

TRANSCRIPT Episode 33 – Hank Smith

Jonathan: Today I'm joined by Hank Smith. Hank is a master teacher. He's super fun and engaging, and not just because he says so, but the youth love him. Adults love him. My wife and I have spent a lot of time listening to him on his podcast with John, the FollowHIM podcast.

Hank grew up in St. George, Utah. He received a bachelor's degree in business administration from Dixie State University, an MBA from Utah State University, and his PhD in educational leadership from Brigham Young University. He's currently an instructor at BYU. In addition to his work in consulting with companies and families, Hank has presented nationwide at Best of Especially for Youth, Retreat for Girls, Time to Blossom and Time Out for Girls programs, several university Education Weeks. By the way, Hank, my wife was at Women's Conference last week and she said your room was absolutely packed.

Hank: Oh, yeah. It was pretty full.

Jonathan: Hank has also done many public school assemblies and various forums around the country. He and his wife, Sarah, currently live in Mapleton, Utah. Hank is great because he gives it real, and I'm looking forward to talking to you today, Hank. But I have to give this quote that you frequently repeat, which is, your wife Sarah is amazing. She knows everything about me and she still loves me. That, I think, is a great testament to what we'll be talking about today, which is open, really strong trust relationships.

Hank: Yeah, yeah, high trust relationship. And she's seen it all. It amazes me that we're still friends.

Jonathan: So you have five children, you've run 15 marathons so far. I want to hear what your favorite marathon is, by the way. You eat ice cream, which is how you can justify the running, and they're symbiotic, right? Calories go in, calories go out. So let's maybe start with the marathons, because I am a runner, but I'm a trail runner. I haven't done any marathons yet, but tell me what your favorite marathon is.

Hank: Oh, man. Well, I grew up in St. George, so the St. George Marathon is pretty famous. The problem is I grew up there, so you don't see it as beautiful, right? Because you're like, why is everybody seeing this as so beautiful? To me, it's just home. But now that I live away from St. George and go home, I think, oh, wow, this actually is more beautiful than I thought when I was a kid.

But for me, probably my favorite race is the one where I sleep in my own bed. So that's the Provo Marathon, the Utah Valley Marathon. It's the one where I can sleep in my own bed, go

to the starting line, and be home and not have to drive a long ways or get a hotel. It's pretty nice.

Jonathan: You don't have to wake up at two in the morning, probably only four in the morning.

Hank: Probably four. Yeah. A little bit. And you get to pay to do this terrible thing, which is just odd.

Jonathan: Yes, the privilege of paying to run on public roads. That's right.

Hank: Right. That's exactly what it is. And you're on mile 21 thinking, why did I pay for this? Then we sign back up for some reason.

Jonathan: Unbelievable. I love it. So I believe your dad was a golf pro. Is that right?

Hank: Yeah, he was. Golf professional down in St. George.

Jonathan: And did you go into golf at least for a minute?

Hank: A little bit, but when I was in high school, the girls didn't like, it wasn't golfing. Golfing was not the thing. It was football. So I played football. My dad said, no, you want to play golf, right? Well, I played football, but I can play golf. It was something we did daily when I was younger.

Jonathan: That's great. Golf is the one sport that it's very hard to just pick up. That's been frustrating me as a semi-decent athlete. You spend a couple hours playing pickleball, you can hold your own with decent pickleball players, not the elite level, but you can get pretty far up there. Golf, not a chance. Not even close.

Hank: Not a chance. It is a frustrating game. But once you get it down, once you can play bogey golf, that's fun golf. But it does take you a minute to get there.

Jonathan: Okay, so how does a son of a golf pro, growing up in St. George, Utah, end up deciding, I want to learn about business and I want to focus on high trust organizations? How did you find your path? Because I went to law school because I didn't have a big imagination. I didn't know what I could study for six or seven years and really say I could focus on this for that long amount of time.

I do study business. I do business law, help companies do business all around the world, and so I eventually found my place. But for me, it's kind of taking in multiple data points. I constantly read and listen to try to understand what's going on in the world and why is it happening the way it is, how did we get here, where are we going. That's just kind of my fun space where I play. But for you, deciding on MBA, PhD, how did you dial that in?

Hank: You know, I was somebody who took the doors when they opened to me. So I don't know if I had a plan to begin with. I like taking advantage of opportunities when they come. I had a habit of saying yes to things when something made me nervous or said, I don't know if I can do that. I just found myself saying yes. Let me try it.

But I remember when I was in high school, my dad had all sorts of struggles. He and my mom struggled. My mom became a victim of the opioid crisis right in the late 90s. So there I am, a teenager, and he was having all sorts of struggles with her. Great people, by the way. They both have passed away, but they're phenomenal people, both of them. They were both doing what they could with the situations they were given.

So my dad and I didn't get a lot of time. We didn't get to spend a lot of time together unless it was golfing. But he came to my room one day and said, you're going to love this book. It was *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey. And we bonded over that book. It was just something we both loved. We were able to talk about it. In fact, before Stephen Covey died, I was able to tell him that. He gave me something to connect with my dad with. He said it meant a lot to him. It was a special moment.

So when I started going to college, I had a flair for that, for the soft skills, for emotional intelligence. I was interested in people and working with people and helping people. An MBA came quite naturally to me just because it didn't really corner me into anything. An MBA is pretty versatile. But then when it came to getting a doctorate degree, you do have to zone in on something in particular.

I'd always been interested in high trust organizations. I'd read a couple of books. I remember Warren Buffett was quoted frequently as saying he could do a million-dollar deal or a billion-dollar deal on a handshake. Why do we need all these lawyers? Why do we need all these contracts? If you just trust someone, why can't you just agree on it? So that had always been an interest to me.

And I found a dissertation chair who was interested in that same thing. It's kind of important. You want to do your doctorate degree on a certain topic, but you better find a faculty member who is also interested in that topic or you're never going to get there. But I found one, and her name is Pam Hallam. She took me on and became a mentor. Five, five and a half years of studying high trust organizations, high trust educational settings. It was a treat.

But a doctorate degree, it's a lot. I'm sure it's a lot like getting a law degree. It's your whole world for that many years. So you're eating the same meal every day for years. It took its toll on me, but in the end, I ended up still just loving what I studied and what I found. I enjoy sharing it with other people. And I think it's applicable. I really wanted to study something

that would be applicable to a lot of different situations, not just business. And I find that the principles work in marriage and parenting, friendships, and business. So that's essentially why I honed in on high trust organizations.

Jonathan: So talk about what these organizations look like in practice. I've been at three different law firms. I've only been a lawyer in my career, but I've counseled hundreds of clients and entrepreneurs. I'm on the business side. One of my mentors said, we practice happy law. That means that we are there when people are at their best. Usually they're excited, they've got money often, and they think that everything's going to happen in a certain way.

It's funny, I remember listening to one of your podcasts with John, and John said something about lawyers, and I didn't take offense for too long. It was similar to what you said, which is, if we could all trust each other, we wouldn't need lawyers. And I say that's absolutely right. I deal in the business of relationships, and I'm a relationship manager for my clients. I help them deal with each other. I help them deal with partners in various aspects.

When I was a young bishop in Bangor, Maine, about 10 years ago, I was a young lawyer too. And I remember sitting down at a table in a boardroom in my office, sitting at my desk in church and thinking, I'm not old enough to be dealing with these kinds of problems.

Hank: Right. I don't have this wisdom.

Jonathan: Not even close. And it struck me how parallel these lines of work were, right? My volunteer work as a bishop through church and my work as an attorney, helping people really figure out what is the depth of our relationship together? How can we trust each other? How do we know we're going to be able to trust each other?

I think in a perfect world, yeah, we wouldn't need contracts. We would just be able to trust each other forever. The problem is that, in my perspective, money often changes people faster than anything else. And stress. A lot of stress will change people too. But you've studied this for years. You've taught it. I never took a class, I did do an MBA as well, but I never took a class on high trust organizations. So give us the Reader's Digest version of what these high trust organizations look like.

Hank: Yeah, absolutely. Three years of doing a lit review and I can give it to people in a few minutes. I can save people a bunch of time. Trust is like the oil of a car. If the engine's good and you have great oil, you're going to be able to go a long ways. If the engine isn't good but you have great oil, you're not going to go anywhere. And if you have a great engine but don't have oil, you're not going to go anywhere. You need both.

If you take a really well-run business, idea, and structure, and then add a lubricant of trust, you can run the thing forever. But there are what I call low oil lights, low trust lights, that can come on. I don't know about you, Jonathan, but I push the oil light probably too far on my car. I think, oh, I'll take care of that soon. And then I'm usually at the last minute going, wow, this is pretty bad, I better go get in there. Others, they notice the oil light comes on and they're quick to go get the oil changed.

So I usually start with what are those low oil lights that come on that say, wow, we're getting low on trust. Usually when people start to conceal their mistakes instead of being open, like, hey, I made a mistake, they start to hide those and use blame and excuses. When you notice people in your organization aren't helping each other, no one's asking for help and no one's offering help, that's usually a sign that trust is low.

Of course, when an engine heats up quickly, the oil is low. It's the same thing with emotions. When emotions heat up quickly, we're having a problem. In my marriage, I don't know about yours, but in my marriage, if I say, hey, you look nice today, and Sarah responds with, what is that supposed to mean? Okay, things got hot really quick. Trust might be low. And you'll be able to feel it because in a low trust setting, people feel vulnerable, and so they'll demand greater safety, greater job protection. I want to know what the policy is. I want to know clearly exactly what can happen or can't happen if I do this thing or don't do this thing.

People usually are finding ways to avoid work, avoiding each other. They're suspicious. Again, that comes with feeling vulnerable. People are emotionally distant. They keep themselves away. Oftentimes you'll find coteries develop, what most people call the meeting after the meeting. Everybody comes together, we have a meeting, and then everybody divides into their separate little gang to debrief each other. That's usually an indication that trust is low.

So when those lights come on, when the low oil light comes on, you don't need to panic and think your whole engine's gone bad. It hasn't. The engine's still great. We just need to look at the oil. Now, the one thing a car doesn't have is a great job oil light. Wouldn't that be interesting? Hey, you're doing really well taking care of this car.

Jonathan: This is the best oil I've ever had in the car.

Hank: Yeah, the car's got a big smile on its face. But if you were to think of the opposite, if you were to look around your firm and people are owning up to mistakes, they're not afraid to ask for help, they appreciate each other, they enjoy coming to work, they support leadership direction, people describe work as fun, they enjoy going to work on Monday, conversations can have conflict, not contention, but conflict. We can debate ideas but still

have good feelings, good emotions. I'm not emotionally attached to what I put forward for the organization. And people feel like, hey, I have the freedom to deviate from normal operations if I need.

So you've got your low oil lights and your, hey, trust is working lights. I found that when I go out and present for organizations, they'll automatically be able to say, oh, that's one of ours. That's an indication in our organization that things are going poorly. I was just with a healthcare company last month, and they talked about when nurses stop helping each other, you know that everybody's spent and all of a sudden they go into self-protection mode. If people are spending their time protecting themselves, nobody's looking towards the goals or the customers. Everybody's looking at surviving, which is a very human thing to do.

When you feel vulnerable, you start focusing on, what am I going to do if this goes wrong? What am I going to do if I lose this job or this company goes away? We start spending time making exit strategies and plans. And then on the flip side, when companies say, oh yeah, you can tell things are good here because we laugh a lot. We enjoy each other. So if one of your listeners were to say, well, are we low trust or high trust? You would take those lists that we just went through and you'd say, okay, where do I see this? Every company goes through low oil lights. Everybody does, because it's an engine and it's trust and you burn through it. Everybody goes through these. Don't throw the whole car away because the oil got low. Then watch for those indications that things are good, because you'll see both.

Jonathan: You mentioned a healthcare system, which I think is fascinating. I don't know if you work with law firms. My listeners are a mix of business people and attorneys, and worldwide as well. But what are some high trust organizations that you've studied? Maybe some that you particularly thought did things well. Is it even an industry-by-industry thing, or is it just the types of people that build the right cultures where you can have a high trust organization? What are some of the best places you've worked and studied versus those that struggled?

Hank: I think the high stress jobs like medical care are the ones that probably struggle the most, not necessarily because the work is bad, but because there's just so much at stake. I would imagine in law, in some firms, it depends on what you do, but when the stakes are high, trust needs to be checked often. It's kind of like taking a car around town versus taking a car 100 an hour across the country. The oil situation is going to change based on how hard the car is working.

With medical care, especially in the last six, seven years, it's been high stress. Those COVID years for nurses and doctors, there is still a little post-traumatic stress from those

times where they were carrying literally the weight of the world. They're still recovering from that. When I was working with that group, we had their annual meeting back by Disneyland. I think they did that on purpose. They were trying to breathe some life into these people who are clearly spent. You look at some of them, it looks like the end of a marathon. They're breathing hard saying, okay, we've got to get back up and let's do it again tomorrow.

Also, I worked with sales quite a bit. What's fascinating about sales is you want a team of salespeople to work as a team, but yet sometimes you incentivize them to compete with each other. That's a hard thing to do, to ask a group of people to trust each other and work as a team, yet compete for numbers with one another. I find that when you're asking a group of people to basically do two things at once that are moving in opposite directions, that can cause quite a bit of revving the engine. We're not really going anywhere, but we are really high stress.

The ones that are pretty fun are, I spoke for a company, for a travel agency, and they meet people when they're very happy. They just loved each other, and all I did was come in and tell them how great things were going.

I've done a lot of dentists' offices, and those can be pretty high stress. Dentists have the lowest mental health of any profession. I think it's because people just say they hate the dentist so often. Your job is basically somewhere that most people don't want to go. So I've spent some time helping the staff of a dentist office work together and be a little bit more transparent in how they're feeling. Because oftentimes there's a kind of artificial harmony. I don't know, Jonathan, if you've ever worked somewhere or been in a relationship, maybe with an in-law or something, where it's kind of an artificial harmony. Everybody just pretends things are fine because we don't have to spend all that much time together. So let's just pretend. But in a place you're spending 40 to 50 hours a week, artificial harmony is not going to last very long. Things blow up pretty quickly.

That's interesting. I haven't really thought about the types of industries, but I guess I could put those into categories, saying, oh, this one is usually burning through oil pretty quick. Another one that seems to struggle are schools, just because everybody cares so much about what we're doing, but we have very different ideas oftentimes on how to achieve the goal. So there's a lot of ideological conflict. And when you have that kind of conflict, it can be good. It can be fine. It can be healthy. You and I could disagree and then go out and get dinner and we'd be just fine. But when you're doing that a lot, when mostly you're with someone and you're disagreeing, that can really have an impact on the relationship.

So if you're not feeding that relationship with interaction that's positive, then it can wax pretty tragic. People start to get upset. When emotions get high, I'm sure you've seen it. It happens in every organization, but when emotions get high, there can be fireworks.

Jonathan: So you and I are both religious people, and it's nice to be able to have these conversations with people of faith. I have friends who are very religious and those who are not. I grew up in the Midwest, in a small town full of really good people that thought mostly differently than I did.

When I travel internationally, I'm always a little surprised—and I travel quite a bit, so I should stop being surprised about this—but I feel like a lot of the world still looks at religion pretty favorably. So I'm wondering, where you sit now, in the United States, is it possible to create a high trust culture without some kind of moral or ethical anchor? I know it doesn't have to be religious, but do you think that it helps an organization or a family or a business if you understand, look, this is our mission statement. We're here to help people, to do good, don't do harm. There's a lot that we could put out there. But what are your thoughts on whether or not it's good or possible to tether the organization to a moral or ethical anchor?

Hank: That has a lot to do with hiring. If you're vetting well, you're saying, look, this is who we are. This is who we want to be. First, you've got to have a leader or a leadership team that has an agreed-upon standard of this is why we exist. Simon Sinek, right? People will buy into your why more than the product. And I believe that.

Religion has been kicked out of the workplace, especially in North America and Europe. And I get that. I think that you want to have a separation there. That can be healthy. However, I have met plenty of high trust organizations where they bring their religion and make it a part of what they do. It depends on the leader.

I've been at annual meetings where, hey, listen, I'm the CEO of this company and I love the Bible, so I will be quoting and teaching from the Bible. And I've been there when the employees love it. It's not necessarily because they're believers, but they like their CEO.

I remember once I was sitting in the back of an annual meeting. I was going to speak later that day, and the CEO was giving a speech, and he was quoting apostles from our church. Most of his company are not members of his same faith. I asked one of them, does he do this a lot? They're like, oh yeah, all the time. It's after your, what do you call it, General Conference. He loves to have us study some of those General Conference talks. I said, but you're not a member of the church. He said, oh yeah, but he loves it, and I learn a lot. I thought, wow. In a high trust organization like that, you can bring that out. It's not a high emotion. It was a fun thing for them.

Jonathan: Context. I was in India just a couple of weeks ago, my first trip there on some business meetings, and I was really floored by the multicultural, multi-religious mix in India. I mean, you've got 1.4 billion people, so you have that, but it was interesting. I feel like they did it really well. I would go to Hindu areas. I went into a law firm and they had incense burning and they had a shrine there. As a person of faith, it didn't bother me. I thought it enriched my understanding of kind of where I sit.

I like having conversations with people who think differently than I do, even though you have to get past the, well, I think I'm right. It's hard for all of us sometimes to get past that, where we think, I'm ready to exchange ideas openly without letting my hackles get up. I think it's a good exercise for everyone to purposely engage in those kinds of discussions where I know this person is going to disagree with me on many areas, maybe vehemently.

I don't know if you think that's part of high trust organizations. I feel like in areas where I've been, where I felt especially welcome or felt like this is a good environment, it is where people can speak openly without fear of reprisal, but also just kind of like, look, give everyone their time. This is their time to talk, and you get a chance to talk. Maybe that's my legal training coming out. I don't know.

Hank: I'm right with you. Constructive ideological conflict is part of a high trust relationship. It needs to be. If I can't have a conversation with you about something that matters to me because I'm nervous or I think, oh, I don't know how he'll take this, that's the definition of low trust. I feel vulnerable, so I don't share.

The highest trust organizations are those who can share in conflict and then turn around and wish each other, hope you have a good night, say hi to your wife for me or say hi to your husband for me, and we turn around and do it the next day. It's because we all know. Like Matt in my office, he and I disagree on how things should be run, but I love Matt. We frequently go back and forth over, I don't think that's the best way to go about it. But then we see each other at the store and we'll talk for hours. We'll enjoy each other's company.

I think you're right on there. Think about a marriage. If a husband and wife can't discuss something, and they don't argue, well, they don't argue not because they're high trust. They should be exchanging ideas. That's a natural result of high trust, that we can have high stakes conversations, but we're okay. Everybody's happy at the end.

Jonathan: And I'm assuming this maps over pretty well into family life. We've touched on it a bit, but I just dropped my oldest son off at the MTC last week. Big change for the Bench family, but it's beautiful. My mission changed my life, still changing my life. I was in Hong Kong on that trip to Asia, my first time back in 25 years since I was a missionary there. It was just beautiful, big, stinky, loud city, and I loved it.

But talk about, I think all of us who are, and I love having these conversations with other international lawyers when I'm traveling, because a lot of us are at the similar phase of life. We have young kids still or teenagers, work stress, family stress, extended family stress. How do we extend this? How do we start the conversations within those circles where maybe there's baggage already, people are bringing a lot of history to the table? What's the right way to talk to a spouse or a sibling or a child about something where you really want to preserve the relationship, but you really need to have a hard conversation?

Hank: Yeah, and that's tough to do. When we don't have trust and we've got to do something high stakes, we rely on contracts, and they can be good. Contracts can be a wonderful substitute for trust when there is none and we've got to move on this. We can't wait until we develop a relationship. I do contracts with my kids. I'm sure you do with yours.

Jonathan: The phone contract.

Hank: Yeah, we do terms and agreements. Nobody's emotional at the time. It's not really a great moment to draw up a contract at the moment that someone's emotional. If we can talk beforehand and say, okay, if this and this happens, these are going to be the results, both positive and negative, both reward and maybe some sort of punishment or loss of privileges.

But that's not where we want to be. We don't want to rely on that all the time. I searched for a way to develop trust quickly because I could write a best-selling book: here's a way to develop trust with a spouse or with a child or with an employee, and you really don't have to spend much time doing it. There really is no workaround. I spent years looking for one.

If I want to, let's say, I have a 16-year-old son and I want to have a high trust relationship with him, there's really only one way to begin that cycle and build some momentum, and that is through interaction that has four characteristics. It's pretty simple: frequent, personal, positive, and low risk.

Frequent means it happens often. I'm not going to see him once a year and expect him to come to me with his problems. Personal, meaning it's not a, let's sit down and watch a movie together. That's not very personal. It's much more personal to go do something together. Positive, meaning nobody walks away with hurt feelings or feeling like the interaction was not good. And low risk. Low risk means I'm not having conversations or bringing things up that make the other person feel vulnerable.

So when I'm with my son, let's say, hey, do you want to go to the gym with me? Me and my 16-year-old son, we go to the gym every day together in the morning. It's frequent, it's personal, it's positive, and I keep it low risk. There's no reason to try to fix his grades every

day, or there's no reason to discuss his attitude about school every day. We're just going to have this interaction.

In a marriage, that looks like date night. We're going to just keep having some low risk interaction. We're going to go have some fun. Just the other night, my wife and I had a trivia contest. We didn't have to fix every problem we've ever had. We just enjoyed that time. With my little ones, it was playing Candyland and throwing the football.

If you'll keep up that frequent, personal, positive, low risk interaction, I can help you get to a high trust relationship. There are other things we can do. But do you see, if you don't do that, I can't teach you any techniques or anything that you could do to take it from, okay, we've got a good thing going, how do we ramp it up? It's almost like feeding an engine, putting coal in the fire. That has to be a continual thing.

I would love to say, hey, you're his dad, therefore he's going to trust you. Or, hey, you've been married for 31 years, you're obviously going to have high trust. It just doesn't work that way. High trust is built on frequent, personal, positive, low risk interaction. I've had parents say, how come my son will talk to his friends and not to me? Well, who does he have all the frequent, personal, positive, low risk interaction with? His friends. So you're going to talk to those people that you have all that interaction with. That's number one, upping that sort of interaction. That's step one.

Jonathan: And how does that map back over into business then? Say it's a stressful work environment, everyone's already at their limits, they're coming in long hours already anyway and working on the weekends. How do you build those into the culture of an organization? Maybe frequency looks like something different. I'm thinking across all the businesses I've been involved in. Maybe frequent is monthly or quarterly. It's not daily. But I'd be interested in your thoughts there.

Hank: Trust can be built on loose ties in business. For example, let's say I trust you, Jonathan, and you trust Tony. So you recommend me and Tony. You say, hey, Tony, go have Hank talk to your business. We're automatically going to have some sort of trust based on that tie to you. You recommended me, you recommended him to me, you recommend me to him, and that is built right there.

Jonathan: So we can shortcut it a little bit, that piece.

Hank: Yeah, we build something right there. Now, if I can't keep up the interaction that's positive, obviously I can ruin that relationship really quick. And Tony calls you and says, what are you doing? Why would you send him to me? He was terrible.

I'll give you a couple of examples. For a high school principal, it's get out of your office. One of the most difficult things is to get a principal out of their office because in their office, they get work done in their mind. This is where I get things done. This is where I'm not getting side conversations. But the side conversations are where people come to trust you.

You've probably read *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. They said Teddy Roosevelt, as President of the United States, could name every groundskeeper by name, every secretary, every chef. He'd ask about their spouses by name. He would ask about their children by name. He was the most powerful man in the world, and here he is, caring about people.

I remember once I was helping a football team, and I said, how many of you can tell me the guy who cuts the grass on the field? There were maybe three of them. They were like, oh yeah, that's Mike. I said, how come none of you care about Mike? This is a pretty important job to what you're doing. The grass matters to you. They saw, oh, all I've got to do is go over and have a 45-second conversation when I see Mike.

So I think in business, it's getting out of your office and being interested in people, their story, their life. Because if I'm a number to someone versus a name, it changes my loyalty to you. If you said, hey, employees, sign in with your number here, 84711, you're a part. You're something that could be ordered out of a catalog. You're just a number. So why would that part give me its creativity? I can buy your time, but I can't buy your creativity. I can't buy your passion. That's got to come through moral authority, that someone says, no, I want to help him. I want to help this organization succeed.

So I think getting among the people for any leader. Now, if you can't do it, if you're a leader of a thousand people in an organization, you can't get to know them all, well, then you hire those people who can get to know them all. Then you have those loose ties we talked about. Let's say you're the CEO and I work over in some other division of the company. When you build trust with me, I actually pass that same trust in you down to my people. I'd say, oh, you don't know Jonathan? He can't get to know all of us, but wow, this is what you'd love about him. That actually is what's called the strength of a loose tie, which is that they're not connected to you directly. They're loosely connected to you, but they see themselves as a friend of yours because of our connections. That makes sense?

Jonathan: Absolutely. So let's pivot to this concept of young people. I love young people. I still think I'm a—I don't know, my wife tells me repeatedly I haven't matured past 12 or 13. So I can jive very well with the youth in my ward. We're very good friends. But if you could give one piece of advice to young professionals who are trying to both build a career and a meaningful life, and it doesn't have to be limited to one, but what would you say?

If someone came to you and said, and I'm sure you get this on campus and other times, I was at the devotional that you gave at Bingham High School Seminary, which is how this discussion came about. They want to know. They say, Hank, I'm really struggling here. What's the right way to balance all of this? What do you tell them?

Hank: If it was a young professional, someone who's just starting out in their profession, not necessarily a teenager, but just beyond that, maybe just turning the corner from teenager to, all right, I've got to pick up this thing called adulthood, adult life, there are all sorts of things to choose from. So it's hard for me to narrow it down.

I was given a piece of advice once from a mentor that must have been meaningful because I've never forgotten it. He said, why are you going into business? And I said, well, you know, I like it. And he said, no, no, no. What are you doing? Why do you want to go into business? I said, well, I want to make a lot of money. And he said, okay, that's good. I'm glad you know you want to do that. How are you going to make this money? I said, whatever I need to do, whatever makes money.

And he said, let me give you a piece of advice. Money is a jealous girlfriend. You chase her, she's not interested. But if you chase wisdom, money will follow you. She'll wonder what you're doing and why you're doing it. For some reason, I've never forgotten it. The moment you chase the girl who only likes the chase, she's not interested in you. So I've often said that to young people: chase what you love, and money will follow you. Chase wisdom. Chase your passion. Money follows you. When you chase money, wisdom doesn't follow. Wisdom never gets jealous. Wisdom doesn't chase you.

Another one is a story from a man named Quentin Cook. You know who that is. When he was a young professional, he was going into hospital administration. He said he went to two funerals in two weeks. One was a very successful businessman who had done very well in life, but really didn't have a lot of focus on his family, mostly on his career. He had done very well in his career. He had made seven figures a year, sometimes eight figures a year. For all intents and purposes, on paper, you would have said this is a successful person.

He said he went to his funeral, and it was very dark. Most everybody was dressed in black. It was at a mortuary. There wasn't a lot of family there. Two of his sons had come. Not a lot of talking amongst the crowd. He said, I attended this funeral. He was one of the people I worked with.

Then he said two weeks later, he went to a second funeral of someone from his church. He had not worked with him, but he was from his church. On paper, you wouldn't have said he was very successful. He owned a home, and that was about it. Had some cars and a messy

garage. This funeral was at a church, and when this man's 40-some-odd grandchildren went up to sing a song, they sang it with all this love and joy. They sang a song about grandpa. Each of his children spoke one by one, speaking of his virtues and stories of working with him in the yard or working with him at his job or a camping trip somewhere. He said it was one of the most uplifting, joyous meetings he ever attended in his life.

It was an interesting crossroads for him because he was deciding what direction he was going to take. Where is he going to spend his time? There's only 24 hours in the day. Where is he going to spend his time? He said that became a crucial moment where he decided what he wanted in life. So kind of that Stephen Covey mantra, begin with the end in mind. But what end do you truly, what end are you really after? You know this phrase, Jonathan, climb the ladder of success only to find at the top you've been leaning against the wrong wall.

I teach by stories. I like to tell stories. That, to me, was a story that had an impact on me. That is interesting. At the very end of your life, if you were to watch your funeral, what are you hoping that looks like? Now you have your mission. Now you will know what you want. I think money can be such a false deception. The idea that the more money I have, the happier I will be is simply not true. That's not just from a religious standpoint. That's from a social sciences standpoint. More money does not equal more happiness. It's difficult for many young people, even old people, to break free from.

Jonathan: That's great. Okay, we're down to the wire. I've got two questions left. One is, and we could do a whole episode on this, and you have a whole podcast around this, you're a person of faith. But let's focus on high-performing professionals. Because of the circles I travel in and my unique situation where I speak Chinese, lived in China, and I have five kids, which can be very unusual, and I grew up in a family of 12 kids, which is very unusual. So if you're in a room of high-performing professionals who are skeptical about religion, what do you say to them to get them to think, maybe I should take another look at this in my life?

It all fits nicely in with what is the end going to look like for all of us. And of course, we have very few credible, reliable witnesses for what happens after this life. So let's focus on just getting to the end of this time. They're skeptical. They say, well, maybe. I don't know. I see you. You look happy. You look like you have a balanced life. You look like you have your head on straight for the most part. Do you attribute your fulfillment in life to religion? And if so, what should I think about it?

Hank: That's great, Jonathan. Thank you for the question. I think it becomes a trap for us, but it's a trap that everyone falls into, to generalize things, because then I don't have to get to know them. I'm sure you've experienced this as a lawyer, where if I can just put all

lawyers in the same category, I don't have to get to know any of them. I know how they all are because I've labeled them. And then you actually find a lawyer who's not a terrible person, who is a really great person, who just wants to help people.

Jonathan: I've met a few of those through the years.

Hank: And then it makes you rethink your entire generalization. When we categorize people, it's a human thing to do, but it's also a lazy thing to do because then I don't have to work. I don't have to think because I already know.

So I would be hesitant to ever categorize a large group of people in a way that makes me not have to think or not have to get to know any of them. And that happens with lawyers and with religion and with almost anything. Oh, I already know about those types of things. So the first step is to notice that you've done that and then take a step back and say, wait, I know that's a human and lazy thing to do. I better take a closer look.

That works in all areas of life, not just this one. As you know, not all lawyers are the same. Some are exactly what people fear, and others are the exact opposite. They're amazing, wonderful people who love helping others. I think the same thing holds true for religions and churches. There are some that are everything we don't want in a religion. But then you find some that are beautiful, and religious people, spiritual people, you find some that are everything you'd hoped a person could be, that a human being could be.

I think the more I get to know all types of people—you sound the same way, Jonathan—the more I understand myself. I try to take my children to places where they'll meet people not like them. I want them to be around that.

We were in Jerusalem once. I was with my older son. It was Ramadan, so the holy month for Islam. Everyone in Islam fasts from sunrise to sunset during Ramadan. By 5:00 or 6:00 at night, when the sun's about to go down, you have a lot of ornery people.

Jonathan: Some grumpy teenagers and everyone else.

Hank: Yeah, which I totally understand. We were there, and I said, let's walk down to the Damascus Gate. It was about a half mile from our hotel, so we walked down to the Damascus Gate, and they're going to have a big feast after their fasting. I just wasn't paying attention, and my son, because we're not Muslim, was eating some candy. There he is around all these people who are fasting and have been fasting all day. A lot of them haven't smoked all day, so their body's really on edge. Here's my 15-year-old taller son, and someone came up to him, this older gentleman, and just slapped him on the back of the head and said, stop eating. It's Ramadan.

I thought that was wonderful. You cannot pay for that. He's not going to get that in his school anywhere. We were able to have a good talk about people. One of the friends I introduced him to back there is a Muslim sheikh. It's kind of like a mayor of a town, but a religious figure. He has got to be one of the best human beings I have ever met. He is just a wonderful person to be around. In the exact same place, I have a Jewish guide. He's from Scotland, and I want my son to meet him because he is an incredible individual.

So I think you're right. It's almost by their fruits. I want to know why the fruit of this man's life is so good. There must be something to do with the root. If the fruit is good, I want to see the roots of this. Where is he getting his strength and his energy from? So I would say to anybody who thinks, oh, I'm pretty skeptical of religion, maybe you've been categorizing it. And again, not your fault. I think we all do it with all sorts of occupations and other aspects of life. But maybe you have the humility to say, you know what, I bet I'd learn some things if I went and looked into the religious world. That kind of humility will lead to progress. It'll lead to growth. I think one of my old mentors said it best: humility is the first step in all progress. So a little humility about maybe I don't know it all, maybe there is something to see there, can go a long way.

Jonathan: I had an experience like that actually in my first religion class at BYU when I was a young freshman. It was a New Testament teacher. I wish I could remember his name. I'll have to look back at my transcript. But I had grown up in a very strong household. Faith was very important, but we were kind of an oasis in the Midwest, in a small town. So I grew up thinking, oh, we have the corner on some of this truth about this life. I had a little bit of a chip on my shoulder, as I come by it naturally, of course.

I said something to the religion professor because he had sent us an assignment to read some New Testament commentary by some people who have a different faith. I said, do we even care what they have to think? His eyebrows went up to the moon. He said, wow. Just that reaction. He didn't have to say anything else after that. He did. He continued to correct me gently after that. But just his reaction there, and I thought, all right, I think I played this card wrong. I think I need to reevaluate a little bit about what I think about people who are different from me in this particular way. So it's been a slow learning curve, Hank. I'm not a quick learner. But it's been valuable learning lessons along the way.

Hank: That's been my experience as well. When I open up to the idea that this person or these people have something that I can learn, I found myself wonderfully surprised by what I've learned.

Jonathan: Agreed. Okay, last question that I did not prep you for, but this one's easy. You are doing something else. You don't have your podcast. You're not a religion professor. You

get to rewrite the rest of your life. Money's no object. What are you going to spend your time doing?

Hank: Oh, I love it. After I travel a little bit, I'd probably pick up golfing again, just because my dad was a golf professional. It's been interesting. I felt like my mourning of my father's passing has been pretty simple for me. He always wanted me to take care of my family. So okay, I'll just keep taking care of my family. But golfing has been something that pulls at my heart. When I get up to go golf, it pulls at everybody's heart. But for me, it's a little bit different just because of the memories of golfing, even the sounds of it.

So I think I'd pick up golf again. But what would I do? I've thought about this quite a bit. I'd probably return to some of my original loves. I would love to have continued in that thing. I think had I done it, it would have been great. But you can't do everything. I think I would go back into helping middle school students learn to play sports. That was one of the fun things I did.

One of my good friends and I said, well, let's do seminars on how to referee Little League games, because you just feel so bad for those little 15-year-old refs who don't know what they're doing. I thought, let's have some fun there.

I would also love to be involved in more art, more theater. As a public speaker, it kind of helped. As someone who is engaged in that kind of thing, public speaking became a way to make some money doing what I loved. But I loved making people laugh through whatever show it could be. It could be a speech or some sort of theater or some sort of concert.

What a great question. I think I'd also want to learn more about other faiths and serve people who don't have a lot. I think once you travel, you realize what an incredible thing it is to live in the United States of America in the 2020s. Just among the people of the history of this earth, how many blessings or opportunities we have. Then when you go out and, for example, see the Bedouin people that live between Jerusalem and Jericho and spend some time and see that, I would love for my children to be out in that and seeing how happy people are, number one, and then ways that we can help them, getting them clean water and hygiene and access to medical care. All of that is a passion of mine. So thanks for the question. That's a fun thought experiment.

Jonathan: It is a lot of fun. Well, Hank, this has been great. I told you when I reached out initially, this is an unintended bucket list item. When the opportunity came up, I said, why not? Why don't I ask Hank if he'd come on the podcast and just talk about this?

I've kind of made a career of putting myself in rooms where I have no business being there. I think it comes from being the next-to-last in a family of 12, where I could get away with things. The rules somehow didn't apply to me. It was like I was two generations removed

from the time when my parents had the energy to enforce rules at the house. So I was a bit of a street urchin and just scampered off. The punishment is that my 10-year-old son is exactly the same way as I was. And now I'm raising myself, and it's frustrating.

Hank: You're telling me I was not this difficult.

Jonathan: Oh, I was probably worse, but I see it. Anyway, it's been wonderful. Thanks for your time. I know that it's the end of a long day. I appreciate the time to learn from you. It's fun learning about business from all parts of the world, from all different areas. It's one of the reasons why I started this podcast, to just continually learn from different people. So thank you for sharing your expertise.

Hank: So much to learn from everyone, really. I'm grateful for the opportunity. I learned a lot as well.

Jonathan: Thanks, Hank, and I look forward to following you. You said traveling. If I can put that on my next bucket list, getting to the Middle East with Hank would be excellent.

Hank: Yeah. Come see Israel with me. It is a life-changing trip. You can't say that about all trips. This one I can.

Jonathan: Great. Thank you, Hank. It's great chatting and I look forward to following your work in the future.