The Virtual Campfire — Episode 339

Chris Schembra: We believe that connection cannot be microwaved. It must be simmered. Connection is not given. It is earned. And I think it's time for people to buck the fuck up and do the hard things that humans need to live fully, love deeply, and build something worth leaving behind.

Tony Martignetti: For generations, we've gathered around the campfire to share stories, build trust, and pass along what we've learned. Welcome to The Virtual Campfire. I'm Tony Martignetti. Here we go. Beyond the success you see on the surface to uncover the stories of transformation behind it, the challenges, pivotal moments, and small steps that led to big leaps. Because every journey has a story, and every story has something to teach us. Let's gather around the campfire where stories spark transformation.

Tony Martignetti: It is my honor and pleasure to introduce to my guest today, Chris. Chris is the founder of the 7:47 Gratitude Experience, a methodology born from a pot of pasta and a single question that's now been deployed inside Google, Microsoft, Dell, IBM, Johnson and Johnson, the US Navy, and hundreds more. He is the Wall Street Journal best selling author of Gratitude Through Hard Times and Gratitude and Pasta. Amazing books, by the way, a founding member of the Rolling Stones Culture Council, columnist at CNBC and USA Today's gratitude guru. Amazing. But what is what he is really is, is someone who designs rooms where people stop performing and start being known. His next book, Earned Connection: The Dirty Work of Being Known, is the field guide for what comes next. And I'm so thrilled. And to welcome Chris into The Virtual Campfire today.

Chris Schembra: Tony, thank you for having me. Our ancestors were once cousins back in the home country. And, uh, you and I believe in the power of helping people live fully, love deeply, and connect in meaningful ways. So I feel like I'm talking to a distant cousin, a brother. So it's an honor to be here.

Tony Martignetti: I love it. You know a fellow paisano, right?

Chris Schembra: Let's do it.

Tony Martignetti: So good, Chris. And just I'm so thrilled because I see you out in the world making such a great impact. And the great thing about the way you show up, it's not just about you. It's about everyone who comes into contact. You have a great orbit and a great way of showing up in the world. So we're going to find out a little more about what got you into this and, and the journey that got you to where you are today. And I'm excited to even maybe touch on your new book because that sounds fascinating.

Chris Schembra: Glad to be here.

Tony Martignetti: Awesome. Before we get started, I'll just want to share how we navigate on the show, which is through this thing we call flash points, the points in your journey that have ignited your gifts into the world. So when I turn over to you in a moment, I'll have you share the moments that have really formed who you are in the world, and you can share what you're called to share. And we'll pause along the way and see what shows up. How does that sound?

Chris Schembra: I love it, I'm excited for it.

Tony Martignetti: Awesome. Well, Chris, why don't you take it away?

Chris Schembra: Oh, so a flash point. Yeah. Of well, well, there's a lot of different parts of the journey. Let me think of a flash point. I don't talk about enough. Let me see. I'm sitting in the room

where my grandfather, Donald Levinson, my mom's dad, he used to live in this Room when after my grandma passed away in December of two thousand, my grandpa Don came to live with us and he was battling pancreatic cancer and passing away in this room on July third, two thousand and one. But he wrote me a note from somewhere in this room, actually, that I took a photo of the note of the letter, and I hung it on my wall back home in New York. Let me see if I can read it, because I've never actually verbalized it. It said, Dear Christopher. So he wrote me this note on June tenth, two thousand and one. He ended up passing away twenty three days later. Dear Christopher, on June twenty fifth, two thousand and one, I will be eighty seven years old. These have been wonderful years as I have grown up in the Greatest Generation. I want to leave a legacy and know that you will respect your parents, elders, peers, and most importantly, the law of the land. And I hope you will continue your academic achievements, as well as excelling in your sports that you participate in. Your parents love and trust you as they know you will always do the right thing and make the right choices. They have been good to you. So please do the same for them. I'm extremely proud of you and will always. I stand with Nana and Papa and Mimi, and I tell you that we have always been proud of you. If a man is to be judged by how he treated his fellow man with respect, dignity, and caring, then I go in peace. I love you. Respect the poppy. June tenth, two thousand and one. If a man is to be judged by how he treated his fellow man with respect, dignity and caring, then I go in peace. So I guess this is Poppy summarizing eighty seven years of his life by saying respect, dignity and caring. And so yeah, I think that was a flash point was, yeah, getting to know my grandpa, Don Levinson, who grew up in Dubois, Pennsylvania, raised his family in Logan, West Virginia, and having him leave behind his words in this letter, it's remarkable.

Tony Martignetti: And first of all, I'm so honored that you shared that with us. And what an interesting dynamic to be able to be in the room where the letter was written, right?

Chris Schembra: His bed was kind of like right here to my left. He taught me how to shave in the bathroom to my right, and it's his American flag up top because he was a cook. He was a chef, United States Navy, the USS Acushnet during the war.

Tony Martignetti: And when I think about those three words that you shared, it seems to embody a lot of the work that you're doing today. So you have lived on in that legacy that your grandfather left behind. Would you agree?

Chris Schembra: Yeah. Respect. Dignity. Caring. Wow. Yeah. My grandpa Don, he loved to volunteer. And I love to volunteer. Yeah, I think he was just. He was just an upstanding guy. And, you know, respected others and showed people that he cared through his food or through his philanthropy, through his generosity of community service. And yeah, I guess I carry that on.

Tony Martignetti: And that really feels so important now because I think sometimes we forget how important it is a to volunteer, but also to be the mirror of like, what do we want to see in the world? How do we show up for others and create that path for what is a good example in the world, not just for our kids, but for the people around us? How do we become that? I always like to think of it as the lighthouse that is allowing people to see, not because you're trying to be bright and shine as bright as as you can be, but because you can lead others into a better way.

Chris Schembra: Yeah, he taught me that. Yeah. Donald Levinson.

Tony Martignetti: Yeah. So tell me, what, how does this show up in terms of the different chapters you've had along the way? What did you do? Obviously, that was more of a recent flashpoint. Let's rewind and go back to some of the different chapters you've had around your journey. What did you do when you first got into the world of work?

Chris Schembra: Well, my first job was I remember my first career, I should say, you know, I've always had jobs, but like my first career Was. I was a kayak tour guide and eventually a commercial boat captain here in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. And that was my first kind of career where I went through the credentialing process to become a boat captain and, you know, had to join the guild or, you know, whatever those kind of things were. The Coast Guard. United States Coast Guard, licensed master captain. And so my entry into the world of work was really me putting people on a boat and them putting their lives in my hands, and me using the South Carolina Lowcountry and using the power of story and the power of questions to help them have a transformational day on my boat in the South Carolina Lowcountry. So I drove around tourists On these full day adventures to essentially understand nature, culture and history in the South Carolina Lowcountry. And I think it was there that I knew I was really good at meeting people. I knew that I was really good at telling stories. I knew that I was really good at painting a picture. I was able to take people through time by telling them stories of our island and the surrounding area. I could bring them back to the seventeen hundreds. I could bring them into the present. I could ask them questions. I could get them to meditate on nature and beauty and awe and wonder. So yeah, it was my first foray into work. It was really fun. I got really tan, ate a lot of sandwiches, met a lot of great people.

Tony Martignetti: Yeah, and a lot of different people too, I'm sure. I think, you know, tourists coming off all shapes and sizes and from all different countries. And so you're having to adapt your style to each person trying to figure out, how do I reach that person? And as you say, the questions, the questions have to be geared towards engagement and getting people to really, how do I reach them? But also how do I get them to be excited about this stuff?

Chris Schembra: You know, it's interesting those questions, a the ability to ask questions that play with time. Yeah. So if you want to connect someone to something in the present, like if you want to connect them to a body of water or a tide or a bird or a tree or something that's like, here you can ask them about things from their past that connect to what they're seeing in the present. And by doing that, you connect that emotion from maybe a childhood memory about a tree or a bird or a piece of water into the present moment to allow them to feel deeper, their own present moment, because so many of us are distracted. We don't live in the present anymore. We're distracted by technology or anxiety or fears or dreams or regrets or goals. Whatever is pulling us out of the present. And so if you can use questions, you know, to ask people to take people on a kind of a time journey, that's pretty fun. I think the key is there's questions that we would ask that kept the land as the star, the land as the central character. And I would ask questions that would help the people meditate next to that main character. And then there would be questions that I would ask where nature was just the backdrop and the person was the main character. And so it was cool to be able to, I think, play with that.

Tony Martignetti: Yeah. Wow. I kind of wish I was on a tour with you. It sounds like a great adventure.

Chris Schembra: Let's go on a tour someday. Yeah. I mean, you know, I could look at your background right now All. And I could say I'm looking up at that statue, the head of a. I don't know what that is.

Tony Martignetti: Easter Island. Yeah, I thought so. Okay, so Easter Island, I could ask you at what point did you like collecting figurines? Yeah.

Chris Schembra: You know, at what age did you know you were a collector? It looks like you've got a lot of collectibles in your background, and I could play with time. Just using your background of saying, at what age did you know that this would be your current day? Zoom background. You know, like at what age did you fall in love with gathering stories? Mhm.

Tony Martignetti: I love that question because it's like there's a realness to that in the sense that I've always been an explorer of places and things and found objects, and then thinking about what the story could be, even if it's not the real story. When I was a child, I used to, um, create worlds. Worlds that had emotional feelings. And sometimes those worlds were were fictional. but sometimes they were real. And I think the key thing was it was about taking people places.

Chris Schembra: Where did you grow up?

Tony Martignetti: I grew up in Boston, in the Boston area.

Chris Schembra: So let's go. A lot of good Italians in South Boston. Let's go. You know, it's talking about, you know, speaking about work and the work journey and stuff. I got my first job in New York City. I got hired because of my questions.

Tony Martignetti: Love that. Yeah. Say more.

Chris Schembra: Well, I moved to New York City on my twenty fourth birthday, August thirty first, twenty eleven with no job, no college degree, one suitcase, a criminal record, living on my buddy's couch in Brooklyn, three stints in rehab Non-suicidal self-injury. Diagnosed at ADHD with ADHD at the age of five. I had a lot of stuff going on. Yeah. And fired as a fired from three jobs. Investor in Ponzi schemes. Life was unique. Life was unique.

Tony Martignetti: Yeah. Flash points upon flash points.

Chris Schembra: One flash point. Yeah yeah yeah. Crashed boats. Um. Got the broken prop award from the company I work for anyways. So I moved to New York City and I was kind of farting around town, making ends meet, doing what I needed to do to get by. Moved up with some dream. I'm going to conquer the world, you know, that kind of thing. And it really kind of wasn't working out. You know, I'd saved the money. I moved here, I'd done the, you know, started to figure out the things. And one day I was talking to some people and I said, you know, I think I want to take some acting classes, right, as well. It's New York City. Maybe I want to be an actor. Maybe that'll work out. And someone said, I can't help you with that, but here's a guy's business card. I met him at a charity event a long time ago. He's an old actor. I think he's retired. He's a legend. You should give him a call. I said okay, and so got this guy named Tony's business card. And so I googled Tony Lobianco and Google popped up. Uh, Academy Awards and the Broadway plays and all these kind of things. And he had had a wonderful career, um, as a mob guy. I said, all right, I'll give him a call. And he picked up the phone and I said, hey, Tony, how you doing? Can I come over and ask you questions about the business of acting? Says, sure, kid. Come on over. He was seventy, fully retired. So he was like, what else am I gonna do? I could use the company. So one day, Friday, September thirtieth, twenty eleven, I showed up at his apartment Upper West Side of Manhattan with essentially a yellow piece of paper filled with hundreds of questions about the business of acting. And he opened up the door. Ninety third Street, Central Park West, sixteenth floor, overlooking the Jackie O reservoir. Place is gorgeous. He opened up the door and he saw that I had that yellow piece of paper right there in the doorway. I had this yellow piece. He said, what are those? I said, questions I'm about to ask you. He took the piece of paper. He said, we don't need those here today. And he put the piece of paper on the table by the doorway, and we walked into the living room. Big, long living room towards the park. And he asked me to sit down on the couch. And he went to the window sill right way over there. And he went to the sill and he picked up this rock. Big ass looks like a fossil. Like a shell fossil. To me. it was just a rock. And he put the rock in front of the couch table and. No. Hello, how are you? I'm Tony, nice to meet. Just, like, put the rock in front of me. And he said, ask this rock a question. What is it? Ask this rock a question. I said, hey, Rock, how old are you? Hey, Rock, how'd you get here? And he said, go deeper. Have fun with it. What do you think? This rock is seen across the course of its lifetime? And him and I

asked questions to that rock for eight hours that day. Oh, Tony, we didn't even talk about acting. The shit that I wanted to talk about. Right? We just talked about life. We ate pasta, we drank wine. I missed phone calls from my dad. And at the end of our gathering, as I was walking in the door, he put his hand on my shoulder and he said, Chris, what are you doing for money? Now I was starting to pack my bags. I was ready to move home, I said. Not much. He said, why don't you come back next week and I'll find a few things we can do around the house together. Grunt work, bitch work. But something. And that's how I started my first job in New York City that I'd be at for the next five years, working with this man for twelve hours a day, six days a week, traveling the world, producing theater. And upon reflection, what I realized, Tony, is he saw a little bit of himself in me. Watching the way I asked questions to a rock. And he hired me for my willingness to be wacky, to go deep with an inanimate object and to trust the process. And yeah, it was amazing. I mean, he didn't need the work done, right. He was looking for connection. So was I. And that kicked off wonderful intergenerational. Let's not call it mentorship. Eldership. Right. He took a young kid. I mean, I was wearing a pink polo. I just got off the boat from South Carolina. I was a nervous, anxious young little kid. And through his questions, his challenge, his wisdom. By the time I was done with him five years later, I knew how to negotiate and walk and talk and think like a tough guy. Like a true New Yorker. And it was all through the power of his questions. Yeah, it was pretty nuts.

Tony Martignetti: I just think about it. First of all, what came to mind was thinking about this whole Karate Kid moment. It's what it feels like. It's like, do the work. And through the work, you actually build the practice and the muscles that are necessary to do what is necessary.

Chris Schembra: Yeah. Leonardo da Vinci called it being a discépolo de la experiencia a disciple of experience. You can't you can't teach wisdom. Wisdom has to be earned by going out and living a life worth being wise about. Live a life worth telling a story about. You have to do the living in order to understand the thing. And I think in this world we are information and knowledge. Age knowledge is cheap. Now. Knowledge is the cheapest it's ever been in the history of the world, right? Knowledge used to be scarce. You have to go to the right school. You have to know the right people now for free. You can go on and get any knowledge you ever want. But what happens is that when we chase knowledge by doing the short, frictionless, convenient, efficient thing, you skip the process of actually understanding the thing. You know, you skip failure, you skip patience, you skip all these things that add up to create wisdom and discernment and understanding what to do and what not to do because of experience.

Tony Martignetti: Something about you sharing that reminds me of a conversation I had with Marcus Collins. A you know, I'm sure you've heard of Marcus before, but he's a professor over at, uh, in Michigan State. And we talked about this idea that passion requires suffering and not suffering. Like you have to suffer. You know, it's like a bad suffering. But if you want to grow, you have to be willing to do the work that growth requires. And that means getting uncomfortable doing the things that allows us to become the person we want to be. and one hundred percent agree with you in this day and time where we are right now and things have become so accessible, so easy to access. But that doesn't mean that we actually can internalize it and we become it. Instead, what happens is we just get on the surface. And what happened that day when you walked into that apartment was that you had the courage to walk in. First of all, which is wonderful, but also you had committed to do the suffering, if you will, which then lasted for five years. So I think it's really wonderful story, and it embodies everything that really shaped you into who you are, I think, in many ways. Plus your grandfather.

Chris Schembra: Yeah. Thank you. Cheers to Tony and Donald. Well thank you. Two and two. Probably opposite energy dudes. Like one was a Jewish man from Pennsylvania that raised a family in West Virginia and ran an insurance, a tiny insurance agency. And the other was a Brooklyn, uh,

Golden Gloves boxer street fighter from the nineteen thirties. That was a mafia guy. So opposite people, but same, same respect, dignity and caring. Yeah.

Tony Martignetti: Well, I know we're going to run out of time quickly because there's so many things I'd love to. I'd love to ask you about, but I want to, I want to dig into something that I think is, is going to be powerful because you have so many wonderful books and stories that you've shared along the way, and your keynotes are amazing. So I think that's something that is really powerful, but I want to hear, what is the thing that you're most drawn to right now? I know you got a new book coming out, and maybe that would be something that you want to share a little bit about what's going on there.

Chris Schembra: Yeah, I, I, um, excited for what we're writing next as it's an evolving work in progress, of course, but it's really kind of all about kind of the the idea of friction. We believe that the world has become pretty efficient, outsourced, and optimized. A lot of people are doing like the convenient thing. A click of a button, a like a text to a friend. Not really actually like living. Yeah. And it's not on purpose. I think human beings are trapped right now. I think that we are users and addicted to frictionless technology that's meant to keep us trapped in a doom scroll in a like cycle. I kind of I think it's really affecting people's souls because they're not actually living and connecting deep. And so our whole kind of idea is that to get out of the trap, to break the cycle of addiction, Just stop the doom scroll. It's not going to be easy. You gotta do a few things that are kind of hard, that might require suffering, that require a little bit of what we call designed friction, or as Italians would call some al dente moments. And some of these things are really hard to do, like learn how to be present with yourself. Yeah. Very hard. Learn how to connect deeply with others. Very hard. Look how to see that tomorrow could be better than yesterday. Very hard. Totally. Yeah. Right. And so we believe that connection cannot be microwaved. It must be simmered. Connection is not given. It is earned. And I think it's time for people to buck the fuck up and do the hard things that humans need to live fully, love deeply, and build something worth leaving behind. And so that's what we're kind of kind of writing about. The antidote to frictionless design is design friction. That kind of like that morph, that shift. But there's some wacky, very timely things in there right now. For instance, one of the things that just I'll give an example of one little piece of content right now, AI has created something somewhat of a godlike complex in its users, and they call it AI psychosis. So when human beings use AI, it's convincing us that we are God. We are smart. Our idea is valid because it just mirrors us and actually challenging us. And so it's causing a psychosis And a large scale identity diffusion. And so I think what what is happening is that human beings egos becoming the biggest ballooned bull ever, right? Every time you get a like on social media, inflates the ego every time that you use AI and it tells you you're a genius. It inflates the ego. And I think that that's caused a lot of disconnection and divide and greed and solo thinking people building in private. And it's really bad for our world. And so if that is the easy thing to do, unchecked was the opposite. Deflate the ego, get small surrender. And then you can go out into the world from a different point of view. And so that's an example of saying if the frictionless thing to do would be to feed your ego by using AI unchecked, the design friction is to check your ego, step into humility, serve others, be wrong, fail, surrender. Accept that there are things in this life outside of your control. You're not the biggest person in the universe. People need that help right now.

Tony Martignetti: Totally. You know, one of the things I'll come back to, because I think what you just shared was just, whoa, like it really, really feels real. And I can't wait to read this book. But the other part of this is that it's because it's like a group mentality of all of us going in the same way, a whole shepherd of a whole herd, of us going in that direction. And so if you if one person is doing this kind of going the other direction, it's hard for us to say, okay, well, they're advanced because they're using AI and they're doing it in this way. If I don't step up and do that, then I'm going to be left behind. In other words, the augmented human is going to win all the races. But the rest of us will be left behind. But

we need to kind of say, stop all that. What we really need is to be more human and not worry about who wins.

Chris Schembra: So I'm not anti AI. Yeah, sure. But I will say, and this is a line in our keynote, it's never been easier to run fast in the wrong direction. And you know the old adage a rising tide lifts all boats. At what point do you question if you're on the right tide. Right. And so what we advocate for is discernment is don't just run fast in whatever direction everybody else is running. Create a pause, think for yourself. Create space and time on your calendar and actually think for yourself. Surround yourself with the right people. That challenge group think the challenge. Yeah, everybody's a sheep right now. They're just all running together. But I think it's running together in the wrong direction. So you got to actually prepare yourself to think about what you really want, what the people around you really want, and what's actually good for the world. Because fuck, nothing else matters besides doing what's good for others.

Tony Martignetti: I agree. Yeah, it comes back to where we our lineage came from. And you think about the Italian and Eastern Europe. You know, the European mentality was collectivism. And collectivism has lost favor in this this day and age. Everyone's individualized and that that's really unhealthy.

Chris Schembra: Well, everybody being individualized is one thing. But also the collectivism that we rally around right now is what's called collective dissonance. It's when everybody connects to root against something. Yeah. You read news headlines, you watch the news, you talk to people. Most people actually that like do connect as groups are groups that align because they hate something else. Oh totally. anti-Fascists, anti communists, anti bald people, whatever it is involved. I'm being very politically neutral in what I'm saying. But most groups that do form a collective are a collective of shared hatred. So true. But I'd rather maybe teach people how to, you know, create a collective of like what's called collective effervescence, shared joy, you know, shared activities that do good, you know, those kind of things. So yeah, it's all in earn connection.

Tony Martignetti: Well, I love it. And I'm just like, like I said, we could have another hour and a half of this conversation because there's so much that I want to dig into. But I do have to ask my last question. And then we're going to wrap, we'll make this brief. What are one or two books that have had an impact on you and why you can do one if you want to be a efficient

Chris Schembra: anatomy of peace.

Tony Martignetti: Yes. Best seller in conflict resolution for many years.

Chris Schembra: Written by the Arbinger Institute. War of Art by Steven Pressfield. On breaking through your internal resistance to bring your best work forth into the world. Big book of Alcoholics Anonymous. Just a great story book about real dudes who rallied to do something good for the world. That's it. And the whole book is a book of stories of others. There's nothing better than stories about other people sharing their stories to help others.

Tony Martignetti: Yeah, it's literally phenomenal.

Chris Schembra: Yeah. So yeah, I'd say, you know, those three books and never split the difference. How to negotiate as if your life depends on it. Meditations by Marcus Aurelius, beneficence by Lucius Annaeus Seneca, Seneca, the younger empathy, why It Matters and How to Get It, by Roman Krznaric. four thousand weeks time management for Mortals by Oliver Burkeman. What I love about all those books you Profit First by Mike Michalowicz The Psychology of Money, by Morgan Housel. Lynn Lynn. No, sorry. The book about money by Lynn Twist.

Tony Martignetti: Oh yes, I remember that one. Yeah, she was good.

Chris Schembra: Mastermind dinners by Jason Gaignard.

Tony Martignetti: I don't think I've heard that one before, but I actually that's one that I'm intrigued by. I want to say that a lot of those books that you mentioned, I feel like this, you definitely intertwine intertwined them into a lot of your, uh, your writing as well. And I think that's great. It's a great homage.

Chris Schembra: But I also say to people that, you know, if the average book takes you ten hours to read or consume, my invitation to your listeners is don't read that next book. This is me as an author and you as an author. So oops, put down that next book. Go out and spend ten hours failing. Go out and spend ten hours being cringe. Go out and spend ten hours living a life of respect, dignity, dignity and care. As my grandfather Donald taught me, you do that, you're probably going to get further along in life than the content you consumed in whatever book that was, for sure.

Tony Martignetti: Yeah, it's having balance learning for sure. You can't get everything from a book.

Chris Schembra: Yeah. I think people need more space to unlearn than learn tomorrow.

Tony Martignetti: Chris. Man, you delivered today in such a big way. I am so loving all that you're doing today. Thank you for coming on the show. And before I let you go, you have to let people know where are they going to find out more about you.

Chris Schembra: Just reach out Chris at 747club.org or find me on LinkedIn or go to Chris.com. Standing invite any of you that are watching this. You are invited to my dinner table in New York City in my home to meet my friends, family, and community. Tony, I have a standing invite. I'm doing the easy thing by inviting people. You watching? You have to do the hard thing to say yes to get over what you have to get over, to get on that flight, to show up and to say yes. But the invites there. Your world can change. It's, you know, it's a one dinner table away. So that's the invite. That's the challenge. Fly to fly to New York City. We've had people flying from all countries, all continents on earth, pretty much to come to dinner tables in my home. You that are watching this. You either nominate someone to attend or you come fly to New York City to dine around my dinner table and nominate a young person. Please nominate someone who needs a hand up. Send them our way, please.

Tony Martignetti: Love it. Awesome. This is amazing. I'm just so thrilled you came. And that's a wrap for today. Thank you so much.

Chris Schembra: Thank you pal.

Tony Martignetti: Before you go, I want to leave you with something from today's conversation with Chris Schembra. We live in a world that's made almost everything faster, easier, and more convenient. But as Chris reminded us, some of the most meaningful things in life simply can't be rushed. Connection takes effort. Wisdom comes from experience, and the relationships that shape our lives are built when we're willing to show up, be present, and sometimes do the uncomfortable work. I keep coming back to the three words Chris's grandfather left behind. Respect, dignity, and caring. What a wonderful measure of a life well lived. So here's my invitation to you. Reach out to someone. Ask a question you've never asked before. Make time for a conversation that matters. Because sometimes the smallest moments of genuine connection leave the greatest legacy. A special thank you to Chris for sharing his remarkable stories, his energy, and his wisdom around our campfire. If today's conversation inspired you, please subscribe to the Virtual campfire. Leave us a review and share this episode with someone who would appreciate its message. You can also explore more inspiring conversations and resources at TonyMSpeaks.com. The Virtual Campfire is proudly produced by. It All Works. Until next time. Remember, a meaningful life isn't measured by

how much we accomplish, but by the connections we build and the difference we make along the way. Keep your fire burning.