

Learning to Lead (Featuring Christy Chiarelli): Leadership D...

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SPEAKERS

Christy Chiarelli, Michaela Kandzer, Ricky Telg, Phillip Stokes



Ricky Telg 00:04

This is science by the slice, a podcast from the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Center for Public issues education. In this podcast, experts discuss the science of issues affecting our daily lives revealed the motivations behind the decisions people make, and ultimately provide insight to solutions for our lives.



Phillip Stokes 00:33

Hello, and welcome to Science by the slice, I'm Phillip Stokes, education coordinator with the PI center. Take a moment and think about impactful leaders in your life. Have you thought of any? If so, maybe you're thinking about teachers, supervisors, coaches, teammates, or even friends or family members. What was it about them that made them effective leaders? When I personally think about impactful leaders and my life, I struggled to pinpoint what exactly they did. But I can usually remember how they made me feel. Still, when I think back about those leaders in my life, it's not actually what they did. It's what I did, that makes me remember them as great leaders. I guess what I'm saying is, whatever they were doing to be a good leader to me, I couldn't really tell you, because I was more focused on what I was doing and how I was able to prosper in that moment. Whether that be in school, athletics, or any other pursuit, maybe even just fostering a feeling of purpose in my day to day life. There's a quote from the novel, *The Little Prince* written by French author sent Exupery. That goes, What is essential is invisible to the eye. I believe that effective leadership is not always visible to the eye, but apparent through the impressions and impacts that are made to the beneficiaries and recipients of that leadership. In other words, great leadership cannot be witnessed or accounted for without observing the actions of those that are being led. But don't take it from me because in today's episode, you'll hear from Christie ciarelli, director of the Wedgeworth Leadership Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Florida. So now,

let's hear more about Christy's perspective on leadership in a conversation led by Makayla cancer, fellow host of science by the slice, they discussed the Wedgeworth Leadership Institute, and how the organization develops and refines leaders in the agricultural industry.

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Christy Chiarelli 02:44

Thanks so much for having me. My name is Christie Shirley. And I'm the director of the Wedgeworth Leadership Institute for Agricultural and Natural Resources at the University of Florida. APHIS. Awesome.

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Michaela Kandzer 02:55

Can you tell us a little bit more about Wedgeworth? And about the mission of your organization? Yeah, absolutely.

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Christy Chiarelli 03:00

So Wentworth, began in 1992, as the Florida leadership program for agriculture and natural resources. So we just celebrated our 30th year of programming, and 2022. But the idea of agricultural leadership programs began really in the 1950s, with Michigan State University. And there were some group of professors at Michigan State that engaged in what we know as the Kellogg's for farmers study. And there was this idea that growers and farmers were great at producing, but they had a very, like limited understanding of all the factors that existed around them culturally, socially, politically, that impacted their ability to grow and produce food. And so the Kellogg's farmer study, it was a kind of an investigation to say, hey, can we develop the leadership capabilities of farmers and so they chose 30 men to engage in different seminars around the state of Michigan and to travel outside of Michigan, and to just develop their skills. And this proved to be a great success in Michigan. And so one of the actual faculty member from Michigan State had come to Florida on sabbatical. And he was in the food resource economics department and started talking about this program. It was like I think one could be really successful here. And his name was Dr. Jean Trotter. And so Dr. Trotter traveled around the state beginning in 19. I think 89 and just building support for this idea of developing Florida's growers and ranchers, and had a lot of industry support. And so in 1992, he started class one of the Florida leadership program for agriculture and natural resources, the older classes we'll call it flipped nor so if you hear flipping or that is what we know as went to earth today, and so much more appealing. Yes. Yeah, it's got an ICER like rolls off the tongue a little easier than putting our but I know, previous classes are very endearing to that to that name. And so that was Dr. Trotter was fundamental just so instrumental in the success of what we know is Wordsworth today, he and industry and ifas, they laid an incredible foundation that has just proven to provide continued success for the program as we know it today. And how it became Wentworth was that, again, under Dr. trotters, leadership, he recognized that this was a program that would take a lot of support financially. And he didn't want to go around the state and didn't want to bother people every year by asking for funds asking for funds. And so instead, he rallied the industry to say, let's create an endowment to help support this program. So that we can always keep tuition accessible to the to growers and ranchers that need it. And we don't have to ask for the same funds every year for the same things. And so Dr. Trotter, led that endowment effort, and Dennis Wedgeworth was the chair of the committee. And as they

approached their goal, they were they were so close to the goal. And so in honor of Mr. George Wedgeworth, the Wedgeworth family gave a gift to name the program for Mr. George Webb Wedgeworth, as a living tribute to his leadership legacy, not only in Florida, but really, throughout agriculture in the United States. He He's a tremendous leader. And so we are happy to have his namesake and certainly, we talk a lot about and Wedgeworth wanting to honor the family name, right? We recognize when you represent that a big leader, you want to do a great job in that. So we take that very seriously.

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Michaela Kandzer 06:50

So that's a nice teaser into our topic for today, which is leadership. And so if I haven't, right, so the mission of whether we're really is to create and train leaders within the agricultural industry in the state of Florida. Yes, in

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Christy Chiarelli 07:05

a nutshell, that is our mission, our mission, specifically is to develop and refine the leadership capabilities of leaders to become involved in policy formation in Florida. And so whether that's policy that applies to Florida agriculture, natural resources, or public policy that impacts the future of Florida agriculture, we want we're trying to develop policy makers, or individuals that have the skill sets and the networks and the know how to make policy so that agriculture in the state of Florida can be sustainable for generations to come. So the ledger Leadership Institute, we have 11 seminars throughout the state of Florida, the nation, and our capstone is an international study trip. So over the course of 22 months, 30 individuals go through a really rigorous leadership training program, as they understand more about themselves, their local community, they understand more about teams and state government, they start to understand about leading organizations and then also how to affect policy at the national level. And then when we travel internationally, it gives them an opportunity to see that no matter where you are in the world, the issues are really the same. In many ways. People are struggling with the same things or people get excited about the same ideas. And so we're not as different as maybe we all think we are when we start to talk with growers and ranchers at different at different levels of the state, the nation and the world. So that's how it's structured. And in, we only accept 30 individuals, because, again, we are traveling so much and going into so many different spaces that 30 is about the max number that we can we can handle. But what that process looks like we're actually starting a new class this year. So we are going to open nominations for class 12 On February the 15th. There's a nomination form on Wedgeworth leadership.com. And you can self nominate, or you can be nominated by someone that has been through the program or is another leader in Florida Ag and Natural Resources. The biggest requirements to be selected is that you have to be at least 25 years old to be eligible for the program. And that's because we want you to have some work experience before joining Wedgeworth I would I always say you know, we are not an emerging leadership program. I think that's very important for individuals to understand is that we are we have the expectation that when you apply to Wedgeworth, you are already a leader in your industry, on your farm, in your community. You are coming to refine those leadership skills. We're not we're not creating leaders, we are developing them. So it's important that you've got a little bit of experience behind you before you apply. So 25 And you have to have been a resident of the state of Florida for one year. So we really want to keep our, our target audience focused on Floridians that want to contribute to Florida in the years ahead. Again, we we care a lot about American

agriculture, global agriculture. But again, our focus is just making sure Florida has a sustainable agricultural future, our immediate focus, I should say, and you have to have a, you have to be involved somehow in agriculture, natural resources, so some portion of your of your livelihood has to come from Florida ANR. So those are the kind of basic requirements to be nominated. And then you're sent an application to complete, and then you're invited to a selection seminar. So we have, typically we have three selection seminars, I think this year, we'll have four so in Gainesville, Bartow, Belle Glade, and I think Tallahassee is what we're going to add this year, you come to a day long selection seminar, and we invite your spouse and your significant other to come with you. So they can also understand about the program, we know that great leadership means that you have to be supported really well. And so we want the families to be involved in that space. And then the selection will be made in September ish of 2023. And we'll start class 12 in November of 2023. And so, class 12, begins November 2023, and runs through July 2025. That's really awesome.

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Michaela Kandzer 11:22

That seems like a long process, but an opportunity to learn and develop a lot of new skills. So you brought up or you mentioned, you know, that you're not an Emerging Leader program. So what is different about leadership on those levels from emerging to establish?

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Christy Chiarelli 11:39

That's a great question. I think that emerging leaders, you you want to be involved, right, or you have the desire to be involved, but maybe you've just not taking that step to raise your hand yet in your community or in your organization or on your operation, to say, Put me in coach, I'm ready, I'm ready to try, I'm ready to lead. But rather, you're on the outskirts kind of seeing that those opportunities exist, and just trying to get a feel for maybe how you can contribute. You know, that's how I would kind of classify folks that are emerging and certainly have an interest, but may not have had an opportunity to lead in an aspect just yet. So that's emerging leadership. I think the leaders that are most successful in Wedgeworth are leaders that both have the interest. And I've had the opportunity to lead in some capacity before. And the reason we say that is because this is such a time commitment that you will benefit most, if you already have experience to tie these principles to if you come to Wedgeworth. And what we're talking about is still very abstract to you, and you're not quite sure how you might utilize it. It's it just isn't a the best benefit to the participant. It's not that we're trying to be exclusive or not appreciative of emerging leaders. Rather, we just want to think about how can we make the most impact on the individuals that we have. And we see that the individuals that have leadership experience, they just more they understand quicker how to apply the skills and Wedgeworth to elevate those skills, refine them, develop them so that they can have an immediate impact. There are several I would say, leadership programs that Wedgeworth participants have been through that prepare them very well for Wedgeworth. And so organizations like the Florida cattleman, association, Florida fruit and vegetable Association, both of those Industry Association groups do a wonderful job preparing future industry leaders, and I am tickled when I see Wedgeworth applicants that have been through those programs because they understand they can understand what leadership programming and agriculture is about. It's it is not a requirement to be, you know, to get in Wedgeworth, that you've been through one of those that I just say that for anybody in the audience that might be looking for somewhere to to get started in leadership, Farm Bureau, young farmers and ranchers. Oh, my

goodness, I should have mentioned them first. That's another great opportunity, and a great feeder program for Wedgeworth. That is just a little different from getting your feet wet and leadership to go into the next level.

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Michaela Kandzer 14:12

Yeah. And that makes sense to as what you would teach Emerging Leaders versus established leaders like those that contents going to be a lot different, right? Yes. So what would you say is or why is leadership development so important?

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Christy Chiarelli 14:24

For Florida leaders in agriculture and natural resources, we must always remember that what we provide to them has to help their efficiencies and their productivity, because we are taking about 55 days of their time, over the course of 22 months. And there is a lot of self growth that will happen and they will they will leave this program different people and they'll think a little differently when they leave. But we also have to give them tools to increase efficiencies and increase productivity. And so I think that that's an important part of leadership development is why we want to, we want to invest in people. It's for those reasons. And I think the reason I connect it to efficiencies and productivity is that when we're doing our jobs well as leadership educators, we're creating a growth mindset. And these leaders, we're helping them to understand how you have to be a lifelong learner. Any leader that has a set mindset, and doesn't change, when new information presents itself, is is destined to be irrelevant very, very soon. And so in order for us to kind of continue to have a growth mindset, that growth mindset is what allows these leaders just continue to look for opportunities to continue to look for better and new ways to do things. And those are the ways that I think developing growth mindsets, ultimately, to increase productivity and efficiencies, it's just because they're always looking for better, more efficient ways to produce for the consumer.

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Michaela Kandzer 15:57

Yes, becoming innovators.

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Christy Chiarelli 15:59

Absolutely.

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Michaela Kandzer 16:00

So what would you tell someone who wants to become a better leader?

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Christy Chiarelli 16:04

Well, I would say, spend some time getting to know yourself, you know, there's definitely we

think about leadership, and it is about mobilizing people. But in order to mobilize people, you have to have a really strong awareness of who you are, what your values are, what you bring to the table. And know that the people you're leading are going to have very different thoughts and very different values. And so I think it's really good to invest in yourself and understand who you are, as a leader certainly is a big part of Wentworth is we do a lot of self assessing, and we do a lot of reflection. So reflection is a tool that I feel strongly for adult learners, adult leaders to always use as are you. Are you reflecting on the decisions you're making, can you articulate why you're doing what you're doing? I would certainly suggest kind of spending some time thinking about who you are some resources that I enjoy. The truth about leadership is a really quick read by Kouzes and Posner. It's research based kind of 10 truths that are just basic leadership fundamentals, if you will, but they are solid. And I use this book in our teaching a good bit. I also really like the book 360 degree leadership by John Maxwell. And this book is great, because this book really shows you that no matter where you are, organizationally, you have leadership power. And oftentimes, you know, a myth of leadership is that well, I can't lead until I'm in charge. That is that is absolutely not true. And that will delay your growth in so many ways, if that's the way that you think about leadership. And so, Maxwell, in his book, 360 degree leadership, he really provides opportunities for no matter where you are in the organization considerations to think about how you can contribute and grow. If you're not into books, I read, he has a podcast, the Maxwell leadership podcast, always good tidbits that I listened to. And then if you like more kind of short articles, just leadership tidbits, I subscribe to the Harvard Business Review. And they have very relevant very business centered leadership articles that I think are very relevant to being successful if you if you kind of just need some quick resources.

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Michaela Kandzer 18:20

And I like, oh, when you define leadership, you define it in a much more like, encompassing way than here's 10 steps to be a leader or you guys really seem to go in depth and really develop, not just educate leaders,

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Christy Chiarelli 18:34

that's our hope certainly is because nobody's the smartest person in the room. And that's the beauty of Wentworth is we get 30 individuals that are at the top of their game. And when they're all together, that's where magic happens. I always think about Wentworth is, you know, my job is to create an exceptionally good sandbox for them. But then we put them in the sandbox, and they build the castles. They're in charge of all the seminars, they introduce the speakers, they ask the questions, they are the ones that are constructing knowledge from the tools that we give them. And that's what leadership is, you know, forever, right, is that you use the tools that you've been provided, and hopefully you create something beautiful from that. And so, I don't know, I don't I'm a, I never believe in the 10 steps to leadership, I believe that there's the 10 steps are going to look different for me as they would look different from you. But the thing that matters to both of us is that we're we're willing to take the step forward and whatever that next step looks like for us.

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Michaela Kandzer 19:30

Yes, and everyone see are unique and we have unique skills and unique personalities, we all

may have a little bit of a different vision of what we want our future to look like or what we want leaders our leadership style to be or to look like and so what does it look like or how different do does it seem from either class to class with Wedgeworth or either even just different leaders within one class together?

C Christy Chiarelli 19:54

Oh, I that's such a great question. I just get tickled honestly to watch how they lead how they express themselves because if we're doing our jobs, right, but the classes are very diverse group, they are not, they are not the same. They have different commodity backgrounds, different geographical backgrounds, differences in every way that we can make them different. But I think, again, the commonalities of them are this vision for the future and caring about people and wanting to move people from where they are to what could be like that is something that I see in all of them no matter where they where they come from, in that space. But I think how they present that, you know, some are really dry, and some are sarcastic, and some are quiet, and some are too loud. But they all have those fundamental desires to leave it better than they found it. And so I think to just to know that if your personality is, you know, I am by nature, very much an introvert, I do not get energy from people. And I hope that I would still be considered a leader, I don't think that there's a personality type, you don't have to be a great public speaker, there aren't these kind of prescribed things, there's just there has to be a desire to be in the trenches, and to constantly grow, and to constantly move people with you. And if you have those sorts of things, I think the sky's the limit for you as a

M Michaela Kandzer 21:13

leader. Yeah. And that sounds like the kind of I want to follow, right? Me too. Yeah. So how would you how can our listeners find you and learn more about your organization? Sure. So

C Christy Chiarelli 21:23

the easiest way is WWW dot Wenche, where leadership.com is our website. And if you go to the website, you'll see on our calendar that nominations for class 12, open on February 15 2023, there will be a big banner on our website that day that you can click on and you can begin the nomination process. And then application will be set to you. Nominations are open until June 15. And then applications are going to close June 30. So if you are interested in applying for class 12, please, you'll have to get your application down before June 30. And don't delay because it is a it's a long application, it will take you longer than an hour or so. So you'll want to really spend some time doing that. And then class 12 will begin in Gainesville in November of 2023. And certainly people are always welcome to reach out to me directly with any questions. My email address is just three letters cc w@ufl.edu. And I'm happy to field any sorts of questions they might have about the program.

M Michaela Kandzer 22:28

Yeah, that's awesome. So if anyone either wants to go through the program or someone that they want to nominate for the program, sounds like they can just visit your website and do that there. So that's exciting. Is there anything else any other comments or any other thoughts you

there. So that's exciting. Is there anything else, any other comments or any other thoughts you wanted to share with our listeners?

C Christy Chiarelli 22:42

I think that's great. I appreciate the opportunity, so much to be on and for you highlighting the Wedgworth Leadership Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources.

P Phillip Stokes 22:53

I want to close today's episode by reminding you that this series has two episodes. In this episode you heard from Christie Chiarelli, and the other episode features a conversation with John Dain. Be sure to listen to both episodes as both guests had so much insight to contribute about leadership. That's it for me. As always, thanks for listening to science by the slice.

R Ricky Telg 23:20

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