

Heather Vickery 0:03

Hi, everyone, this is Heather Vickery. Thanks so much for tuning into this week's episode of The Brave Files Podcast. You know, when you move forward with intention, and you set boundaries and you remain true to yourself, you begin to lead the life that you were meant to live. This shift in both your mindset and actions will build the groundwork to unlock a bolder, deeper and more fulfilling life in every aspect. It's in this shift, that you find the empowerment that is within you. Because remember, empowerment isn't a gift somebody gives you. It's only there when you show up for yourself. So it's in these ways that you'll learn to choose bravely each and every day. So I invite you to join us for the Brave Method Workshop that starts next week, Tuesday, December 8. This is where you'll discover my proven five-part method that's built specifically for those who are ready to take powerful action and uplevel their life and their business. The Brave Method Workshop is designed for you if you are ready to take intentional action and accelerate your success, both in your personal life and in your business. The event starts on December 8. Registration starts right now. Join us today by visiting VickeryandCo.com. This is a completely free event. It's hands-on. It's intensive. It's engaging and exciting. And now is your opportunity to step out of your comfort zone and manifest your dreams again. Register today, at VickeryandCo.com. So this week's episode is all about leading a business with compassion. My guest Chris Gannon grapples with this concept every day. As the founder of a recruiting company, Chris seeks to create an environment where both his employees and his clients feel safe and supported. During the pandemic. However, this business model felt more like a pipe dream than a reality. Rather than give up and succumb to a typical capitalist mentality, Chris chose to step into his brave and put his people first. This is a great episode, Chris and I talk about the idea that hard work and hard play lead to a well rounded, balanced if you will, life, and the fact that when you lead and serve from a good place, a place of honesty, and authenticity, the money follows. It's important to make people feel heard in any aspect of your life. But listening to the people you work with, is a key part of being a successful professional. Being an attentive and thoughtful listener will lead to more open doors and growth across the board. And interpersonal connections have value. All of them no matter what, if you think it was a waste of time, reframe that conversation. We talked about this and so much more. So let's get to it.

Chris Gannon 3:09

Empathetic, passionate, and charismatic.

Heather Vickery 3:12

This is Heather Vickery. And you're listening to The Brave Files, stories from people living courageously. When we choose bravely and big and small ways, it powerfully elevates our lives. I hope these stories connect with you and encourage you to embrace bravery in every possible way, day after day. Together, we can build a movement of courageous living that enriches both our lives and our communities. And if you enjoy the show, I ask you to please share it with others. Maybe think of someone who you want to choose bravely right alongside you. Thanks for tuning in. Now, here's the show. Hey, everybody, this is Heather Vickery. I'm excited to have a new friend, Chris Gannon, here with me. And Chris and I met through Pod Max, which is a really cool podcasting experience and event. And it's been so much fun to just briefly chat with you, Chris, to, to dig out what your brave story is. And it's one of the things that I love about this

show is that we tell a unique story every week. And this just goes to prove this format where I really didn't have any prep and you didn't come to me and say I have this brave story. I want to tell it. We were put together I think the universe has always got our back. And to realize that really everybody has a brave story. So I'd love for you to tell folks just a little bit about who you are and what you do. And then we're going to chat about what, what you do that's unique in your industry and how that is such a brave thing to bring to the world.

Chris Gannon 4:51

Very cool, Heather. Thank you for having me today. My name is Chris Gannon. I'm the founder of a company called Captivate Talent. we're a recruiting firm that specializes In building out revenue teams for early and growth-stage startups, so

Heather Vickery 5:04

That is cool. Alright.

Chris Gannon 5:06

Yeah. Now I've been in recruiting for the better part almost two decades now a decade and a half but makes me feel old.

Heather Vickery 5:11

You look you, look really young. So I may I don't believe you at all. You look great. You look like you just stepped out of college. So your background I love it. You were, you were in sales. What's the first thing that you sold out of college?

Chris Gannon 5:28

Yellow Pages. It's like straight up old school phone book, walking into a business Yellow Pages.

Heather Vickery 5:34

That's amazing. I wonder if everybody listening even knows what the my kids would not know what a yellow pages is.

Chris Gannon 5:41

See that's where I date myself. When I tell when I really tell people my real first job out of college.

Heather Vickery 5:47

That's awesome. You know what my first job out of college was? It's so similar. Just as awful. I sold copiers.

Chris Gannon 5:54

Ooh, Xerox Rico, one of those.

Heather Vickery 5:56

It was, yeah..that wasn't the brand that we sold. And I mean, I worked for the slimiest, just people on the planet, that level of sales where, the same thing, knocking on doors, nobody wants to buy a copier. And nobody really wants to buy yellow pages that either we just do it because we have to what we don't anymore.

Chris Gannon 6:13

I got thrown out of so many auto body shops. Mostly the auto body shops.

Heather Vickery 6:18

That's so funny. I love it. That's brave all in itself, is to go and do that kind of cold calling sales. It's a training that you cannot get in any other type of job.

Chris Gannon 6:31

You know what, it actually really sets you up for success. Because then like if you move into another role in sales or something like that, you have to like cold call, you're like, wait, you can't throw something at you. If you curse at me, I can just hang up the phone. This is easy now.

Heather Vickery 6:48

That's so funny. It's true knocking on those doors, I will tell you the best thing that job did for me is I learned the streets of downtown Chicago so well because my territory was right in the city, in the loop and so I can get around. So I'm grateful, grateful for that. All right. So you went from selling ads in the phone book, which I think is such a great story. I really do, to going into recruiting and tell us a little bit about what that environment was like and what then led you to starting your own business in a very different way.

Chris Gannon 7:23

Agency Recruiting. So big, big agency recruiting, which was at that time, it was a little bit like Wall Street-ish. Like the movie.

Heather Vickery 7:32

Yeah. Very cutthroat. Yeah.

Chris Gannon 7:35

Corporate cutthroat, clean-shaven, suit, and tie every day. 14-15 hour days. I mean, it was, it was really good boot camp early in life. Taught you some good skills and you know good like self-discipline.

Heather Vickery 7:50

Maybe some things you don't want for your life.

Chris Gannon 7:53

And a few things that Yeah, yeah, you once you step out of that world, you probably like , we should get rid of this part of me.

Heather Vickery 8:00

Okay, excellent. So tell us about that. What did you love? What did you learn that you've used every day of your life since then?

Chris Gannon 8:08

I mean, it's the first thing was I had to be in the office. The absolute latest you were allowed to be in the office was 8 am. And you were you were able to leave at five o'clock on Fridays.

Heather Vickery 8:22

I was never cut up for that shit. I sold copiers. And then I went and I did nonprofit event planning and then I realized, I do not work well for other people. I've been an entrepreneur most of my adult life.

Chris Gannon 8:34

When you do the, when you do the outside sales, it's kind of cool. Especially out of school, you're like, Oh, I got a 10 o'clock appointment.

Heather Vickery 8:41

I did my shopping. I did a lot of shopping.

Chris Gannon 8:44

8:30 meeting when I sold the Yellow Pages, that's probably why I got thrown out of those auto body shops. Walking in at 1130. I'm like, Hey, what's up?

Heather Vickery 8:52

That's too funny.

Chris Gannon 8:53

Um, but yeah, there was a lot of self discipline that was taught. I mean, I was 7:30 in the morning was normal time to be in the office. And ya learned how to just endure and push through. There was a recession in there.

Heather Vickery 9:07

Yeah. Yeah.

Chris Gannon 9:08

You know, my first year in the business, everyone had nice suits, and it was like printing money. And as a 23-year-old, I was like, This is the greatest thing in the world.

Heather Vickery 9:16

Yeah.

Chris Gannon 9:17

And then 2008 happened. I was like, what's happening? The world's burning down.

Heather Vickery 9:21

Yeah.

Chris Gannon 9:22

So the recruiting industry took a hard nosedive. And I watched my team go from I think was 120 to 43.

Heather Vickery 9:31

And you stayed on the team.

Chris Gannon 9:33

And it was just I mean, I think it was part dumb luck. I was a low headcount cost. I didn't know anything better than to make 120 phone calls a day. So it was kind of like..

Heather Vickery 9:44

I mean, that's drive like a

Chris Gannon 9:46

Yeah, like, you just had that there was nothing there was no way to outsmart it except by just sheer will.

Heather Vickery 9:51

Yeah.

Chris Gannon 9:52

And you know, I think that's important at that point in life. You have to kind of just have that.

Heather Vickery 9:55

I think it's kind of important for for everybody. I mean, folks, tune into this show for a lot of differen reasons but we had a lot of entrepreneurs, and that that willingness to and I'm a big fan of creating work life harmony, like I do not actually think you have to work 24 hours a day, I think you should sleep, I think you should take vacation, I think you should eat well, all of those things, but you've got to just get in it and do it. If it's 120 calls a day, or whatever it is, if you don't show up, nothing works.

Chris Gannon 10:27

If you're in your 20s, and you're not out working everyone around you, like, you're not gonna be able to make it when you're in your 30s because the energy levels just not the same.

Chris Gannon 10:42

These were like Tuesday nights going out till 2 am. And then you're just in the office. You can't do that in your 30s.

Heather Vickery 10:48

Yeah, try your 40s.

Chris Gannon 10:50

40's? I would be dead.

Heather Vickery 10:52

You'd be dead. I'll be 46 in just a few weeks.

Chris Gannon 10:55

Yea, really? No way.

Heather Vickery 10:56

Yeah, true story.

Chris Gannon 10:57

All right.

Heather Vickery 10:58

Yeah. And I'm tired. I mean, I'm a I'm a single mom and I adore my children, but they are with their other parent 50% of the time. And I'm like ready to fall into bed when they leave because they stay up late. And I spend time with them. And one of them doesn't like to sleep and I'm like nine o'clock, like they're gone. I'm like, I gotta go to bed.

Chris Gannon 11:17

So 26 year olds out there, put the work in now like it does not get easier.

Heather Vickery 11:23

Well lay that foundation, which I think is really important. Although I will say all of you listening, I probably don't have very many 26 year old listeners. You can still put the work in in the hours. I'm a firm believer and I would love to know how that shifted for you, Chris in particular. Like if you have five to eight actual dedicated, focused hours of work a day. You can really rock some shit out. I really believe that.

Chris Gannon 11:51

You should. There are so many distractions. I think today, that if you could even five hours a day, if you get five hours out of your people, if you get five hours out of yourself, like pure focus work like, you won.

Heather Vickery 12:05

I hear that right? Because most of the time we're fucking around. Like if you're actually making those phone calls or writing whatever you're writing or connecting and all of that you're doing your work. You don't have to work like a lunatic- you don't. So tell us, tell me what you hated about this agency recruiting that you then went to create your own business and an a completely different way.

Chris Gannon 12:38

So yeah, there were there's a little bit of a journey in between so that the thing I hated. And I think I had this old bought my old book boss from the Yellow Pages met me for lunch one day. I'm so proud of you. You were the guy couldn't get to work on time sometimes, like look what you've done. Like but I feel like you're, there's something missing. And I don't know how she saw this. But there was, there, I wasn't able to be creative. Like as creative as you got was if you wore a blue a white shirt or a blue shirt or pink shirt that day. That's about as creative as you got like brown shoes, brown shoes, were frowned upon. Everyone lashes.

Heather Vickery 13:12

Brown shoes are frowned upon.

Chris Gannon 13:15

And I hated that. Because I grew up with a, my father was an entrepreneur, my grandmother on his side was an entrepreneur, my grandfather, on my mother's side owned his own record company. So like,

Heather Vickery 13:27

Cool. So you were born an entrepreneur.

Chris Gannon 13:30

I couldn't do other things. So that, this old boss sat me down, she gave me a book and it's called Poke the Box. And still laugh at her when I see it. It's always on my nightstand.

Heather Vickery 13:40

Really sounds inappropriate. I'm not gonna lie.

Chris Gannon 13:43

Yeah, it's it wasn't a good book to give a 28 year old at a big corporate company that had ideas, like it was not healthy for my work life situation at the time. So I read it and I was like, Oh, I could have ideas and I can do other things. And it didn't work.

Heather Vickery 14:00

Because you just weren't in a space where there was any autonomy or ability to do that.

Chris Gannon 14:05

No, there was no way of like when Facebook came, like, I used Facebook to help me recruit and they like they blocked it. And I was like, what do you mean, this is where all my people are, this is where my network is. And they're like, don't use Facebook, use our system. And I'm like, that's stupid.

Heather Vickery 14:20

Are they still around? Because I feel like..

Chris Gannon 14:23

They're still around.

Heather Vickery 14:24

They're using Facebook now though, you know they are.

Chris Gannon 14:26

They're probably using Facebook now. I think, figuring out what LinkedIn is, is what I see on LinkedIn. But you know, there are 40 year old brands, so they don't need to think like that.

Heather Vickery 14:36

That's true.

Chris Gannon 14:36

They don't need to be innovative. But for me, I was like, how am I gonna find my network? They're on LinkedIn or on Facebook. So I left, which was crazy and scary. And my parents were like, are you sure like, you have a really good job with a big salary, you're about to get promoted again. You just had an awesome year. My team was number one in the company. I left and I went to a startup and I walked in and there was a laptop. And that was like, that was my team. And that was my like, here you go, here's your training manual. And over the next three years, I worked at two high growth startups as a head of talent. So it was the other side of the business in recruiting. Ah, and it was really cool experience.

Heather Vickery 15:19

I love that the other side, I think it's really important to be on both sides. When I was in events, I was, I had been the caterer, I'd been the plant, like, I've done all the things. So what did you learn by being on the other side?

Chris Gannon 15:32

So it was really interesting to see how these companies operate internally from like a very business-y standpoint, but you start to learn that, you know, recruitment is seen as this like transactional job, and recruiters tend to have like, a bad like, car salesmen, lawyer type,

Heather Vickery 15:51

For Sure. Yeah.

Chris Gannon 15:53

And I get that, and I understand that I honestly, I didn't, it didn't bother me when I worked for that big agency. But then I started working at these other companies. I'm like, oh, because like you never hear back from them, or they like ghost you or, like, now I had to represent this brand that was a company I worked for not, I kind of represent the startup, so you couldn't do things like that. And then I was fortunate my last startup, I worked for a CEO who lead with empathy. And he always did the right thing, not the most profitable thing.

Heather Vickery 16:28

And not the easy thing, always either.

Chris Gannon 16:30

And it taught me that if you do this, it might work for you, too. Like it either is a greater, I don't want to say strategy, because that almost seems like you're doing it intentionally to reap benefits. But like if you lead with good, and you lead with like a good mindset, like it works, like you don't always have to be thinking of your bottom line, your profit and like looking at people as transactions.

Heather Vickery 16:58

What I love about that, and what I've learned so much from being a coach is that the money comes when you when you lead and you serve from the right place. The result is you make the money. And so learning to lead with empathy, learning to be a mentor in that space, and to actually care about the people you're working with and working for will always outproduce anything else.

Chris Gannon 17:27

It's it's definitely a longer journey. And it's sometimes a more painful journey for that.

Heather Vickery 17:33

Yeah.

Chris Gannon 17:33

I mean, when I started my, my company, when I started Captivate Talent, I hired my first employee, like, I gave her benefits and paid her salary, which most companies in recruiting world like they pay you on a draw.

Heather Vickery 17:44

That's super stand up of you.

Chris Gannon 17:46

And people like, What do you mean, you're paying us, giving her benefits, and I paid for her full benefits. And I was like, Well, she's worried about, and this was a lesson I heard from my old

CEO, like, if you're sitting there and you're worried about your health, and if you should go to the doctor, not because it's gonna cost you \$600 you're not, you're gonna be a good employee.

Heather Vickery 18:05

Yep. I love that.

Chris Gannon 18:08

And it's, you know, again, is it the most fiscally savvy thing to do? Probably not, you could probably get away with being like, oh, we're startup we don't have benefits.

Heather Vickery 18:18

Of course, you can get away with it. But what you're doing is building a team of people. And it sounds like it's what you've done, that are gonna, they're gonna show up, they're gonna fight for you. They're gonna work hard for you. They're gonna, you change businesses, they're gonna follow you. They're gonna go where you go, because they know you've got their back.

Chris Gannon 18:36

That's what I mean. I think it's working. It seems like it's, I think they don't hate me. But that's, I think that's important in this this business area that I'm in because like recruiting seen this as this connotation of like these dirtbags that just want to make money. And like, when you think about it, there's probably three really big decisions that every person is going to make in life, where they're going to live, who they're going to be with and where they're going to work.

Heather Vickery 19:06

Yeah

Chris Gannon 19:07

We're screwing with one of those decisions, like how can you not be empathetic to somebody? Like, how can you try to force somebody into a job, because you're gonna make money off of it, that they're gonna have to sit in for eight 9,10, 11 hours a day.

Heather Vickery 19:21

A lot of people do. A lot of people just don't just don't care. But it's not. I will tell you that I know I do. I do a lot of corporate work, a lot of corporate coaching. And the companies that are on the precipice or that are really thriving, are thinking like you. They are changing those patterns and those habits they we want to teach people to lead from the ground floor up, you know, this, there's this whole, you're in recruiting, we promote people because they're good, let's say sales people, but they don't have any idea how to manage or how to lead or how to do any of that and it with with the approach that you're using and there's so many really smart companies are using, your you're avoiding that problem. You're training people to be empathetic leaders to ask good questions to listen, to hold space, which makes you by the way, better in sales right, doesn't it?

Chris Gannon 20:15

I mean, it's funny that like, when when this whole pandemic thing started like the big LinkedIn sales like gurus were saying lead with empathy lead, with empathy and like, wait a minute this is like now a tactic like why weren't you doing this last week? Like how about you just be like not an asshole instead, and maybe people will like working with you.

Heather Vickery 20:38

Yeah,

Chris Gannon 20:38

it's cool now like we're in year three of our business and like watching all these things manifest like, these people just come back to us and work with us. And we're largely a referral driven business. Like I like to say, like, I lead, I lead sales. And I say that in quotes, because we're on radio now. But like, I'm not making 120 cold calls a day anymore. Like, it's not about that, it's about just doing a really good job being a really good person, and people want to work with you again.

Heather Vickery 21:11

And connecting, right? Building relationships, making friendships, that's like showing up to this event that we're both that together today. Like, you never know who you know, and who they know. And so that referral is huge. My one my biggest corporate client, she's like, my job is to be a friend. And whatever I hear that my client needs, I'm gonna know somebody that can help them fill that need. And that's why they come back to me.

Chris Gannon 21:38

That's part of our value prop as a business too, which is like crazy, because we don't charge for it. Like, somebody needs help. Like, oh, you need you need us recommend a lawyer for you. You need an accountant, like you need us to like, give you like lunch spots to take your team out to like, we'll do that stuff. And there's other, there's other companies out there that like charge consulting fees for

Heather Vickery 21:57

Yeah,

Chris Gannon 21:57

I could never charge a consulting fee. Because if you put it as a budget line for us as a consulting fee, that means you really don't know what you're charging for.

Heather Vickery 22:06

Absolutely. Absolutely. And building those relationships. Being a quote unquote, friend, is why they keep coming back.

Chris Gannon 22:15

I don't, it's so bizarre to see people not do, I think that part of business died. And I think most people never saw how it existed. And I was really fortunate, I saw when my grandfather had a record company. I remember he his trick, he would bring his clients to my grandmother's house, and she would cook.

Heather Vickery 22:36

That's brilliant.

Chris Gannon 22:37

And they would sit there and they would break bread at the table. And they were in his home. And they were almost like family. That's how he treated his clients. And, you know, like when he passed away, His funeral was like, filled with all these business people.

Heather Vickery 22:50

That's amazing.

Chris Gannon 22:51

That's that's how people should be in business. And they're not anymore. It's all about just closing a deal.

Heather Vickery 22:57

Yeah. I really see a cultural shift back towards that, though. Maybe not that extreme. Like was kind of weird these days let strangers in your house for dinner. Although i invite people over all the time, but be like, Hey, Mom, make me some food. I'm so not east coast. So that was just a really bad East Coast accent right there.

Chris Gannon 23:19

Oh, no, I agree, though. It's, I think it's shifting back a little bit. But I think there are a lot of people that are still there are a lot of people that are uncomfortable with it, because they're not used to it.

Heather Vickery 23:31

Yeah

Chris Gannon 23:31

I think there's a whole generation out there of the workforce that has never seen or heard of anything like this. They've never met a client in person.

Heather Vickery 23:41

Yeah, oh, this virtual world is is wild like that. Some of my closest friends I've never met in person. And and that's so weird. I mean, we try, like I do when it's not a global pandemic, I travel a lot to speak and to present and if I know anybody in that city, I try to meet in person and connect. But it has to be genuine and authentic and real connection, you ask real questions,

and you really listen. I would imagine. I'm curious to hear from you. From a recruiter standpoint. How do you get to know what somebody really looks for and it key, I'm a huge fan of Malcolm Gladwell. And so much of his work is like, don't just look at somebody's resume, like go in their house, you'll learn more about them by the width, of what's in their living room than you will on their resume. Do you want them to work for you or not? So do you do anything different or unique to place people?

Chris Gannon 24:30

So I got taught this by a guy named Rob Williams early on in my career, and I feel bad for him because he had to manage me when I was 25. And so many gray hairs I probably give him but he was young looking guy so he's fine. But he taught me to ask three things. What are three things that you're looking for in your next job and listen to what those, that is the most. If you're on the phone with for somebody for a half hour, an hour, and you don't ask that question. You walk away with nothing. So before you ever talk to them about the job you might have, and you shove a job description down their throat, like a really bad recruiter starts with that, like, here's let me tell you about this job.

Heather Vickery 25:12

Yeah.

Chris Gannon 25:13

If you don't listen to somebody and ask them what they're looking for, it doesn't matter what job you have, it might be like, you know, oh, you're perfect for the startup. And the first thing might be like, Hey, I'm tired of the startup world. And I really need stability, because I just had my second kid and like, things are going crazy right now. My wife is gonna be home from work. Like, if you don't ask somebody that question, you're never gonna know. And then you're trying to talk to them about like, the next crazy startup that's going to they're going to work 70 hours a week at.

Heather Vickery 25:43

Absolutely. How do people react to because I love it? Yes, getting to know them, those three things. That is so good. I feel like that is like a great networking takeaway. Even if you're not in recruiting, we all want to know, somebody ask that question. And then, you know, lean into what it is that they say there. And the listening is huge. How do people react when you ask that question?

Chris Gannon 26:06

Sometimes they're thrown off. They like tell you about their salary. And you're like, no, like, give me something more, like I know how much money you want to make. It's very important. I promise you like, that's gonna be a really pivotal part of our conversation next, but like, talk to me about three things you want your next job. And then like, you're trying to think of those like, do those things fit? What you're what you're about to talk to them about? And if they don't just back off.

Heather Vickery 26:33

Yeah.

Chris Gannon 26:33

Tell them that. Tell them why like, Hey, this is why this job that I called you out is not going to be a great fit for you. And move on to the next thing.

Heather Vickery 26:40

And then you can keep them in mind for for different jobs, right?

Chris Gannon 26:43

That's the thing that like, like, it drives me crazy. Like, why did I talk? Oh, I wasted my time talking to that person today. Like if you're you should never waste your time connecting with somebody.

Heather Vickery 26:55

Yeah.

Chris Gannon 26:55

Should never be a waste. If you think you wasted your time It's because you didn't do something right.

Heather Vickery 27:00

Oh, yeah. I love that. I, I teach a method. It's called the Brave Method. Brave is my jam. It's my business. But the R stands for reassessment, reframing and resilience and reframe it. Every conversation has value and keep those people in the back of your mind. That's how you build your network and support and share and it's just huge. It's game changing.

Chris Gannon 27:21

It's, you know, in the recruiting world, it's all about like that person you can place and I there's so much lost value on just like some of the best relationships I have are people I've never placed. There's a director of sales that started he started this nonprofit Coffee Company through Coronavirus. We probably talked once a week. And for me, like for him, it was him talking about his business. And we were talking about like, what he's doing next. And for me just talking to him every week was such an uplifting part of my week.

Heather Vickery 27:54

I love that.

Chris Gannon 27:55

We had this like cool, awesome relationship. And now like, next time he's in New York like me and Mitch are going to get a beer.

Heather Vickery 28:02

Absolutely

Chris Gannon 28:02

It I am not number one on that list I'm gonna be pretty upset.

Heather Vickery 28:06

Yeah, I mean, we grow our networks in so many ways. And maybe there's referral business out there. But maybe there's not, maybe it's just personal. I mean, we need to grow ourselves. It can't be all work all the time.

Chris Gannon 28:16

So Gary, Gary Vee has has this good tagline. And I'm not like the big like, crush it, drop the F bomb on the podcast, or

Heather Vickery 28:24

you can drop the F bomb on my podcast.

Chris Gannon 28:26

But he does say there's always, always be able to always think like, give at least 51 and only expect 49 back. And that means if you're, you owe, if you're not always in a giving mode, and you're always trying to take it, it's just never going to work for you. So you always have to be in this like, what can I give? What can I offer? How can I help you not expect anything back?

Heather Vickery 28:51

That's right.

Chris Gannon 28:52

And at best, you might get some of it back.

Heather Vickery 28:55

Yeah, that's right. Give for the sake of giving, be in service. But it always comes back. I really believe that. So I would love to know from you, Chris, in building this business the way that you want it in, in building it a way that feels within your integrity, which is very different from the background you came from. What's been the biggest struggle for you?

Chris Gannon 29:18

2020

Heather Vickery 29:20

Wow, yeah, welcome to the freakin world.

Chris Gannon 29:23

I mean, in in a very like 2020 from our growth standpoint, like was year three that was like, it was the money year, that was the growth year that was the business model works year.. Let's double in size. Like how about we pay myself like a really good salary this year, like, you know, do some things in life that you want to do. And then all of a sudden, you know, March 8, or whatever it was, I'm sitting there with my my team and they're all home and they're scared and like, we have no business anymore. No business for a few months. And it wasn't like it stopped for a few days like zero business and that was, that's actually the first time I've ever felt like it was able to call myself like the founder. Like, I don't get and I don't know, I got to think of what your LinkedIn profile says. But like, people, almost and CEOs of one person companies, I'm like, okay, like, I get it, you need to do it for like aesthetic purposes. But like, are you really the chief executive officer of like, what?

Heather Vickery 30:16

Yeah.

Chris Gannon 30:17

But this year, like, you know, leading a team through a crisis, a health crisis, financial crisis, while being remote, that was the most challenging part of my career and maybe life.

Heather Vickery 30:31

Yeah. How did you best support your people through that, like, what did you do that may or may not be different from what other people did to keep them with you and make it work?

Chris Gannon 30:41

Did a lot of things wrong.

Heather Vickery 30:43

Right. Welcome to business ownership.

Chris Gannon 30:45

Everyone was like jumping on zooms about the playbook and the strategy. Like nobody had a playbook. Nobody, who ever had a playbook for this one. Like, what? What? What were you in on that we weren't? Um, you know, it was the thing actually, it wasn't that hard to shift mindset. Because I like caring about your people, you have to care about your people. And I'm like, what do you mean, you have to now care about your

Heather Vickery 31:12

Yeah, you were already doing that. Lots of people weren't though, how fucked up is that?

Chris Gannon 31:16

Like, there are there are so many horror stories of like, Oh, we we got on a five minute company wide zoom, and they laid off 200 people, and you're just like, these people, like, dedicate a good

part of their life to you. And you just lay them off on a zoom call in five minutes. Like, you couldn't have a one on one. Like, at least with them, I get it, you couldn't see them in person and call them into your office, but you couldn't just have a one on one conversation with them and tell them why it's not gonna work out. And unfortunately, the business couldn't support them. And a lot of companies did that. There were, we have competitors half in size, like overnight. And I was just like, how can you do that to people?

Heather Vickery 31:52

So you were able to keep all your people.

Chris Gannon 31:55

So my promise to them was during the pandemic, I wasn't gonna I was gonna hold on as long as I can without laying anyone off. And there were two reasons for that. A, there's a strategic business side was if I can keep my team together, when we come out of the back end, hopefully, we'll have still a team.

Heather Vickery 32:10

For sure.

Chris Gannon 32:11

The other thing was like, I noticed something like, we're New York centric company, and like lots of our employees were in their apartments, like small apartments, they were stuck there.

Heather Vickery 32:20

Oh, my God, awful.

Chris Gannon 32:21

Like, what are people going to do? Like it was March and April, were really bad here.

Heather Vickery 32:28

Oh, yeah.

Chris Gannon 32:29

We were shuttered at home. And like, you couldn't leave. So I'm like, we this zoom call that we logged on in the morning, and you see your teammates like that, and almost at one point turned into like a wellness check.

Heather Vickery 32:41

I'm sure it did.

Chris Gannon 32:42

And like I couldn't imagine telling somebody like, there were companies that like furloughed people and like, I'll hire you back, like in September, and I'm like, so you're gonna make him sit at like, home, like, while this rages around them, and not give them any sense of like, a

purpose. And I'm sure there's some days where my team's like, shut the hell up. We do not want to hear from you. We do not care about the purpose you want to give us. But I mean, our strategy was like, hey, let's get really good at like marketing, and let's just be good people. And let's talk to anyone that we can, that we can help.

Heather Vickery 33:14

Yeah, help, serve, be a friend.

Chris Gannon 33:17

And that was whether they were in in our business or not like anybody who needed resume help. We put Open Office Hours up just to like, chat with them for 20 minutes and give them advice.

Heather Vickery 33:27

I love that.

Chris Gannon 33:28

And it worked. I think it worked. And people called us back when people started hiring again. And they're like, we love your stuff that you've put out. And it wasn't again, it wasn't, there was no like, grand design

Heather Vickery 33:40

Right.

Chris Gannon 33:41

I could sit here now and say like, this was our strategy.

Heather Vickery 33:45

Just be good person.

Chris Gannon 33:47

And this is how we're gonna really attack the market. Like,

Heather Vickery 33:51

I love it

Chris Gannon 33:52

It was really natural. And I think that was the best part about it.

Heather Vickery 33:54

That is awesome. What an incredible business model you've built and role model for the people who work for you and the people who hire you. I love that. So that's a lot to celebrate. And we talk a lot about celebration on this show. So how do you like to celebrate the big things in the little things? How do you celebrate?

Chris Gannon 34:13

How do I celebrate? Um, pour myself a drink?

Heather Vickery 34:18

I'm alright with that.

Chris Gannon 34:20

That's at the end of the day, like when you when you pour that drink to because something good happened. It tastes a little different. Um,

Heather Vickery 34:27

I feel that or if something bad happens, but you know, whatever.

Chris Gannon 34:31

A little bit of a different taste then. You know, you have to, it's hard sometimes to celebrate like, and that was like coming out of this. We didn't have any wins.

Heather Vickery 34:45

You did though, that's so, that's so bogus. You had so many wins, you kept these people employed. You connected, you you made new connections and friends like,

Chris Gannon 34:56

But it didn't feel like we were winning. Like we needed to feel like it was almost like this was that was what we were doing worth it? Like, what were we doing the right thing? And was it making sense? Like was it manifesting itself like, this vision and it really got put to test like this vision that I started the company on, like, be a good person, be empathetic, like, try to treat people the best way and always try try to help people even if it doesn't help you, like, the last seven months really put that to the test. It was like, we're gonna see if this really works like the universe is like, we're gonna gut check you.

Heather Vickery 35:33

Yeah.

Chris Gannon 35:33

Do we have the grit to keep doing this?

Heather Vickery 35:37

You do. You did.

Chris Gannon 35:39

There were a couple times where we could have been like that sneaky, slimy, like, push somebody into something or really like, hammer down on the client. And we didn't. And it worked

Heather Vickery 35:49

Super cool.

Chris Gannon 35:51

One of the first clients that called us back, like, I asked him, like, why why'd you call us said, I love the stuff that you've guys have done.

Heather Vickery 35:58

That's amazing.

Chris Gannon 35:59

I love what you're about. And it just makes sense to work with you.

Heather Vickery 36:03

I love that. You got to celebrate that shit, man.

Chris Gannon 36:07

We did. We're celebrating now. We are just what you know, gotta be a little cautious. You can't like

Heather Vickery 36:13

well,

Chris Gannon 36:15

all team out at a bar or like, part of

Heather Vickery 36:17

But celebration can be anything, celebration can just be like actually acknowledging it out loud on your daily team meeting or whatever, like celebrate, I really believe in the power celebration. And it partners with the power of gratitude. Joy shared, is happiness returned. That sounds so trite and cheesy, but being able to say, this awesome, awesome thing happened. And we need to like fist pump or you know, have a dance party or just say, Hey, man, I am so glad you're on my team like that's celebration.

Chris Gannon 36:49

I think it's probably my biggest area for growth like that I've like, you know, when I ran a team, and it wasn't my team, per se, and I was the manager, it was like, easy to like fist pump, high five and celebrate. But when you're, you're the founder, and you're running your business, like you're consumed by like, all these other things. So if somebody over here closes a deal, you might be consumed by all this other stuff. Sometimes you don't recognize it in the right way.

Heather Vickery 37:11

So here's my challenge to you, Chris is to give this an equal playing field to all of the wonderful empathetic things that you're doing. Because you'll see celebration and gratitude, you'll see that it's contagious to your team and morale will shift.

Chris Gannon 37:27

It's a good, it's a good challenge. I definitely, maybe that's why we won't match up today for this maybe.

Heather Vickery 37:33

So we got to stay in touch. So you can let me know how it goes.

Chris Gannon 37:36

I will.

Heather Vickery 37:37

Alright. So I know we're almost out of time. But I ask this question every week. It's really, really important to me, I'm actually really excited to hear your answer. What's your favorite charitable organization to support

Chris Gannon 37:47

Charity Water

Heather Vickery 37:49

Okay, tell me more about Charity Water.

Chris Gannon 37:51

So I was fortunate enough where I saw Scott Harrison speak, and he's the founder, this nightclub promoter who turned into you know, had a little bit of an out of body experience and moment where he's like, I need to serve. And he started Charity Water where every dollar that's donated to Charity, Water goes directly to helping people in mostly Africa get clean water. So they go to a wells over there. And I believed in the company, because I saw he has this amazing story about serving and empathy and all the things that I try to do in my business. But his model to he's the company is funded by private donors. Like Jamie Diamond that

Heather Vickery 38:32

angel investors. Yeah.

Chris Gannon 38:34

Yeah, we'll give them a million dollars to run their payroll. But every donation somebody like me, makes goes directly to people.

Heather Vickery 38:42

That's cool.

Chris Gannon 38:43

So it's not like you know, other charities are like 10 cents for every dollar you donate actually goes to that charity, and then everything else pays some CEO salary. This goes directly to the people they help.

Heather Vickery 38:53

I love that. So they're going to be our charity of the week. And folks, we ask you always every single week, get to know them, give them a little social media love, share, if you have something to donate do so if there's a way to get involved do so. But I really believe in the power of coming together as a global community to support and grow.

Chris Gannon 39:10

Read his book. It's pretty life-changing

Heather Vickery 39:13

What's the name of the book?

Chris Gannon 39:14

Thirst.

Heather Vickery 39:15

Thirst, of course.

Chris Gannon 39:16

Scott Harrison. Yeah, it's pretty eye-opening.

Heather Vickery 39:19

All right, cool. We'll link to that in the in the show notes for sure. Chris, this has been so much fun. We didn't know what we were getting into with one another. But I kind of think we're we're Kismet and I really look forward to getting to know you being part of of your global network because you've got a great energy and it's so wonderful to see it.

Chris Gannon 39:40

Heather, if you're in New York soon. I promise you. I'll cook for you.

Heather Vickery 39:46

Okay, I am down. sold. I would love to be. I have a lot of clients and friends in New York. I can't wait to be able to travel again. I'm ready.

Chris Gannon 39:53

Never thought I would miss being crammed in a plane seat.

Heather Vickery 39:59

Right right. All right, so listeners This is awesome. The my favorite core takeaway here is be a freakin good person, man. Listen, care about people lead from that. Don't worry about your bottom line because the bottom line will work its way out. If you treat people with love and kindness and respect and compassion, and you can do that if you're an entrepreneur, you can do it if you work for somebody and they write you a paycheck, you can do it if you're a founder, you can do it in recruiting, whatever it is, this is the kind of world that I want to live in. And I think if you're listening to this show, it's the kind of world you want to live in. And I know it's the kind of world Chris wants to live in.

Chris Gannon 40:37

Don't. Try not to suck, be a good person.

Heather Vickery 40:39

Try not to suck, quote of the of the interview. Try not to suck folks. I love it. Y'all. This is Heather Vickery reminding you today and every day to go out and choose bravely. Hey, friends, I want to share something really exciting with you. We already know you enjoy listening to podcasts because you're listening to this one. But I'm also betting you enjoy audiobooks. And hey, listen, if you don't already enjoy audiobooks, then it's time to check them out. That's why I'm really excited to share libro.fm with you. They are an incredible new platform for listening to audiobooks. And by choosing libro.fm over other audio book services, you are supporting a local bookstore of your choice and investing in your local community. libro.fm offers over 150,000 audiobooks via their primary platform, which by the way, they built with love and from scratch because they're a small business also. They even offer bookseller recommendations for great audio book options. You can sign up right now via www.VickeryandCo.com/librofm slash, that's VickeryandCo.com/librofm. And when you do, you'll get one free audio book of your choice. And the proceeds will go to your favorite local bookstore. Now check what I just said there, you're going to get a free book, and the proceeds are still going to go to your local bookstore, because libro.fm makes sure that their booksellers get paid even when they give a promo to customers. I've listened to over 20 audiobooks this year alone. I especially love listening to memoirs read by the author. And it feels great knowing that all of my purchases support my local bookstore, The Book Table in Oak Park, Illinois Libro.fm, the same audio books, the same price, but a completely different story. Check them out right now at VickeryandCo.com/librofm.

Heather Vickery 42:56

Have you ever thought about starting a podcast? Maybe you've had this thought and then quickly shut it down? Because who has the time? Or you don't know how? Gosh, it just all seems too hard. If you have something to share with the world, we want to encourage you to get your message out. The world needs to hear it. Did you know that 50% of all homes are podcast fans. If you've ever wondered about having your own podcast or how it can increase your business, or get your message across, then please join me and the other experts from the

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