

[00:00:31] Patrick: Hello, everyone. Welcome to episode 115 of the leadership window. Glad you are along. I am loving this time of year. The pollen has stopped falling all over my car and driveway and patio.

Now we can start looking forward to the heat and humidity of famously hot Columbia, South Carolina.

And I am okay with that. You will not hear me complain about the heat, not after living in the north and experiencing those winters. I would have heat over cold any day of the week, twice on Sunday. And I know that a lot of you are like, oh, not me, I love winter. Uh, but yeah, it's all great. However, I'm not in Columbia, South Carolina. In our home studio right now. I am in Miami, Florida, where I'm working with one of my, honestly, just one of my, the most fulfilled, filling organizational client work that I have, have a relationship with them that's probably eight years old now. And we went a while where we weren't connected. And then about three years ago, somewhere in that neighborhood, we reconnected. And we've just been doing deep work with this organization since. And the organization is called Caring for Miami. They are a part of the free clinic sort of network in Florida, but they are a very unique free clinic. They are a dental clinic. And more than that, they are a mobile dental clinic. We're going to learn all about what they do. But one of the reasons they are so extraordinary is because sitting in the CEO seat and the executive director seat is an extraordinary leader. And her name is Ashley Garritley. And we're down here doing some deep coaching work and working with her board and her staff. And I said, hey, while I'm down there, next time, why don't I just, you know, bring a couple little portable microphones and let's do a podcast? Cause I think Ashley has such a fresh view of leadership. I don't even know, I don't even know if she knows that she can articulate it, but we're gonna find out today. But I know she has one because she execute on. She executes on it. She's an extraordinary leader. Her board thinks so, her staff thinks so, her community thinks so, I think so. Her husband thinks so, who is the pastor of Christ Fellowship, which is a very it's a large. Is it considered a mega church?

[00:02:56] Ashley: Would you probably considered, yeah, I think so.

[00:02:58] Patrick: Yeah. And it's a big deal here in Miami, and they're growing and busting, it seems, and doing amazing things. So Ashley has sort of double duty. We're going to talk about the relationship between the church and the organization. I think some of you will find that particularly informative because many of you are running faith based organizations, or you might have a relationship with a single church who's sort of supporting you. I've seen it a few times, so we're going to talk about some of that. But I just, I've come to totally admire Ashley, love working with her, and just want to introduce her as the executive director of caring for Miami. And thanks for, like, carving out time for this. You didn't hesitate. You said, sure, I don't know what we're gonna do, but yeah. Okay. So welcome to the show, Ashley.

[00:03:49] Ashley: Thank you, Patrick. Thank you for having me.

[00:03:50] Patrick: Tell me what I should have said. Reintroduce yourself. Who, why are you here? Who are you? What are you doing in the world that is loaded?

[00:04:00] Ashley: Yes. My name is Ashley Garritley, and I am the executive director of caring for Miami. Who am I? I am, like I said, the executive director. I am a wife. I am a mom of two little babies, two and a half and five years old, and I have the honor and the privilege to lead caring for Miami, an organization that is celebrating 15 years this September. And, yeah, I'm just incredibly humbled and excited to be able to lead this organization. But that's a little bit about me.

[00:04:34] Patrick: Humble is a good word to describe you. I really saw some of that yesterday when we were doing some coaching work and I was holding up to you what I was observing in your leadership and your longtime co worker and confidant and director of operations. Grace echoed and said, yeah, I'm really glad you said that, Patrick, because I have to tell her that, because she's humble and she is sometimes second guesses herself.

And we were talking about your instincts and your intuition, and you said, yeah, but I don't have the experience. How long have you been in this role as executive director?

[00:05:15] Ashley: I've been the executive director of caring for Miami for two years. I was nominated by the board in 2021 while on maternity leave. I was not even actively engaged, but I was, you know, I was, I've been with the organization for nine years, and I began as a program coordinator coordinating our mobile dental clinic with a really high interest in dental care. And the provision of dental care in our community, and really just being that gap between the individuals who need care and the providers that are able to provide it. And in my time at caring for Miami, I've been able to sit in multiple chairs and wear multiple hats. I became the director of programs shortly thereafter was promoted to associate director right before COVID And right after COVID, we had a executive director transition and interim director stepped in, and I was nominated to serve as our executive director.

[00:06:16] Patrick: You were nominated? It's like, I wasn't looking to. Yeah, you were told you are now the executive director.

[00:06:22] Ashley: No, they did. They took a very good, our board had a very good approach at, let's not just put in the next person that we think is in this organization right now. That is the best. Could be a good fit, might be a good fit, but they took the time to really look inside the organization and consider outside the organization to see who might that next person be. And unbeknownst to me, I was their number one choice.

[00:06:48] Patrick: Well, I think this is also one of those cases where you had been there for a number of years and you were in a leadership role. You were maybe even more of a management role, but you were running a big portion of what caring for Miami actually is in the trenches, and you demonstrated the kind of leadership skills, and you had institutional knowledge, so it wasn't completely out of the blue.

So I want to ask you this, going back to our conversation yesterday about experience, two years now as the executive director, you've never been the executive director of any organization before. And for our audience, Ashley's young. I'll leave it up to her to tell you how young, but she's young. And that, that's what I think that's what brings so much energy to this, and it's another reason why I'm so impressed by you and the wisdom and maturity you do bring to the role.

Let me frame this. You could argue with it, but I'll just lay out a theory off the cuff here, is that when you talk about experience, you know, I've always asked the question, does someone have ten years of experience, or do they have one year of experience repeated ten times, like, am I really learning, or am I just doing the same thing over and over? And I'm not really growing as a leader. So I've. I've known leaders that have been in their role for ten years, but I wouldn't say they had ten years of experience.

They keep repeating the same year. They're not growing, they're not learning.

So I find that there's maybe two levels or inflection points when it comes to learning and experience as a leader. One is over time when you look back and say, boy, here's what I've

learned as a leader. You know, I've been a leader now for 20 years, and here's all the things. But the other is in your first year or two as a leader, the learning happens so fast. You have to learn a lot fast or you just won't make it to year three. So let me, that frames my question. What would you say you have learned most about leadership in your first two years here? Learned you didn't know before you took this. Maybe surprises or just really good things you're glad you've learned. But in the first two years, when it comes to leadership, what would you say are the biggest things you've learned so far?

[00:09:11] Ashley: Well, I would say that the biggest things I've learned so far is that the learning never stops. And so I think that to your point, there are people who maybe don't learn so much year after year, and it's because there's some of us that can just remain stagnant. And we learn either in crisis or we learn when, you know, things are happening, we learn over time. But what I've learned is that I have to, and it's, you know, something that I actually enjoy. I have to constantly be learning and seeking knowledge and seeking wisdom and really trying to uncover the truth about every situation or the facts, really about every situation. And so in the first two years, and especially as an organization that is much smaller, we don't have a lot of staff, a lot of infrastructure.

When situations arise, when anything comes up that we need, we need to lead in that moment. Right. My ultimate goal is always to uncover the facts and really learn in depth of what is going on. I like to be able to. I want to give you an example. We're having a situation, let's say, in our financial department, with our finances, there are a lot of people who have the gift of being able to lead others, to be able to solve problems and figure this out and get back to me on how that is. On what's going on. I like to learn what is going on. I want to understand what's going on so that in the future, I can inform future staff and future volunteers or whoever it might be. I like to have the level of understanding, and it might not be so in depth. You can't know everything, but I like to know and learn and uncover the facts in every situation that I'm dealing with, far deeper than just the surface level. And in management, in leadership, a lot of times we sit at that top 10% of that iceberg, right? We only ever see the top 10%. But I think as leaders, we really need to go against the grain and put on that scuba gear and dive down to the bottom of that iceberg and figure out what's going on in order for us to lead our teams and our processes effectively. Because if we're not getting down to the bottom root cause of what's happening, then how can we expect others to follow? How can we expect others to trust our wisdom and our knowledge and to go with us and lead them? So a lot for me has been learning, but proactively learning.

[00:11:40] Patrick: So before I hear you saying that before you make significant decisions, you really want to investigate and know the facts. So you're making the most informed decision you can possibly make in that moment.

[00:11:52] Ashley: The most informed decision. And there are a lot of people who don't lead that way. That might not be their leadership style.

My leadership style, I've learned, is that I lead with a very high expectation of others, of myself, really, of myself. And in order for me to do that, I want to make sure that I'm making the most informed decisions and that I have all the facts at hand. I'm a true crime junkie. I like to get down to the bottom of facts and crimes and all those things, and I think it translates into my leadership style, where just because something is the way that it is or something is happening, we need to uncover the why. We always need to look at the why.

[00:12:30] Patrick: Yeah, I do know your expectations are high, and I think that's part of what you've been able to do with the organization. We're going to talk about the growth and the scale and the vision of this organization because it's powerful. But you do have high standards.

How, how do you, what are, what are your primary methods for holding that standard for everyone in the organization?

You've got now almost eight, what, 18 staff.

You've got a board. You've got, you know, stakeholders. How, what are, what are your methods for holding people to a higher standard?

[00:13:08] Ashley: Well, first and foremost, I hold myself to the high standard, and I think that as leaders, we need to lead by example, and it's things that are caught and not taught.

I have had to learn the hard lessons that not everybody is going to execute and operate at the same capacity that I do or that others can. And that's been a hard pill to swallow because someone might not do something the way that you do it, or they might not do something exactly to the t. If somebody might not bring 110, but they're bringing 80, and I've really had to learn that lesson hard. But I still do think that leading with a high expectation with my team really starts with us having a clear vision and a clear mission and making sure that I communicate to my team the why behind everything that we do, the mission, the purpose, but also the partners, the stakeholders, the people who are invested in the work of what we're doing. And that's why I feel that I lead at such a high expectation, because I feel almost indebted to those who are propelling the mission of caring for Miami forward. It's their dollars, their investment, their blood, sweat, and tears, and I'm a steward of that, and that's why I lead with such a high expectation. And so if I can properly communicate that and cast that vision to my team, then I feel that they catch it. It's a feeling. It's not a begrudging obedience. It's a camaraderie. It's a teamwork. It's a mission.

[00:14:50] Patrick: Yeah.

So we people who listen to this show or follow our YouTube channel or have worked with me before, know that I get nerdy on things like self determination theory, right? That a good leader creates an environment where their people can be autonomous, where their people can be competent and grow and learn, and to the point you just made, where the people can feel a sense of relatedness and belonging and identity. And I don't know if you ever thought, you know, if you sit intentionally and go, okay, self determination theory, how am I doing these things? But I do think that you just articulated one of your values, which is the relatedness piece, connecting people to the. To the value of the mission, and being the kind of leader who models in a way that they want to relate to you, they want to work for you, they want to drive the mission with you. So whether you have realized it or not, like, one third of self determination theory in the workplace, and what, and what a leader's job is to create that, I think you're doing that in spades.

[00:16:02] Ashley: Thank you. I appreciate it. No. And a rising tide floats all boats, right? All the boats are going to rise when the tide rises. And being able to articulate that to the team, and again, just leading. We have to lead by example. We must lead by example. We cannot expect anybody that we are leading to do something that we wouldn't first do ourselves.

[00:16:27] Patrick: Yeah. Um, I'm gonna. I'm gonna go ahead and shift gears into the next piece that I wanted to talk with you about, and that is the origin of caring for Miami. Um, you're. You're. You're not just faith based like a lot of nonprofits are. You are an. An offshoot or a ministry of Christ fellowship church here in Miami, and yet you are a 501 c three of your own. You've got a governing body, and you've got, you know, an IR's 990 that you complete, and you, you're. You're doing health and human services, you're getting grants you're part of. So, but, but obviously, having been, having worked as closely as I have with you, I hear the faith bent. You know, I hear the caring. I mean, the whole name of the organization is caring, but caring for your people. And, you know, are you using words like stewardship? Those are biblical, faith based

sort of concepts that I think that's.

Maybe I'm wrong, but I think your leadership philosophy seems like just comes straight from your faith and your faith construct.

[00:17:39] Ashley: Absolutely my leadership philosophy and that of those who I lead, it truly is through the example that we finding Jesus. And our organization is an offshoot of Christ Fellowship. We were founded 15 years ago by a few members of the church who said, there's a need in this community, and we need to get out of the four walls of this church and meet it. And not only is there a need, because there's a lot of churches that can meet needs within the church organization, within their own tax id, within that they can serve the needs of the community. But when you're talking about niche services such as dental care and dental clinics and, you know, medical clinics of churches, it does. There are nuances and there are restrictions of what you can and cannot do. My insurance agent looked at me this past year and said, yeah, no, I don't think the church would ever be able to get insured for, like, a dental clinic.

We just probably wouldn't be able to do that. He thought it was the strangest thing. He still thinks we're kind of the strangest thing because we're an offshoot of the church and we provide free dental care. What church do you know that really, that provides free dental care? There are a few, a lot of church based ministries similar to caring for Miami, but that's how we were started. And so starting with a, you know, not even with a mobile dental bus, they just started providing care in different churches and different homes, and being able to meet the needs through this organization. And through that, the organization has grown to be able to provide dental care, but also to meet those, those food needs as well. But going back to your question of us being an offshoot of the church, being able to be tied to the church allows us really to maintain those values that we have, that are rooted in faith, that are rooted in the Bible. And it also allows us to be able to leverage ourselves to work with partners who may or may not align with our values. They're okay with our values. They know we're faith based. Listen, the church is the heart of the community. They're doing the good in the community. The church is the hospital for the herding. Right? And we know that. And so we're able to work with partners all across Miami, all across Florida, even global partners. We've worked with DHL, we've worked with Tiffany and Company. We just worked with EIS Solutions. It's a global software company to really meet needs in this community, because all of us have a bent, a corporate social responsibility, a personal social responsibility to serve others. And being able to work with the church, work with community partners, work with hospitals, work with agencies, it allows us to be able to serve the needs of the community, which is what we really ultimately want to do, faith aside.

[00:20:27] Patrick: Well, you know, you talk about the church providing dental care, and so I'll, you know, just challenge me if I get this wrong, but I think for the layperson out there, it's important to note that yes and no, like, it's not the church providing dental care. Your husband said this beautifully the other night of, look, we see a neat dentistry for people who can't afford it is a big deal. But we don't have the expertise to do that. That's not what we're trained and skilled and even called to do. But if we can support an entity that does that, then it's caring for Miami, that's providing the dental care. It's Christ fellowship. That's supporting caring for Miami. And it's a, it's, you could call it, you know, two sides of the same coin or whatever, but it's. It's. That's nuance. That's different, because you are a nonprofit, again, 501 C three with an autonomous mission and all of that, but with the support of, and the sort of guidance of the church. And it's just a different. It's a different thing.

[00:21:33] Ashley: It's a different thing. And I think a lot of the pitfalls that churches fall into is that they want to do good in the community. They create, you know, these resources or these ministries that are doing good in the community, but they're not the experts, which is what you're saying. You know, you're the expert at a church, at Bible study, at small groups, and that, and

that's the. What we need churches to be. And so when churches can really come alongside the nonprofits in the communities that are doing the work, doing it well, and waking up every morning and knowing the needs of the community, and when those partnerships and that collaboration can start to happen, I mean, the opportunities are limitless because the church can now partner with whatever fits their members real desire, whatever fits their, I don't want to say portfolio, but their needs. They want to do human trafficking, do they want to meet dental needs, medical needs, foster needs, hunger needs, partner with the experts to be able to funnel and mobilize not only finances, but also people, bodies, manpower to all different nonprofits, to be able to support the work in the community. And that's what nonprofits need.

[00:22:43] Patrick: And I think it's brilliant for the church because, you know, if you look at scriptural concepts for the church, you know, Jesus didn't. Jesus spent more time talking about, you know, serving the weakest people than he did. Preach and have churches and build Bible studies and, you know, grow your congregations, it was, when you've done it under the least of these, you've done it unto me, it was, you know, give your coat and it was walk an extra mile. It was eat dinner with the sinners. It was get out there. It wasn't, you know, his teachings weren't about the, the Sunday services, right? Yes, he taught. Yes, he taught. And he. And he said, go and teach.

But the real ministry of Jesus, when we talk about being Christ like, is serving the people. So I think it's brilliant of the church to say, hey, we're fulfilling the calling, but through an innovative way.

[00:23:37] Ashley: And that's what we do is we really stand in the gap with the church and we allow them to fulfill that call, to go to the lost, feed the hungry, help the widows, serve the poor, heal the sick. And we stand in that gap and create that conduit for the church to be able to serve in that way. And Jesus was mobile. So talk about leading an organization that is mobile. We leverage our mobility through mobile units and through being able to go out into the community through our mobile units. We don't have brick and mortar care. Jesus was mobile. He went from community to community. He never stayed in one place for very long. He went from city to city, healing and feeding, and so it really is an example.

[00:24:19] Patrick: He met them where they are.

[00:24:20] Ashley: He met them where they were. So do we.

[00:24:23] Patrick: I have never heard you say that. I mean, I know you're mobile. Your mobility, by the way, which we'll talk about, is, is your core competency as an organization. It's a mobile dental clinic. But that's the first time I've heard you put that in context of the fact that Jesus was mobile, and he didn't just sit there and say, okay, I've got this building over here. Come to me if you want care. He went to them. He found them. That's powerful. That's.

[00:24:46] Ashley: And then we point them back to the church. We're here. We're serving your physical need, but we truly believe that there's a spiritual need. And so then we point them to the church, and that's where our partnership and collaboration with the church is just beautiful.

[00:25:00] Patrick: So that's all nice. Wonderful. What are the challenges in that? What have been. What have been some of the challenges of being a nonprofit, also being a ministry of the church, where those lines get blurred and how do you manage those?

[00:25:15] Ashley: That's a great question.

There's challenges, for sure. One of the things that I think has been really well set up is that

caring for Miami, like you mentioned, has its own 501, its own board of directors, its own policies and procedures and ways that it operates. So it does operate in a completely separate way, and it allows it to do that because we are so different. But the challenges do arise where we have the DNA of the church. We were started by Christ Fellowship, and we always want to ensure that we keep that. We don't want to stray far from that. We want to make sure that we always remember where we started and how we started and the vision that God put into the hearts of those that started the organization. But as we grow and as we increase our capacity and our staff and what we're doing, it creates challenges, because we're growing. We've been dependent, not dependent, but the church has helped support a lot of the organization. And I think that there may be organizations listening that have a similar model where you might have pastors or communications and marketing and people who are helping you in that way, and they've done that for so long for us. But, you know, as you grow, as two organizations are growing side by side, it creates a number of challenges.

There's quite a few. I can't. I can't really articulate one. But you know, what I do love, Patrick, is that we're able to really come to the table and communicate those challenges openly and honestly. And I think you've seen that through our coaching sessions and always leading with that mindset of, we're here to.

To help others.

[00:27:03] Patrick: Yeah.

[00:27:04] Ashley: Yeah.

[00:27:06] Patrick: Tell us about caring for Miami. What's the model? And who are you? What's unique about you? What's the service you're providing?

[00:27:13] Ashley: Well, I think we mentioned mobility. That's definitely what's unique about us. But we are, our mission, really, is to bring basic and critical resources to families in need. And it's broad, but what we do is broad. And what we do through our mobile units is diverse. We have a mobile dental clinic that provides care to people who are uninsured and who lack financial resources to visit the dentist. And some people might say, well, that's not really a need. And the real challenging part is people don't think that it's, like, sexy ministry. It's like, it's not like a cool non. People love feeding hungry children. People love feeding children overseas or providing disaster relief. Oh, yes, there's so many ministries that really stir people's hearts and so many nonprofits and companies that stir people's hearts, but not, not so much dentistry. But our mobile units really focus on that provision of care for those who can't afford it. Florida is one of twelve non expansion states. Medicaid is not covering much for our, for those here in Florida. And we also have a huge partnership with the Miami Cancer Institute for individuals who are experiencing a recent cancer diagnosis and they need dental clearance. They gotta go to the dentist before they can start chemotherapy and radiation. And you're facing medical bills. You already can't afford to put food on the table. The majority of people living in Miami Dade County, 63%, are one disaster, one car crash, one broken washing machine away from not being able to make ends meet. And so we're able to step into that gap. And one of the other things that our organization does is we address food insecurity.

And so we do that through a backpack program. We feed 400 kids on the weekend in our schools. We partner with 18 schools. And we also have. We just newly launched a mobile food market because we said, hey, we're mobile. We do mobile really well. We do food really well. Let's put food on a mobile bus.

[00:29:13] Patrick: And take it to the people.

[00:29:14] Ashley: And take it to the people. And the backpack program, interestingly enough, was a very strategic decision, because the backpack program was a ministry of Christ Fellowship. It was internal, in house ministry of the church that was started by the church. But the church doesn't do backpack program. Right. We go back to that and making those decisions of, is this really where we need to be focusing our efforts, or is this sideways energy? And so bringing the backpack program under caring for Miami has really set it up to be able to not only just partner with a more diverse portfolio of partners, increase community engagement, and really let experts come in and focus on feeding the needs of the community so the church can focus on being the church.

[00:30:00] Patrick: Yeah.

Let's talk a little bit about the scale. You started with two or three people, was a ministry of the church. Today you're your own 501, you've got 18 staff. You've got an annual budget of 1.4 million. Okay.

[00:30:18] Ashley: And without capital projects.

[00:30:20] Patrick: Right. I was gonna say that with the capital projects of, I mean, you're. It's buses and it's.

[00:30:25] Ashley: Yeah.

[00:30:25] Patrick: You have a, you know, an office building to maintain and those kinds of things.

What have been.

How did you do this? How'd you do this? How did you get in a few years to this place where you're serving 1500 unique individuals a year and counting? You've got how many buses now? Is it two, three?

[00:30:48] Ashley: Three.

[00:30:49] Patrick: And I heard your board chair a little while ago saying, you know, it should be five, and we're gonna keep pressing and.

But that, I mean, really, you've had exponential growth in a very few years, and under your young, short leadership time, how?

[00:31:09] Ashley: Well, I have to take it back to the faith, because, Patrick, I'm telling you, I could not have done this on my own. I truly, I truly do believe that God equips the cult, and I have been appointed to caring for Miami for such a time as this. And the way that I've been able to just learn and lead, I truly do feel that it is the Lord who has given me that ability to do so.

But all that, we're missing kind of a part of the story here. So nine years ago, when I started at caring for Miami, I was leading the mobile dental clinic. We had just gotten a new bus. So when caring for Miami had originally begun, we had a retrofitted rv that I think someone donated. It was a two chair dental clinic, and it was incredible. It was the first bus I had ever seen. It's what sold my heart on caring for Miami. I was a volunteer. I loved it. I wanted to be a part of this. Told my mom I was taking a gap year. Wasn't going to finish doctoral program. And it's been the gap decade, longest gap year of my life. But at that moment when I came on staff at caring for



Miami, took a part time position in my gap year. And I remember the executive director at the time left, she hired me and then within a few weeks, she quit. So imagine I'm new, it's me and another, you know, another coworker and the executive director's gone. I actually had to clean out her office. So I cleaned out her office because she just left. And so at that point, the board came in and they said, we have three programs. We have a counseling center that was providing great care, counseling care to the church and to the community. We had a sort of like a language program, the bridge program, and we had the mobile dental clinic. We had just made a big investment in a mobile dental clinic and we had one grant for \$45,000 to provide one day of service in the community.

And they said, you know, Ashley, we're dissolving this counseling center. They're going to break off, they're going to go do their own thing. They can do it. It's something different. We don't want to do it. The other program, we're just, we're not going to put any more efforts towards it. We're going to close that program down. And you have a \$45,000 grant. So when that's gone, like this might be done, you know, it's kind of sink or swim here.

And we just, we hit the ground running. We started providing care. We started fulfilling the deliverables of that grant and we started writing more grants and we started really getting our name out there and working with local hospitals. And that 145 thousand dollars grant has grown into providing care one day a week, has grown into a full service dental safety net clinic that provides care five days a week, on the weekends as well, for a walk in clinic. 91% grant funded 60% of the organization's funding comes through this program. And now we're expanding to two mobile dental clinics. And it's really been blood, sweat and tears. Keep your head down. Let's do the work. There's a need, we want to address it. And so it's been through the generosity of donors and foundations in this community and really through just the team that we've been able to grow the clinic to where it is today and in such a, in such a short time. You know, right after that executive director left, we brought on another executive director and, you know, during his time here, we brought on the backpack program. And that was great. Everyone loved the backpack program, and everybody's been really passionate about the backpack program. But as God would have it, he called to that executive director somewhere else, and he's thriving somewhere else. You know, God moves people out, and it's in situations like that that I've learned, and my staff has had to learn that in those moments, we can't crumble. We've got to lead. And so a lot of times, you know this about me. I'm a high c on the disc assessment. I don't have those high d, but I can operate in that when I need to. And so there has to be times where we need to step in and we need to do the hard work. We need to learn, investigate, figure it out and move forward.

[00:35:28] Patrick: You're a great example, and I've talked about you when I'm doing disc workshops around the country having a low d dimension. And I apologize to our listeners if you're not familiar with the disc assessment. It's a, you know, call it a personality profile, for lack of a better word. It's deeper than that. But it's disc, and each of the letters mean something and it's different styles. And having a low score on any one of those letters does not mean you don't have those skills or those competencies.

It means those aren't your default skills that you lean on as your go tos. So it's tendencies. And you're a great example of someone who does have a low d. But when I watch you and I think when you. I think you're. I think you're consciously. I bet if we did disc, we should do it again. I bet if you did it now, I bet your d is higher than it was when. When you last did disc, because it can change and it changes with context and you adapt to new behaviors that you have to employ, and those do then become more of your. You might. You might be more of a d than you think you are today because you've had to be. So you've adapted now and created these new things. I think it's a great example, actually, of someone who says, look, I can't just say, well, I'm a low d. Can't make change, can't make decisions, can't be direct and daring and bold and

innovative and, you know, can't see the big picture. Sorry.

[00:36:54] Ashley: I like that word that you use, adapt, because I feel that in order, I think that to be a good leader or to be a dynamic leader, a growing leader, you must be able to adapt to change. You cannot be stagnant. You cannot be black and white. Adaptability is key. And it's interesting because sometimes I tell people that I'm a chameleon. You have to be a chameleon. You have to adapt to your environment and learn how to blend and change.

[00:37:24] Patrick: Oh, chameleon. I thought you said comedian. Yeah, you have to be that, too sometimes. Probably.

[00:37:29] Ashley: I gotta be a green today and blue and be part of this tree.

[00:37:32] Patrick: Yeah, right, right. Good. Well, that's a good tenet of, you know, you got to move in and out of this. Leadership is not just, you know, one thing.

So in true leadership style, you just gave all the credit for your growth to God and your team and your stakeholders and your partners.

You know, I'm going to push harder on this. What about your leadership tenants?

What have you brought to the table that you feel like, you know, here's one or two things I think I've done well in terms of leadership that have us where we are.

[00:38:07] Ashley: One or two things that I have, or ten.

I think, I do think my innate desire to be a lifelong learner, to always want to be better, I think that's something that's just been instilled in me from a young age. You know, I was fortunate enough to be raised by parents who 1415 like, you're getting a job, you need to go get a job. A lot of times today, kids aren't, you know, they're not getting jobs until they're well out of college. And that's no shade to anybody. But I have parents who have instilled a very strong work ethic in me from the very beginning, and I saw that in them. And so learning, constantly learning, seeking to learn and always wanting to better myself, I think has made me a good leader because the more that I learn, the more that I grow, the better that I can lead. And I also think adaptability, that flexibility, I do find myself to be not a pushover.

It's not that I'm a doormat or anything like that, but I have the ability to adapt and be flexible and change and pivot and make a decision when we need to. That sometimes is difficult for people to do, and sometimes we have to make decisions that are hard, but decisions that are fast and decisions that kind of go against the grain sometimes. And I feel that I can make those decisions and I can articulate them in such a way that people can get behind it.

[00:39:48] Patrick: Yeah. Yeah. I've seen that in you and your right hand person acknowledged that in you yesterday, your ability to frame conversation and articulate the vision and be clear about the frameworks. I've also noticed when you say that learning is one of the, you know, assets, I. One of the things I've noticed is that you learn fast and you absorb and retain.

I, you, you have said several times to me, yeah, Patrick, you. When you were coaching me, you know, seven years ago, I'm still, you know, I'm still applying this and I'm working on this, and, like, I don't even remember that conversation or, you know, from two years ago. Yeah, Patrick, remember we talked about this and I learned that this, that and the other. And you're applying it and you're retaining it. So you're not just a, you don't just desire to learn. You retain the learning and you apply the learning. It's not just, oh, I go through class after class and I get degrees and

certifications and read books. It's the, it's the application of the learning that I think you've done extraordinarily, and you do it quickly.

[00:40:52] Ashley: Thank you.

[00:40:53] Patrick: What's it going to take to get to the next level? So I asked you yesterday, you know, how many people you're serving a year?

I said, if we, if we asked you that question in 2030, would the number be the same? And you said, I hope not. No, it should be a lot more. What's that going to take? Because, you know, you know my philosophy. What got you here won't get you there. What's it going to take from you as a leader? Because this is a podcast about leadership. What's it going to take? What's next for you? What's your next stretch, your next challenge as a leader?

[00:41:25] Ashley: It's going to take me being able to lead with greater autonomy, with greater trust. Not that I don't trust my team. I do. I trust my team more than anything. But I need to be as leaders. We cannot be in every weed. We cannot be in the weeds. And I think that a lot of us fall into that pitfall where we need to be a part of every decision that's made. We need to be involved and informed in everything. And I think that that can hinder growth and that can hinder an organization. When you have a leader who can't lead a smaller team that leads the organization. Right. If that makes sense. So being able to step back and allow other leaders to rise up and allow them to lead components of the organization is really going to take us to that next. And I don't want to say that I'm not currently allowing that. Obviously, with nonprofits and with organizations, resources are limited, and a lot of times, the executive director has to wear many hats. But to get to that next level, I. My charge is to lead, continue to lead with high expectation, because it's high expectation and excellence, like we have excellence in all that we do, but to lead with greater autonomy and to continue to just lead with vision and clarity, crystal clear clarity of where we're going, because what is it where there's no vision? People perish. And so to know. And that going back to that framework, I can articulate and cast a vision well, but I'm always doing my homework, right. So you always have to do your homework. As leaders, we have to do our homework. We have to know exactly what it is that we're articulating. And that's probably a flaw and a good character trait that I have that I always say I hate questions, I want to go in somewhere, and I never. I don't want people to ask questions because I have clearly articulated and answered every question, so no one needs to ask one. Right. So being able to lead with crystal clear vision and then stepping back and giving that autonomy, you and I discuss a lot about.

I don't know if I'm sharing a trade secret, but disappointing your people at a rate that they can absorb, and you've said that to me for a while, and I don't think I had ever, like, really experienced it. Sometimes I'm like, what is Patrick saying? I don't understand that until recently, where I've had to be stretched as a leader, as we've grown, and I had to disappoint people at a rate that they could absorb. And I'm living right now in the disappointment and seeing people kind of disappointed. Right. And it's hard as a leader to feel that you've failed your team because.

[00:44:12] Patrick: You have to make tough decisions that lead to change, that people.

It's not always satisfying for people.

[00:44:18] Ashley: Right. And I never like to feel, and I don't think anybody does, that we've failed our team. But it's not failure. It's just disappointing them at a rate that they can absorb. And I've realized that when I do that, I can see people who are naturally rising up and leading, because as leaders, we can't be everywhere. And so when we do that, we can identify other

leaders who can come alongside.

And I've been able to kind of see that in this season, and it's been really cool it's been really, really unique.

[00:44:50] Patrick: Wow.

We could definitely go on and on with this. I think that our leaders have, or our listeners have almost certainly got a little bit of a glimpse into what I'm talking about when I say that you've been an extraordinary leader with a very short time in that role. And I'm hearing it. I'm just hearing the clarity of very matured leadership viewpoint coming to a close here. Let me ask you this.

Who is a leader in your life, past, present, someone you know personally or someone that you've just watched from afar? Anyone who you would say has had significant influence on your view of leadership and who you are today? Who would that be and why?

[00:45:44] Ashley: I won't name him, but it was a brief instance. It was our executive director during that first board transition that I mentioned during that first executive director transition that I mentioned when I first came on to this role in caring for Miami, who I really think helped set the trajectory for my time in this organization.

He was our board chairman, and oftentimes board chairman doesn't step in and start directing staff, but sometimes they have to. And in the way that he led, and his leadership style was very valuable to me. He led with clear articulation, crystal clear clarity of what was expected of me.

He allowed me autonomy and room to be innovative, room to have ideas, room to feel heard, and he pushed me into opportunities and situations that I wasn't comfortable with, but he believed in me and pushed me into it. And so his leadership and the way that he led others, but also the way that he led and developed me as a leader is something that I aspire to be. As a leader, I want to make sure that I'm clearly articulating what we do and why, that I'm pushing people into uncomfortable spaces, but empowering them that they can do it and they stand behind them and support them.

[00:47:12] Patrick: Wow. So.

And this person is.

What's amazing is this person is still engaged in the organization.

[00:47:21] Ashley: So he's not. He's not. No, no, he's not. He's actually. I think he's in the Carolina is with you.

[00:47:25] Patrick: Oh, okay. Okay.

[00:47:27] Ashley: Yes.

[00:47:27] Patrick: Awesome. All right. I'm thinking of someone else.

Last question. This is a question I ask everyone on the show.

You got 15 seconds. You're on the mountaintop. You've got a megaphone. All the leaders of the world are below listening to the Ashley Gritley number one tenet of leadership that all leaders

should know. What is that center point for you.

[00:47:54] Ashley: All leaders? My advice would be lead with courage.

Lead with conviction.

Lead by example, and lead with kindness.

You can't.

You can't get honey by kicking hives, right?

[00:48:10] Patrick: So, no, no, that's. Or you can, but you won't be able to enjoy it.

[00:48:16] Ashley: You'll be stung when you get it.

[00:48:18] Patrick: Ashley, thank you. Thank you for everything you're doing. Thank you for all the engagement that I've been able to enjoy with you. And by the way, so we're doing this mobile podcast. I don't know if our listeners can hear this or not because I haven't listened back to it yet, but if you're hearing a bunch of noise in the background, it's growth, right? Because we are at Christ Fellowship right now. We're in the pastor's office, which is this really nice acoustically sound thing, but they're evidently doing some remodeling and renovating, and hopefully that hasn't. I don't think it's been too distracting. It's been fine. Probably can't even hear it. I don't know. We'll see. Anyway, thank you. And thank you for carving out time for this.

I know that this was a little different to do this and be vulnerable on the spot, and it went exactly as I knew that it would. It was extraordinary. And we'll do it again because I know there's going to come a time in the not too distant future when carrying from Miami has blown up yet again and reached this next level. So I just want to thank you for everything you're doing. And thanks. Thanks for letting me have a small role in it and play a partner with you. It's been an incredible honor.

[00:49:32] Ashley: Likewise.

[00:49:33] Patrick: All right, folks, we'll see you here next time. I will say this. Go to [caringformiami.org](http://caringformiami.org). Please go to [caringformiami.org](http://caringformiami.org). You're going to do several things there. One, you're going to just see the extraordinary stuff they're doing. Pictures of these mobile dental clinics and mobile markets and statistics on what they've done and who they're serving and where they're covering. Just pictures of the work in action. Ways for you to get involved if you're in the Miami area, and ways for you to get involved if you're not. Like, give. This is an organization I can very easily endorse. If you want to support an organization where you feel like it's an investment and not a charitable donation, you want to feel like it's really an investment in doing something significant that's changing lives.

This is a great organization to do that with. So go to [caringformiami.org](http://caringformiami.org). I wish all of you could hear the staff people on the buses talk about the stories of the times that they have interacted with so many people and literally changed their lives by giving them a smile, by giving them confidence, by removing the shame and the stigma, and by doing things that they could never otherwise access without caring for Miami. So go there and do that. And lead on. We'll see you next time.