

SCOTT JEFFREY MILLER

MASTER MENTORS



30 TRANSFORMATIVE
INSIGHTS FROM
OUR GREATEST MINDS



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INTRODUCTION

I'll admit I'm in a bit of an enviable position. Every week I have the opportunity to sit with some of the brightest, most creative, disciplined, and driven people you can imagine and pick their brains for the better part of an hour. They appear as guests on FranklinCovey's weekly *On Leadership* podcast series, which I've had the honor to host since its inception. The series' goal is simple: bring world-renowned experts into an easily digestible, timely, relevant, and inspiring podcast—which has become the largest and fastest-growing weekly leadership podcast in the world.

Conducting the *On Leadership* interviews and reading many of the guests' books has been an experience that often leaves me with a sense of awe and humility. I can honestly say that spending time with each of them and with their respective works has profoundly changed both my professional and personal life. So I wrote this book as an homage to that experience by selecting thirty *On Leadership* guests I've now deemed "Master Mentors," and sharing a single transformational insight from each of them. These insights are often drawn from our interview, but in some cases may have come from a prior or later experience with them. Regardless, the unifying criteria for appearing in this book as a Master Mentor is being a featured guest on the FranklinCovey *On Leadership* podcast series. If you subscribe to *On Leadership*, you'll recognize that our guests share more than a single insight

during their interview. However, I wanted this book to be easily digestible and actionable, so I've selected a single insight I've designated as transformational—sometimes against the backdrop of my professional roles as a former corporate officer, team leader, and entrepreneur, and other times through my personal roles as husband, father, brother, son, and friend.

You'll discover that, although the chapters are laid out in a similar format, the content, length, and style of each may read differently. Some are longer and others more succinct. A few even include verbatim transcripts from their interview. Read nothing into those choices. I did my best to represent each person uniquely while creating a cadence that I hope illustrates a transformational insight you'll find valuable and applicable in your life.

I've selected the thirty Master Mentors to cover a wide swath of experiences, challenges, and insights relatable to anyone in a formal leadership role or those working on the self-leadership to move ahead, get unstuck, or open their minds to new ideas and ways of thinking. Depending upon your situation at the moment, some of these transformational insights may hit you as profound, while others serve more as a reminder of what you perhaps already know. Either is fine, as each is beneficial. For a sense of the diversity of experiences and structure you'll find in the pages ahead, consider just a handful of the Master Mentors highlighted:

- Nick Vujicic, author of too many books to recall: His chapter highlights a powerful moment of insight while he was a guest at my home. His example will change you forever.
- Stephanie McMahon, the Chief Brand Officer for WWE: Her chapter speaks very little to the content of our interview, which was superb, but rather to the minutes that led up to her appearance.

- Kim Scott, author of *Radical Candor*, and Trent Shelton, author of *The Greatest You*: These two chapters are fundamentally different from the others in that I included the word-for-word transcript from portions of their interviews so as not to miss any of their voice or nuance.
- Stephen M. R. Covey, author of *The Speed of Trust*: This chapter focuses on an insight and leadership skill I learned from him nearly twenty-five years ago—long, long before the first podcast. Not *my* first podcast, but *the* first podcast.

And those are just five of the thirty Master Mentors included in this first volume. Narrowing from well over a hundred interviews was no minor challenge, and is why there absolutely has to be a second, third, fourth, and ongoing volumes in this series. Looking forward to *Master Mentors: Volume 12* in 2032!

To center the main transformational insight and help it stick in your life, every chapter ends with a summation of the key insight and a question or two to prompt deeper thinking and adoption of the principle/practice. My hope is that in the same way I have made these Master Mentors a part of my life, you'll accept the invitation to do the same. Chances are, there's at least one transformational insight highlighted here that holds the potential to profoundly change your life for the better.

Think of reading this collection of Master Mentors like spreading a bet across all thirty-seven numbers on a roulette wheel. If you're willing to give the ball a spin, you're guaranteed to hit the jackpot.



MASTER MENTORS





NICK VUJICIC
FRANKLIN COVEY
ON LEADERSHIP
WITH SCOTT MILLER

EPISODE 100

NICK VUJICIC

GRATITUDE

MANY OF THE forthcoming chapters in *Master Mentors* feature a particular insight I've taken from either a guest's book or their podcast interview. Then there's Nick Vujicic. There's no such thing as a single transformative insight from Nick. Just being in his physical presence is wholly transformative.

Although Nick appeared virtually on our podcast, as most guests do, several weeks later he was a guest at my home in Salt Lake City, Utah. Although Nick lives in Texas, he was traveling to California and dropped by to join my family and friends for a dinner party of sorts. If you're connected to me on any social media platforms or by chance follow me, you know my family has a tradition of hosting a monthly dinner where we invite someone of unique stature to join us and about fifteen local friends. Each month I invite a mix of local business and community leaders, educators, friends, and professional colleagues to join a featured guest for a few hours of food and conversation. It's been a remarkable experience not only for the

invited guests but also for our three sons (ages ten, eight, and six) who meet and sit in on fascinating conversations with celebrities, government leaders, and people we've met who are remarkable in some unique way or have accomplished something truly significant. We've hosted famous musicians, actors, authors, and politicians. A recent guest was former Utah governor and ambassador Jon Huntsman, who ran for the Republican nomination for president in 2012 and served as the United States ambassador to both China and Russia under the Obama and Trump administrations. You could have heard a pin drop during that dinner as he shared stories of his life as a diplomat. Truly remarkable insights are shared each month from different guests.

Nick Vujicic's dinner was even more captivating.

Now, what you need to understand and perhaps be reminded about Nick is that he has no limbs—no arms and no legs. He was born in Melbourne, Australia, with just his head, neck, torso, and a small footlike appendage attached to his waist area that allows him some simple mobility. His “foot” provides him with some pivot capability when he's on the ground and also allows him to text and type. He cannot eat or drink without help. He cannot dress, use the restroom, shower, or even scratch his nose without help. His physical limitations are completely unrelatable to any able-bodied person. I suspect they are also fairly unrelatable even to most people with physical handicaps.

Nick has channeled his physical challenges into a brand of inspiring everyone he meets. He has authored numerous books on his life's journey, his perseverance, his religious faith, and leadership topics that have made him a worldwide celebrity speaking on stages to massive audiences. He told me his largest audience ever was eight hundred thousand people in eastern Europe. Can you even imagine that? I once spoke to seven thousand people and I thought I was the bomb!

Nick Vujicic is the real deal in every aspect. Beyond his physical limitations, most of us can't relate to his influence, celebrity, or constant stream of opportunities from companies, nonprofits, governments, and organizations asking him to speak to their group or represent their brand. In a moment of levity on my living-room sofa, Nick confessed, "It's a good life, Scott." The irony was not lost on me, I promise you. But his lack of arms, hands, legs, and feet isn't the feature of his message and legacy. It's his mental attitude of gratitude. And that's the transformative insight I'd like to highlight.

Nick's life is full of gratitude for all he has. He focuses solely on what's ahead, not what's behind; on what's happening now and next, not what's missed or lost. He is a model of what Franklin-Covey's cofounder Dr. Stephen R. Covey would describe as having an abundance mentality. It's actually contagious being in his presence. You can't help but feel some shame thinking about your trivial problems when you're with Nick. But I had the opposite feeling with Nick at my home—an overwhelming sense of gratitude flooded over me. Here's the story:

Nick is sitting on one of the purple velvet sofas in my home, a prominent feature of the many videos I've taped while sitting on them. He's on one sofa and I'm on another sitting across from him. My wife, Stephanie, is sitting next to Nick and we're just chatting before the other guests arrive for our monthly dinner. As Nick is talking about some business opportunities, I find myself lost, looking at his body. Now, I know Nick well enough not to be awkward around him, plus he has a remarkable ability to put everyone at ease as soon as they encounter him. But I am, for perhaps the first time in my life, truly grateful for my hands and fingers—something I notice when I unconsciously retrieve a glass of water on the coffee table and drink from it. Apparently, I am thirsty, but it is all done reflexively. I don't even think about it. It

is just so natural—I am thirsty, so I will drink some water. Zero effort on my part.

Do I even need to describe the level of heroic effort it would take for Nick to access some water? If his life depended on it, I'm not sure he could accomplish it alone. At least not in my home.

I may not be adequately describing the insight here other than to say I didn't fully understand gratitude before that day . . . before looking down at the glass of water in my hands. Then, as I put the water down, I took a fuller inventory of all my complacency: my arms and all they do for me, my legs and the mobility they afford me. This sounds dumb, I fear, but I'm now just typing from my heart to relay what has become a newfound sense of gratitude in me.

The doorbell rang, and without even thinking about it, I stood up and walked to the front door to welcome our dinner guests. Walked . . . with my own two legs and feet. Then about ninety minutes later, while we're all outside having dessert and listening to Nick entertain us with some of his most outrageous, blush-worthy travel stories, I again thought about my hands. I looked down and noticed I was holding a small dessert plate, putting a fork into my slice of Key lime pie. I looked over at Nick, watching him constantly balancing his torso in his chair while I mindlessly ate my pie. I didn't even remember picking it up to hold it.

I think you get the point by now. Certainly not with every motion, but since my time with Nick in our living room and subsequently at the dinner, I have a viscerally heightened sense of gratitude for what I've completely taken for granted my entire life: my hands and fingers. I can drink a glass of water. Nick can't. I can put a fork into my Key lime pie. Nick can't. I can catch myself if I fall out of my chair. Nick can't. By now I'm sure you're wondering how he even functions. Nick is very resourceful, but he also travels with Giovanni, a full-time companion, who nearly invisibly attends to all his needs—a hero in his own right.

To cap this chapter, Nick's life reminds me of something FranklinCovey's other cofounder, Hyrum Smith (creator of the famed Franklin Planner), was known for saying: "I have to. I ought to. I get to." In short, Hyrum proposed there were three mindsets we can choose from in life. I'll use a mundane task we all face daily to illustrate them.

"I *have* to take the garbage out."

"I *ought* to take the garbage out."

"I *get* to take the garbage out."

In the winter evenings here in Salt Lake City, when the wind and snow are blowing at ten degrees and the sidewalk to where our garbage cans are stored is iced over, I'm mindful of Nick. Then I think to myself: *I get to take the garbage out*. I'm sure Nick would absolutely love the chance to do the same. And thanks to his abounding and living example of gratitude, I can say that now I do too.

...

THE TRANSFORMATIONAL INSIGHT

Build mindfulness around the small things you take for granted (which actually may be big things) and practice more consistent gratitude in every area of your life.

THE QUESTION

What will it take in your life to transform your level of gratitude from *I have to* or *I ought to* to *I get to*?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Capping a twenty-five-year career in which he served as chief marketing officer and executive vice president, Scott Miller currently serves as FranklinCovey's senior advisor on thought leadership, leading the strategy, development, and publication of the firm's bestselling books on thought leadership.

Miller hosts the FranklinCovey-sponsored *On Leadership with Scott Miller*, the world's largest and fastest-growing weekly leadership podcast, reaching more than six million people. Miller also authors a leadership column for Inc.com and *Utah Business*, and hosted the weekly iHeart Radio show *Great Life, Great Career*.

Miller is the author of the multivolume *Mess to Success* series, including *Management Mess to Leadership Success: 30 Challenges to Become the Leader You Would Follow*, *Marketing Mess to Brand Success*, and the forthcoming *Job Mess to Career Success* (January 2022). He is the coauthor of the *Wall Street Journal* bestseller *Everyone Deserves a Great Manager: The 6 Critical Practices for Leading a Team* and the author of *Master Mentors: 30 Transformative Insights from Our Greatest Business Minds*, which features insights from his interviews with the leading thinkers of our time, including Seth Godin, Susan Cain, General Stanley McChrystal, and many others.

In addition to supporting FranklinCovey's global thought leadership efforts, Miller has developed the **ignite your genius™**

coaching series to help leaders take their careers from accidental to deliberate. He hosts FranklinCovey's Bookclub.com series with world-renowned authors.

Prior to his roles as chief marketing officer and executive vice president of business development, Scott served as general manager and client partner in FranklinCovey's Chicago and UK offices. As a highly sought-after speaker and podcast guest, he has presented to hundreds of audiences across every industry and loves to share his unique journey as an unfiltered leader thriving in today's highly filtered corporate culture.

Miller began his professional career in 1992 with the Disney Development Company (the real estate development division of Walt Disney Company) as a founding member of the development team that designed the town of Celebration, Florida.

Miller and his wife live in Salt Lake City, Utah, with their three sons.

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