite challenging, that gives you, I think, some gravitas to be in the trenches with people and have them pay attention to the ideas you have. Give people a sense of what some of that work was that you had to experience and the losses you had and how you came about overcoming them.

**[0:04:21] ME:** Thank you. Yes. Change and resilience comes from experience, in my opinion. Change comes to you and you have the ability to react, or not react. That's a decision that you have to make. Change is going to happen. A lot of things start happening when I was growing up. Moving here into the US – let me just start by moving here into the US, and I don't remember if I put that in the book. But I came to the US knowing basically three words in English, yes, no, and maybe. But you have to make a decision, right? You're in a country that you have to speak the language. If you want to do what you need to do, then you just do it. You have to find that fire inside you.

I went to a very hard divorce. In 2008, I separated. It was strong divorce. It was hard, where a lot of things happened. It's not used to normal divorce, right? I lost part of the connection with my kids for a few years and that created a sense of financial stress, because that happened in 2008 when my business was in the middle of becoming a business and then you get through the divorce and then you have two households to take care of. Then it's also the year that we have the crack in the economy, too. The industry that affected the most was the automobile industry, which happened to have 95% of my clients in that industry.

Used to have a perspective, in a matter of two days, I lost 65% of my income and my expenses tripled. You have to do a lot of adjustments and you have to make a lot of hard decisions. You have to understand the tools that you have available to you. With those tools, one of the biggest things is vision. I call it in the book and I call it in a lot of the consulting that I do, your life plans. Do you really have something that you can grasp, that you can visualize, that you can touch, bring it outside the idea.

A lot of times, we work with ideas in our heads and we think we have it. There's nothing stronger than something tangible. That tangibility became the lifestyle that what I say is, is this the lifestyle I want? It's not the moment that I'm living, but this is the lifestyle I'm creating. When I was able to change that idea into my vision, it was very clear that that's not what I wanted. When you know what you don't want, the question is, what are you willing to do to do that? That's from the personal life, which is combined a little bit with a business, right? Because you have a business that is, it's coming down. You're losing all your clients, because you have lost or I have, I lost the trends of my business, which is very common to do as business owner, or a director, or a CEO, and you're having personal problems, personal is going to pull you into work

with that, because that has a very big importance in your life, the way you think, the way you feel, the way you react.

The one that suffers is the business. When you turn around, in my case, I have basically lost both of them. when you touch that base and you go into making decisions as hard as what's it going to be, what I'm going to eat on a daily basis. When you talk budgeting, I really leave that budgeting part through a good amount of months, where everything gets super tight, but you make decisions. What I'm willing to sacrifice, what I'm not willing to sacrifice?

If you identify in the book, as you have seen, there's a lot of change theories hidden in the stories. One of them is the cycle of change. There's the fear part, there's the uncertainty at the beginning. You don't know what you're going to do, until you accept what's happening, right? The acknowledgement that something is happening. When you create that acknowledgement, then things start moving and growth is visible. You have that light at the end of the tunnel, as we call it. As part of that, you have to get out of the uncertainty, the fear, those elements that keep you steady in one place. You have to challenge that. First of all, that was part. You acknowledge and then you move on.

**[0:08:45] RT:** You're in an important place here, because I can imagine people listening who can relate to your situation that you're describing you were in at that time. You've done this diagnostic that tells you something about where you're trying to get and what you believe and you've got to make some changes. All the stuff you just said. On behalf of those people who are listening, the question I have is, what did you then actually do in action, in movement, in the real world that was in-line with where you say you want to go and leaving behind where you are? What did you have to do to actually create something in the physical world that started to express this vision?

**[0:09:25] ME:** When I talk about budgeting, because here's the thing, they say that money is not everything, but it helps a lot. It helps a lot. You have to be very smart with that. We're very good sometimes on finding a job and getting money and making decisions, "Okay, I need to change this job." But if you don't know where your money goes, it makes absolutely no sense. I created a tool that in the book, I called it triumphometer. The idea of this is where my money

goes and how can I keep myself motivated even with small steps? That's the idea behind it. I created four silos that the money goes.

You have your obligations, everything that you have to pay. Whether it's credit cards, rent, alimony, child support. You have to have exactly how much money is that. Then one thing that works really well is likes. What do I like? I like to go get my coffee. I like to go have a piece of chocolate. How do I reward myself? I talk about the reward of the likes on a weekly basis. I like chocolates. If the week was good, if I achieve what I was needing to do, Saturdays, I will give myself a chocolate. It's not the fact that you cannot have it is the value that you have to put in that chocolate, or that candy, or that coffee, or that drink. Whatever it is that you go like, "I earned this, right?"

Here's something very interesting. 82% of all humans in the world live just out of obligations and likes. There's two other elements, two other silos that are very, very important to me, which are the desires and the dreams. Now, when you talk about desires, or dreams, are things that you have to plan more, things that you need to put, you have to start saving. I actually created two different saving accounts, one for desires and one for dreams. This is what I want to have in the next 12 months, 18 months. One of the desires at that point in my life was Christmas gifts for my kids. I cannot wait until December to see if I'm going to have money. I have to start saving even \$20 a month. But I have to put them somewhere tangible.

For me, tangibility is very, very important, because we can create all these ideas in our minds and we can say like, "Oh, we're going to be fine," but you're not. Unless, you create a discipline of putting all those elements where you want them to be and then keep track of them. Part of the triumphometer is, okay, you have your four elements, or your four silos of where the money goes, dreams are long term and you can start putting a little bit on it. I can tell a story about that one later.

The other one, which is as important is reward yourself on every step. Don't wait to achieve the goal to reward yourself. Don't wait for the game to finish to enjoy the game. You can enjoy every pass, you can enjoy every touchdown, even if your team loses, right? You can enjoy every step of it. That's the analogy I do in a lot of times I talk to people. Why do we have to wait until we've

really said like, “Okay, mission accomplished. Here's all my data check, because I did it.” Enjoy every check mark. Reward yourself.

**[0:12:40] RT:** How do you coach people to enjoy? Sometimes we're not so good at enjoying. We've lost either our understanding of it. We were never good. How do you coach people to enjoy the small steps?

**[0:12:52] ME:** We actually create things in companies, or personally, it depends if I'm working with a company, or working with somebody. We do say, okay, if we are going to achieve this, let's break that in steps. What every steps means to you? Then we do analogies. If you like football, if you like soccer, if you like baseball, if you like cycling, whatever sport you like, I bring that into that. Okay. If you like football, we're in the middle of football season, do you cheer every time a good pass is performed, or you wait until the touchdown? You just sit on the couch and do anything.

Like, “No, I enjoy the pass.” Okay. If you have a good block, do you cheer for that, or you don't? I do. Same thing in life. How can you find that emotion in the plan that you're creating? I think everything starts right there, Rick. We really understanding the emotions that need to go into the planning of what I want to achieve, or I'm just doing it on a very logical way, I write things and I don't connect to the plan. That's very important. If there's no connection with the plan, 95% of the times, that plan is not going to work.

**[0:14:06] RT:** All right. In the book, you surprise me, because you have some specific influences in your life for, I'm going to say – I can't quite say, for people. Some of them are people, some of them are characters.

**[0:14:17] ME:** There's one people. There are three characters.

**[0:14:20] RT:** I'm going to name them, but I want you to go down this list of four and say why each of these people makes your list and what are they bringing to you that helps you navigate the world. Your four are, and the real person is Albert Einstein.

**[0:14:33] ME:** Yes.

**[0:14:34] RT:** You're also influenced by Sherlock Holmes.

**[0:14:37] ME:** Yes.

**[0:14:38] RT:** James Bond and Bruce Wayne.

**[0:14:41] ME:** Yes.

**[0:14:41] RT:** Okay. Let's start with Albert Einstein. Why Albert Einstein? What is it about him that gives you something that you can use to navigate your life?

**[0:14:51] ME:** There's two things that Albert Einstein gives me. It's not that he was the most brilliant mind in the world. Actually, he was number one, his sense of incredulity. He couldn't believe how things work, so he was challenging everything. Whatever he hears, that sense of, I need to know more, I need to find more, I need to understand things on a different level than what everybody's telling me. For me, that was very important.

The other one is how human he was, how many mistakes he made in personal life and in his professional life, how unsuccessful he was sometimes with love. He loved dearly, but his work would sometimes overflow into his emotions. His connection with his emotions and his logic was a constant battle with him. That creates that humanity in him that sometimes we lose the fact, because he was the greatest mind on earth. Those are the two things that really did me about him. I did start by just knowing that he was the brightest mind and are like, what did he do to become that? Then the more I learned about him, the more I knew how human and his perseverance and his stubbornness to get things done.

**[0:16:18] RT:** What does Sherlock Holmes bring to you?

**[0:16:20] ME:** Now Sherlock Holmes, what he brings to me, it's a little bit part of the same. He finds details, he understands that there are solutions, that there is something always available to you, but you have to stop and look. When it comes to consulting, when it comes to coaching, when it comes to be helping somebody, that person is bringing you a challenge. A lot of them

say, they bring me a problem, I don't see the problem. I see the challenge that the person, or the company is bringing to the table. Obviously, they have done everything they can to solve whatever that challenge is. What he comes to me is like, okay, I need to be more precise of what I'm looking for. That's what Sherlock Holmes brings to me.

**[0:17:12] RT:** James Bond? I can only imagine what James Bond is bringing to you.

**[0:17:17] ME:** James Bond's bringing me that sense of security, the believing himself. It's not the arrogance that I see in him. He's more like, knowing the tools that he has available, including his mind and his ways of being that help him stand in front of everybody and stylish, obviously. I like the style. That's James Bond.

**[0:17:44] RT:** And Bruce Wayne. Let's assume not everybody knows who Bruce Wayne is. They might not.

**[0:17:49] ME:** It's very interesting, because it's Bruce Wayne. It's not Batman.

**[0:17:52] RT:** Yeah.

**[0:17:52] ME:** Okay? He's not the guy behind the mask. He's actually the guy. Bruce Wayne went through a lot of sadness as he was growing up. He was a very sad kid, losing his parents, right, and trying to find himself in an alone world according to the legends and the stories behind it. That was raised all alone. I wasn't raised alone, but I had big losses as a kid. I was a sad kid, that Bruce Wayne tries to find his purpose in that sadness. He tries to find how can he help others through that journey. I think that's part of me. I tried to find, I think the coaching call and the consulting call, especially the coaching call came very early in my age, even before coaching was called coaching. I was wanting to help people, but I didn't want to be a psychologist. I wanted to get into their lives and share elements that have helped me go through all that sadness and adversity that you go through. That's the connection with Bruce Wayne.

**[0:18:58] RT:** I think it's interesting, too, in reading your book, the thing that I was struck by, and I had not thought of this before, is we all have superheroes of a kind in our lives growing up and along the way, sometimes they're just real people and sometimes they're mythological

characters, but there's some resonance that we have to those people. What I was struck by in reading your book is how you'd actually given some thought to what I would say, never assuming that there's an accident that you're compelled to pay attention to Bruce Wayne. Why am I compelled? What is it that he's bringing here that is useful to me, and how does that actually show up in something I can use in my life?

I think that there's so many resources out there for us to use when we're challenged by things, and we sometimes are a little too logical when we should be in our heart and our emotions and let the spirits of these elements talk to us and hear them and then see if we can use them. That's my story that I made up in reading this part of your book. I don't know how valid that is, but that's what came up for me.

**[0:20:00] ME:** Very valid, because you're trying to reshape your personality. You're trying to shape who you are. Like you said, there's people that can go to the grandpa, or their uncle, or their own father. Of course, I got a little bit of that, too. But there's these characters in life that they do have a big impact in you. Then you have to start understanding, why are you attracted to that? Then I did make the decision that I wanted to start understanding you more, because I think that's part of what he shaped my personality to. At some point in my life you probably couldn't see me more a little bit like Bruce Wayne, or more like James Bond, or whatever. But at the end, I can see that I have a little bit of each one of them in my life.

**[0:20:46] RT:** For those listening who are familiar with American football, I know and Miles is not going to acknowledge this, but he hopes he has a little bit of Patrick Mahomes in him too, but will remain to be seen if he has any of that. All right, so let's get to the book, because I read the book. You gave me the book. I should say for listeners, and they'll know a little bit of this story because there's been a great many people in the podcast who have been on the journey that I've been on, and you were on by studying at Oxford and I should say, for a master's degree. You and I met in the alumni gathering that took place in September in Oxford. First time we'd met. You told me about the book, a little bit about it, but then I got a copy of it.

Let's get into it, because you spent a lot of time on this, and this is a pretty useful resource, I think, for people. The title of the book is *LET It Happen*. I'm going to let you explain the acronym of LET. First of all, before we get into the detail, why a book? Why would you take the time to

put pen to paper, or computer and write a book? What was it you're trying to get out of you that you thought the world needed to hear?

**[0:21:56] ME:** I think it's part of the story. I've been thinking about this book for a long, long time, and it had changes. The title probably a good dozen or more times. It finally came to *LET It Happen*. But it's something that even clients of mine have been telling me for a long time, "Mau, you need to put all those thoughts in the book. There's a lot of people that can benefit from that." Oxford had a big impact into the decision, because I sense that I have a little bit more of tools available to me that brought all those ideas that I had to give more, more of a structure, more of where they come from." I was able to identify all the theories and created the book.

Now, I wanted to create a book that it was easy to read, because I like books, easy to read. I don't like academic books. I wanted to give academia to the people through the stories, storytelling being one of my favorite. I think I'm a storyteller by nature. I tried to do that. I like to tell stories, so I thought it was a good idea. Let's see what the readers think.

**[0:23:05] RT:** Okay. You have an acronym here, L-E-T, and it means something. Let's walk them through, so people understand what the focal point of the book is. Let's start with L. What does L stand for?

**[0:23:16] ME:** L is logic. As leaders, when we make the decision to be leaders, because there's a difference in leadership. I don't want to get too much into that. There's a decision. When we make the decision, we need to understand that there's really these three elements that live together. Logic give us a lot of confidence, because logic is irrefutable, if you like. I mean, blue is blue. If I tell you, it's a 3.5%, it's a 3.5%. There's no questions from that. If you have growth, if you have decline, the theory is behind it, all that have that logic in it. Logic is past. Logic is what you have learned today and before, what you have brought into your decision making with all the elements. If you think about logic, logic talks about the past. Everything that has happened until this moment, that's logic.

**[0:24:13] RT:** Okay. E. What does E stand for?

**[0:24:16] ME:** E is emotions. We're human beings, so we're emotional entities before rational entities. We always feel before we think. Even for a nanosecond, the emotion is first. Now emotion is present. Logic is past, emotion is present. You can have all these elements to make a rational decision, but the rational decision is made with the emotion of the moment. If at the moment your emotions are not in tune, then the decision might not be the right decision either way. The beauty about emotions is that they are unique and they will never repeat themselves. They can be similar, but it can never be the same emotion. Whatever you're feeling right now, you will never feel it again exactly the same way you're feeling it right now. That's a part of emotions. We need to understand that. We need to allow emotions to be part of who we are, because they're there. We just need to allow them to be a tool of ours.

**[0:25:23] RT:** Okay. Then T. The letter T.

**[0:25:26] RT:** T is tactics. Now, tactics is actions with a purpose. It's not a strategy. I'm talking about tactics. I'm talking about actions with a purpose, with a reason. Why are we doing what we're doing? That's future. If you think about it, LET is past, present, future. Tactics is what going to get you to the place you want to go, because those actions have the logic of what you have learned until today, all the elements that you know until today, had the emotions that are going to push you forward. For we're talking about tactics, we also want to know that those actions have that emotion and that logic behind it. They're pushing it. You cannot guarantee that you're going to get there, but you're going to feel more confident that you're going to get there.

**[0:26:11] RT:** Okay. Put logic, emotion, and tactics in a coherent form for the sake of taking action and getting something that you're challenged by. You help a lot of people through your coaching, your leadership work to realize goals and things that they're not achieving right now. How does the model support the work that helps me make progress on the things that I'm not making progress on? How does that work with you?

**[0:26:36] ME:** Okay. Let's think about this. When you're defined where you want to go, that is a vision. People can make it very easy visions, okay. When we work in the narrative, what are the words behind that vision, when you challenge that part? It's not that I want the vision to become the future. It's like, I want them to feel the vision. I want them to feel how they're going to be emotionally through the journey. We understand where we want to be and we put the motions

behind it. I'm going to tell you the story of a lady that I was able to coach many years ago. It was a recommendation. The story just comes to, it's not on the book, but I think it will help a lot.

This lady came to me and it's a case of overweight person that wanted to lose weight. She has go to different trainers and then she had done diets, everything. She's like, "I'm coming to you, because one of my friends told me, but it's almost like a waste of time. I've tried everything, Mau. Absolutely everything." Okay, let's give it a try. Why do you want to lose weight? They start going through the normal answers that everybody gives you. I want to be healthy. I know it's bad for my system. We start digging, okay.

We went through the seven whys. Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? I started digging. The bottom line, I'm going to make the story up. But the bottom line is, "I feel tired playing with my kids." I said, okay, we got it. Why do you feel tired playing with your kids? What is what you want to feel? When we start getting into the emotional part, the real emotional part of the goal, the real emotional part of the vision, then we're able to create a plan, not a run exercise, not a round diet, but a round activity that she wanted to do.

We brought those ones into her normal routine that she was doing. The difference was tracking the right goal. You go to the gym, you're probably going to track weight loss. You're going to track, or lifting. How much you're lifting, or how many hours, or minutes you're doing on the treadmill. However you want to find that. Her goal was not that. Her goal was to have three more minutes, two more minutes with her kids playing, without getting tired. That's where we start tracking. That's going to start helping her. You have that logic, that emotion and that tactic into it.

**[0:29:01] RT:** I wrote this question down and I thought I was thinking to myself. I don't know if I'll bring this question up, but you've provoked me. You and I live in a country and most of the people who are listeners right now are going to know what we're talking about here, but we're living in a country right now, we're navigating heart issues that are stemming from politics, race, gender, immigration, income inequality, etc. They're all hot buttons in and of their own right. Then they're meshed together. Then we have the politics that's toing and froing in the middle about this.

An awful lot of complaining and concerned by the populace about it, without some sense of movement, or ways to which they can actually use themselves to maybe create some effective change on the ground in the areas where they live. All right, so you know some stuff about what you're talking about here. You also understand that environment, because you live in the middle of the country. You see it every day. We can't escape it. Without getting too political, I avoid that, but it's impossible to. When you think about your work and your model and the way in which you help people, what's an application, what's a way in which I could take your model, for example, out into the world in this environment with these people who are struggling to make some progress on some things they care about locally, what's your counsel for bringing your work to that dynamic with that stuff at stake?

**[0:30:23] ME:** Like you said, there's different elements and there's the elements that we can control and the elements that we cannot control. That's probably the first thing we need to separate. Because we spend a lot of time and a lot of discussions in things that we cannot control. For me, that's really a waste of time and energy. We decide, okay, what is what we can control and we can control the narrative. We can control a lot of the connections that we have. I have this conversation with my daughter a lot, because she is a very big advocate for Latinos and immigrants and all that, of course. I said, what can we control? What are the things that we need to teach? What are the things that people need to understand they need to do to create something a little better?

There is the logic. We go into all that it can be taught, it can be taught. Then is, how can we create that? How can we bring the actions need to be taken, the tactics need to be taken by each individual, as far as a personal journey? As a group, as a community, there are actions that we can take that they can have a good impact. They have to have the purpose. It's not just doing for doing. What is what we want to achieve out of it that we can control? Otherwise, we're just fighting against the wall.

It is very important that in all the different elements that we're living today, we separate the issues. We understand the things that are controllable, that we need to push and push those ones.

**[0:32:05] RT:** I want to go back to something you said early in this answer, because I think it's important. I suspect it's important, but I'd like you to amplify it. Which is, you said something about the degree of control we have over the narrative. It strikes me that early on in choosing to use myself to address this dynamic that I'm putting in the middle of our conversation, I need to think about what is the current narrative and what's a narrative that reflects what it is that I'm attempting to do? I need to test that narrative before I spend too much time trying to do too much, because the narrative just be my own version of it and it may be missing elements that I'm not aware of. Talk a little bit about, if you would, the importance of narrative design to get a sense that you're actually capturing some elements of the thing that you're trying to address.

**[0:33:00] ME:** When we look at the current narrative, most of the narrative that we see on social media on a lot of discussions is narrative created by somebody, whether it's A, or it's B, that narrative is there. The question is, are we going to jump into that narrative, or we're going to change it? That's one of the things that I, again, I talked to my daughter. She comes to like, well, all this is said. When she and I start arguing and discussing the issue, that's the real narrative. Because she start telling me everything that she doesn't agree, or agrees and why. That's the narrative that you need to put out there.

You cannot just jump into follow whatever is there. We have to think, we have to react, and then we have to challenge that. Now, we can control that to a degree. Even if we control that with our inner circle and in our conversations, and I think those are conversations that they need to happen, whether they happen at the gym, or they happen outside the school, picking up your kids, whether they happen at different places. I mean, if you really want to create some changes, then those conversations need to happen with a very constructive narrative.

Instead of fighting what is happening today, let's build something. I've been living in this country for 30 years. I love this country as much as I love Mexico. We have a beautiful country, we have beautiful minds, we have beautiful people in all color, size and shapes. There is no questions of that. I think that what makes us really, really strong, this space to debate and talk and come to an agreement, even if it's an emotional agreement. So, okay, I respect what you say, I respect what I say, let's move on. We're missing a lot of that, Rick. We're missing a lot of that emotional agreement that I respect you, regardless if our logic is not the same. We want to go to the same place. That used to be this country.

**[0:35:02] RT:** I agree with you. I'd add to a piece that's at least dormant right now. I don't know that it's missing, but dormant, is some combination of curiosity and inquiry for understanding before I opionate. You could have a narrative, but if I don't give you enough time to fully explain a narrative, because I want to give you my narrative, we just got two narratives barking at each other. It strikes me that it comes across in the work, in the writing that there's this element of space to allow things to land and be heard and questioned for understanding, not to tear them apart, so that I can understand more thoroughly and then figure out, is there something here I can use?

When I think back, your Albert Einstein model, there is a guy who was immensely curious. Asked lots of questions for understanding. I tossed that in, because I think the narrative is a critical piece that you're referring to here that we're not so good at right now and how do we be helpful to them. All right, so what's your definition of leading?

**[0:36:16] ME:** What's my definition of leading? Service.

**[0:36:18] RT:** Service. Say more about service. What service look like from somebody's leading?

**[0:36:23] ME:** If you want to be a leader, if you're leading, you have to be at the service of the people and at the service of yourself. Let me start with that. I cannot lead anybody. I cannot serve anybody if I don't serve myself, if I don't lead myself. Everything starts inside. Because leadership at the end, in my opinion, is more of an emotion. People follow that emotion that following the thought behind the person. If I'm not leaving that, if I'm not servicing myself, if I don't doing things to me, it's very hard for people to follow that.

Said that in a corporation, let me take this to a corporation, to a business. Who am I serving? Am I serving the business, or am I serving the people within the business? That's a very strong narrative thought that you have to put into there. Because a lot of times we think that we're doing, and you hear this in the words of people, I'm doing this for the company. Well, who's the company? Who really is the company? Sometimes what we're doing is we're doing this for the Excel spreadsheet, or we're doing this for the PowerPoint where it was presented. We have to

look inside. We have to look inward. It's the people that we serve. Is if we take them more into consideration into why we're doing things, and in the book, I give a couple of examples of how to do that. I have seen over the last 25 years, Rick, that the companies excel more when we service our people, rather than servicing the Excel spreadsheet.

**[0:37:58] RT:** When you're saying people, you mean both the people internally in the organization and the people outside who are taking the services of the products that you're making, all stakeholders.

**[0:38:07] ME:** All stakeholders, all stakeholders. Yeah.

**[0:38:11] RT:** All right. We tend to learn more from our leadership failures than we do our successes.

**[0:38:15] ME:** Absolutely. I ask

**[0:38:18] ME:** I asked this question of everybody on the podcast. Would you mind sharing an example of a leadership failure that you learned? What did you learn about yourself and about leading from that failure?

**[0:38:28] ME:** The biggest failure that I have was thinking that the plan had the answers. I will create a plan in my mind, write it down. I think everything was there. I will follow it to the T, knowing that the next action was the wrong action, but the plan said it. Because the plan said it, so I was very logic. The plan said, I didn't trust my instinct. I didn't trust my emotions. I created all the actions, not tactics, all the actions behind a piece of paper. I still see that on a daily basis with a lot of people.

Now, what was the result of that? The result of that was taking my business almost to bankruptcy. With that, also, comes that self-awareness that you're not right, that you make mistakes, that you're human, that it's okay to fall, what is not okay needs to stay down there and liking the floor and start kissing the floor. That's not okay. You need to get up and you need to understand and you need to shake it off and do the next part.

Now, to do that, you cannot do it alone. You have to be willing to be vulnerable enough to listen to those people around you that really care for you, whether it's in the business, or outside. There's people that care about you and they're telling you that. In different ways, you have to listen more than words. You have to listen to the eyes, you have to listen to all the expressions, you have to listen to the environment, you have to listen to the result of your decisions, you have to listen to your emotions. You really have to listen everything that it goes around you, because the answers are always present. We're just choosing not to listen to them and that was part of all that mistake that you believe so strongly in something that you become blind.

**[0:40:26] RT:** Yeah. In that dynamic, with all this stuff that's going on that you went through, or your clients go through now, what have you learned about how you take care of yourself? Your humanness, your mind, your body, your spirit when you're in the middle of this and it's not going to end tomorrow, it's going to go on for a while. How do you take care of yourself to stay in that game and keep moving?

**[0:40:47] ME:** I do have a schedule, that the schedule, if you look at it, is going to have a lot of time for me. I have to have my times where I go to the gym, where I have my time where I have to stop and just take a walk. It's not that when I'm feeling it, I schedule those. Because I know the type of work and the responsibility that I have when I'm working with a client. Let's put it this way. I never go from one session to the next one without at least having 20 minutes in between with a walk, where I completely give myself the time to go to the next one. There's a lot of that.

You have to understand as a leader, I think that's another very important question. You have to understand what you mean to the rest of the people. It's not just your words, it's your actions, it's your presence, it's everything around you. If you don't give yourself that credit, if you don't believe in yourself on all that, then it becomes incongruent. When there is that, then people don't follow. People don't believe, because there is a story that you're telling me and there is a story that you're leaving. Those two do not match. If they don't match, they repel.

**[0:42:09] RT:** What's ahead for you?

**[0:42:10] ME:** Well, we're creating with this concept, we're creating a certification for coaches and leaders that want to be certified on the LET model, where they can go to business and do

their personal coaching. We do a program of leadership retreats assisted by horses, I talk a little bit in the book, too. I was just in Germany working with the first group of 10 coaches that do similar things with the coaches, so they can start having an idea of what the certification is going to come. You just keep helping people and hopefully, see you next year in Oxford again, or in our next reunion.

**[0:42:51] RT:** You will. You will. All right. We will put links to the varying resources that you have available in the show notes, so people can look those up, how they find you, all those kinds of things. So you know if you're hearing something here, you want to chase, then you'll be able to do that when you see the episode show notes. I'm going to let you have the last word. Anything you want to say to be complete here in our conversation?

**[0:43:11] ME:** Thank you. I want to let people know that when you get your hands in a book like this one, it talks about change, it's because you're understanding that you're in a process of something. If you're in the process of something, just let it happen. We spend a lot of time in the why. It's about time to start in the what, okay? Let it happen. I started my seminars with that, with what. What is what you want to let it happen? It's already inside you. You're already probably figuring out the why. You probably already spend a lot of time in your why. You have created a what. That what is inside you, and that's what you need to let it happen. Hopefully, this book will give you the elements, the theories, the stories, the guidance to help you navigate through that and really allow that what to happen and lead you in the track that you want to be.

**[0:44:06] RT:** Great. Mau Espinosa, thanks very much for coming to the swamp. It's been fun.

**[0:44:10] ME:** Thank you, Rick. My pleasure.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[0:44:15] 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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