

# LEADING FROM WHERE YOU ARE



**TRISH  
BUZZONE**



*DYNAMIC LEADERS IN BUSINESS, POLITICS AND THE ARTS  
SHARE APPROACHES THAT HELP THEM SUCCEED.*

# Leading From Where You Are

Dynamic Leaders in Business, Politics, and the Arts  
Share Approaches That Help Them Succeed

By

**Trish Buzzone**

John Maxwell Team Executive Director and Founding Partner

with

**E. Adam Porter**



### **About Trish Buzzone**

Trish Buzzone is a Certified Speaker, Teacher and Coach, as well as as an Executive Director and Founding Partner with the John Maxwell International Leadership Development Team. Trish has invested more than 20 years working with leaders in corporate management, nonprofit organizations and individuals interested in increasing their leadership lid and becoming more influential people. For Trish, her “why” is inspiring others to effective action toward the fulfillment of their purpose.

# What other leaders are saying about Trish...



*"Trish has very keen powers of observation. She reads between the lines, comes back with the right questions. She guides, you decide ... Trish motivates you to reflect, to explore what you really want, to cut through everything and find some clarity."*

— Laura Giancarlo, Co-founder of  
TeenMax Camps



*"Every conversation with Trish fascinates me and leaves me wanting more. She has a natural gift to recognize and extract the obstacles preventing individuals and teams from firing on all cylinders. She has been a true blessing to my endeavors and I cherish the opportunity to know and work with her."*

— Lain Livingston, Brand Strategist

# 'Thank you' from Trish

Thank you for reaching out and taking the time to read this book. I'd like to take a moment to share how it came about.

In early 2017, I was speaking with friends, talking about "What Leadership Is..." That conversation took a lot of twists and turns, and we settled on one idea: Leadership is MANY things. All of us had a similar description, however each of our definitions included aspects and approaches to leadership that were distinctive, if not in their content, in how we prioritized those aspects of leadership.

I sought out several local leaders who are actively making a real, positive difference in their respective fields, and in the lives of the people they lead. Together with my colleague, writer and editor E. Adam Porter, we interviewed those individuals and captured their stories in the eBook, "[Leadership Is...](#)"

During several of those conversations, the leaders we interviewed talked about the importance of mentoring or developing other leaders on their team, people who lead in a variety of ways and in a variety of roles. Those conversations inspired Adam and I to reach out to a new group of leaders to talk about leading from where you are.

Some recently stepped into new roles or accepted additional responsibilities, others wear different hats with different organizations. Each of these dynamic people has hard-won wisdom to share, and we believe you will be inspired by what they have to say. We spoke with:

- **Rebecca Groomes, DDS**, Co-owner Friedman & Groomes General Dentistry, Dade City, FL, and Co-Producer Spotlight on Talent
- **Albert White**, Director of Sales, Lexus of Wesley Chapel
- **Mike Giovinazzi**, Safety Director, Accuform
- **Ashley Hofecker**, Legislative Assistant, Florida House of Representatives
- **Adam Burnside**, Good News Pest Solutions

The conversations we had with these dynamic leaders led to many different answers to the question “How do you lead from where you are?” Every conversation enriched and encouraged us, and we have done our best to accurately capture their answers here. Those conversations were incredibly motivating and inspirational. I hope this book will be the same for you. If you are inspired by what you read here, share that with these incredible leaders, and, please, reach out and let me know as well. I would love to hear from you.

*In friendship,*

*Trish*

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# Leadership is Embracing Opportunities to Make a Difference



## **Dr. Rebecca Groomes, DDS**

*Co-owner Friedman & Groomes General Dentistry, Dade City, FL,  
and Co-Producer Spotlight on Talent*

Rebecca Groomes grew up in Dade City, nourishing parallel dreams that she now breathes life into every day. A musician for as long as she can remember, Becky competed in local talent competitions, before earning a music performance degree from the University of Florida. And Becky had another passion, which led her to earn a degree in Dentistry from the University of Maryland.

“Growing up, I watched my father in his dental practice, saw how he worked, how he helped people. Every day, he helped break down that wall of fear so many people have with dentistry. I wanted to do that too. I felt, if I



could help a patient, especially a pediatric patient, feel comfortable hopping right up in the chair, not fidgety or nervous, I was making a real difference for them. I could be a source of comfort, education and compassion, someone to listen. Now, I get to do that every day. I also love working with my dad as my mentor, learning about both business and medicine.”

“And, while there’s an artistic aspect of dentistry, I’m also involved in other venues and events that allow me to stay connected to the artist in me. For several years now, I’ve been volunteering with Spotlight on Talent, a regional performing arts competition held annually in Wesley Chapel. My mom, Barbara, is the event’s producer, and I grew up performing in Spotlight. Today, I’m on the other side, working with my mom, doing whatever I can to make the event the best it can be.”

### **Shining a Brighter Spotlight**

“Spotlight has been a part of my life for almost as long as I can remember. I jumped right back into it after returning home from college, back in 2003. Even during school, if I was home on a break, I would volunteer to judge competitions. For me, Spotlight is an opportunity to inspire young performers in the same way I was inspired, and a chance to spend time with my mom. She really puts her heart and soul into this, and it’s made a big difference for so many kids. Whether it’s updating the scoring system to be faster and more efficient, or upgrading the technical side of the show – accompaniment, lighting and sound – I saw opportunities where I could make a difference, so I did.

***“I saw opportunities where I could make a difference... so I did.”***

“That’s really all it takes to make a difference. I know we’re all busy. I’m married, two kids at home, and a business to run. We know what it

means to run ourselves ragged with music, sports all that. I'm a team mom, my husband was an assistant coach, we want to be as 'there' for our kids as two very busy people can be.

"So, yes, we're busy... but I could also see some ways to make Spotlight better. Part of it is just how I'm wired, I want to make things work better. But wanting to and choosing to are two different things."

### **Lessons in Applied Leadership**

"One of my personal leadership challenges was leading in different ways in these very different venues. As a doctor, you are accustomed to observing an issue, discussing it with the patient, and immediately taking action. As a business owner, you see something that's not working, you fix it. Conversations are brief and decisions are quick.

"With Spotlight, there's a board that makes the event possible, and a production team that makes it happen. All of these people are volunteers doing this because they love the arts and they love kids. These are people who have invested years of time and talent building this event into something amazing. Working with this team requires a very different sort of leadership.

"Because of these different dynamics, I had to take a different approach to leadership. The biggest shift was to lead by making suggestions rather than making decisions. I'm still wired to fix things, but this opportunity has stretched me, taught me a lot about working with others.

***"For me, the biggest shift was to lead by making suggestions rather than making decisions."***

"The first thing I really got my hands into is helping with the meetings we have each year after the competition. We had detailed records, but the

system wasn't efficient. We're all volunteers, and I saw ways where we could do a great job and save a lot of time. I saw something similar during the competition, with the judging. At the time, we were still doing all the scoring and tabulation by hand. In any live, judged competition, one of the biggest challenges is cutting down on the time between a performance and announcing the winners. I was able to set up a system using simple software, so we could cut way down on the time the performers, and their parents, were sitting in nervous silence, just waiting.

"More recently, we transitioned from CDs to MP3s as accompaniment for the performers. That solved a lot of formatting issues and other technical difficulties we'd had in the past. Once again, that was identifying a problem, making a suggestion and discussing the best solution.

### **Leading From Different Positions**

"There's another group I'm involved with, Mission of Mercy, in which I'm totally the low one on the totem pole. This is a two-day, large-scale professional dental clinic, sponsored by the Florida Dental Association, that provides dental care to patients at no cost. That's a passion for me, an amazing experience to be able to make a profound difference in the lives of the patients we see.

"Even though I'm very passionate about this project, I'm not involved in organizing this event at all, just there to help in any way I can. I'm still jumping in with both feet, but how I jump and how hard I land has to be different than in my other roles. Remember, I'm wired to 'make it better', but that's not what they're asking of me. They need my dental knowledge and skills, not my organizational advice. So, in that role, I'm very conscious of always being entirely encouraging and supportive of the leadership and what they're doing. This group and this event does amazing work, and I'm just happy to help in any way I can.

***"They need my knowledge and skills, not my organizational advice."***

"So, for me, there are three very different leadership opportunities, all of which are very important to me. I want to invest my heart into each of these ventures, but making that investment in the best possible way requires very specific communication approaches and mindsets.

### **Always Room For Improvement**

"I've been involved in the performing arts since kindergarten, doing Spotlight and other pageants. Those experiences taught me a lot about competition, about winning and losing, and about how to learn the most from both experiences. What these kids have in Spotlight is something really special. Professional judges and a beautiful venue in which to perform. It's great practice for those who will be facing high-pressure auditions for arts scholarships or professional roles, and it's a great learning experience for anyone who wants to learn what it takes to be successful, whatever their goals may be.

"Because I understand the value of this competition, and I understand what it means for the performers, I want to give all I can to see that it's the best it can be. I think everyone involved feels that way, and that's one of the reasons the competition has grown. We all want it to be the best it can be, and that means getting better every year. Each year, after the competition, the production team meets to go over what went well, and what we can do better. There are so many aspects necessary to put on this show, so many moving parts. If you don't focus, it can be overwhelming.

"That's a principle in performing arts, that you can always improve. There's no such thing as a flawless performance. That's one lesson our contestants are learning, and it's an example we want to set. For my part,

each year, I try to focus on a few specific things that we could do better, so the competition can be rewarding for the contestants and enjoyable for the audience.

***"There are so many moving parts. If you don't focus, it can be overwhelming... Each year, I focus on a few specific things we could do better."***

"This year will be a special milestone for me, because my son is competing in Spotlight for the first time. He told me he wants to audition for this competition because he sees the commitment and work we put in to 'make it the best'. We hear that from parents and other competitors, but to hear that from your son, that's extra special.

"Sometimes, the best approach to leadership, especially in a volunteer situation, is to do the best you can where you are, then say 'yes' when another opportunity comes up. That's how it's been for me at Spotlight. I started just helping out here and there, with technology and efficiency. I emceed and stage managed. Then, when a co-producer stepped down, I saw an opportunity to help in every aspect of the production, so, once again, I jumped in.

"With Spotlight, our goal is to encourage kids to embrace the arts, and to spread art appreciation in the community. When I keep my focus on that as the goal, it's easier to rein myself in, to choose to relay my thoughts and ideas in a way that's appropriate in each situation. I've also made it clear to other leaders that, if I overstep, they should call me on it. It's been a process, and I definitely make mistakes, but the process helps me grow. We can always do better, and that's something to embrace, to look forward to. Music taught me that, competition reinforced the principle, and leading in different environments offers opportunities to live it out every day."

# Leadership is Serving Others



**Albert White**

Director of Sales, Lexus of Wesley Chapel

***"Whatever you're doing, wherever you are, give all you can give to inspire someone, to make their situation better."***

Albert White is a devoted husband, father and, by all accounts, a natural 'people person'. But, Albert admits, while caring for people came easy to him, leadership was a skill he has worked to develop. He began his career in the car business in 2009, learning the business from good mentors. Then, in 2017, he had the opportunity to help launch a new dealership, as the Director of Sales at Lexus of Wesley Chapel.

"I love making connections with people, trying to make a positive difference in their lives. As long as I can remember, I always have. Even as a young teenager, I sought out opportunities to inspire people, to help them in some way.

“As I recognized that in myself, I knew I wanted to get better at that, to nurture that passion for servant leadership inside me. I looked at leaders around me, people who sought out opportunities to encourage and inspire. I read all the books I could find from leaders who inspired me. I made growing as a leader a priority in my life long before I was recognized as a leader at my job.”

“Sometime in 2009, a friend introduced me to the car business. They had just bought a car, and their salesperson said the dealership was looking to hire some people. It was a great fit for me. The car business, at least how we do it, is a people-first business. It’s about relationships, so that was definitely me, and I’ve always been a ‘car guy’, so why not work in a place that gave me the opportunity to relate with people and be around beautiful cars all day?

“At that dealership, I met Patrick Abad, and I saw in him a guy with a similar perspective as mine. He poured all his heart and energy into everything he did. He would find the smallest spark in someone and turn it into a bright, shining star. He started at the bottom in this business, and now he’s at the top. Patrick showed me what is possible if you put people first.

“There’s a perception people have about the automotive business. It’s no secret, but here was a guy building a team that was changing the perception of the business. I got to be a part of that for nearly nine years. So, when I learned Patrick would be leading the team at the new Lexus dealership, I wanted to be a part of that.”

### **The Value of the right Mindset**

“When there’s something you don’t know, don’t give up. Find a mentor, listen and learn. Throughout my life, I’ve benefited greatly from mentors who took the time to invest in me, to advise me and coach me.

Without them, I wouldn't be where I am. They gave me confidence, made me believe I could do it. It was no different in the car business. I brought enthusiasm for the job and a love for people, and I found mentors willing to teach me what it takes to succeed in this business.

"I've found if you have the right mindset, and you're teachable, you can be successful. One of the first things I learned is that this business is not just about selling cars. You have to come in with a positive mindset, and you need to maintain that mindset in every situation. Once you have that, the next step to success in this business is learning how to think. I believe that's similar to success and to longevity in any business. If you stay positive and think it through, you build a foundation for success.

***"If you have the right mindset, and you're teachable,  
you can be successful."***

"That's not to say you won't have bad days... There will be rough times... Times when it all goes wrong. Same thing the next day. You feel like you're doing all you can, and it's still not working. You want to give up... It's in that moment, when you're at your lowest, you have a choice. Do I walk away, or do I sit down, think it through and put together a better game plan? When you choose to take a step back and look for a better way, that's the first step in turning a struggle into a victory. When you understand that, and you apply it, you can be very successful in whatever you want to do."

### **Every Interaction Matters**

"In our industry, you hear all the time how 'competitive' it can be. That's true. The car business can be very competitive. I'm personally very competitive too. I like to win. I like to be the best. I believe that helps me be successful, but that's not the primary driver of my success. For me, it still



comes back to having a genuine love for others, a strong desire to help them. I believe when you approach every interaction with the intention of caring for people, they feel that, they sense the genuineness of your heart. It's definitely not something you can fake. People can sense false sincerity, they know when you're putting it on.

***"For me, it still comes back to having a genuine love for people..."***

"Many times, the difference is in how you address the specifics. When working with a customer, listening to what they are specifically looking for, rather than trying to sell them on something. When mentoring a person, helping them discern the specific ways they can reach the next level. That's when you make the most impact.

"When people think about me, I want them to remember specific aspects of that interaction, how I made them feel and how I helped them, the details. That, to me, is what establishes and builds trust.

## **Step Up**

"Every mentor I've had, and every book on success and leadership I've read all agreed on one thing: failure doesn't have to be a reason to quit. It can be a step up. In my experience, you can't be successful if you've never endured failure. No matter what you want to accomplish, you will fail before you succeed. But don't let that hold you back. Remember, you're not judged by your failures. If you keep at it, keep learning and growing, people will not judge you by your failures, they will judge you by your successes.

"Failure, as long as you learn from it, is just part of the learning process. One step along the path to the promised land. For many people, it's the fear of failure that stops their momentum, not the failure itself. It's that fear that will stop you from becoming who you want to be.

## **Speak Up**

“People are sometimes afraid to speak up. I know I was for years, but I learned if you come in with the right attitude and mindset, put others first, people will listen, and things will fall into place.

“Everyone, everywhere, wants to feel special, to feel important. Attitudes, both positive and negative, are contagious. So, when you make someone feel special, they pass it along. That’s not to say I have it all figured out. Certainly don’t. The more I learn, the more I realize how much there is to learn...so many wonderful areas in which to grow, and so many wonderful sources for wisdom. I can be speaking to someone with a lot more years in this world than me, or I can be talking to my young daughter, who is seeing all of this with a new, fresh perspective.

***“There’s always something to learn if you keep an open mind.”***

“One of the things I learned about myself is, I didn’t speak up enough. I led by example, but I didn’t articulate where I wanted to go, what I wanted out of my career. When the time came for the expansion, the new dealership, that opportunity inspired me to stretch beyond my comfort zone. I went in and told Patrick, “I’m the right guy for this job and here’s why...” He listened to my reasons... and he agreed. If I had kept it to myself, who knows? Maybe there’s someone else sitting where I am today. I’m so glad I chose to step out and speak up.

“I cannot overstate how excited I am to be in the position I am as part of this team. Already, it’s grown me as a person and as a leader. Even with that growth, with the shifts in perspective and approach I’ve made, the motivation behind my approach to leadership is the same: I’m here to serve, and if I can make someone else’s situation better, that, to me, is success.”

# Leadership Is Creating Shared Responsibility



**Mike Giovinazzi**

Safety Director, Accuform

***"There's a lot of ways you can handle things when people are reluctant to change. My way is to ask questions."***

Mike Giovinazzi retired from a career in law enforcement and security, and he was looking for something to do with his time. He saw that Accuform had a position open in the electrical department and decided to apply. Right away, he noticed something different about the company.

"There's a great culture in this company that starts from the top down. It made me want to be a part of what was happening here. The more people I met, the more I realized how genuine that spirit is... It's like a family. That

really connected with me. In law enforcement and corrections, there's a brotherhood, and I wasn't sure I would feel that again. To be able to come here, to feel the brotherhood, I recognized it immediately. That feeling, more than anything else, is why I took this job. There were other offers at other places, but they just didn't have that feeling of connectedness, of brotherhood.

***"In law enforcement, there's a brotherhood...  
I wasn't sure I would feel that again."***

"When I started here, I was working in electrical, just something to do, you know, get me out of the house... When the previous safety director retired, they posted the position. I was interested but thought, 'no,' I'm not looking to be in charge of anything. It was my wife that talked me into putting my name in for consideration. I'd spent my career in security, law enforcement and corrections — U.S. Marshals, Immigration, fire service, always a protector. I had been doing safety and security for 25 years, but I thought that stage of my life was over... Turns out, it was just evolving."

### **Perceptions and objections**

"I've had people tell me 'you look so intimidating' or 'don't mess with that guy,' but I just don't see it... At least, that's just not how I see myself. I'm a peaceful guy. I don't really know why people are intimidated by me. I'm serious about what I do, very serious. Maybe that's what they see. I can be an intense guy, but in my heart, I'm a peaceful guy.

"That's not to say I'm trying to make people feel warm and fuzzy. I'm here to make sure people are safe, that we're all looking out for each other. I don't want to have to call someone's family or friends and tell them there's been an accident. If that makes you feel good, great. If not, well... You have

those conversations in this line of work. People don't always understand why something is a hazard, especially if 'we've always done it this way'. They don't see it as any big deal.

"There's a lot of ways you can handle things when people are reluctant to change. My way is to ask questions. I may know the answer, but it doesn't help us if they don't know the answer, or they honestly don't understand. So, we talk about it, and I listen. It's important to me to see where they're coming from, to get their perspective. I may think they're wrong ... I may even know they're wrong, but it won't help them unless they realize that. Best way to do that is ask questions, let them lead themselves to the right answer.

***"There's a lot of ways you can handle things when people are reluctant to change. My way is to ask questions."***

"When people are involved in the process, they're more committed to the outcome. And, when people know you care what they think, they're more apt to listen. In the end, I want the person with the objection to understand well enough to change their mind on their own. So, I tell people, 'question everything'. That's what I want."

### **Creating an environment**

"My success here as a safety director begins with leaders who are willing to listen, to try new ideas. If I come up with something that requires a change, the upper management here looks at it seriously. They listen, and they ask tough questions. I like that. I don't shy away from hard questions, because it shows someone is taking you seriously. I come into those conversations prepared to explain the benefits of making the change.

“My job is not going around pointing out problems. That’s part of it, sure, but my goal is to get everyone to be conscious of safety, to look out for themselves and each other. I want safety on their minds every day. To accomplish that I have a very specific routine. First thing I do, every day, is check the reports from the night before. Did everything go well? Were there any incidents that need to be addressed? Then I take a walk around the building, do my best to greet everyone, talk with them, listen to what they’re seeing. I engage with everyone every day, because I want to create the expectation that safety is everyone’s responsibility.

***“I want to create an expectation that safety is everyone’s responsibility.”***

“I also want every member of this team to feel comfortable coming to me with any questions or concerns. When each employee feels a personal responsibility about safety, they feel more freedom to speak up.

“That approach is working. When I first started in this position, it was mostly me pointing out safety issues. At least 80, maybe 90, percent of the time. But that’s been changing. Today, it’s around 60 percent. You can feel that change in the building. People are engaged, thinking about safety, and they’re comfortable talking about it, sharing their concerns with me.”

“For me, a title isn’t as important as what I see I’m responsible for. As far as safety is concerned, I’m responsible for the entire building and everyone in it. It’s my job to point out potential hazards, to find solutions to current hazards, and to get everyone on the same page. That’s not just something I hope happens. I do my best to lead by example, to hold myself accountable as well. There have been times where someone will see me, and I have my safety glasses dangling around my neck, just forgot to put them

on, and they'll call me out on it. I love that. They're looking out for me, and we're all looking out for each other."

### **Why clarity matters**

"When it comes to communication, clarity matters. I'm direct and to the point on purpose. I want people to understand my expectations, to be clear on what I want to see, so they understand what I'm looking for. How else are they going to know? I model that, because that's how I want people to communicate with me. It's frustrating when people beat around the bush, because that causes confusion... It doesn't help anyone.

"That also makes me successful when talking to upper management. When I see something that needs to change or to be improved, I need to be able to anticipate their questions, so I can answer them well. I need to know what it will take to accomplish, what it will cost and what the benefits will be. Safety is not something that will add to the bottom line, you don't recoup costs directly, but there are still consequences, and I need to be able to clearly communicate the results in order to justify the costs. That takes time and preparation."

### **Challenge yourself every day**

"You can't come in thinking you know it all and expect to do your job well. I've been in and around safety and security my entire career, but I still have a lot I can learn. For example, in this job I have to speak to larger groups. That wasn't something I did before. In most cases — on SWAT, in corrections, etc. — it was just me and a small group of guys. Now, I'm teaching CPR, first aid, even forklift operation, and giving briefings to large groups. It's not something that comes easy or natural for me, but I'm challenging myself, getting better. That's part of leading, of doing your job well, you have to evolve and learn.

“For me, the public speaking was about fear of the unknown. What if they ask me a question, and I don’t know the answer? Once I learned how to handle that, it got easier. It’s one of those things that the anticipation is worse than the action.

“Something else I’m doing is working through the John Maxwell material. I studied Maslow’s hierarchy of needs when I was counseling troubled kids, but I hadn’t done anything like this that challenged me to be a better version of me every day. It’s been really good.”

### **Choosing every day**

“Every day I make a conscious choice to get up and come into work committed to doing my best that day. I know that sounds like something everyone says, but how many of us actually do that. Choose, every day, to be fully present on that day. That’s why, in the morning when I’m making the rounds, greeting everyone, they ask me how I’m doing, I just say, ‘I am.’ A lot of people don’t get that, but I want them thinking about it. I want them to figure it out. I’m present, I’m right here right now... are you?”



# Leadership is Bringing People Together



## **Ashley Hofecker**

Legislative Assistant, Florida House of Representatives

***"When we talk past each other, we're missing opportunities.  
First, you have to connect."***

Ashley Hofecker has served as a legislative assistant in the Florida House of Representatives since 2015. Before that, she had never even been to the state capitol. Though her interest in politics was birthed much earlier.

"I remember, in fourth grade, I helped the sheriff during an election campaign. That was my first real hands-on exposure to politics, and I loved

it for so many reasons: everyone coming together to work toward a common goal, going to events, meeting so many different people.”

Ashley says her passion for being a connector, creator and collaborator has helped her excel as a leader on a team supporting another leader.

“I like to be a resource for others, connecting folks with resources to meet their needs, answer their questions, whatever they need. I also love to solve problems. When there’s a challenge or a question, I’m an idea machine, and I love to work with other people to find the best solution.”

But, she says, that hasn’t always come easily.

“Leadership is hard, you have to work at it.. One thing I learned from this experience, and I’m learning this more every day: I’m capable of a lot more than I give myself credit for. You may not always be right, and that’s okay. Just keep working and keep learning.”

***“I’m capable of a lot more than I give myself credit for.”***

“When you’re wrong — and you will be — listen to the feedback and learn from it. The worst thing you can do is check out or get discouraged. Keep showing up, every day. Press in, give yourself permission to learn from your mistakes. If you have a constant desire to improve, you still don’t like to be wrong, but you don’t get hung up if you are. You choose to learn from it.

“That’s a big one for me. In the past, I would not have been able to be wrong. Even if I was dead wrong, even if I knew I was dead wrong, I would fight.. You have to get past that. Now, one of my favorite questions is: ‘explain it another way, show me...’ I want to learn why and how...”

## Leadership Lessons

“Another key lesson for me has been about tone. I’ve definitely had to work on my tone. If you are honest in your desire to learn and grow, don’t be disrespectful ... or sound disrespectful. Tone conveys so much, and it can convey things you don’t mean if you let it.”

“For example, we may be sitting around a table tossing ideas back and forth, crafting legislation. A lot of ideas go into that, and there will be a lot of editing and changing even after the bill is sent off for drafting. With all the passion and perspectives that go into that bill, tone plays an important role. Even if you don’t agree with someone else’s idea, you’re still on the same team working toward the same goal... Your tone should reflect that.”

“It really boils down to what John Maxwell says about people: [‘everyone communicates, few connect.’](#) When we talk at or past each other, we’re missing opportunities. First, you have to connect.

“That’s hard, genuinely hard. Everyone is going through their own stuff. They have their own perspective, their own reasons, their own distractions. Connection is not one-sided, and it’s certainly not ‘one size fits all.’ We’re learning that about leadership, but we sometimes forget that when it comes to connecting.”

## When Leadership Clashes

“Something else I’ve learned: there will be times when I don’t agree with ‘the boss,’ when our visions don’t align. There are a lot of choices you can make at that point. For me, I’ve had the best results when I invest the time to listen, and then ask: ‘may I make a suggestion?’ The key here, is collaboration. The other leader needs to understand you’re working with them, not against them. Here again, tone is important, and so is timing.

***"I've had the best results when I invest the time  
to listen... then ask..."***

"Even when everyone is working toward the same vision, establishing consensus can still be challenging. Working around so many smart, confident people with good ideas, we all want our idea to be picked... If your goal, instead, is to be a positive contributor, to make everything better than it would be otherwise, that gets you farther than wanting everything your way.

"When you begin from a place of making a positive contribution, rather than trying to get it your way, people see that, and they're more willing to look at things from a different perspective. Not everyone ... there are some people who are locked down, stuck on 'no' ... but most people. The key is to make a suggestion without making them 'wrong.'"

**Shifts That Helped Me Grow**

"One of the biggest, most important shifts, for me, goes back to making connections. Instead of pressing my position or perspective, I've worked on developing relationships, especially becoming less self-focused and being more aware of the needs of others. That process has made me much more effective, both as a leader and as part of a team.

"That shift is different for everyone. For me, it was less about doing things differently than being more aware of what I'm doing. I'm naturally collaborative, so I am more purposeful in how I interact, remembering that everyone connects and communicates differently.

"I believe that, over time, that shift in perspective has begun to make my age less important, or maybe less obvious, to others around me. I may be one of the youngest people on the team, but they've worked with me for some time. They know what I'm about, what I'm capable of and how I carry

myself, and they've learned to trust me. That took time, and a lot of intentional effort on my part. It's not something that just happens."

### **On Paying Your Dues**

"Let's be honest, this can be a very frustrating process. You're brought in on a team because of your skills, your experience, something about you they wanted ... then you learn you really don't have any control over what you're 'allowed' to offer to the team.

"It took me a while to realize it wasn't about establishing value, it was about establishing trust. People knew what I could do, they wanted to be sure who I was. That learning process will mean jumping through some hoops, showing people not just what you can do, but who you are as you do it. For me, that process took at least two years, and I had a lot of opportunities to practice patience in that time.

"You may not think you need to put the time in, that your work should speak for itself, and your value should be evident. But if you allow that attitude to creep into your motivation, your quality of work suffers. And, when you start letting your work slide, it won't help your argument. It's much better to deliver excellence, even when you're frustrated ... especially when you're frustrated.

### **Looking ahead**

"Going forward, I plan to continue focusing on my personal and professional growth, while being as aware as I can be of the needs of others. I'm investing time with mentors, reading, learning all I can, and finding ways to remind myself where I could use some growth. In the end, I may not be "wrong," but I can probably be better. And, when I'm better, I can bring more people together to get more done."

# Leadership is Stepping Into Your Calling



**Adam Burnside**

Good News Pest Solutions

***"At 29, I was the most senior person in the new office...  
This was my opportunity to lead."***

Adam Burnside, a sales supervisor at Good News Pest Solutions, grew up in the family business, watching his father build Good News Pest Solutions through exceptional customer service and methodical business sense. Adam's father, Dean, believes leadership is about asking people to "care every day" and equipping them to do so. After going out of state for college, Adam worked for a time in that area, before returning home to help his father build Good News. While some people may struggle with family dynamics in business, Adam says joining the Good News team was a great decision.

I love working with and for my dad. We've never had any issues, no struggles or falling outs, like some people talk about when they work with family. Never had any disagreements we couldn't get past. I think it's because, for me, I really appreciate what he's building, and I have a lot of respect for that. I mean, he's been doing this since he was my age. I can see that path clearly, and I have the opportunity to learn from what he did and carry on that vision."

### **Doing it My Way**

"That's not to say we're the same. My dad and I have different personalities, especially in the way we process work. We're both very detail oriented, but our pace is different. So, yes, I have a way of doing things, but I can honestly say, my dad's been a great example. Really, both of my parents have worked to demonstrate leadership, both at home and in business, in a way I want to emulate. They surround themselves with a team, seek out wise counsel, personally and professionally.

"He's been able to grow the business with fewer mistakes because he sought out that wisdom and he listens. I learned from that, so I've been able to sidestep a lot of beginner mistakes by watching what they do well.

"When I look back at the archives, when Dad was beginning to expand this business, he was about my age, and I was about the same age as my daughter is now. At the time, he was learning how to balance home, business and social commitments, and I'm learning similar lessons today."

***"I've been able to sidestep a lot of beginner mistakes by watching what (other leaders) do well."***

"I had great examples growing up, but I was never sure I wanted to be a carbon copy of Dean Burnside. I was a high achiever in school, in

sports, president of my fraternity in college, always a leader. As I grew closer to college graduation, I started asking myself: did I really want to follow my dad, or was there something else out there for me?

“On one hand, it seemed the easy choice to come home immediately after college, join the company, fall in line, and start working my way up. I knew I would do well, but is it what I really wanted? I needed to know, so, after college I took a job with Audi in Atlanta. You know what, I had a blast selling cars. I’d always loved cars, but I’d never learned that side of the business. I was able to travel, experience new things, and see a lot of the country. I had per diem, rental cars... I could show up, make a difference and fly back home. It was fun, and it was rewarding, but was it the best fit? The hours were long, sure I made a lot of money, but that’s all I did. Only one vacation – a five-day cruise – in three years. Hardly ever had two days off in a row, work every holiday... zero flexibility.

“Growing up, we lived modestly, but my family went on vacations every year, so many amazing memories. Dad coached all my sports teams, spent so much time with me. I wanted those things for my family more than I wanted an Audi.

“I began to look ahead, to consider the different paths I could take in life and where they would lead. I didn’t think there would ever be a better overall offer on the table than being part of a growing family business. The flexibility, the earning potential, and the growth opportunities. Very few people are ever given that sort of opportunity, and I didn’t want to squander it.”



## **New Opportunities**

“Recently, I’ve been offered a new opportunity that has led me to shift my thinking, especially in my approach to leadership. The company is opening a new office in a fast-growing area. Because many of our current accounts in that area are mine, I’ve moved with a small team to that new office. It’s familiar, because I’m doing the same things, taking care of customers and working to build the business, so, initially, the new location was just another place to park my car. It didn’t take long for my perspective to change.

“Here I was, 29 years old, and I’m the most senior person in this office. In our other location, I was the young guy of the group, so many people around with more experience. At the new office, I was presented with an opportunity to lead. If someone had a protocol or training question, or they needed something for their job, at the other office, those questions would have gone to someone else.

***“Now, they were coming to me. I was the one with the answers, and the keys to the equipment closet...”***

“That new role has been stretching me almost daily. I’m learning so much about leadership, about relationships and team building. We’re growing closer as a team, too, learning to trust each other more, because we’re in the trenches, meeting challenges together, and I love it.

“In my role, I’ve shifted from being responsible for my job to touching every aspect of the business every day... So, there’s more responsibility, yes, but the rewards, with family and business mean so much. I realized, through this process, that, though my dad and I may approach things differently, we have the same priorities, similar reasons to make the choices we have made: the benefits for our family, the type of life you can build, and

the expectation that our faith will be an integral part of the business as well as our lives.

“Dad sees leading this business as his calling, an opportunity for ministry using the gifts and talents he has to make a difference for people, both his employees and his customers. If that wasn’t my heart as well, coming back into the business may not have been the right choice for me. In coming back, especially in taking a leadership role, I’m accepting the call to further that vision for business as ministry, to take our ability to do business and to minister to the next level. When you say that, when you wear “Good News” on your shirt, you’re representing that ministry focus. It can’t be just about advertising, not just about a brand people will trust, you have to live your faith out personally, with authenticity. We want to grow this business to be one of the biggest and best in our industry, and that ministry aspect will always be central, the most important part of what we do.

“So, yes, I take that very seriously, but, you know what, I’m also having a lot of fun. I get to go out, every day, build relationships and help people. Some days, the hours are long, but when you spend every minute smiling, it doesn’t really feel like work.”

# Making the Shift with Trish

Thank you for investing your time to read this book. I hope the stories and perspectives offered by these outstanding leaders have resonated with you. They are making tremendous investments in their organization and communities, every day, and I'm grateful for the time they invested in this project.

Before we close, I would like to ask you what I believe is one of the most important questions any leader may ask themselves. I've asked hundreds of people this question over the years, and I believe answering it is a fundamental key to success in any endeavor:

## ***"Do you have a daily plan for personal leadership growth?"***

Would you be open to making a small daily shift that could dramatically increase your capacity for success? If so, here's what your daily plan for personal growth could look like, courtesy of my friend and mentor, John Maxwell.

1. Make a commitment to grow everyday.
2. Make the commitment public.
3. Be specific: Choose two areas in which you want to grow, one area of choice and one area of skill.
4. Invest one hour per day investing in growth in these areas. Include time for preparation, practice and reflection. This does not have to be all at once. I like to prepare in the morning, practice during the day, and reflect in the evening.

5. Focus about an hour at the end of every week to reflect on what you learned in that week. Write down what you have learned.
6. Share your growth with someone you trust.

When you are intentional about your growth in this way, you will outgrow almost everyone you know.

I would love to be one of the people you choose to share your intentional daily growth plan with. Please reach out to me through my website "[trishbuzzone.com](http://trishbuzzone.com)" or via Facebook at "[facebook.com/trishbuzzone](https://facebook.com/trishbuzzone)". Ask me how to build your simple daily plan for personal growth, and share with me the results you want to have.

And, if there's a leader in your community who's had a positive impact on your life, please let me know. We would love to feature that leader on our Facebook page and possibly in our next book.

Finally, if this book has been a blessing and an encouragement to you, please share it with someone else. Remember, anyone, anywhere has the capacity to be a leader, if they choose to be. And any leader will be a better leader tomorrow, if they invest time to grow today.

Let's make it happen!

Trish