

Mike Paton:

This is Mike Paton with the EOS Leader podcast, and I'm really excited about introducing this rebroadcast of an earlier episode with Gino Wickman, the creator of EOS, the founder of EOS Worldwide, the author of seven books, six of which are in the Traction Library. And we're re-releasing this episode in advance of the launch of his latest book, The EOS Life. So, super excited to be having this conversation with my long-time friend, business partner, and mentor, Gino Wickman.

Gino Wickman:

It's a pleasure. I'm going to start by saying exactly what I say to you every time I see you or call you, and that is, "Paton, my brother." So I am so looking forward to this. I can't stop smiling. I keep giggling. So I'm just looking forward to spending an hour with you.

Mike Paton:

Yeah. I'm giddy as well, and the good news is April is in the office to remind me when we're running out of time. So keep us on track today.

Gino Wickman:

Great.

Mike Paton:

So Gino, would you build on the introduction I just gave and give the listener a little bit of information about your journey to become a leader and an entrepreneur and a helper of other entrepreneurs. Just take us back to the earliest days of your entrepreneurial career.

Gino Wickman:

For sure. I'm going to offer up one edit on your introduction. You said that I was called into the family business. I actually clawed my way into the family business. Those two phraseologies are very, very different. So I wanted in the family business, and my dad did not want his kids in the business. So I'll come back to that in a second, but I clawed my way in. So the lightning fast history is that I always say I've been an entrepreneur since I was 21. Backing up a little bit, I barely graduated high school with a solid 2.3 GPA and did not go to college and went to work. I was an entrepreneur in the making out of the shoot. I didn't know that.

So again, went to work and bumped along finding my different ventures ideas to ultimately finding my way into the family business. What happened was I went and got my real estate license because I was doing real estate investing and failing the test the first time and getting kicked in the stomach. It was like that was so defeating. To getting my license, I then really realized what my dad did and what the family business did and what he had created. I took all of his training as a real estate agent at 22 years old. I was making a six-figure income by 23 years old, and I fell in love with his company. I wrote a goal for myself that I'm going to become the president of that company someday.

Our plans were very different. Like I said, he didn't want the kids in the business, but his business partner who trained me was enamored with me, and he knew I wanted in, and he wanted me in. So he convinced my dad to let him in. But then my dad said to me, he said, "If you wanted to this company, go sell \$5 million in real estate and then come talk to me." At the time, my average sale price was like \$130,000 per house. So I sold a lot of real estate at 22 years old. That's how I got in. I started at the

bottom of the company, selling his products door to door. I went from making a six figure income to 25 grand a year. That's the second time I went broke, and I worked my way up through that company.

In a year and a half, I took over the reins as president and took on a major turnaround. Where'd the drive come from? What made you work so damn hard. I with I could tell you. I'm reminded of the time I asked you why were you so driven in the early days of building your EOS implementer business, and your answer was abject fear. So that flashed into my mind. But for me, it's like I always describe it as... I don't know is the short answer, but I've heard this analogy of people talking about... There are people walking the earth that are insecure, and there's this hole that they're always trying to fill. I'm guessing I had one of those holes, but I am incredibly driven.

When I left high school, I knew I was going to be successful. I knew my income goal at 25. I said, "I'm going to make 50 grand at 25. I'm going to be a millionaire by the time I'm 30." So I don't know where it comes from, but there was some hole I was trying to fill, somebody I was trying to impress. Something I was trying to accomplish. But I was incredibly driven all through my 20s, and I certainly still am.

Mike Paton:

So you're successfully running the family business, working with your father and the leadership team, and you decide to sell the business. Walk us through that decision a little bit if you would.

Gino Wickman:

Yeah. So give a little bit of color around that, so after I turned the business around, it took me three years, ran it for a total of seven years. It was during the turnaround where I created the visionary integrator concept. So my dad was the visionary. I was the integrator, and that's when we really took off. Once he fully got the visionary role and the integrator role. So that's where that concept was spawned for what that's worth. Once I finished the turnaround, I was ready to move on and go do the next thing, and there were three partners, my dad and Escobar and myself. We each owned a third. I was ready to leave, and I went to them and I said, "I'm ready to leave." They talked me into staying. So I stayed for another few years and then went to them again and said, "I need to go." Because that's what I really decided and knew what my unique ability was, and that was helping people run their companies. I realized I had a gift for that.

As I was helping my dad do that, I was also helping my young entrepreneurs organization brother and now known as the entrepreneurs organization. So I just realized I had that knack. So I wanted to move on. We then hammered out my deal, and we got a phone call. We got an offer. Somebody called and wanted to buy the business, and it was really funny because I had a feeling it was going to happen. When they called, I literally said about five minutes into the call. I said, "I've been expecting your call." So there's just something that I just knew. So it was like the perfect scenario because I didn't know exactly what they were going to do without me. But we had a plan that we laid out.

So it just worked out great. The only downside is it forced me to stay on for another two years because when we sold, I had a three-year contract, which I got out of a year and a half early because I told the new owners that I'm ready to go, I'm ready to go. Every single day, I literally told this guy I'm ready to go and finally flew into town and said, "All right. I'll let you go."

Mike Paton:

We'll let you go.

Gino Wickman:

Exactly. So I don't know if I've answered your question.

Mike Paton:

No, that's good. Then just at a high level, what was it that convinced you that there was a business to be made helping entrepreneurs get what they want from their businesses?

Gino Wickman:

Yeah. So it was in strategic coach. My first year of strategic coach, I was I think about 28 years old when I had my clarity that, "Wow, out of everything I'm doing all day, every day running this business, and I have my hands in everything, I realized about 5% of what I was doing was my unique ability." So that's when I had my clarity and my aha. So I knew that I was going to spend my time helping entrepreneurs run their businesses, but I didn't have it fully fleshed out.

So upon selling the business, finishing that year and a half, retiring from the company, I took a nine months sabbatical and spent nine months getting back into shape, reading a ton of books, soul searching, and it was my guardian angel, Mike Palin that handed me a book called The Monk and the Riddle. It was a story of a guy that helped CEOs. I was like, "Wow, this is the gig. This is the job." I took my leap doing that and bumped along and figured it out. But over a five-year period working with 50 companies, I put the finishing touches on what is now EOS.

Mike Paton:

Awesome. After running EOS from the visionary seat for many years, you decided it was time to transition out of that role and pursue your next passion more fully. Talk to us about that decision-making process.

Gino Wickman:

So where are we now on that journey? Which passion are we talking about?

Mike Paton:

We're talking about the Entrepreneurial Leap.

Gino Wickman:

Yeah. So I think everybody knows the story. So it was Don and I that joined forces as visionary and integrator, and I took the reins as visionary of EOS Worldwide, and I knew it was going to be a short-term gig. I did it for 10 years, and you heard me say it every 90 days as an implementer, I would say to you guys in our quarterly meetings as I was running those quarterly meetings, I would say, someday, I'm going to be sitting next to you at the quarterly meeting because I am an EOS implementer. Okay?

So I'm doing this gig. I stepped away from being an EOS implementer full time to help build this company. So I gave down 45 days a year as the visionary to build EOS Worldwide into what it is today. So I always knew I was going to step out of that seat, number one. I always knew I was going to replace myself as visionary. Then when I met you, so if you remember this, when you came to that first bootcamp as a new EOS implementer at the first break, I grabbed you, and I said, "I'm never letting you go." I knew you were it. You were the embodiment of what I was looking for and what the perfect EOS implementer was. So I kind of knew it was you all along.

So again, I knew I was going to be out of it. Then when I was 40 years old, I set a goal, and I said, "When I turned 50, I'm going to shift my energy from helping successful entrepreneurs become even

more successful to going to the front end of the entrepreneurial journey and helping entrepreneurs in the making get a huge jumpstart on taking their Entrepreneurial Leaps and starting a better startup." So when I turned 50, that's when I sold the business. You were fully at the helm. As the visionary, I was completely freed up. I was just simply an owner. So that freed me up to go right, Entrepreneurial Leap, and now spend the last three years and at least the next seven years focusing on this new passion, which is helping a million entrepreneurs in the making take a better leap and start a better startup.

Mike Paton:

You're still practicing as an EOS implementer today if I'm not mistaken.

Gino Wickman:

Yeah. So my life is 50/50. So my working time is 50%, still be EOS guy. I own 12.5% of EOS Worldwide. I still own all the books. I still speak, and I still have a client base. Doing the sessions with the client is still my number one love. So that's 50%. The other 50% of my working time is Entrepreneurial Leap. So that's how my life is divided up now.

Mike Paton:

Yeah. I want to transition into the subject of this podcast, which is leadership. You and I both know having watched so many leaders play this game for so many years, there's a lot to talk about here. So I want to go back and ask you if you can remember the first time as a very young person when you saw someone leading or saw leadership in action. Who was it? What was the situation, and what was the impression it left on you?

Gino Wickman:

So you're asking first time I actually witnessed someone leading?

Mike Paton:

Yup.

Gino Wickman:

Oh, that's such a great question. I think I would have to say it was... So out of high school, I went to work at a machine shop. I worked at a machine shop for three and a half years, saved up \$8,500 and then went to take my Entrepreneurial Leap and the owner of that machine shop, so there were, I think 40 of us working in the machine shop, and he would come out and visit each one of those 40 people at least weekly. When he came out, it was like God was... I don't know how to describe it. He would come out, and he would spend time talking to me. I never thought about that. But that was probably the first really impactful time that I witnessed that, because I'm remembering the effect that had on me and the fact that I killed for that guy. He talked about nothing. You know what I mean? Just small talk about nothing.

Mike Paton:

Tell us how that made you feel more specifically. What impact did it have on you?

Gino Wickman:

Yeah. I mean, it made me feel important. It made me want to work hard for that guy. It made me want to kill for that guy. It just made me feel important.

Mike Paton:

Interesting. Do you still have a relationship with the guy who owns that machine shop, just out of curiosity?

Gino Wickman:

Never saw him again the day I left that company, nor did I ever want to see that company or him again, because that was not the kind of work for me. It's incredible because I'm not mechanically inclined, and I was a gear hover, and I was a good one. That's why we cut gears, these specialty gears, and I had 13 machines running at once. I mean, it's crazy, but I was just this workforce and to be working mechanically today, I'd have no fingers left if I were to do it now. But no. I could not wait to get away from that. I worked 61 hours a week. I busted my ass. I worked very hard and played very hard back then, but now I never saw him again after leaving

Mike Paton:

Fascinating. Did you see this early stage leader in your life make any big mistakes?

Gino Wickman:

No, because he was so high level. No. Again, there was a humility with him that. That's the other thing that kind of stands out for me. But no, no mistakes.

Mike Paton:

All right. Fair enough. In your life, not just as an EOS implementer, or the builder of EOS Worldwide, who's the best leader you think you've ever seen working?

Gino Wickman:

Wow. I mean, I think it feels so easy to answer. There's really two, but I mean, right at the top of my list is my dad. I mean, my dad is and was... He's 78 or 79 now. So he's pretty much retired that he's retired six different times. Every time he retires. He's [inaudible 00:14:42] a month, and he's got more energy than three of me. But he's such an incredible leader and communicator, an inspirer. So the short answer is my dad. I'm guessing the follow-up question is. what were the things that he did? So I'll share that because it's one of the things... There's so many things in EOS that the teachings from him and the philosophies from him, and it's like the VTO, it's like the first five sections of the VTO, it's all him and his teaching. But he was so masterful at having a vision, communicating that vision and inspiring people around that vision, I mean, and such an incredible communicator.

So I always talk about what he taught me. The number one thing he taught me is how to communicate with people, be it one or 1000. So if it's a one-on-one conversation or if it's speaking to a thousand, he taught me how to do that masterfully, and the way when it was one-on-one his directness and his humility, and he was so masterful and having some of the most difficult conversations I saw. So I learned how to be so direct, how to rip the bandaid off, how to hit the nerve, all the things that have served me so well, certainly building EOS Worldwide, but also being an EOS implementer.

Mike Paton:

Something I want to share since I've had the great pleasure of meeting Floyd many times is I think he's very gifted in his ability to make it clear he's genuinely interested in your wellbeing, even when he's

kicking you in the ass. I've always considered that a great leadership trait of how important you are to me, even when I'm being tough on you. So I'm giving him a lot of credit for that and you as well.

Gino Wickman:

Yeah. So we could go on forever with that. So Floyd Wickman is his name. Look him up. I mean, just watch a couple of his video. He's just the greatest. He's an incredible entrepreneur, amazing speaker. He's a hall of fame and National Speakers Association. Ziglar was his mentor. He was Les Brown's mentor. So in EOS, so one of our little tricks that we have or tools in our toolbox is when you can't read a room or a person, and so the two emotions exercise. I watch him do that so many times so masterfully, and you're sitting there with somebody, and they have that look on their face, and you can't figure out what that is, and you just say two emotions. Right now, you share yours, I'll share my. What are you feeling right now, your most positive emotion and your most negative emotion?

You can do that one on one, or you can do that one on five in a group. But when you can't read the room or you can't read the person, that is such a simple, powerful exercise, that again, I've watched him do so many times, I've used so many times, and you just get this instant sense of what's going on with that person, and it's never what you thought. So there you are as a leader sitting there making an assumption about this person that has that look on their face, it's never a good luck, and you're assuming they're off at you, or they're off at something about the cut, and it never has anything to do with that. So it takes all of the assumptions out of the room. So it's such a great, simple leadership nugget that will make you an incredible leader.

Mike Paton:

Yeah. That takes it back to the first thing you said, which is what a great communicator he is. Not just sharing information, but absorbing emotion and absorbing information and really sensing what's going on and diving deeper when he's not sure very basic skills and often overlooked, for sure.

Gino Wickman:

Yeah, and I don't want to discount the power because you've seen me do this a thousand times in the last 15 years. But his ability to just hit the nerve in a conversation and state the obvious. When I would watch that the first two, three, four years, I mean, I literally would go, "Oh my God, I can't believe he just went there. I can't believe he said that." Everybody in the room tenses up. I mean, think about what we do with our client. I learned that from him. You just go there. You go there. It's that you owe it to the relationship to go there, and you always think that this horrible thing is going to happen, and 99% of the time, beautiful, amazing things happen, and 1% of the time something bad happens, but that bad thing that's going to happen, it's going to eventually happen anyway. He just would make it happen.

Now, why the freak would you wait around for that thing to happen a year from now? Let's make it happen now. So the power of that one little nugget I hope makes sense for our audience here.

Mike Paton:

That's absolutely golden, and I've seen it play out many, many times. The overwhelming emotion in the room when it's out there is relief. Right? Oh, thanks. We were all thinking it. Now, it's present and public, and we can work through it, for sure. Cool. How about the worst leader or the worst leadership types you've ever seen? Maybe you don't want to identify a single person?

Gino Wickman:

The one that instantly comes to my mind... I mean, there's a thousand of them, but the one that I experienced personally that was my leader. I'm going to be very generic in this. I'm trying to figure out how to say this and make sure that no one can extrapolate.

Mike Paton:

For the record, I'm sitting here hoping you're not describing me.

Gino Wickman:

No. No. No. But this was a job that I was going to work for someone to see if that's the business I wanted to work with then. I was a salesperson. The advice I was given is that every once in a while, you may have to lift a few skirts to close the deal.

Mike Paton:

Wow.

Gino Wickman:

[inaudible 00:20:17]. their fans. This guy he's telling me to screw a bunch of people in town too. At the time, I was almost engaged. I might've been engaged at the time. So I may have to lift a few skirts to close the deal. So that's an integrity issue for me, and I couldn't get out of there fast enough.

Mike Paton:

Makes me want to take a shower.

Gino Wickman:

I hope no.

Mike Paton:

If you had to identify some characteristics or attributes of leaders who aren't great, who struggle, who alienate, who aren't able to inspire and empower and make people feel wanted, what are the kinds of behaviors or attributes you see that get leaders in trouble?

Gino Wickman:

Well, I feel like the first one is easy, and then we'll see what comes out of this as we unpack it, and I would urge you to just kind of dig.

Mike Paton:

You bet.

Gino Wickman:

I mean, the first one is just a unwillingness to be vulnerable, and I hate using that word because that word is just so overused and still misconstrued. So I'm going to say it a different way, but that's the word I purposely am choosing to use, but it's a leader that is not self-aware. The one thing about you, one of your greatest gifts as a leader and as a leader of EOS Worldwide is your ability to self-deprecate yourself. It's so disarming. It's so powerful. So it's the opposite of that, where the leader that will not admit a

weakness, will not show their cards, will not let their guard down. So whatever you want to call that, there's an emotional intelligence aspect of that. But it's that leader with Teflon two-foot wall that you can't pierce so dangerous and unhealthy, and everyone around that person is just always tense. Everything's tense around that person. So that's not fun.

I take great pride though when that person happens to be one of my clients very early in the process and tearing that wall down eventually. But some of them run for the hills because they're just incapable of doing that. So that's one thing that comes to mind, but that's the biggie. That's the biggie that jumps out for me.

Mike Paton:

Yeah. Let's build on that a little bit first, and then I'll probe for a couple of other attributes. But what I observe when I'm working with somebody like that is they're also the ones who take every question, honest inquiry, or challenging of the status quo as a personal affront. So I call it perfectionism, this desire to be above reproach and always perfect. You're right. It just scares the hell out of everybody on the leadership team, and you're walking on eggshells.

Gino Wickman:

Yeah. As you say, that helps, because that gets my gears turning. But it's like the opposite of that is the leader that's comfortable saying, "I don't know." I'm just sitting on that team, and there's an issue, and they don't have all the answers, and they know we don't have all the answers, and a great leader on a leadership team only has the answer like 10%, 20% of the time. So the team is rising up and has the answers. So they're just capable of saying, "I don't know, but together we're going to figure this out, and I'm looking to you guys to help me." So that's the antithesis.

Mike Paton:

So 135 clients, 1,900, almost 2,000 sessions with leadership teams. How has watching other entrepreneurial leaders and leadership teams work informed your style as a leader?

Gino Wickman:

That's great. I can't help as you're saying that, I'm just sitting here, I can't stop smiling doing this with you because we are privileged. I think you and I have sent each other a thousand voicemails in the last 15 years with all of these cool stories about our clients and the sessions. So we're just so privileged. So when you say that, now I'm thinking about 2,000 sessions with these amazing people. Man, what a privilege? What a joy what we've seen? So man, I'm trying not to default to the obvious answer because the obvious answer, the biggest lesson I've learned is that vulnerable, open, and honest thing and the power of that, and it goes right back to what my dad taught me, what I learned from him and how scared I was in the first year or two saying I want the team to be open and honest, but still fearing what that looks like and then shoot forward to today. It's like I do everything in my power to open that can as fast as I possibly can.

So I've learned the power of being open and honest, letting your guard down, calling out issues, saying issues. I think the other thing that comes to mind is what I've learned is that issue resolution, issues. There is no one solution for every issue, and I'm now more convinced than ever, and I write this in the little e-book, *Decide*, that I believe the answer is almost always in the room. So if you picture in your mind, a leadership team, and so you listening in right now, you and your leadership team sitting there, the answer is almost always he's in the room, and I literally believe it's like 99.9% of the time. So we're talking about literally one out of a thousand times, you have to go outside the room to find the answer.

So the default with a lot of teams on the front end is that okay, here's our problem. Who do we go to? Who's the expert that's going to solve this for us? The first place they look is at us as the EOS implementer, and my response is always, "Oh, so we aren't that good." So the beauty is it's teaching them and showing them that they have the answer. They just have to build the muscle to let it fly, and the point is and the lesson is and the lesson for me as a leader, to the point of your question is the solution to an issue.

If you take every business issue, and I always jokingly say there's only 36 in the history of business, but you take that business issue that that leadership team is facing, the solution to that issue, when you run it through the filter of the company's core values, the company's core focus, their tenure target, their short-term goals, the answer and the decision that they need to make is different than the exact same issue for the company down the street because they have different core values, a different core focus, a tenure target. If I can get that to make sense in this conversation and for the audience listening, you realize that we can do this. We have the answer to this. We don't need to look somewhere else. There is no expert that can give us a better answer than we can.

So let's all lean into this thing. Let's bring everything we know to this thing, all of our history. Another aspect is your growth trajectory. If your growth trajectory is 10% or 100%, the solution and decision on that issue, sometimes it's very different. So when you put all the factors into the decision you need to make, it's a unique decision for every client. One size doesn't fit all for every leadership team. So hopefully that made sense because the summary is 99.9% of the time, the answer is always in the room, and they don't have to look anywhere else. If that could sink in, look at what that team, the confidence level of that team, the decision-making ability, the decision-making speed, I can come up with 10 more words. It goes through the roof. Does that make sense?

Mike Paton:

100%. The way I see it manifesting itself a lot is a desire to table it or call an offline meeting to talk about it later, or the amount of energy towards not arriving at the wrong conclusion is huge. Sometimes the right answer might be not what you decide, but if you made the decision and you try on the wrong answer for 30, 60, or 90 days, you'll know a quarter from now. So I see exactly the same thing. As you say, once you let go of the desire to always be right, you become more decisive almost immediately. You tend to look inside. I can't tell you how many times the newest member of a leadership team has come up with the answer to a vexing issue because they had the courage to say, "Hey, have we ever tried this?" Everybody else goes, "How the hell did I think about that?"

Gino Wickman:

Yeah. What you just prompted for me, but then here's the other side of this. The team that keeps looking outside for the answer and going to the supposed expert, the expert's decision is twice as shitty as their bad decision. So it's like it's the outside expert almost always gets it wrong because they don't have the experience. They don't understand the culture at a soul level, the goals, the vision, the plan. So there's a better answer in that room than when they actually go to the expert that's giving them some off-the-shelf answer. So I don't know if that makes sense, but that's the icing on the cake in terms of why they should answer it internally.

Mike Paton:

To me, doesn't it all go back to accountability, right? In that, if it's my idea and our answer and we're wrong, we're accountable.

Gino Wickman:

Exactly.

Mike Paton:

If it's an outsider's answer or idea, and we're wrong, we got the wrong expert. So it's that willingness to embrace accountability that feels like a really important ingredient of a great leadership team and a great leader.

Gino Wickman:

Yeah. Let's give an example, okay, for the audience, because I want to make sure that this is being clear because if the issue is we need to build a website, well, of course, you're going to go outside and probably find an expert that's going to build you a website, unless you have those capabilities internal. But if it's about what do we do with Johnny, our top sales person, because he's doing this certain thing, there is no place else to look for the answer. You have a better answer to that. If it's, how do we make this step in the process more efficient, you can go outside and have the process expert come in and give you their off-the-shelf answer. But I am convinced you're going to... Again, we can go through all 136 issues, but you're going to come up with a better decision because there's so many factors that go into a decision that are so unique to you as an organization.

Mike Paton:

Yeah. Great. Talking about your leadership over the lifetime of running entrepreneurial companies, what's the scariest moment or a time you felt most stuck or unsure of yourself as a leader?

Gino Wickman:

Well, I've got about 200 situations to call on. So I'm just trying to pick the best one.

Mike Paton:

I have a long list here to remind you of, Gino, if you can't come up with anything.

Gino Wickman:

I'm trying to think of what yesterday's was to make this recent. A couple of the highlights. So I've been broke three times in my life. When I left the machine shop with my \$8,500 and tried a bunch of stuff that all failed, broke then, when I went from making a six-figure income in real estate to working for the family business for 25 grand. I was broke then. Then when I achieved my goal of becoming a millionaire by 30, which I hit it at 31, I was flat broke by 33 and \$200,000 in debt. So that scenario, that third one was when I took the leap to build EOS Worldwide, when I took the leap to go help entrepreneurs. So I had this wonderful nest egg that all went away with some very stupid investment decisions, and I was burning cash because I wasn't generating an income building this.

So the one there is continuing to stay the course believing that I could build this thing and being just flat piss broke and having a five-year-old and an eight-year-old and looking my wife in the eyes who is the most incredibly supportive person of this lunatic entrepreneur that I am. So that was scary to decide to stay the course. Then the other one was this one, you'll really have a visceral reaction because you were in the room, but it was a year and a half into building EOS Worldwide with Don when we

decided to leverage it and go find implementers and start to build this thing. We were a year and a half then. We had about 20 implementers.

By the way, you'll be able to validate how many we had. Please do that at the end of the story. But it was when the model wasn't working. Don and I were making no money for a year and a half from EOS Worldwide off of our idea, my idea, I'll take all the responsibility, and then in a fit of frustration, going into a Starbucks, reading Starfish and the Spider and Tribes by Seth Godin and pouring over all the data points and coming up with plan B and then having an aha for the plan B business model and leaving the coffee shop, calling Don and saying, "Don, I'm about to turn our business model on its ear," and then did a three, five-minute riff explaining the model and then shutting up and him going, "I love it." I can remember it like it was yesterday.

Then within a month standing in front of you guys, I think it was within a few days at our quarterly meeting and presenting the new business model, that was absolutely terrifying because I rocked... How many implementers were there in the room?

Mike Paton:

Somewhere in the 20 range.

Gino Wickman:

Yeah, that's right. That was my guess. 20 is because I rocked all of your worlds because the ones that weren't producing had to start paying because we shifted to a membership model, and you had to pay to play, and people like you that were incredibly successful got a nice pay increase, and so we just rocked everyone's world. From that moment, the business grew 40% a year for the next 10 years, and the rest was kind of history. So that was terrifying going into that room fully expecting everyone to leave but you and having to start over again.

Mike Paton:

At the same, it was an issue that needed to be [inaudible 00:33:39] and resolved, and you made a decision that you thought was the right one, and you were prepared to be wrong, and as it turns out, it worked out pretty good for everybody, me [crosstalk 00:33:49]-

Gino Wickman:

Which by the way is a perfect example of if I went to a consultant and said, "Hey, my business model isn't working. Give me a new business model." There's no way anyone could come up with... What I came up with was so unique and different, but it was based on my personal philosophies, my abundance based mentality, my motivations, my... So again, there were so many different filters that went into that decision. Only I could make that decision. Then certainly, I needed Don's support, which obviously, he said he loved it.

Mike Paton:

Well, because you were presenting it to a group of people you cared about, my feeling at the time was that you wanted to have looked at it from every possible angle, contemplate the way it would affect people and be prepared to answer for your decision rather than saying, "Well, we hired a consultant to do that for us. So I can't answer these questions." That's the power of wrestling with your own issues and coming to your own conclusion is that you can defend it and explain it and understand it better. Then the last thing I would say is you also made it clear to us that you thought this was the right thing,

but you were prepared to be proven wrong. That sort of vulnerability and humility really helped carry the day in my humble opinion.

Gino Wickman:

What a day? I mean, I share it, but you and I have never really talked about that day. So that was-

Mike Paton:

That was why I think you told me once or twice when we were preparing for QCE that you were up all night, trying to get your message exactly right. That's the way I prepare for everything. So it was nice to hear me say you did it once in your career [inaudible 00:35:22]-

Gino Wickman:

Then how many times in those early days do you remember me saying to you, "Worst case, if this doesn't work, it's just going to be you, Dan, and I. We'll keep figuring this thing out, but..."

Mike Paton:

I connected enough to it today that I still feel the same is true.

Gino Wickman:

[inaudible 00:35:38].

Mike Paton:

But just be us on a beach somewhere. I want to talk about entrepreneurs in the making and some of the nuggets in the research you've done and the preparation you've done to share Entrepreneurial Leap with the world. You make some very bold declarations about what an entrepreneur is and what kind of attributes are essential to success. Walk us through the discernment process. Are you an entrepreneur or not? What's your belief on that? Are you born? Can you be made, et cetera?

Gino Wickman:

Yes. I have some very strong beliefs on that. So I love the question, and this is a topic that I'm very passionate about. So where I will start is I'm going to begin at the end, okay, because I use the term a true entrepreneur. Okay? So what I believe, when I say true entrepreneur, I'm picturing, which is 80% of the people listening to this podcast right now, that those are the entrepreneurs that own privately held companies with 10 to 250 people. That is the sweet spot. That's why I created EOS. That's who I created it for. So I'm very obsessive about that target market. We have about 80% of our clients are in that target market. 10% are larger, 10% are smaller, and I'm pretty obsessive about saying that's who it's for.

So when I talk about true entrepreneurs, I'm talking about those entrepreneurs. So I'm talking about the entrepreneur in the making is a person who is yet to take their Entrepreneurial Leap, but someday they're going to build one of those 10 to 250 person companies. Whether they build a tech billion dollar unicorn, I could care less. I don't need to talk to them anymore when they hit their 251st employee. Okay? Then I always kind of jokingly say, "I don't want to talk to them until they have their 10th employee, because that startup phase is so messy. I'm not emotionally strong enough to help somebody in that messy phase."

So the point is when I say true entrepreneur, that's what I'm talking about, these aspiring entrepreneurs that are going to build companies with people and rule of thumb tend to 250%, and it's

going to be privately held. So assuming that makes sense, a true entrepreneur, I believe has six essential traits. I call them visionary, passionate, problem-solver, driven, risk-taker, and responsible. Anyone who has those traits, be at age six or 106, someday you're going to be an entrepreneur. Okay? So for some of you, you take your leap at 13, and for some of you, you don't take your leap till 60. It's all okay. It's about when you're ready.

But those traits, like creating an assessment, it's free on the website e-leap.com. Go take it. If you score 90 or higher, you probably have those six essential traits. If you score lower, you probably don't, and I'm going to talk about what you do if that's you. But I believe beyond a shadow of a doubt you are born with these traits. They cannot be taught. It is nature over nurture. I'm obsessive about that. Half the world agrees with me, and half doesn't, and I love the debate. So a professor of entrepreneurship that's making their living off believing they can teach 7.5 billion people on this planet to be entrepreneurs, I believe, is a sin. Okay?

So there's my little soap box. I'll come back down to reality. There's some of my passion coming through. With that said, I call that the 4%. So I'm trying to find the 4%. About 4% of the world has these six essential traits. So with that, assuming that's you I'm trying to find you because what I'm going to do is show you an incredible life, the book is written in such a way it's called confirm, glimpse, and path. Confirm is everything we're talking about right now. First and foremost, confirming that you have those traits, assuming you do look out maybe because I'm going to show you a glimpse of all that is possible in all of your options, and it is going to light you up. Then I take you to a path to show you a path to get there faster, to start a better startup, to eliminate literally half the mistakes you're about to make. So that's what the mission is all about, and I want to help a million entrepreneurs in the making do what I just said there.

So all that said, now I want to take the sting off because I just literally off about 10,000 people, and I actually feel a little good about that. That's the sinister side of me. Because what this is a cautionary tale. Okay? Because everybody wants to be a fricking entrepreneur right now, and I'm terrified by what the media is doing around this because they're lathering everybody up, and they hold up the billion-dollar tech unicorn is like the ultimate destination for an entrepreneur, and it's like one in a million.

I like to always say there's nothing wrong with building a \$5 million heating and cooling company that throws off a 20% profit. So there's the everyday entrepreneurs I'm talking to. So with saying all of that, in the book I teach something called the entrepreneurial range. Okay? So if you picture in your mind this arc and on the far right side of the arch, you see the words true entrepreneur, and on the far left side of the arch, you see the word self-employed, well, anybody that owns their own business is somewhere on that entrepreneurial range. What I'm speaking to are the people on the right side of that range. Those are the true entrepreneurs with the six essential traits. If you picture the entrepreneurs that red-line that range, Elon Musk, Walt Disney, Henry Ford, Oprah Winfrey, Sara Blakely, these are the greatest entrepreneurs of all time.

Now, let's go to the left side of that range. Self-employed. These are the one person shows that people with a side hustle, a consultant, a freelancer. They're a sole proprietor, and it's okay. You have your own business. You're free, and I always like to say, "If you're a handy person and you have handy skills, you can go become a handyman or a handy woman charged 60 bucks an hour. You'll make a hundred grand a year, and you'll be busy for the rest of your life." That is awesome. You're totally free. You're self-employed, and that's okay because you don't have the six essential traits. But if you do, as that handy person, handyman or woman, you will not be able to stop yourself but turning that into a construction company, because you're going to start to see so many opportunities and have so many ideas to build that into something.

So with that said, if you don't have the six essential traits, it's not a death sentence. It probably means you're more cut out for being self-employed one person show. If you really want to do that, the other reality is a lot of you that score low, below 90, your integrators, and you just want to be around the entrepreneurial spirit. Go attach yourself to a visionary, and there'll be a match made in heaven, and forward you go. So did that make sense?

Mike Paton:

100%, and I enjoyed the pleasure you take in breaking a few hearts. One of the things you also share in Entrepreneurial Leap are the eight critical mistakes entrepreneurs make in the hopes of helping us avoid making them ourselves. So talk to us about those things that you see entrepreneurial leaders mess up from time to time.

Gino Wickman:

Yeah, for sure. Yes, I do. I want to back up one step because the breaking the heart thing, I want to make sure everyone understands the intent behind that. Because hopefully, you can tell them all, "I am a good person at the end of the day." It just doesn't sound like that always. But when I talk about breaking their hearts, it's a cautionary tale. I am begging them to please don't take the Entrepreneurial Leap because you're going to be miserable for 10 years, trying to build a 25 person company when you don't have the six essential traits. So I'm trying to save you, and I'm trying to help you understand that being an entrepreneur is not the ultimate career destination in life, and that's what's being sold to the world right now. It's one of a thousand career options. It's just a career option. If you don't have what it takes, it's okay. You get to check that box, say that's not for me, and you were one step closer to finding out why you're on the face of this earth.

Mike Paton:

Let's keep riffing on this a little bit, Gino. Much of the myth of entrepreneurship is whitewashing the challenges and glorifying the upside. So a lot of people are taking these leaps not fully prepared for the journey ahead and not really a great fit for the way life is going to work. It isn't for everyone. I can speak with extreme experience and say that when you're in my grill about something you think I'm about to do, that's a mistake. It's because you care about me, and you don't want me to make that mistake. So I echo your sentiments 100%.

Gino Wickman:

Yeah. The other last little point on that is it is hard. It is hard building a 10-person company, and you get knocked on your ass weekly. It's insanity what we do. It is borderline stupidity what we do, and it's craziness. But we're so obsessive, and we're so passionate, and we want to build this thing or bring this thing to the world. I mean, it's that reality distortion field that Steve Jobs was accused of. So it's not for everybody, and it's not all it's cracked up to be. It is hard. It's like 90% pain, 10% pleasure. I mean, it's insanity.

Mike Paton:

It's also very lonely. It's also very, very lonely and very scary. The highs and lows are extremely. It is unsettling. I think if you're going to get in the toboggan, you need to be ready for the ride, for sure.

Gino Wickman:

Yeah, and the carnage, the carnage behind most entrepreneurs, the divorces, the families that don't talk to each other anymore, the relationships that are destroyed. Now, the good news is now I'm going to go to your question because here we go, we get to take them to glimpse. So now we've confirmed that you're an entrepreneur in the making. Now, we're going to show you a glimpse. To get to your exact question, I need to create a little more context and glimpse-

Mike Paton:

[crosstalk 00:45:24]-

Gino Wickman:

... because what I do in glimpse in terms of lighting you up, if that's what you are, is a couple things. I share countless real-world stories of people who are right where you are, all ages, so you can see what has been done. Number two, I share a tool called MyBiz Match. Every tool I'm sharing is free and downloadable on the website, e-leap.com. But I created a tool called MyBiz Match, which helps you as an entrepreneur in the making get clear on the exact business you're built for, industry type. Are you a product entrepreneur, service entrepreneur? Are you a B2B entrepreneur, a B2C entrepreneur? Are you a high price, low volume entrepreneur? Are you a low cost, high volume entrepreneur? In what size business do you want to build? It's okay to build a million dollar company, a \$10 million company. They don't all have to be billion dollar companies.

So it creates clarity for you so you know what you're drawn for. Every entrepreneur is incapable of being successful in every business. You got to find your perfect match. It will greatly increase your odds of success. Then I share what you are asking about. I show a day in the life of an entrepreneur, heaven and hell, the dream and the nightmare. Most entrepreneurs sadly are living the nightmare. I show you how to live the dream by avoiding the eight most critical mistakes that almost every entrepreneur makes, and you tell me what you want to do with those because I can rip through them all. They're all equally weighted. There's not one that's more important than the other, which everybody asks these eight mistakes.

You know this personally, because almost every EOS client that comes to us is suffering from having made these eight mistakes, and we're basically fixing them, unfortunately when they're at 10 and 250 employees, when they could have avoided it at their first employee.

Mike Paton:

Well, not only do I know them personally from that experience, but I believe they're the first eight bullets in my resume because I've made a hundred times.

Gino Wickman:

That is so [crosstalk 00:47:14]-

Mike Paton:

So why don't you riff through them real quick and then pick a favorite and let's have a neat little conversation about it. Give me an example and talk about the way it creates problems.

Gino Wickman:

You bet. What I love about sharing it with this audience is they pretty much solve these. But there are eight, and here we go. Not having a vision, hiring the wrong people, not spending time with your people,

not knowing who your customer is, not charging enough, not staying true to your core, not knowing your numbers and not crystallizing roles and responsibilities. I want to say this before you pick one because you know this audience, I'm always obsessed about the audience and thinking about who's listening. I don't know exactly who that is, but I want to share, there are some unintended consequences with this book that had been very positive. So I wrote this book for an entrepreneur in the making, any age, and it's been very powerful for them and lots of wonderful testimonials and all.

With that, I never expected a few things. Number one, I never expected a true entrepreneur that is successful to read this book and literally get lighten up, for lack of a better term. It lights them up. So for you out there, that is a visionary entrepreneur. You're about to read your life story. What it actually does is it will light you up, as I said, but it kind of centers you, and it brings you back to your soul level, pure entrepreneur, and you're going to have a ton of ahas. So I urge you to read it from that standpoint. The second audience is what I call collaborators. This is anyone that wants to teach her is currently teaching entrepreneurs in the making, colleges, high schools, nonprofits, for-profits, anyone that wants to help them, I give you all this content for free. You go be a hero to your audience.

Then the final audience is if you have children out there, and you have one of these wild and crazy entrepreneurs in the making as a child, a son or a daughter, this book will help you understand them better. It will help them understand themselves better, and it literally gives them a path. We're going to go to path next, but it's going to just show them, and it's so freeing because there's pre-med, pre-law. This is pre-entrepreneurship A to Z. So anyway, for what that's worth, if you want to pick one of those, great. But I feel like this audience knows them well and knows how to solve them.

Mike Paton:

Yeah, I think they do, and I want to keep going on this path in a slightly different direction. When I'm working with a leadership team, it's very rare that the person who owns and runs the entrepreneurial company intended to build a big entrepreneurial business and be a leader and manager. There's a lot of unintentional leaders and managers in entrepreneurship. A, is that your experience as well? B, why do you think that is? Why do you think so many people wake up one day and realize they're signing 40 paychecks and realize, I've got to become a better leader, a manager?

Gino Wickman:

That is so good. It gets to exactly why I wrote glimpse. If you understand the power of the psychology of this linear three parts to the book, we're going to go to path next, obviously. But again, once you confirm that you are, the idea behind glimpse is to show you exactly what you're talking about because what I've learned, what I've discovered and what I'm seeing now is if I can show someone all of those options, they intentionally go into it knowing that, yes, I want employees. Yes, I want five. I want 10. I want a hundred. I want a thousand. I want to build this billion dollar tech unicorn. I give a lot of examples because I have a friend who's masterful at building \$10 million companies. He's done it three times. He builds them. He sells them. One time, he tried to build a hundred million dollar company and failed horribly.

This is my point that you out there, you are not built to build every kind of business. I realized, for me, I'm like a 50 to 100, maybe 150-person company kind of a guy. One of the reasons I sold EOS Worldwide, it just got too big for me. It's not fun. I can't hug everybody anymore. I can't know everybody intimately. So for me, that doesn't work for me. So you out there, you're built for something. To the degree you can just see that, or at least be aware, you're less surprised when you wake up with a hundred employees going, "Wow, the hell did I get here?" To your point, because that is exactly it. The

true entrepreneur will take a leap, get caught up in this wave for five, 10, 20 years and wake up and go, "Holy shit. I don't want all of this." Or, "I didn't intend for all this."

So when you know going in, you custom design the perfect business for you, and the beauty is, when you hit your 10th employee, if you thought that was it, and it's still feeling pretty good, you get to say, "You know what? I think I'm going to go to 50." At 50, you get to say, "You know what? I think I'm going to go to 100." So I'm not talking about the one in a million, go raise a \$10 million, try to go public in five years and build a billion dollar company. That's not what this is about. This is about the 99.9% of the entrepreneurs, the true entrepreneurs that build really cool, sometimes boring businesses, but they're just awesome, with awesome people, with a great purpose. So I don't know if I'm answering your question.

Mike Paton:

No.

Gino Wickman:

I feel like I'm rambling. So I'll stop.

Mike Paton:

You didn't. So what do you say? What I want to focus our conversation on here, and I think you're going to pull from path in this part of the conversation as well to the entrepreneur who started a business because they're good at something, passionate about something and had somebody wanting to pay them for something, and all of a sudden they're running a 20, 40 or 60-person organization, what do you say to that leader that they could go do to become a better, more comfortable, more effective leader and manager? Do you think that's a skill you can develop, and if so, what would you tell them to go?

Gino Wickman:

Well, if you're a true entrepreneur, i.e., visionary. So keep in mind that entrepreneur in the making that has the six essential traits that gets to attend to 250-person privately held company, we call those visionaries. Okay? So let's start there because that person is a future visionary, for lack of a better term. Okay? What I believe, first of all, if you're a visionary, the word manage should never show up. Don't even try to learn how to manage people. Okay? Please. So the greatest thing you can do for yourself is get an integrator quick so you never have to manage a human being. But keep in mind, though. What I'm trying to do, it's the power of this book is I'm trying to show them everything in advance so they're aware going in. You're still going to make half the mistakes. But I believe I can avoid the half that they're going to make.

So I can cut off half the mistakes, and I can double their odds of success. So if they go in, going, "Gino tells me I'm a going to be a manager." They may still go, "I don't believe him. I'm going to go manage some people." I'm going to be right, okay? With all due love and respect, you're going to be frustrated with your 10 people you're trying to manage. But you're going to go ah a lot earlier than most entrepreneurs, five years in, and they're miserable, and they're borderline divorced, and they're working 24/7. They're going to learn faster, and they're going to go, "This is why I hate this." I am a true entrepreneur, and I should never manage a human being ever in my lifetime. So it's just knowing these things in advance. So for instance, again, I love how you said it.

The typical classic scenario is this entrepreneur in the making has an idea. They want to bring it to the world. They start a business, and all of a sudden, they find themselves with people someday. Well, going into that knowing, I love products or I love services, they're going to have this awareness that if all

of a sudden, if I ever want to do a product business, when I see inventory, I get the heebie-jeebies. I have utter disdain for product businesses. It's not for me as an entrepreneur, just because I'm an entrepreneur. Just because I'm an entrepreneur doesn't mean I can build a great product business. They're just a bunch of awarenesses that greatly increase their odds of success and make better decisions about what they really want.

Mike Paton:

You touched on a subject I wanted to dive deeply into anyway, which is the difference between leadership and management. Talk about that for a minute. Where did that realization come from? What are the key differences, and how can our listener benefit from understanding that?

Gino Wickman:

Well, the really deep dive is go read how to be a great boss, because we're talking about LMA here, but I'm just going to give two really high level. So the best way to think about it is leadership is thinking work, management is doing work. So if you're doing anything, you're managing, okay? So that's how you know where the line is. Leadership is simply about providing people clear direction. So the best way I've heard it described or one of the ways is just leaders are great pointers. In other words, they just point the way for people. They're not doing anything. So that's when you're a leader. On the other side, when you're doing, not pointing, and that's managing people, that's getting stuff done, it's doing the work. Now you're in management mode, and visionaries, true entrepreneurs are not good at that stuff, but they're amazing leaders. So their job is to constantly say over and over, the vision, the plan, the philosophy. So anyway, hopefully that answers.

Mike Paton:

Yeah, perfectly. What I hear a visionary say frequently, when we're arguing about this, you weren't put on the planet to manage people conversation is, "Well Paton, I'm great at managing people who don't need to be managed. I hear that a lot." That is pointing work. Yes. What you're saying is the people who, when they know what direction our boat is headed, grab an oar and start paddling in the right direction like crazy, you're a leader. You're not a [crosstalk 00:56:53].

Gino Wickman:

Yeah. You and I could go on forever on this, but here's what's dangerous about that statement. I get the heebie-jeebies hearing that statement because that leader that says, "None of my people need to be managed," and let's pretend there's no manager in that scenario, something really bad.

Mike Paton:

I agree. I agree.

Gino Wickman:

Really bad is coming, and you're kidding yourself. Here's the beauty. I've pissed off so many of my clients saying, "You shouldn't be managing people." Then they say, "Well, I'll prove you wrong." I'm always right. Again, I don't have a big ego. So I'm not saying it from that standpoint. I'm just giving you the data and the history and the statistics. I just wait them out. In a year, they say, "You know what? You are right. I hate this shit."

Mike Paton:

Turns out you're right. The good news is there's millions of people who can be very good at managing, and if you can surround yourself with those people, ah, then you can point and everything good happens.

Gino Wickman:

I love all the visionaries listening that know this, and they laugh at the visionaries that try to manage people because you are so free when you never have to manage a human being. It's guilty stuff. It's so awesome. I mean, the manager being, "Find a great manager, i.e., integrator put them in place, free yourself up and go be an amazing person."

Mike Paton:

Agreed. So leader or manager, let's talk about not the true visionaries or visionaries who want to be better leaders and pointers and high-level inspires of others. What are the kinds of things you see great leaders doing to make themselves better?

Gino Wickman:

Well, first of all, they take care of themselves physically. Okay? So everything begins with the basics, and I'm not going to get into all the basics, but exercise, eat right, meditate, take care of yourself so that you're healthy because that right there is going to give you like 50% excess energetic output. Okay? Because it requires a ton of energy because thinking work burns a hell of a lot more calories than doing work. Point one. Point two, I would say that they are constantly educating themselves. Okay? So they're learners. So keep working on yourself, honing your craft, read great books, learn great stuff. Being a leader is a craft. Okay?

There's this great quote. I won't get it right, but you'll know who this is from, but it's, you're not a leader until you've created a leader who's created a leader. So your job is to just keep elevating people, keep grooming more leaders, and so just really focused on elevating. They focus on elevating the people around them because as they become great leaders by your too legend mentoring and coaching, they will then build other leaders, and that is an endless cycle of greatness. You do that for 20, 30, 40, 50 years and look out, baby, you're going to put a huge dent in the universe.

Mike Paton:

Yeah. Nice. Thank you.

Gino Wickman:

Then the obvious one, clarity breaks. So I'm trusting everyone out there is taking clarity breaks. But as a leader, if you're not taking clarity breaks, shame on you.

Mike Paton:

Yeah. Give us a minute on clarity breaks because some listeners have not heard that concept yet, please.

Gino Wickman:

Got it. So with that, my discovery in my early 30s in researching and reading about great leaders is I would see this common thread where they all had this way of just kind of taking time to think, quiet time. Leah Coco would do it on a Sunday night. My business mentor would do it every morning in his den for 30 minutes. I do it for two hours in a coffee shop every week. So it's time where you just simply think.

You don't do anything, but you take 30 minutes, an hour, two hours. You've got to figure out your perfect formula, and you just think, and you work on the business so that you come into the business, and you're much clear. You're much confident. You're better for your people. You give better direction, and so that's what a clarity break is.

Mike Paton:

Yeah. Thank you. Working with leadership teams as an implementer, you occasionally get frustrated with lack of leadership, lack of accountability, lack of management. What are the kinds of things that frustrate you because you know people are missing the opportunity to lead and manage?

Gino Wickman:

Well, I mean, that's an interesting one. So I actually don't get frustrated any longer about that because I know I'm going to get them there. Okay? So that's the beauty of the EOS process and all of the tools. Implement them, follow it purely. You're going to become a great leader. You're going to become a great manager. If you're not, you're not going to be in the leadership team anymore. It all kind of takes care of itself. So I've become very, very patient about those things you're saying where I used to get very frustrated. When I get frustrated in a session, it has more to do with where they're not confronting the issue head-on. They're being very wimpy about making the tough decision when we've all clearly identified the issue. Everybody sees the solution, but there are two-way.

So those are the things that I get frustrated about when I see that. Everything else to me is a learning curve, and I've got some leadership teams that are sponges, and they learn really fast. Within months, they're supervised. Then I've got some, it takes 10 fricking years. But I'm in, and I'm in for the long haul. I'm doing everything in my power to expedite their learning curve, but I can only bring out the best in the team that I'm working with, and some move very fast, and some move very slow. I do everything in my power to move them as fast as they can be moved without doing damage.

Mike Paton:

The answer that I was seeking that you provided was when they won't confront the issue head-on, when they won't make a decision, when they've gathered all the facts and there's no more research to be done that's going to make them any more likely to pick the right answer, that's frustrating. I put that in the leadership and management bucket, for sure, be in a great decisive, willing to take the consequences of every decision you make leader is really important. So that's quite helpful. So EOS is an operating system for entrepreneurial companies. In the answer to the last question you said, if they're implementing EOS, they're going to become better leaders and managers. So I just trust the process. Why is that true?

Gino Wickman:

Oh my goodness. So that is a deep question. So I'm going to do my best to take a swipe at answering it simply. Then I also want you to be conscious of time because that's always one of my critiques for you is you get lost in conversation, and I am now having empathy for your audience listening, and I don't know how much they want to listen to us. But here's the way I would describe it. There's two ways to come at this, and oh, I hope I can make this make sense. I could simply just show you the context and the outcome, and you just want that, and I get you there and life is good, or we can get into the 700 things, disciplines, tools, philosophies, experiences, et cetera, on how we do all these things that we. But I just believe that second scenario takes way too long.

I'll give you the short and sweet context answer because here's what I know. I know that at the end of the game, if I can get a leadership team to agree on the vision and plan for their company, i.e.,

VTO, forget about how it works, why it works. I mean, we could do a 10-hour conversation on why the VTO works. But if I can just get that leadership team to agree on a vision and a plan, answer eight questions about your company and be 100% on the same page, number one. Number two, if I can get a leadership team to agree on roles and responsibilities, who's doing what, who's accountable for what, who's managing who, okay, if I can just get them to do that. Number three, if I can just get them to agree on what the three to seven most important things are in the next 90 days. Number four, if I can just get them to get in a room once a week for 90 minutes, and even if they just stared at each other, there would be results. Okay? Although we give them a nice agenda for that meeting.

Number five, if I can get them to agree on the five to 15 most important numbers to look at and react to every week, they will become amazing leaders and managers, and we don't even have to get into how or why that works because here's the beauty and statistically you know this. The five people we started the first session with, and let's pretend two years later, what I just said has been accomplished. Somebody is not there anymore, and many times, four of the five aren't there anymore. So if the original five aren't capable of getting to what I just said, that context, that outcome, they're going to go away, and they're going to be replaced by people that can. So there's the three-minute answer, or we can now shift to the 12-hour answer in this-

Mike Paton:

Oh no, no. I was looking for the three-minute answer, and that's that's, to me, the answer is it's a framework for ensuring the company's needs are clearly defined and constantly met.

Gino Wickman:

Yeah. Highly analytical people are going to have a really hard time grasping what I just said, but the ones that can simplify.

Mike Paton:

Yeah. No, that was brilliant. Last question, Gino, and then we will conclude this version of the podcast. What advice do you have for a young entrepreneurial leader who's trying to do great work every day, make a dent in the universe and build a great business.

Gino Wickman:

Oh, my goodness. I would say the kind of mantra I've been sharing, and this is going to maybe come out of left field a little bit, but the power of it has been so impactful as I've been living it now for 18 years, but it's embraced the power of 10-year thinking. Okay? So the initial reaction is somebody is going to say... think I'm going to say, focus on your clients, blah, blah, blah," all these different things, build a great leadership team, be open and honest with your people".

If that entrepreneur can simply slow themselves down and shift their thinking to thinking in 10-year timeframes, not now, now, now, today, today, today, this week, this month, this year, but in 10-year timeframe. So that's how I've been doing it now for 18 years. Time will slow down. You will make better decisions. There is a piece that will come over you, and you will literally get there faster. So that would be my advice to that hard-charging entrepreneur.

Mike Paton:

And that's a wrap. Thank you for listening to this episode of the EOS Leader podcast. If you'd like to learn more about The EOS life, please visit [www.eoslife.com](http://www.eoslife.com).