

Kirt Jacobs: Welcome to MoxieTalk with Kirt Jacobs. This is an archived edition when our program was called Leadership Landscape TV.

(Music)

Kirt Jacobs: Welcome to a new partnership between Metro T.V. and Y-PAL, the Young Professionals Association of Louisville, called leadership landscape, where we go inside the minds of local community leaders and allow them a chance to offer some keen insights into who they see themselves as, and most importantly explore just what makes them tick. I am. Kirt Jacobs a current Y-PAL board member and today our guest is Stan Curtis. For those of you who don't know our guest allow me to read some of their bio.

Stan Curtis is the founder of Kentucky Harvest and USA Harvest, he was raised in a children's home. He is actually a former pro tennis player and teacher in Miami. He returned to Kentucky in 1980 and became a stockbroker with J.C. Bradford and Company in 1986 his world changed in a cafeteria line with a simple but profound idea of taking food from people who have it but don't want it. And give it to people who want it but don't have it. This led to the creation of Kentucky Harvest and ultimately USA Harvest. Kentucky Harvest was set up to never accept money from the government or any other source simply to rely on the generosity of volunteers. Thank you, Stan, for being here with us today.

Stan Curtis: Thanks. Thanks for that description.

Kirt Jacobs: Yeah. First question for you, what do you think drives you to do what you do?

Stan Curtis: I think that changes all it's that I think again. In December of 1986 when Harvest started, I was driven because

I think that was a moment chosen for me to recognize a different way of life and to ask a simple question and then come up with an answer to the question. I think I'm driven today because I see the need. I see the need for help but also I see the need for a lot of people to actually be able to help. You know, I've meet a lot of people who if they knew how to help, they would and as as you've experienced recently, when somebody says, "Gee, I would really like to help," I really take that seriously. There are a lot of people who want to help they just need to know way and a lot of times they don't want to help fundraising so I give him a chance to food raise you know. So I think that the what drives me to to keep moving and to try to do better all the time changes all the time but it's basically to improve. I don't know to improve the closeness of people you know.

Kirt Jacobs: Next question for you, with your interesting upbringing, who do you credit to be most influence in your life? If you could name one person.

Stan Curtis: I can't name one person. There are people in my life that I remember. There's a guy named Logan Bo Hannan who ran Bellwood children's home when I lived there. Mr Bo as we called him back then, as a matter of fact I spoke to him on the phone a month ago he's really over ninety years old right now.

Kirt Jacobs: I was going to say, is he still alive?

Stan Curtis: He is and he lives here in town, and I should and will go see him very soon. You know, Mr Bo was a hard-nosed guy, you know, and you either did things right, well you really didn't have much of a choice in that kind of a situation in the children's home, you know, you'd shovel the cow stalls, and you'd tackle the the pigs when we were going to castrate them. You know, you'd chase the horses when we wanted to feed them and you'd hold the cows down when you want to treat him for pink eye and stuff like that that's what we did as a kid. There's also guy named Marlowe Dean who is a music impresario if you will. Here in Louisville, he introduced me and he gets the total credit for me being married for twenty three years to my wife. Harlowe, you know, Harlowe is a

renaissance man of the of the twentieth century and he taught me a lot about the arts and a lot about different things in culture. But you know I don't I don't know where my motivation comes from. I have an intensity within me which gives me the drive to get up every day and be thankful, number one that I'm on the side of the grass, but number two to just try to urge and empower and inspire people to do things better and to do them for people who can't do them for themselves, you know.

Kirt Jacobs: That's great. Do you think that something from birth, that driver, or do you think that's something that life experience kind of brings out the best in people.

Stan Curtis: Well I, you know what I don't know I don't know about the birth part. I do know that survivability. I mean you know when I was eighteen years old the people at the, at the mission, I started to say mission, at the children's home, at the orphanage, told me that that having been, having accomplished what I was able to accomplish in high school that it was wonderful, but you're eighteen years old, you have to leave because you're an adult. So at age eighteen, I was homeless again and and so I think it's survivability. OK? I think it's maybe never looking over your shoulder to see if anybody's gaining on you, but, well fear is a good motivator that's for sure, but I think it's more than that now, I think it has to do with accomplishing things that a lot of people maybe don't think about, so that whatever it is it's there and I'm glad it's there.

Kirt Jacobs: That's a great answer. I think we might know the answer this one but, what do you feel was the most defining moment of your life, if you had one?

Stan Curtis: Well, I think there were, there were a couple of them. Number one, the day that I married my wife, was an inspirational, a motivational time for me to want to live up to somebody. OK? The day that my daughter was born, was a true blessing for me because I perceive that now is the day that my family tree started.

Kirt Jacobs: right.

Stan Curtis: OK? The day that my grandson was born. OK? is a branch off the family tree. All right? that I saw start with my daughter. I think obviously, the day that changed my life is is on that December day in 1986 when I asked that question about the green beans being thrown away and have to get a commercial answer I ask him again and he gave me a very standard, dry “Well you know somebody said this so we do that,” and, you know, that was eleven and a half billion pounds of food ago. So there are a lot of journeys that you take in life. You know? So, you know, I may be lucky to have a lot of those defining moments. You know? Along the way. Yeah I mean they’re pretty carved in stone though, you know, they’re pretty black and white answer, to what those moments are.

Kirt Jacobs: It’s good that you recognize them I don’t know that everyone recognizes those moments.

Stan Curtis: Well...

Kirt Jacobs: In their life and then how they react to them.

Stan Curtis: I mean you know. Yeah maybe that’s true too, you know, I mean I aspire to be a wonderful father and a great husband but a perfect grandfather. OK? And on the other hand with Harvest, I aspire to having that obsession that I have for helping those less fortunate. Having that adopted by people your age and younger. you know? So there are a lot of different aspirations that with that come with those defining moments, but they’re all pretty much segregated. I mean you can understand where all of them are. You know?

Kirt Jacobs: That leads into our next question If there is one, what is your biggest professional regret? In other words, is there anything that you would have done differently.

Stan Curtis: Sure. Yeah, yeah and I can tell you that it’s very easy. I was giving a speech at Notre Dame a few years ago, and after telling the story of Harvest for a while, a young woman stood up and she said, “when did you start this harvest program?” Now this is a room with four hundred kids, and I’m doing a monologue and all

of sudden she decides it's going to be a dialogue, and I said OK. I said well, you know, I said I was thirty seven years old when I started this Harvest program and and I really regret to your answer the fact that I didn't realize that I could have done it at age twenty seven. Or maybe should have done it at age seventeen started caring about other people and so on and she said, yeah, I guess she had to stand for something sooner or later didn't you. Well that's wonderful because yeah that's my regret that I wasn't, that moment in life didn't happen until I was thirty seven years old. OK? It would have been great if it happened to thirty. All right or twenty nine. OK? but it didn't, so that's that that's my regret. You know everything else is pretty small compared.

Kirt Jacobs: That's good, the way you recognize it.

Stan Curtis: Oh yeah

Kirt Jacobs: people don't always recognize...

Stan Curtis: Well I feel it too. You know?

Kirt Jacobs: On the flipside of that, the next question, what do you feel is your biggest professional triumph?

Stan Curtis: I think having a, I think having a fantastic wife, I think having a beautiful daughter. I think having a great grandson. I think that, you know, one thing that I realize all the time and I travel with Harvest a lot. And when I go to a city, like November twelfth. OK. I'm going to be in Palm Beach because we have a Palm Beach harvest right? And you don't think of Palm Beach Florida as a heavy need but this Harvest chapter, this Harvest chapter grew to five million pounds a year faster than any harvest chapter ever. And we've got 124 of them now. And in Palm Beach, Florida I know that I'm going to be at a volunteer appreciation event. There will be three or four hundred people in the room. OK? All these volunteers who are doing the work come and you know they exchange pleasantries and so on and so forth and I've done thousands of these over the years. OK? And every time I go to one of these things if I get a moment by myself I step back and I look, and I realize that

I had an idea and all of a sudden in Palm Beach, Florida all these people know each other, you know, because I had an idea in Louisville, Kentucky. That to me that makes me very proud as a father is the founder of Harvest. OK? You know but then I have to step up and remind them that the reason we're all friends and we're here is because there are people less fortunate. So I kind of throw water on the fire a little bit, but no I just think I say you know maybe she knows her. He knows him because I had an idea and it travelled and that's what ended up happening and that fascinates me about life.

Kirt Jacobs: why don't we play off that. Can you define leadership in one word? If you had to pick one word in the lexicon.

Stan Curtis: Yeah, "example."

Kirt Jacobs: Interesting, I've never heard that one, it's usually "passion" or "commitment"

Stan Curtis: I think that if you if you are an example, then you are a leader, and I really believe that, I really believe that I don't believe that you... I don't believe that leadership can be taught, but I believe it can be learned. OK? I think that learning leadership you have to have examples. OK? I think, maybe, I have a different view of leadership a lot of times. OK? I mean you can put all the wonderful vernacular to leadership but, Kirt I think what it boils down to is doing. OK?

Kirt Jacobs: One last question. When the great day comes, how do you want to be remembered?

Stan Curtis: I want to be remembered, I want to be remembered as somebody who cared. I want to be remembered as somebody who did something about their passion and about their caring. I'd like a soup kitchen named after me somewhere in America it doesn't matter there are a lot of missions out there I go to. you know? but I want to be, I just want to be remembered as somebody who cared, that's all.

Kirt Jacobs: Stan, thank you very much for being on Y-PAL

leadership landscape. Thank you, appreciate it.

(Music)

Kirt Jacobs: Thank you for listening to MoxieTalk with Kirt Jacobs. This episode was archival audio from when we were known as Leadership Landscape TV. If you have any feedback, general comments, or a recommendation for a suitable guest feel free to email me at kirt@moxietalk.com or catch us on Facebook under MoxieTalk with Kirt Jacobs, or on Twitter under [@kirtjacobs](https://twitter.com/kirtjacobs) or our extensive website at www.moxietalk.com