

Transcript / From Good to Better with Andrew Molosky

Andrew Molosky: 0:00

I'm not going to be the best-looking guy in the room, the smartest guy in the room, or the wealthiest guy in the room, but I'll still be here when everybody else has given up and gone home. So, you know, management is job title, management is business card and payroll. You know, and there's a distinct difference. You know, I would tell anyone willing to listen, you can lead from any job you have, any job you don't have. Your actions are leadership, your titles are management.

Chris Comeaux: 0:21

The only way to really learn about leadership is in the actual doing. And I didn't ask you this, but my sense is that statement would resonate deeply with you.

Andrew Molosky: 0:31

Right. And whether it's a global pandemic or an economic recession or even just the loss of a key staff member or the procuring of a big contract that you weren't ready for, but you had to go after. Those are the moments where you need leadership, right? And having it well ahead of time, it's almost, I jokingly say, it's like realizing that you need to fill up your car with gas once you've started a race. And that pandemic was a perfectly illustrative opportunity, a whiteboard, a blank canvas for leaders to distinguish themselves from managers. Right? I know a lot of managers who went home, locked the door, didn't take their phone calls, just tried to ride it out.

Chris Comeaux: 1:04

You actually just reminded me we actually were just celebrating some pictures in our history. And man, that was a huge inflection point for Teleios. And one of my favorite stories is if you remember, you couldn't cross certain state lines. And the joke is TCN almost became an overnight PPE day trader. Like we were scouring the earth for like PPE because we want to make sure our members were prepared. And uh one of our team members was at the border of South Carolina and another at the border of North Carolina handing a big black trash bag of PPE across the state line to get to one of our members.

Andrew Molosky: 1:39

I think you can define success as equally easy by saying what constitutes failure as what constitutes success. If your goal is to maintain the status quo, that's not leadership, that's autopilot. And even if you don't have it right, even if you're missing more than you have, if

you have the grit, you have the perseverance, and you're willing to get back up and keep moving, you will be amazed at how many things go your way.

Jeff Haffner / Introduction: 2:03

Welcome to our crossover show with Anatomy of Leadership and TCN talks. Now, here's our host, Chris Comeaux.

Chris Comeaux: 2:12

Hello and welcome to TCNtalks. I'm excited today. Our guest is a special guest, is Andrew Molosky. He's the president and CEO of Chapters Health System. Welcome, Andrew. It's so good to have you.

Andrew Molosky: 2:23

Thank you for the opportunity, Chris. Look forward to being here.

Chris Comeaux: 2:25

Yeah, absolutely. Let me read from your bio because if folks have never heard of Andrew, although I'd be surprised there are a lot of great listeners in hospice empowered care. But Andrew Molosky is the president and chief executive officer of Chapters Health System, the country's defining chronic illness organization. It's comprised of more than 30 different companies and programs, including the nation's largest nonprofit hospice network. They also have PACE, value-based care, such as Care New, which is a Medicare Advantage Plan, Managed Services Organization, Technology, Advanced Illness offerings, and more. Established in 1983 as a community-centered and nonprofit entity, Chapter's Health has grown exponentially through Molosky's innovative approach to healthcare. They've become a national leader, recognized by Great Places to Work, Fortune USA Today, and others for being also a top place to work. And as a leading voice in healthcare, Molosky is routinely engaged in consultant, consulting, speaking, and also mentoring. He's modeling and leading across several industries concurrently. Andrew has more than 20 years of experience spanning in an array of geographies and organizations, including publicly traded, privately held, and nonprofit. He completed his undergraduate work at the University of Toledo and is MBA from the Ken Blanchard College of Business at Grand Canyon University, additionally holding his fellowship from American College of Healthcare Executives. So, Andrew, what did I leave out that maybe you want our listeners to know about you?

Andrew Molosky: 3:49

No, you were very kind to cover that ground. I think that was a subtle trick. If you write a long enough bio, your time having to come up with improvisational answers is shorter. So no, I think you've done a wonderful job, and I appreciate the kind words.

Chris Comeaux: 4:02

You bet. And Andrew, we're going to actually do this as a crossover show, TCNtalks, and also the Anatomy of Leadership. And one question that I ask on our Anatomy of Leadership podcast is I ask our guests, what's your superpower? So, I'd love to hear what is what do you think your superpower is.

Andrew Molosky: 4:16

Yeah, you know, I'm not sure if you'd call it a superpower or determination trait, right? But I you call it perseverance, call it stick-to-it-ness, grit. You can choose any number of words, but you know, I think that fundamental principle is critical to leadership. You know, leadership, you don't have to be necessarily the most academically gifted. You don't necessarily have to be the most fluent speaker. But, you know, I jokingly say to my friends and family, I'm not going to be the best-looking guy in the room, the smartest guy in the room, or the wealthiest guy in the room, but I'll still be here when everybody else has given up and gone home. Right. And I think there's a tremendous value as a leader to saying to your team, we will get through this. I will be here with you the whole journey. And I think in many regards, that is a superpower because it's lacking sorely in today's business environment. Everyone wants to tell others what to do, but very few are willing to walk that walk with them.

Chris Comeaux: 5:02

Oh, I love that. Actually, and I didn't know that was going to be your answer. And so you'll love this. At TCN, we actually do annually, we call it our Hall of Heroes. You just did an amazing employee recognition event for your whole organization. Every year we call ours Hall of Heroes, but one of our levels is the True Grit Award, actually. And the very special award, which is not given every year, is called the CISO Award. I think it's a Czech, Czech Slovakian word, which is almost like the grittiest of the grittiest. They're like the masterful folks of grit. And so, it's S-I-S-U. Um, and then the other thing I just think of when you answered that, you didn't you didn't say something else to know about you, but something I was fascinated. Can't remember how we bumped into it, but you do triathlons. And is that correct?

Andrew Molosky: 5:47

Yeah, emphasize the try in triathlon, right? So, I'll tell folks that I collect a lot of t-shirts. I'm not sure I'm leaving any mark on the sport, but yes, I enjoy it greatly. I think it's uh it's illustrative of a few different personality traits. One, you know, I'm a multitasker, I like

having a lot of things going on simultaneously. And two, you know, I think it's uh anytime you can have something that's kind of the great equalizer, it gives you a chance to shine where you're strong and it overcomes areas, you're weak. In in business, in sports, and personal life, you know, it's a balance, right? And so much of life is having a balance and realizing there's areas you're great and there's areas you're not great. And if you pack a demol together, you're probably gonna come out on top, assuming you apply some grit.

Chris Comeaux: 6:28

That is that is just so cool. Again, I just there's someone else I've mentioned that we were gonna be doing a podcast, and I mentioned that about you, and their first response was, where does he find the time?

Andrew Molosky: 6:39

There's, you know, well, this always risks coming out maybe not the right way. So, I offer my disclaimer more as an a tribute to those who find time, right? I've yet to encounter the person in life who says to me, I'm tired, I'm exhausted, I don't have any time when the reality is you see it. Those who really don't have time are the ones you never hear that statement from, right? They make it, they prioritize it, they realize that it's what you make of it, it's not how much is given to you. Again, it's time in this example, but it could be fortune, it could be luck, it could be, you know, circumstance. It's oftentimes what you make it, it's not what it appears to be on the surface.

Chris Comeaux: 7:18

I love that. And you're actually proving exactly why I really want to. We're gonna push this podcast on our TCNtalks platform, but we're also gonna release it on our Anatomy of Leadership podcast. And hopefully you take that as the compliments intended, Andrew, because you and I could talk great hospice, palliative care, healthcare, innovation all day long. But the fact that you could weave in leadership lessons like that, it's really why I like you so much and admire you because I love both of those subjects as well so much. So, we've created two podcasts. So, with that, you know, on the Anatomy of Leadership podcast, we've used the book, The Anatomy of Leadership. The book is kind of a framework of leadership. So, I knew that you would just be a great person. And our um my mentor, Dr. Lee Thayer, said the only way to really learn about leadership is in the actual doing. And I didn't ask you this, but my sense is that statement would resonate deeply with you. Like you can give people theory all day long, but the true learning in life is in the actual doing itself. Does that resonate with you?

Andrew Molosky: 8:14

A hundred percent, right? And I'm gonna get the quote wrong because I've already told you I'm not necessarily an academically gifted person, but the concept we've all lived,

right? There's management, which can be taught through graphs and spreadsheets and Excel and all the pieces that you know can be academically translated, but leadership is a learned and lived experience, right? And leadership is not about a business card or a job title, it's about demonstrable actions and chosen behaviors. You know, management is job title, management is business card and payroll, you know, and there's a distinct difference. You know, I would tell anyone willing to listen, you can lead from any job you have, any job you don't have. Your actions are leadership, your titles are management.

Chris Comeaux: 8:52

That's that's incredibly well said. So that actually sets the table perfectly because what we're gonna do is weave through these questions and they're gonna be a little industry specific, but also, I have a feeling you'll take it industry, but also weave leadership in. So, Chapters Health System, as if hopefully our listeners picked up very quickly from your intro, is one of the largest nonprofit hospice powder care organizations now in the country. So, from your perspective, it's almost like the superpower question, but just to your organization, what makes chapters unique and how it serves patients, families, and the communities where you're at?

Andrew Molosky: 9:23

No, and it's a wonderful, and thank you for the opportunity because it's something that I will speak passionately about, even if not articulately. You know, if you were to ask chapters, right, if the entity was a living, breathing thing, which in many regards I think it is, what it perceives as its superpower, I think it would respond to you, it's its culture, right? And a lot of people will say culture, and that's good, they should. They should all be proud of it. But there's a difference between perceived culture and functional, tangible, almost like line of credit or currency culture, right? Chapters, I believe, in addition to being very perseverance-oriented, very grit-oriented, has laid a foundation where our chapter, our culture, if you will, is the chassis upon which or the skeleton upon which other things are hung. Right? You would have a hard time finding a lot of business correlation between how a managed care plan works and a pay center works, and a hospice works, unless the underpinning is patients and families first, seeing people as a story and not the sum of their diagnostic or medical parts, looking at things from an interdisciplinary and team approach, right? That culture, if you will, is the common chassis upon which the whole engine is built. Then you can apply all sorts of things that are seemingly disparate, but in a way that everyone speaks the same language, same language and has the same motivations. And that is both a superpower as well as a tactical or strategic play.

Chris Comeaux: 10:40

That's so awesome. Well, this will lead to another good question then. Man, I think about I remember chapters, I actually started my career in Florida, and so the old chapters

compared maybe the new chapters, but you've led chapters through a significant amount of change. What do you see maybe as the essential qualities of leadership when everything around you feels uncertain, in transition, evolving?

Andrew Molosky: 11:04

Yeah. You know, and it's interesting, I think this will probably cease to be as relevant ten years from now and ten years ago. No one would have had an idea what we're talking about. But going back to my earlier comment about the difference between leadership and management, you know, we all I would guess the vast majority of listeners to this somehow lived and thrived through the pandemic. Right? And that pandemic was a perfectly illustrative opportunity, a whiteboard, a blank canvas for leaders to distinguish themselves from managers. Right? I know a lot of managers who went home, locked the door, didn't take their phone calls, just tried to ride it out. Fine, I'm not judging, but I know a lot of leaders who did the exact opposite. They ran to the fire. Right. And so, whether you apply kind of old chapters, new chapters, any organizations pre and post, and it doesn't have to be the pandemic, but that's an inflection point that the vast majority of people can say, oh my gosh, I remember January of 20 and I remember June of 20, and they're very different. Anywhere in your professional, probably personal journeys, there are opportunities or inflection points to say this is how and when I'm going to define myself, right? And whether it's a global pandemic or an economic recession or even just the loss of a key staff member or the procuring of a big contract that you weren't ready for, but you had to go after. Those are the moments where you need leadership, right? And having it well ahead of time, it's almost like jokingly say it's like realizing that you need to fill up your car with gas once you've started a race. Too late, right? What you need is a car that's tuned, gassed up, with a competent driver, and then the start happens. And that's why I would encourage a leadership. Think about where you want to be. What does a finish line look like for you? You don't have to predict the whole race. I'll steal one of my kind of triathlon analogies. You're going to start running eventually. And you know you're going to run 26 miles, but you don't know when you're going to sprain an ankle, have a shoe come untied, get a cramp, it's going to start raining. Those are all things that come up along the way, but you were prepped, and you were prepared to be responsive in the moment. That's leadership. And that's what I would tell people if you're taking your company from V1 to 2.0 or something like that. You know, have your finish line, have your bag of tactics, have your culture laid in place, and be confident in your leadership. Not that it has to be perfect, but that is directionally correct, and you will bring people on the journey because mistakes are part of it. Without mistakes, you didn't push hard enough, you weren't edgy enough. And if you don't correct from those mistakes, that's a management mistake, not a leadership mistake.

Chris Comeaux: 13:24

That is so good, Andrew. You know, um, one of our keyboard members, when we start at Teleios, he's uh in the higher epsilon of Edward Jones, incredible guy. And um he doesn't say much, but it's like that EF Hutton, if some of our older listeners will remember, and there are always these wonderful quips that you could keep unpacking. But the gist was this he said, look, you guys are doing something that hasn't been done before, so you're gonna fail. Just fail fast. And the, you know, obviously the learning lesson was number one is a board member giving us permission, go fail, but make sure you're learning from it and you keep doing that rinse and repeat, keep uh improving off of it. And you actually just reminded me, we actually were just celebrating some pictures in our history. And man, that was a huge inflection point for Teleios. And one of my favorite stories is if you remember, you couldn't cross certain state lines. And the joke is TCN almost became an overnight PPE day trader. Like we were scouring the earth for like PPE because we want to make sure our members were prepared. And uh one of our team members was at the border of South Carolina and another at the border of North Carolina handing a big black trash bag of PPE across the state line to get to one of our members. It's just one of those beautiful like highlight reels of we did whatever it took in that moment. And we keep telling those stories because the lesson applied to today looks much different. But it is that essence of actually, we have a term, Andrew, in our organization, uh brickle or so it's a term most people don't know. It's something Dr. Lee Thayer, who was my mentor, taught us. And it was like a MacGyver who would take whatever is in front of you and basically make it happen. In fact, our even onboarding process is called Bricoleur Base Camp as people come into the organization. So, it looks like you were going to say something related to that.

Andrew Molosky: 15:08

No, I you know, now we date ourselves, right? Or we isolate ourselves to a certain area when you use a MacGyver reference. I've said that to our clinical staff. I said, I think you all with a bunch of MacGyvers, and there are no higher compliments. When you can take a stick of gum, a match, and a leaf and somehow turn it into a solution, you know, that's incredible. And that's what our home and community-based service is, not just hospice and palliative, but home health and private duty and all the team members and social determinant work, when they're out in the community, they are true MacGyvers, right? And it's it never fails to impress the creativity and ingenuity of our folks. And again, to the point about leadership earlier, too many don't give credit to, too many fail to empower that level of thinking and that level of ownership. And to the point about seeing where you know Teleios is gone, where chapters have gone in these past few years, organizations that are really truly employee focused recognize the talents, empower the talents, and that's how you amplify a workforce. That's how you can grow in size and geography and scope without it being problematic, but you can't do it all if you're I'll keep

coming back to this, if you're a selfish manager, you're not going to do it. If you're a true committed leader, it won't be as hard as it seems.

Chris Comeaux: 16:15

That's really good. So let me set the table this way because I feel like there are a couple of pearls what you just alluded to. Because on one hand, I actually used to say that great hospice clinicians, the IDG team, they're like the marines of healthcare. You know, they literally just adapt, and they make it happen. There's a shadow side to that, right? It it makes that if you depend 100% upon that, um, it's hard to scale a company. And so there has to be system and process to where it's not all pulling it out of the air on a day-to-day basis. So obviously today, I mean, where you have you scale chapters is incredible. You're a large, complex organization. So how do you guys approach managing change so it's intentional, sustainable, and then also not overwhelming to the teams? Like it's the right bolus amount that it's stretching them, but not so much that it, you know, breaks them.

Andrew Molosky: 17:02

Yeah. Yeah. There's, you know, and there's probably as many ways to answer change management as there are audience listeners interested in it. So rather than give some universally applicable solution, what I'll share with you is some things that have worked for us, and then everyone has, to your point, kind of add their own spice, right? This is a leadership chili cook-off, right? A change management chili cook-off. We know what the general ingredients are, but the difference is in the nuance, and that's what makes it special. So, you know, organizationally, if you were to volunteer, work force, support, be around chapters, you'd notice two things. The first is we keep it the old Occam's razor, right? We have an incredibly simple and absolutely unwavering commitment to this statement, so much so that it is federally trademarked, right? We have been able to statistically show the phrase there are only two jobs at this company taking care of patients or taking care of those who do. Hard stop. The pile of work on your desk today has some of that in it and some of that not in it. I suggest you focus your limited time and limited resources on all the work that applies to that statement. Because if you have a highly empowered, highly talented, highly supported workforce, they will show up with their A game and they will deliver the clinical care that our patients, families, communities, members, participants, however you like to address the audience, needs and wants. And that translates to the lag measures or the business acumen that so many people unfortunately reverse engineer and focus on first their metrics, then their revenue, then their margins, forgetting that the vehicle that got them there. So, you know, the question around change management is both easy and hard. It's easy to say you have an unwavering, very simple and very clear delineation of what success looks like and everything else is acceptably allowed to be eschewed from that. That's the challenging part, is you have to, as a comfortable leader, know that if you're going to keep it that

simple, there are other nuances you'd love to also see happen that you have to permit falling by the wayside. Right? So, when we go and we welcome a new organization or when we roll out a new EMR, right? When we tell somebody, you focus on employee care and patient care, well, guess what? There might be something that falls out of that, and we've asked for that. So, its equal parts understanding to keep it simple means you're going to move most of the machine in synchronicity towards the same goal, and there will be stragglers. And so, what's what, you know, by task, by person, by job, you know, and what do you do with that, right? So that is b that's a second part. And if we're doing a chili cook-off analogy, that's where you might add a different spice. That may not work for you, but to move 30 organizations across almost 11 different service lines in synchronicity, you have to be okay realizing that on this giant ship, you know, there might be a little bit of a little bit of toe behind, but that's okay.

Chris Comeaux: 19:52

That's so good. There's so many pearls in that. If I'm the listeners, I would rewind that several times because there's so many little leadership lessons packed into that. Um, gosh, I knew you'd be great, Andrew. So, as CEO, you can't, this is the really the tough part. And I so appreciate every time you and I get to hang out with each other because the complexity you're navigating is different than maybe if I was just a monofocus, just a hospice, especially if I was a just a what local hospice. So, I think this will be a really good question for you. So, you can't share everything that you know, whether it's due to timing, regulation, strategy. So how do you communicate effectively while balancing transparency when you have those kind of limiting um just limitations on you?

Andrew Molosky: 20:34

Yeah. You know, I've become a big fan, and you referenced having a mentor earlier that has taught you a number of things. And I I think almost every person in a position of success, notice I didn't say title or affluence, I said success, has had a mentor, a coach, a parent, a neighbor, uh, you know, a church, you know, um uh leader, someone that gave them guidance officially or unofficially. We all have them. I have one. Might happen to have, just like yours, chosen to speak very infrequently because he said, I save up my words so that when I choose to, you listen to them. And he's absolutely right. Unlike me who just babbles all the time, he was very selective. And one of the things that he taught me earlier on, you know, was about transparency, trust, you know, that that simply sharing information doesn't necessarily validate it. And so, we have, and I would suggest any real good leader does this, make your interactions genuine and authentic when you have them. Make the information that you share be relevant. Make sure you understand your audience's desire to know certain things and what they're really asking for. And I'll give you a practical example. You know, we do a lot of affiliations, we welcome a lot of new organizations, and I will constantly have people say to me, What's on the horizon next?

Where are we going? And it's not that they want to see the strategic plan about this city or this service line. What they're really asking is, am I gonna be safe? Is my job gonna be in peril the next time we bring on someone who has a duplicate role to mine? You know, and what I need to say to them, not return, is we're going to blank city and blank state to do, you know, blank thing. What I say to them is the next thing we're targeting is only going to enhance and take off those stress points you've been asking me about for two years. So not only are you safe, this is gonna bring us all to a new place. And you'd be shocked at how easily people are able to hear what they wanted to hear from an answer you are allowed to give, provided you understand what the audience is really asking you about. So, you have to understand that sociological component, the psychological component. And if you really get somebody who's truly asking you for the behind-the-scenes, behind the curtain stuff, it's okay to say to them, not sure I understand your motivation. There's some things I can and can't say. But think back to when you were a child, right? Your parents knew how to tell you all the things you needed to know without knowing all the real dirt that was going on in your house. And if you happen to be a parent now, you know how to articulate to that to your children. It's the same line of logic. You know, they need to know what's relevant to answering their question. They don't need to know all of what you know. And when you're that consistently honest, on those few occasions, you simply have to say to them, Man, I'd love to tell you, I just can't right now. They're gonna know. He answers nine out of ten times for me. This other one must be a thing, right? But when you hoard information and power broker it or somehow use it as leverage, that's the problem, right? It's not about what people are wanting ask you, it's how you help them get to what they really want to know.

Chris Comeaux: 23:28

That's a great answer. That's a great answer. Um, so I mean it's gonna sound like the same question, but I want to weave something else in it. But how do you how do you maintain trust with staff but also stakeholders? Again, were you limited with what you can say? What practices really help you reinforce trust even when you have to maintain silence? And this is the curveball I want to throw in with you. Yeah. How does vulnerability play into this? I mean, you're such a super competent guy. I mean, I when I stand near you at a conference, I just feel more confident because I'm hanging out with you. Um, but imagine there's a side that you know that vulnerability also helps with authenticity. So, I'm curious how you would weave all that together.

Andrew Molosky: 24:08

Yeah, and I don't know that I have necessarily a solution. I can offer you what I have chosen to do. And if there's any worth or any admirability in it, then by all means do, right? But I think you talk about authenticity. My second sentence behind any dialogue that begins with authenticity is don't mimic somebody else's authenticity, because then by

default, you are already inauthentic. Right. So, when you talk about how do you maintain trust, how do you maintain uh, you know, that that position of confidence in light of not being able to say things, here's my answer. When you can be honest, well, I'm sorry, always be honest. When you can share, share. And when you can't, you can't, but you are known as an honest person. And honesty goes hand in hand with vulnerability. To say to somebody, I have all the answers, I'm not gonna mistake, make a mistake, this is gonna go perfect, I have a whole plan, you're probably being dishonest. Or at minimum, you're being inauthentic. That is going to make them question what is plainly obvious, then they're definitely going to question what is not obvious. And I think the reality is I'd be the first to tell you right now, and I can say this in truth, we have something really exciting in the hopper. And why I haven't shared with you is because two parts. One, there's legal parts I can't, which is kind of the initial question you ask. But the second one is I don't have all the answers, and I don't have enough answers to make you comfortable. I don't want to give you information that will make you uncomfortable. I'll bring it when it's better baked, better thought out, and I can really truly help it be an advantage to you and not a threat or a concern or a loose end to you. And that is both authentic and honest, as well as hopefully conveys that sense of I'm not telling you, but I'm not telling you for a reason that is personally beneficial, not because I like having secrets or information you don't have.

Dragonfly Health Ad: 25:57

Thank you to our anatomy of leadership sponsor, Dragonfly Health. Dragonfly Health is also the title sponsor for leadership immersion courses. Dragonfly Health is a leading care-at-home data, technology, and service platform. With a 20-year history, Dragonfly Health uses advanced technology and robust analytics to manage durable medical equipment and pharmaceutical services as part of a single efficient solution for caregivers, patients, and their families. The company serves millions of patients annually across all 50 states. Thank you, Dragonfly Health, for all the great work that you do.

Chris Comeaux: 26:46

It feels a little, hopefully you don't feel like I'm taking a right turn, but I have a feeling you're going to take something away from. I read something the other day as a person of faith, like wouldn't it be awesome if God just kind of gave us the plan, right? Or like, here's here's your purpose and the five-part plan. But he doesn't do that because life is really meant to be an adventure and a creative adventure. I think there's a lesson to that that applies to what you're saying as well. You know, I think maybe that comfort level is, Andrew, I want to know you have all the answers. But the reality is there is no leader ever in the history of time that's had all the answers. And the beauty of that is there is this great adventure that we're going on, that we're going to create it together. That's why

you're needed and I'm needed. Um, and that's what makes it actually fun. And so, I don't know if that resonates with you.

Andrew Molosky: 27:30

It does, right? So, for those of you, especially if you know me, I'm prone to doing two things, making jokes that sometimes connect and sometimes don't, and trying to keep it very light. You know, the line of work that we've all chosen is unforgiving and it's thankless many times. And it'll take all you're willing to give it. So, if we don't have a little levity, if we don't bring ourselves a little fun, nobody else is gonna. This isn't a stand-up comedy world. You know, you mentioned the, you know, uh God or faith, fate, karma, whatever it is you subscribe to, wouldn't it be nice if they just gave us a 20-point plan and said, go? And I laugh because there's a kind of an urban legend, whether this was ever said or not, I don't know, but I think it's hilarious. Mike Tyson is often quoted as saying, everybody has a plan until you get punched in the face. Right? And you know, and I worry that whatever higher being or whatever belief system he has, even if it gave us a plan, you know, how would you not have questions about following it? Would you not wonder what's behind this plan? I mean, you're never going to have this bulletproof confidence instilling step-by-step guide. Otherwise, it takes away the art form of leadership. And I think there's a difference between having all the answers and having all the principles. You can't have all the answers, you shouldn't, because then you haven't tried something edgy enough or forward-thinking enough. But you can have all the principles. You can have authenticity, relatability, you can have trust, you can have integrity and dignity, you can have adaptability, agility, things of that nature. Those are principles. And a good leader should have almost all those at all times, but not necessarily all the steps, right? That way you're covering unexpected positives, unexpected negatives, left turns, changes in the environment, but in that manner that makes it seem like you have the steps when what you have are the principles.

Chris Comeaux: 29:09

That's so good, Andrew. I love the Robert Frost point, right? That the a road emerged in the wood, you know, I took the road less traveled. We live at a time because of social media and just all the distractions that I think a lot of people live their lives in what I would call screensaver mode. You know, when that computer goes and screensaver. But I feel like what you're poking on is a better pathway where you're fully alive, fully open, because the joy is actually in the adventure. They're creating, pulling upon those principles to create things that have not been done before. And for healthcare leaders, my gosh, this is our time. Um, there's a I'm a little bit of a Lord of the Rings fan. And Gandalf is walking alongside and Frodo Looks at him and says, you know, just kind of lamenting, why am I in this story? And Gandalf basically looks and says, Ah, but you've been, you've been brought to this story, particularly. This is your purpose. And he says, you know,

everyone. Meant that, you know, why am I alive at this time? But this is precisely why you've been brought here. I feel like that's us as the healthcare leaders. There's a lot of challenges. There's a lot that's not right within healthcare, but it's exactly our time to take those principles, those tools, and create something wonderful. And again, that's why I admire you so much because I think you're one of those leaders inspiring other people to do that.

Andrew Molosky: 30:21

Well, and again, that's extremely kind. I'm blatantly stealing from a mentor's line to me once. And so if I if he happens to be listening and I get this wrong, you should have known better than the tell me gym, right? But you know, there's a reason when you think if you were to go to the Louvre today, right, or the Metropolitan Museum of Art, or wherever you have highly respected works of art, you know what you'll find, but you know what you won't find are paint-by-number artists. And it doesn't mean they didn't do a great job, and it doesn't mean their artwork isn't beautiful, but that notion of high-level, uh world-famous pieces of art are equal parts the end product, but the creative process and the reality that that canvas might have been painted on 25 times before the finished product you see. The artist didn't fail, the artist just wasn't done. Right? In a paint-by-numbers situation, it's still gonna be beautiful, it's still worth looking at, but it lost that artistry. It was following a series of steps that were preordained by somebody else, and there's a difference between route completion and following steps and according to a plan that was given to me, and I was an artist, and it took me a while, and there's lots of layers of paint, but this is the end product, and it's beautiful. And I like to have people, especially in our line of work where it's interdisciplinary, every patient is, you know, COPD patient one is nothing like COB patient two, nor COPD patient three. They may have the same underlying disease state, but the artistry is what that team is going to paint on that canvas for that patient that day. And I think that is an analogy that always stuck with me, right? There's there's no bad paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. There's some that took more iterations than others to get there, but it was truly the process and not the not the steps to follow, if you will.

Chris Comeaux: 31:59

That's awesome. Well, my guess is that you're facing just countless opportunities and requests. There's maybe it's probably been building, and so probably more opportunities than probably ever. So how do you personally determine what to say yes to, what to decline, how to help your team to build that same discipline? You're gonna chase some rabbits, right? Even a great baseball player doesn't bat a thousand, but imagine you have some process by which you kind of because everything can't be chased.

Andrew Molosky: 32:27

That's right. That's right. Yeah, and you know, there was a word in there, and I always hate picking on semantics, right? But this particular one feels more like it's illustrative of an idea than playing word games. When you asked how I triage, how I sort of prioritize, I think the first answer is I don't. Right? I think the we part of this, which I believe is an inherent part of and an underappreciated part of leadership, you know, leadership is typically when done right, a team of people or a like-minded group of people working towards a common goal. And there's occasions when leadership is one person doing one thing, but then that's just individual performance, right? Leadership is is shepherding and leading a group of people. So, when we, if you will, comb through opportunities and look at opportunities, we have a couple of guiding principles. As we said earlier, that's what we always have, maybe not steps, but principles. Does this fit our cultural ethos, right? Because as a nonprofit, as someone who's not looking to roll up and be taken public or exit with no judgment towards that, it's just a different end game, you know, with a long game in mind, you want someone that fits your family. And I'll make crowd, you know, callous analogies all day long. You could go to the humane society, and I'm a huge, you know, pet lover and pet rescue supporter and all those pieces, and I want all the dogs. But the reality is I have the ability to take one dog home, and I want that dog to fit with my other dogs, and I want it to be a peaceful addition to my family, and they're all wonderful. I take them all, but you have to stay somewhat focused, and it has to be equal parts. You can love the dog, but if it doesn't see eye to eye with you and your other family members, it's not going to fit. So, while I'm not comparing our business dealings to adopting animals, I think there's that sense of I want all the things, you know, but I have to realize that one, the other thing has to want me equally as bad. It has to fit the dynamics, which are a little bit harder and they're constantly evolving. And then two, what is the end game, right? What are you, what are you adding or what are you selecting in the ambition of? Go back to my earlier analogy about running a marathon. You know, if your goal is to finish 26.2 miles of running and all of a sudden, the side of the road, you see a beautiful oven that you really want for your house, you don't stop and get it because that's not going to help you get to the finish line. It's going to weigh you down. Did you want it? Yeah. Was it there for taking? Of course. Would it be great in your house? Without question. But it detracted from the end goal at hand. And that's what I would say to anyone entertaining growth, expansion, you know, uh proliferation of your current business, whatever it might be, what ball is it advancing? And that's a big triage determinant that people fail to appreciate. You'll say no more often than you realize if you try to tie a very shiny object back to your stated ambition, it's not always gonna fit. And then it becomes easier to let go. Um, assuming it makes that threshold, that's when you got to have a team who feel the same way. I can love it, but if I'm not gonna be there to operate it, to collect for it financially, to navigate the HR components of it, those team members have to love it equally as well. So I'm throwing a lot into that. It's a we kind of triage process. Tie it to your strategic goal, your end game, make sure it's a cultural fit so

that in a people line of work, which is really all we are and all we have, you know, it has to fit both ways. You get through those three, most of your work's gonna be done for you.

Chris Comeaux: 35:39

That's so good. Um, you're making me reflect. Recently, um, I asked folks to give me some feedback as a leader because I want to keep learning, keep growing. And one of the ones kind of stung a little bit. And so, you are probably one of the most visionary people I know in our space, Andrew. I'm visionary as well, but I wouldn't say I'm visionary to your level because I do obsess a little bit more about the operational side. So, I'm kind of that hinge point between the vision. But yet that person said, you know, you make us chase a lot of rabbits that feel like distractions sometimes. And then I give myself comfort and say, well, you know, a great baseball player bats and a really good baseball player might bat 300, 385, which is literally 38% of the time. You know, is that kind of a justification? Or do you think there really is that, you know, 40%, 50% is doing pretty well? Or should a leader aspire for that discipline you're talking about where maybe that ratio should be more like 85, 70% or something?

Andrew Molosky: 36:37

Yeah, you know, and I'm not entirely sure my answer is gonna do the job I hope it to do, but let's give it a shot anyway, right? The whole purpose of this is not to necessarily be profound wisdom makers, but to bounce ideas. That's the best part about collaboration. I think what you just asked me is a chance for me to apply a principle I mentioned earlier. I don't know that I want to be known for having a percentage time that I get it right or some mathematical formula to saying this is how it should be done, but in this moment, using what you just mentioned, the principal thing, right? The management thing would say, I need this to go right 50% of the time. And if I'm behind, I can't take any more risks because I'm all sudden at risk of not making my 50% or 75% or whatever it is. But the principal thing says, you know what? The last one went bust. But we applied it because it met our culture, it met our strategic plan, it met our, and here's another one. My principles say, go after this one. Yeah, the last one was a failure. I might not be batting 50 or 38 or 75%, but that's not what this has been about. Principally speaking, what we all agree to, what we stand for and who we are, this one meets it. We're gonna give it a whirl, right? And sometimes you might bat 100 when the goal was 50. That doesn't mean you can lay off and take bad decisions. If you're batting 25% and the next thing comes along and it still fits what you need to be doing principally, then you should take it and you shouldn't worry about falling down to 20 if this one too fails. So, I don't like to necessarily why I respect the analogy and love it as a baseball player and you know at heart, you know, man, if I could bat 320, if I could be up there in that Ted Williams territory at 410, that is absurd. But they didn't do that because they were chasing the number. What their principles are is if it's a strike coming, if the runner's in scoring position, if I'm listening to

my batting coach, those are my principles. And it happened to work four out of 10 times, right? But if they were down to 200, they're not going to change their principles. They're still swinging at strikes, they're still advancing runners, and the numbers are what the numbers are, right? So even the legendary batters, I still believe were principle driven and not statistics driven.

Sona Benefits Ad: 38:36

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Chris Comeaux: 39:15

That is a brilliant answer. It's interesting you say that. I've actually a couple of books I'm reading right now, but a lot of uh they've got just great uh coaches in there like Dean Smith, Nick Saban. And what they described is exactly what you just said. You know, the number of national championships, it wasn't a they weren't chasing the outcome. It was more about the system, the process, the principles, and making great people. And if you do that, you actually get the wins, you get the national championships. And then interestingly, for those, that is actually not the most satisfying part of the process. In some cases, it was a it's overstated for me to say a little bit of a letdown because the true joy was in the process and the journey. And so, you just have just said it in a much more beautiful way. But I I love that answer that you just gave. And thank you, because that's actually coaching me in the process as well.

Andrew Molosky: 40:06

We were kind of glad it worked out. We were kind of fumbling through territory there.

Chris Comeaux: 40:09

That's what makes us fun, man. Um, so in a field-driven, I'd say a mission-driven field of hospice and palliative care, I'm curious then, how does chapters apply the purpose of the organization to certain decision making, even if you had a story along these lines, to make sure then that time, focus, and energy is going to the right places?

Andrew Molosky: 40:30

Yeah, and I think I understand the question. So, if I'm not answering it, please by all means just jump in and tell me. So, I'm, you know, I'm told that multiple times a day.

Chris Comeaux: 40:39

Let me say again a different way, then. You people will go, you got a mission statement? Yeah, I got a pair of shoes, got a pair of shoes, yeah, we got a mission statement. It becomes cliché. If you use the mission statement powerfully, the purpose statement of the organization, it should guide you uh for approaching time, energy, purpose, resources. So, I'm curious how chapters do that.

Andrew Molosky: 41:00

Thank you for the clarity. And yes, now I feel better about equipped to answer or attempt to answer. So, the irony is our timing here. We about 72 hours ago uh unveiled our revamped mission statement in its form. You've already heard me reference it. You're not getting an unsecret unveiling here, but we moved from what we believed were fairly common industry missions, all of which are good, but they were fairly common, right? We're gonna be the best clinical caregivers, we're gonna have the highest clinical outcomes, we're gonna dominate this market, whatever it might have looked like, right? But those were still metric driven, those were still, you know, more binary black and white types of things. Are you or are you not there? And we came to the realization, much like I said about principles, that it should have equal as many failures as it does wins, but as long as they're all principle driven, it's kind of part of the stew. So, our mission has been now publicly dedicated to being exactly what I said, taking care of patients or taking care of those who do. Because everything you then have to run through that funnel of should we do this? Can we afford this? Do we take this on, is very easily relatable or not to that endeavor. And it becomes both a triage system, a decision-making system, a prioritization system to some levels, a talent acquisition and you know, uh retention strategy. And so, it has a lot more purposes than just telling the audience what you're about doing. It becomes, if you will, the soul of an organization, which I think is what probably whoever wrote the first mission statement or vision statements intended to do. But as with so many things over time, they became rope, they became kind of cookie cutter, and we decided that is not who we are. Do we have it perfect? No. But do we have it right in our principles? Absolutely.

Chris Comeaux: 42:40

That's so good. You know, I I don't know uh if you would agree with this, but I'm getting the sense. I'm a huge Jim Collins fan, and I've been getting a sense that revisiting some of Jim Collins' earlier works, most particularly Good to Great and Built to Last. In fact, I'm kind of working on a project where I'd like to bring both of those back to the forefront. Um, and you think about hospices, right? Hospices have been around in 40, some some

of the earlier ones, almost 50 years. And the premise in Collins' book about built to last is these were organizations that were built to last literally over decades. And you know, we live at a time when, yeah, I still remember when Guarmans were like a cool Christmas present. Now we have that on our smartphone. So, like the um velocity of disruption is much quicker. So, for an organization to be around like over decades is kind of a rarity. And a lot of people may have forgotten that Collins basically bolded down to this and built to last. And I think this is going to resonate with you. And we believed in this principle so much, if you look at our Teleios logo, the actual swirl is actually the um illustration that Collins was talking about. He said those organizations built to last were like a hurricane. And Andrew, it feels like every time you and I are on the phone, it's like, yeah, we're preparing for another hurricane in Florida. But there's all this swirl, this change, this innovation. But yet in the middle, just like the eye of the hurricane, there's this somewhat unchangeable core, the mission, vision, and the values. And I think we live at a time where people go, been there, got the t-shirt, yeah, read the book. Do you really understand what he meant? What he meant was if you use those tools, they are going to shift over time. We actually, we just tighten up one of our values because we were using it. We start looking at each other going, hey, there's something missing here. So that eye changes, but it holds. It's like that center of gravity of all the innovation swirls about. And that's the vision that I got in what you just described. I don't know if that resonates with you for you'd even say it a different way.

Andrew Molosky: 44:34

It it does, right? And so, I'm gonna offer one of my standard disclaimers, especially to our, I'll call them Southeast friends listening. I'm gonna use Hurricane Speak, and its still October, so I'm doing so at my own peril. But we're gonna do it.

Chris Comeaux: 44:47

Knocking on the wood for you.

Andrew Molosky: 44:49

Yeah, we'll do it a little bit differently. Everybody knows the strongest hurricanes are the ones with what? A well-defined eyewall. Right? Listen to any meteorologist study any sort of NOAA report or anything that helps to educate on how hurricanes work, there's one core component that defines the strength, size, speed, and destruction of a hurricane, and it's the eyewall, right? The eyewall drives the wind speed, the eyewall drives the direction and the change and the landfall location and how much precipitation is being picked up. But conversely, when a hurricane starts to fall apart or fails to form or ultimately is looked at as not a real serious threat, what's the first thing they say? The eyewall failed to materialize. The water's still warm, there's plenty of it. Where the continent is not changing. You know, Florida's where Florida is, Texas is where Texas is. But what failed to

happen was the eyewall materializes. So, Chris, when you talk about the eyewall being correlative to mission, vision, values, to a culture, to a strategic plan, you get those to materialize. And if you think of hurricanes as a strong, good thing at this point, you get an eyewall, you're gonna be a category five hard to deal with. A little bit unpredictable, very large, very strong, not going anywhere, built to last, if you will. You know, and then if you think of it the other way around, you know, if your eyewall fails to materialize, you're gonna break up, there's gonna be scattered rainstorms. Sure, you might flood a few things, but you're here and gone in a week. And that is a pretty fundamental difference when if you want to be known as a category five company, work on your eyewall first. A lot of other atmospheric things will contribute on their own, you know, and then all of a sudden I'll pick on the first Jim Collins book because nobody should ever pick on Jim Collins, right? There are some, you know, you don't criticize LeBron James' basketball skills, you know, you don't criticize, you know, Warren Buffett's investment skills, Jim Collins writes good books. But I would say to you, I never liked good to great. I've always liked good to better as an example because I've always felt like great was a definitive kind of game overstatement, whereas better implies that opportunity to constantly be involving, constantly be learning, constantly be improving. So, with no disrespect to the great Jim Collins, we won't use that phrase. We're working on good to better every day.

Chris Comeaux: 47:00

That is so good. And I'm a huge A Tool Guinea fan and you know, world-renowned surgeon who brought a coach in the room and then wrote a book called Better. Um, high five. Man, you just you just you've added to add to analogies I use, so I just love this. So, Andrew, I'd love to kind of kind of land the plane with this question, and then I want to give you final thoughts too. So, for leaders, hospice, healthcare, beyond, they're facing big changes right now. What lessons from your journey of chapters that you would just want them to take to heart that you would like to pay forward to them?

Andrew Molosky: 47:32

Yeah, I I I think this this statement itself is cliché, but I think every cliché is rooted in a certain degree of truth, right? Because if it's not, it fails to materialize as a cliché. So, when I say be bold, be risky, be edgy, be innovative, right, distill that down to whatever the essence of that means to you. I think you can define success as equally easy by saying what constitutes failure as what constitutes success. If your goal is to maintain the status quo, that's not leadership, that's autopilot. Right? If you happen to be in a position of quote unquote senior leadership or strategic vision or seeing around corners or part of your job description, you know, the goal is not simply to engage autopilot or cruise control, make sure the car stays on the road. The goal is to find a shortcut. The goal is to drive a little faster, the goal is to pass the other traffic. You have to drive that. And you make driving mistakes all the time and don't think twice about it. What do you do? You

correct, right? You made a wrong turn, then you make the next right turn and get back on course. Why are we so afraid to do that in business? And if you're a leader, a real leader, not a manager, not a designated job title, you're mapping those changes. You're putting yourself out front to say vulnerably but assertively and with confidence, we're gonna do this now, we're gonna do most of it correct, and everything we miss, we're going to correct, and then we'll take on the next, almost perfect set of endeavors as well. But I look at a lot of peers who are successful, and I mean successful in the sense that they've gotten to the end of their plan, inclusive of their mistakes and their resolve. And I look at a lot who maybe sit and don't take those chances and they're viewed from the outside world as keeping the margin up, keeping the census up, keeping the revenue up, not losing market share. That's great. But what did you really do? Right? I would venture the guess that most of your staff did that work. Your job is to take it somewhere it's never been. And I'm often told that when I do these podcasts, people expect me to say, and that means joining another company. No. Chapters would love to have new organizations. Teleios would love to have new organizations. But what organizations like ours would be more excited about is seeing our peers move the space, move the industry, get us the recognition we deserve and our competencies and capabilities as home and community-based medicine. And if that is through stronger, better together, great. If it is you reinventing part of the world that no one's gotten to, even better. Right? So this isn't a sales pitch, but it is a motivational kick in the behind to say if you don't have something on your horizon that's going to redefine your company and redefine you in the process, then I think you have left opportunity on the table to be the leader you want and not just the manager you're paid to be.

Chris Comeaux: 50:16

I five on that, Andrew. You know, when I started writing my book, The Anatomy of Leadership, um, I had uh, we were wrestling with the definition of leadership in the organization where I was at the time. I was working on my Master's of Leadership, kind of being a graduate assistant to Dr. Thayer. And I never asked the guy the definition of leadership. So, I shot him an email and he responded. And I kind of forgotten about the email until I was like wrestling with this idea of the book. And I went back and pulled that email, and his definition was brilliant. And it just puts an exclamation point in what he just said, what you just said. And he said basically this is that leadership by definition changes the trajectory of things. And he says it could be the course of a conversation, a marriage, an organization, a department. Um, and then he says, this is a word that throws people. He says, most situations are on the course that they're on telologically. And people are like, what the hell does he mean by that? It's what you were just saying. It's I'm just maintaining the census; we're just maintaining the market share. I'm just pressing the button on a day-to-day basis. We're just maintaining. And but leadership by definition will change the trajectory of things. And here's the punchline for the better, if it's effective and

worthy leadership. And that's what I literally feel like you just said it, the definition in an even more beautiful way, but then applying it to this wonderful um I don't want to call it industry, this wonderful movement, this wonderful field that we're in in healthcare. So, I want to give you the final thoughts.

Andrew Molosky: 51:46

Wow, final thoughts. You know, um that is tough because I don't consider myself to be kind of a big motivational person where there's going to be a tagline. But here is what I would say. You've chosen to listen to this today or at some point in time because you have an inherent thirst or an inherent curiosity for how to improve your thing, right? Your thing as a job, your thing as a parent, your thing as a society member, a church goer, or a teammate, whatever it is. You're looking to improve, otherwise, you don't listen to discussions like this. So, kudos to you for having that initiative. Now, do you have an end game or a goal or some kind of what constitutes success? If not, think about it, right? Do you have an acceptance of the fact that there's going to be possibly more losses, or I would say incremental learning lessons and losses to go with the occasional wins? Do you have principles that say this is how I put something in this circle, or this is how I'm comfortable leaving something out of my circle? You know, and I think if you apply just a few of those, not even all of them, right, you're going to feel better about your direction. By virtue of being here on this with us, you have the inherent desire and curiosity. Pick up a tool here or there and go back to what I opened with is what I closed with, right? In true, you know, uh entertainment format. Here's the callback. And even if you don't have it right, even if you're missing more than you have, if you have the grit, if you have the perseverance, and you're willing to get back up and keep moving, you will be amazed at how many things go your way.

Chris Comeaux: 53:11

Well, well said, Andrew. I'm so glad we did this. Um, I've been wanting to kind of sit down with you in a one-on-one format in quite a while, and there were so many pearls in this. Thank you for the job that you're doing. Thank you for the just the way that you and your team are trying to change the world for the better and know a couple of your team members. Give tell them I said hi. And uh also thank them for letting you get away for a little bit just to spend some time with us and our listeners.

Andrew Molosky: 53:34

Well, it was a it was a pleasure, and we appreciate the opportunity. I look forward to seeing everyone out there in the trenches.

Chris Comeaux: 53:38

You bet. So, we're gonna have a link to Andrew and anything he wants to include, probably a link to chapters, um, just any anything you want us to include Andrew. We'll put that in the show notes. To our listeners, we want to thank you. At the end of each episode, we always share a quote, a visual. The idea is to create a brain bookmark. This one's gonna be fun. It's a thought prodder about our podcast subject to further your learning and your growth. And thereby what we're going for is like a brain tattoo. We're wanting it to stick. Please be sure to subscribe to TCN Talks and the Anatomy of Leadership. We don't want you to miss an episode. Also, check out the book, Anatomy of Leadership, if you want to on Amazon. Tell your friends, family, coworkers about it, and be sure you hit that subscribe button. Again, we don't want you to miss an episode. It's so easy for us to rail against the world and be frustrated by things. Let's be the change that we wish to see in the world. So, thanks for listening to the Anatomy of Leadership and TCNtalks today. And here's our Brain Bookmark to close today's show.

Jeff Haffner / BBM Quote: 54:30

"If you have the grit, you have the perseverance, and you're willing to get back up and keep moving, you will be amazed at how many things go your way." By Andrew Molosky.