



Podcast Episode 167
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“Is a Transparent Leader Really the Best Leader?”

David Loy: Hi and welcome to In The Loop with Andy Andrews, I’m your host David Loy, Andy welcome, thank you for being here.

Andy Andrews: Welcome yourself.

David: I just welcomed everybody. Welcome to the entire world, welcome to you, you welcomed me, everybody's welcome.

Andy: Thank you buddy I am excited to be here.

David: Yes, fantastic. Let’s say, what’s going on in the Andrews house, kicking off 2015? Is there anything exciting, anything you’re looking forward to in the next few months with you, with Polly, with the boys?

Andy: Yes, there are. There always is. There’s so much. I mean, I’m writing, we’ve got another book coming out. I don’t know if we’re ready to announce that yet but that’s up to you guys, that’s not up to me.

David: And I can say we don’t have to, we can’t give details yet but I’ll say that by the end of the first quarter of 2015, there will be many, many announcements about this new book.

Andy: Good and I am really in a period right now of learning a ton. I am really digging in hard. I spend a lot of time talking to, especially to the boys, I guess. Polly and I talk to them a lot trying to help them understand certain things. And the more I explained the more I understand. And so I pray every day, God please help me have simple ways to explain complicated issues that are confusing people. And I know that's important because I've been confused. And so that clarity solves a lot of challenges.

David: Absolutely. And I laugh only because how often do you hear people that are in the public eye just come out and say, I've been confused, you know, and I'm seeking clarity on that. And I think that's what's wonderful about what you're trying to accomplish here.

Andy: Well I think it's, one of the worst things you can do for a kid that you try, you want to raise this child into an awesome adult. Now people may disagree with me about this, I think it's probably a few people who understand this but for me, I'm making sure my boys buy their own car. Their first car, they're buying their own car. And whatever they have the money to buy that's what they're going to buy. And a big part of the reason for that is, it will start their life at a point that they can continue to advance, right. I'm not going to give them a car that after fifty-five years on this Earth that I can afford. Then all of a sudden, now, when they do have to buy their own first car, now they're going to go backwards. I want them to start at a certain point. Well the same is true with their understanding of their dad. I want to be somebody that they look at and admire and listen to but part of the reason that I want them to listen to me, and that I believe that they will is because I want them to understand, listen I didn't know everything. You may look at me now and think that I know a lot and compared to somebody who's twelve or somebody who's fifteen, maybe I do know a lot but even though you think I know a lot, there is so much more I don't know and I'm still struggling

every day to be wise in my choices, to be wise in my thinking so that I can help you do what you want to do. But I am perfectly willing to sit there and talk and explore with you to come to the best, come to the conclusion there. But you got to understand that the only way we're going to get there, the only way you're going to get there is to know that there's more. You don't reach a point and have all this figured out.

David: And then you're done.

Andy: Yes, I haven't got everything figured out.

David: I love to hear that. That's fantastic. And that's what this show is about, is to continue to explore ideas. People are sending in great concepts and questions and looking, and they're seeking to grow as well. We actually have a really good one on leadership today from friend in Oklahoma that I believe you met briefly, his name is John Mark. Let me read you an email real quick from John Mark and let's get your thoughts on that.

Question: Hi Andy I enjoyed meeting you at the OKC leadership summit this past September. You are more hilarious in person than on audio via podcast. That's a little bit of a backhanded compliment.

Andy: Yeah it is, but I like it though.

Question: He continues, he says, I truly enjoyed attending the conference and I learned a lot and I grew a lot in my leadership journey. So here's my question for you Andy. I read and I hear a lot about the importance of being transparent, authentic and real in leadership. To what extent does being transparent hurt your

leadership or does it? Please let me know, I'd appreciate it, thanks again for all you do and for changing people's lives every day.

David: John Mark, thank you so much for that email. That's interesting Andy, he asked, at what extent, to what extent does being transparent hurt your leadership or does it? What are your thoughts?

Andy: That is a great question. Because I think in our lives, we hear and we see leaders profess to be transparent or we hear them promise to be transparent and then I guess we see varying degrees of their ability to pull that off, or their choice if they want to pull it off. This is kind of an ironic statement but I guess, John Mark says, to what extent does being transparent hurt your leadership? Well, if you declare your intention to be transparent and you are obviously not than in a way that is a transparency that has hurt your leadership. Does that make sense? And so I really, I'm trying to think, ok, how will it hurt, how it will hurt? And the only way that I can really, like just of the bat, the only way I can really see that being transparent would hurt your leadership is if the transparency reveals something about you that is not worthy of following.

David: That's huge.

Andy: Does that make sense?

David: Absolutely.

Andy: I think that if you are transparent and you are worthy of being followed I don't think that transparency can hurt, alright? In fact I think that even, and people want to say, what if, what if people, if I'm transparent they'll know that I don't know all the answers. Ok, well there you go, to me that's one more reason

I'm going to follow you cause I'm sure I'm not going to follow somebody that tells me that they know all the answers, because I know that ain't true. So now you've just told me to follow you and I'm going to lie to you. And so I don't want that.

David: That's not an excuse to say that, that's the reason that your leadership will be hurt, in that regards.

Andy: Yeah. And so I really think that if you are worthy to be followed I don't think your transparency, I don't think that transparency can hurt, it can only help.

David: Now, I think there is a kind of a next level there in a leadership position, how you reveal or how you convey or how you communicate your transparency. It's crucial.

Andy: Right. And that's a great point because immediately I jump to forgiveness in my mind here when you talk about that because as a leader you're obviously, we're human, you're going to screw up. I mean unless you just got today and you're only going to lead for a day and you can manage to pull off that 24 hours. But if you're going to be a long-term leader, there're going to be some mistakes and unfortunately, you know, experience tells us that your thinking may also get off track and there might be some bad choices that are added to those mistakes. Now, if you are transparent and you are able to convey to the people who are following you, that you know the difference in a choice and a mistake and you handle both of those in the proper way, which they're handled in a different way, then your leadership will grow by leaps and balance. But if you do not know the difference in a choice and a mistake, you can be inadvertently, you may think you're being transparent but again I think we did a podcast not too long ago about how just cause you believe it doesn't necessarily mean that's true. We've seen people who, they thought that they covered it up or that they went with their

followers and they said, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry. And they just never, they lost their leadership. And they thought that they're being transparent. And they weren't being transparent. They were handling an issue incorrectly. They made, they were saying they were sorry for a choice. And I'm sorry only works for a mistake. I thought I should've made a right turn, I made a left turn and I was late, I'm so sorry. Ok, that's cool. That was a mistake, ok. Gosh I stole this money from the company and gosh I'm sorry. Well dude, I don't know if you're sorry, you're just sorry you got caught. I mean, you're sorry, what do you mean you're sorry? And so you may think you're being transparent but when a choice has been made, only true remorse and the words will you forgive me will press that reset button. I'm sorry won't cut it.

And so there is the surface level of being transparent and unfortunately we all see leaders who even fail at that surface level. But there is a deeper level of transparency that gives people a glimpse into your humanity that will cause them to actually be more loyal to you and more grateful to you. And follow you more closely because you have just proven to them that even though you screwed up, even though you have made a bad choice, even though you're human, you've just proven to them that you're worthy of being followed, because you know how to get back on track, ok? You know, everybody gets off track at one point or another, everybody does, ok. Well we've got to be careful who we follow because knowing that everybody gets off track at one point or another, do you want to follow somebody who knows how to get back on track for real, not just appear to be back on track for a time and then really they jump off the track on the other side and the woods on the other side is just as deep as the woods over here. And here you followed them into those woods just like you were followed them into those woods. But now, the end of it is no good right. So do we want to follow somebody that knows how to get back on track, knowing that everybody is off track? Leaders,

followers, everybody gets off track. Do we want to follow somebody who demonstrates the ability to know where the track is and know how to get back on it or do we want to follow somebody who basically bluffs their way through life? Or doesn't understand where the track is to begin with. Or maybe they understand where the track is but they think they can fool you into. And there's many, many levels of this, obviously. But when you're looking at a transparent leader, I think you're looking at a leader who knows where the track is, they know when they get off of it and they know when they got off mistakenly, right. They know when they, gosh I thought I was supposed to take that exit. So, they know when they're off track and they know why they're off track, they know that they either made a mistake and got off track or they chose to get off track. And believe me people can handle those bad choices; a leader can handle those bad choices in an effective way and literally build loyalty. Now boy, doing it on purpose ain't a part of it so don't think. I'm just saying if you handle it correctly, I mean, there've been times with my boys that I know. You know, I could say 'cause I have gone to my boys a bunch of times and asked for their forgiveness. And so that's leadership I guess, maybe not on a level that John Mark was talking about

David: But it's certainly applicable.

Andy: It is. And so I have been able to go to the boys and explain to them how I have made a bad choice here. Now and I'm thinking about one specifically and try to think should I even tell everybody about this, 'cause this makes me sound like such an idiot. But if you know me, you probably know I am one and you're not surprised at all. It wouldn't be that much of an admission, would it?

David: Polly's not in your head somewhere right now?

Andy: Yeah. But I was really grouchy recently and I raised my voice and I didn't handle the situation well. And now here's the thing, even truth, they were doing something that needed correction, but I handled it inappropriately. And so I took what they were doing and I trumped them. And I said, you think you're acting bad, you watch your daddy. And so, I could have gone, being the parent, I mean these are kids. I could've gone and said, let me tell you I could've said nothing. I mean, frankly a lot of parents say nothing, you know. I'm the parent, you listen to me, I'm an adult, you're a kid and if I blow my top, I've got stress issues you don't understand and that's just tough and you'll understand it when you get there. But I look at those boys and I'm trying to prepare them for adulthood and for an effective adulthood. And so I could've said nothing, I could've said, hey, you know, I'm sorry, I kind of got, I was wound up and I went too far there and I'm sorry. And they say, ok, that's fine. What are they going to say, they're kids.

Ok, but I know that for my leadership to be maintained and to grow with them, you know it is curious to me you can actually, my admiration will grow for you if you are truly transparent, if I understand your thinking and I understand that you're human like me, I want to follow you. I don't understand leaders sometimes that say, man, you know, if I tell them that I screwed up here, they might not want to follow me. Look they're screwing up, so why shouldn't, why should you be any different? And to me your screw-ups provide the perfect opportunity to lead somebody. Because if somebody comes and says, hey I'm having this problem, I did this, and if the only thing you can say is, well that never happened to me. To be able to say, yeah, I know how you feel, I did the same thing or I had the same issue and here's what I found out.

So with the boys I knew I had to go and I said, guys, it is true that I have been working a lot, it is true that I'm very tired, but I want you to know that none of those things are good excuses for me acting like I did and raising my voice with

you. I expect you to understand that how you act will determine where you go in your future. And so I expect you to choose how you act. And what I showed you was a horrible example of that.

David: Here's what not to do.

Andy: Yeah. You saw what not to do and I want to ask, will you guys please, I probably shouldn't be talking about this but I said, will you forgive me for not being the kind of example that I should be for you? That I want to be stronger than that for you, and I'm not always the kind of dad that I want to be. I want to be an awesome dad, a great dad for you. And sometimes I know that I'm not and that moment I was not, and so will you forgive me? I said, I'm so sorry for the way I acted and I want you guys to know that I'm very serious about being a leader for you and to show you the right way to do things. And that time I was not. And so I want to ask, will you forgive you and I'm so sorry. And both of them did and amazingly they kind of like patted me on the back and they said, ok, we understand. And it's great to hear but I also told them, I say, hey, just because you understand and I know that you do understand and just because I understand, I mean, I know why I did it too but I also know I'm going to be tired in the future, I'm going to be working hard, I will be tired again but that's no excuse for doing that, that we are better than that, we are bigger than that. And so I guess I was very transparent with my boys and amazingly our relationship got stronger. Now I don't want to do it again.

David: Of course.

Andy: But our relationship got stronger. I see an understanding, I don't mean, this is not a bragging thing, I'm saying this to you if you're a mom and dad, we all want to see an admiration in the eyes of our children. And I see, I watched that

carefully, because I'm just, I tell people all the time, just because I'm the one who kind of knows these seven decisions, don't think I'm great at them, ok. I'm still learning. But boy that was a long, crazy answer.

David: I think that's fantastic. And I think you're taking a great position on that. John Mark thank you for the question, I hope that that shed some light on a very interesting topic.

Andy: I'm sorry I cried.

David: No, I was going to say thank you for being transparent in your leadership but also transparent in your answer. That's authentic and that's fantastic. Well if you have questions please send them to us, call, leave us a voicemail, you've got the phone number, it's 1800 726 2639 or intheloop@andyandrews.com

Andy: Hey, can I say one last thing? I know that, boy, that was kind of an over the top response and so don't think, I didn't cuss them out or slap them. It was kind of a normal, just get mad type of thing but I am emotional about it because I do know how critically important it is, I see so many teenagers and their parents growing farther and farther apart. And it just kills me 'cause I know it doesn't have to be that way.

David: There is a fix to it absolutely. Andy thank you, thank you for your time, your wisdom, your willingness to share your heart. It comes through loud and clear.

Would you like to run something by Andy? Contact us and your question might be featured on the show!

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