

Como estas, mi amigos? Yes, that is the most amount of Spanish you're going to get on the Chris LoCurto Show. I am saying that because there's a shout out to Maria, who is in Spain. We have people all over the world listening to this show and we love to hear from you guys. We love seeing the numbers and that's pretty fantastic. She writes in and she says, "Hi, Chris. I want to thank you for your podcast. I really enjoy listening to it. I must confess, I'm becoming addicted to it. Smiley face. My husband and I are very thankful we understand English; we're from Spain, so we can learn from you and what you say. Please, continue to worship God by taking care of us, His children. A big grown-up, though-" That's her saying that, not me. "Have a wonderful day, Chris. Sincerely, Maria."

There you go. Maria, thank you so much. We are so glad that you're listening. We're so glad that you're a part of this and we're so glad that we can have an impact in your life and your husband's life. Thank you for letting us know that you guys are listening. For everybody else, don't miss out. Our next level leadership live event is coming up May 2-4. You need to be here. Maria, come on over from Spain. We want to see you guys. Go to ChrisLoCurto.com. Click on the big banner or click on "Live Events." This is a powerful 3 days of learning the things you need in your leadership, in your team, right now. Incredible, incredible stuff. I don't have time to tell you everything about it. Go to ChrisLoCurto.com. Click on the big banner or the link that says "Live Events." There is a ton of information there, a lot of information. Trust me; you want to read it. You want to get your tail to this event. We look forward to seeing you there.

Now, we are answering a question today from James and it is a powerful question for all team leaders. Here is James' question.

James:

Hey, Chris. James here. Thank you so much for your podcast, for your life plan, all of those things that have really benefited me. I've been listening to one of the more recent podcasts that you talked about leadership and I have a question for you. I'm a band teacher and so most of the leaders that I'm training are actually teenagers between the ages of 14-19. This specific question relates to when we are doing our drum major auditions, which we just completed about a year ago. I always end up being a little bit nervous because I want to leave it up to the students and use a democratic style of leadership.

Every year that I've done it, it's come out how I wanted it to be, but I'm still a little bit scared. I don't know if I need to do this a little bit differently. I had the, after we interviewed our candidates, I had a top 2 in mind. We had 7 great candidates who, any one of them would have been great in the position. We had about 6 people on the review board and these were seniors who had been part of the marching band. At the end, we all agreed on the top 2, but I'm always a little bit nervous in the process of what will happen when, one year when they don't agree with me or

maybe we just talk it through until we're done. I'd appreciate any feedback you have on this. Thank you so much and have an awesome day.

Chris LoCurto: James, fantastic question. Thank you for asking that and thank you so much for caring about properly leading young minds for growth and not just telling them how to be and how to think. Well done, sir. Also, thank you for the compliments. Coming through life plan, we used to do our life plan event, which was so incredibly powerful. We have actually created a whole new phenomenal event called Next Level Life. That is what we are doing now. That is focused on the years and years of great transformation that we've created for folks. It's based on our root system process. If you're interested in that, email Joel@ChrisLoCurto.com and he can help you understand more about that.

Back to James' question. James, again, I'm so proud of you for taking this approach. The podcast that you're talking about- Let me talk about what you heard, for anybody that did not listen to it, which I'm sure you listen to every single podcast I put out. Right, everybody? What James is talking about is, we had our Next Level Leadership retreat. We've got our Next Level Leadership live event coming up and that is open to the public. We've got our retreats. We do 3 of those. That's only for the Next Level Leadership, the Next Level Mastermind Group. That's coming through and doing all that fun stuff.

We do 3 of those retreats and on this last one, we had this incredible process where we didn't give them information on what they were going to be doing, but we broke everybody up into all of these groups and we put these leaders in place. Some of them, we allowed them to be democratic style leaders. We had some that were being very controlling. We had some that were completely absent, just this huge process that was phenomenal. We've got all of these leaders in this room and going through this process. To watch leaders experience the very thing they may be doing with their own team, it was powerful for them to see what worked, what didn't work, what was a huge failure, all of that fun stuff.

The favorite of all teams? The democratic approach, where the leader really got information from the team members, really walked them through, got asked questions, got to a place, made decisions, and they moved forward. The most close-knit team and the team that would stay together the longest by far, that is a style that abso-stinking-lutely works. Now, listen...there's many things I've got to hit on this, but that is the one that James is talking about. He's doing that approach, essentially himself, which is great. Some of the most successful companies on the planet, long-term successful companies let me say that, have a process that is a lot like this.

The way that I do this, I believe- I discovered this when I was way young, that I don't have all the right answers. Yeah, I don't. I have a lot of good ones and I have a ton of bad ones, but I don't have all the great answers and I can't do it myself. If I could, I wouldn't need anybody else. Learning that early on, one of the things I started to do early on in my leadership is what I call "taxing the collective

intelligence." I started looking around and said, "Okay, I want to know what you know and I'm not going to get it out of you if I'm a bad leader." I had to first focus on being a great leader, at least a good leader, to get people to be able to open up and give me information.

What I've done for decades in my leadership is find out what people know. Get out of their heads the thoughts that they're having, the information that they've got, if they've got input. Treat them with dignity. Treat them in a process that says, "Your input is not only worthy, but it's desired. I want to know what you think." Do I do this every single time? Of course I don't. There are some times I don't have the chance, but guys, my role is to, wait for it, here it comes, lead people. That's my role. If all I do is come up with all the answers myself and I don't care about theirs and I don't tax the collective intelligence, then I'm not technically leading anybody.

My job is to make them successful, not the other way around. I can't hire a bunch of people and go, "All right. You all make me really good." It just doesn't work out that way. I need to make them successful in the process, whatever that takes. If I can do that, then by default I become successful. One of the best ways I do that is I tax the collective intelligence. It doesn't mean that I run a business by consensus. Oh, Lord. Oh, Lord, that does not happen in here. I can promise you that. We don't lead by consensus because you can't lead by consensus. There has to be one head guiding, directing. There has to be somebody who's at least making the final decision.

What I will do is, I will get the information from my team. Whoever's involved at the time or whoever needs to be involved, that's also another. You don't want to go taxing the intelligence of people who are not actually tied into the process that you're discussing at the time. That's a waste of time. I will get the information from my team members, which causes them to think above what they're already doing. I have been around teams that don't think. Oh, my gosh. It's painful. It is painful to watch them. They do not get out of their own set force of habit thinking, which is not thinking, which is, "I don't need to think any more than this." "Hey, what do you think about this?" "I don't know." "Hey, what should we do here?" "I don't know." "Hey, how should we do this?" "I don't know."

That is so crazy painful. I want to know that I am causing you to think, to process, to solve problems. That's a big one for me. For everybody who comes through Strat Plan, they will hear me say that over and over and over. Solve the problem. Solve the problem. Solve the problem. Let's get out of all the junk. Solve the problem. When you are helping people to think for themselves, when you're helping people to get in the habit of making quality decision, of discovering what they believe is their own answer, helping them to gain perspective along the way, a great way to do that is when somebody gives an answer. Ask them, "Why?" When somebody says, "We should do this," "Why do you think we should do that?" "Well, I mean ..."

When you get the "uh," they don't have an answer. They're just making statements. You've been through Strat Plan. For those of you who have been

through Strat Plan, they knew what happens when all you do is make statements. You get another comment from Chris. You want to help them to actually think through the process, which is exactly what you are doing, James. That is what James is referring to.

James, the thing you have to remember is, what leading is. It's taking people to a place, which is what you're doing through this process in trying to get these young minds to think democratically, to think, "How do I feel about this? Why would I want to pick this person? Does this person have more talent? Is this person a better leader?" The way you lead them in this process to getting to the right answer is asking a ton of questions, helping them to discover what the answers are. There's so many teachers out there nowadays that are just filling information, saying, "This is what you're supposed to believe," so I'm so proud of you for doing this. Ask them.

Now, why? What should we base this on? When we're going to select these folks, what should we base it on? Should we be basing most of this on talent? Should we be basing some of this on leadership? Should we? Help them to come up with a structure. What should it be? When they ask you, because inevitably they'll go, "Well, what do you think?" "Guys, how about you fill this in first?" Then, as they give information, here's the key. Use your years of wisdom. This is vitally important as a leader. I don't sit there and try and have my team come up with all the answers because it's just not going to happen. That's not, time-wise; we don't have that kind of time. Instead, I lead them in a process of getting to, "Okay, so guys, what did you think about this? All right, so I hear what you're saying. Would this possibly happen? What happens if this happens in that situation?"

We were talking about a product launch, actually it was just today. I'm like, "Okay, we're talking about if we get overloaded here. If we get overloaded here. If we get overloaded here." I actually turned around and said, "What if we don't sell any? With what we're doing, it's just not an option, but what if it is? What if it does?" Everybody stopped. "Oh, gosh, I can't even see if it does." "Well, what if it does?" "Well, then we probably have to have a backup plan." "Yes, we would. What would that look like?" That type of leadership helps people to not just focus on the positive, not just focus on one aspect, but also think of the whole.

As we're looking at these 2 people, what is it that we should be basing our decision on? Is this person going to...well, so and so said that they might be moving halfway through the school year. Well, then, is that the person we want to elect for this? You know what I'm talking about. You get what I'm saying. Guide them through your leadership to discovery. It's one thing to have them come together and make decisions. It's a complete other thing to guide them to the greatest information about making the decision. That, my friend, is Next Level. That is leading. That is walking them through a process where going forward, they don't just take information and run with it. They don't just go, "Well, we like this one because he's more popular."

I'm assuming that that's where the other part of your question came from. "I'm nervous of the process. What if they don't agree with me?" That wasn't a, "What if they don't agree with the great James?" I know that's not what you're saying at all. Instead, it's saying, "What if they do pick somebody that I know is not going to be right for the position?" That's very possible. That is incredibly possible. You have to look at it from the side of, "How do I get them to see all the information they need to see?"

Let me take a slight political turn here without getting political. I'm really ticked off about watching what's happening with the system in this political election, that people being scared ... Listen, I am in no way endorsing a single person with this comment. What I am saying is, I am disgusted with a person leading in the polls and everybody else going ballistic to shut it down. Why am I disgusted? What that is saying is, there is literally a system put in place that says, "We don't care about what the populous thinks. We're going to do whatever we want to, to make it go our way." That is not how it's supposed to be. That is not what this system should be based on.

Now, it may be the populous makes a really stupid decision. Great. We will learn from that. We should not have people guiding a process and making a process happen because a select group of people want it to happen one way so that they get to keep their lobbyist, so that they get to keep their money, so that they get to keep all this junk. I don't care who the candidate is. If the populous is saying, "This is the person we want to follow," we need to listen to that. If there is a reason we shouldn't be following that person, that's what these discussions are for. That's what debates are for. That's the process. That's the concept here, people. Learn. Gain information. Get information. Don't just scream at a TV and don't be just mad because your friend said somebody's a dork. Instead, discover information.

The thing you have to realize, James, is in this position; you don't want to be that guy. I don't think that you would be, but it could become that way. "Well, they're all leaning in the direction of this person because they're Mr. And Mrs. Popular, but I do not believe they're going to do anywhere near as good of a job as this other person over here." If you just you, "Well, guys, I'm sorry. I'm picking this person," without them understanding and having information, then it's going to look just like that. "Well, he was giving us the chance to be a part of this process, but now he just cut our legs out from underneath us. It must be he just wants to have it his way."

That's not what you're saying, so you need to do this. Help them to understand why they want to choose somebody. If it is a popularity contest, pull it out. "Guys, we've got 2 candidates here. We have discovered that this one has more talent. We have discovered that this one has more leadership ability. We have discovered bing, bing, bing, bing," whatever it is. "Help me to understand why we're moving in this direction over here. What is it specifically about this other person?" What you may find is, this person over here is way more talented, but the slightly less talented person is a much better leader. Okay. Well, then we've got to have a good

conversation. If it's just because this person is popular, because they're attractive, because of whatever else that has nothing to do with the role, we have a problem. Lead them through that. Help them to discover the information, and you do that not by telling them what to think, but by asking tons and tons and tons of questions and getting them to that place of, "Is this the smartest decision?"

Now, with all of that being said, also understand this. My team knows I am the leader. I am the person who will make the final decision if need be. At the end of the day, I treat my team with dignity by making sure that I listen to what they have to say. I was talking with Pat Lencioni years ago and this is something that came out of that conversation. We were talking about some of these great companies that he's been able to be a part of and leading their leadership teams in these processes.

He was talking about something that, I think it was Intel, Southwest, some of these companies that it is mandatory if you disagree about something that you have to speak up inside of the meeting and the leader has to listen. You have this opportunity to set your case, to sell your point, to get your information out. If you don't ultimately do it, if the leader decides after having listened to everybody's input and anybody who wants to disagree, after listening to all that stuff, the leader makes a decision. We move in that direction. Everybody gets behind it. If you don't agree with it, but you did not do a good enough job selling on it, and this is obviously assuming that you have a leader that's willing to listen, if they aren't, why are they letting you speak up? Why do they have a mandatory, "You must disagree if you disagree"?

Having that process in place, everybody knows, "If I did not sell that leader on my disagreement, I did not do a good enough job. I didn't sell them. I didn't do. I didn't bring to this conversation the quality information that shifted the decision. Period. Get behind it and move forward. Let's go. We go as a unified team. Why? Because we know that the best decision with the information that's been presented has been made. Otherwise, everybody would be in disagreement and we wouldn't make that decision. Having this process and having the ability to do a democratic style approach, taxing the collective intelligence, getting information from these young future leaders or future team members or future entrepreneurs, helping them to be a part of this process is crazy powerful.

At the end of the day, as long as they understand that James, if you need to make a call, you need to make a call, do the best you can to help them with the information. Then make the right call. If the team has come up with great information, and then they've done a great job choosing the right person, then fantastic. Let's move forward with that. Give them praise, all of that. Make sure that they understand that you still have the deciding vote, no matter what. Again, if they are moving in a direction because it's very possible it's going to happen, if they're moving in a direction of choosing somebody because of popularity as opposed to talent or skill or better leadership skills, whatever it is, help them to see why they're coming up with that answer. Pull it out. Pull it out. Pull it out. Pull it

out. Pull it out until it comes out.

Don't tell them what they think. Literally come back with the information and the facts. "Guys, this person is this talented. This person is this talented. This person is this talented at leadership. This person is this talented. Why are we choosing the one ... Help me to understand why you would like to pick the one over the other. What is the deciding factor on it? What is the thing that is showing you that that's a better choice?" That gets that conversation going. That gets the information out and the crazy thing is, they might just swing the answer that shows them that their choice is ridiculous. You might just have somebody go, "We just like so and so better." "Okay, so we're making this about liking this person better? Is that what we're saying is the decision making factor?"

Now, you got 2 people that are just as talented in every aspect whatsoever, pick the one the people want to follow. At the end of the day, if they have the same talent, then for me it comes down to one thing. Who will be the best leader? Who will people follow? That for me is key. I want them to be able to follow somebody in a great direction. I don't want somebody who's going to be a dictator. I don't want somebody who's going to tell them what to do. I don't want somebody who's going to be a dork or a jerk or get their ego blown up or any of that stuff.

Great question, James. That applies in all aspects of leadership. Help your team to be successful. One of the greatest ways you can possibly do that is be here at our Next Level Leadership live event May 2-4 here in the Nashville area. It is phenomenal information. Do not miss out. Go to ChrisLoCurto.com. Click on the banner or click "Live Events" and get your tail here. As always, folks, take this information. Change your leadership. Change your business. Change your life. Change your kids and the way that they make decisions. Join us on the next episode.