

William:

Well, hey, everybody. I wonder how the beginning of your '21 is going. And I'm wondering if you're tired. I'm wondering if you've made a resolution that isn't coming through. I'm wondering if you're wondering whether it's time to leave where you are or not. I'm wondering if you're just tired of seeing the same people over and over again. If any of that is remotely true, this show is for you.

William:

I had the chance today to visit with Dr. John Walker and Dr. Charity Byers. They run Blessing Ranch and have counseled so many high capacity leaders over the years who were going through those very things. And today, we're going to hit on a few really cool topics that helped me personally, like when do I know when it's time to go? When do I know when it's God's voice saying stay? How do you know the difference between those? How do you keep up a habit that you started from your New Year's resolution? How do you keep dealing with the people now that it's winter and you still have to stare at the same people you were quarantined with forever? How do you deal with that? Today's show is going to hit a lot of that, and I think it's going to be helpful to you. I hope it's as helpful to you as it was to me. So tune in to Dr. John Walker, Dr. Charity Byers, and me as we have a conversation about navigating the post 2020 and into '21 dynamics.

William:

Well, hey, everybody. Thanks so much for joining us today. I know that the New Year's kicked off and all of Christmas is behind us. And in a normal year, right after Christmas when I was a pastor was when I ended up doing a whole lot of funerals. Right after Christmas is when the counseling load actually went up for me. And you would think when the holidays are over, everything's calm. But it's not as easy as just lose 10 pounds and balance your checkbook and have a resolution. It's a hard time. So I wanted to take some time today and got really lucky and got two friends willing to come on and visit with us about how we deal with the emotional stress of a pandemic and of just general life, particularly even in January.

William:

So joining me today, Dr. John Walker. Dr. Walker is an amazing, amazing counselor. I'll say it this way, John, forgive me if it's wrong, but he has the client list no one ever wants made public. John has worked with some of the most amazing pastors and leaders over the years. When they go through struggles like we all do, he's there to help them and get them to an even stronger place than before. And also joining me is Dr. Charity Byers. Dr. Byers is the succession plan for Dr. Walker and also his daughter. So welcome to both of you. Thanks for joining us today.

Dr. Charity Byers:

Thanks so much. I'm so glad to be with you.

Dr. John Walker:

Thank you very much, William.

William:

Dr. Walker, I'd love to start with you. And then in true succession fashion, we'll just kick you off the call if you're not offended by that.

Dr. John Walker:

Yeah, wonderful, wonderful.

William:

Tell us a little story. I'd love to just-

Dr. John Walker:

Yeah. Well, Blessing Ranch came into creation in a pretty remarkable way with an amazing encounter with the Lord back in the early '90s that just said, "John, I need you to build a Christian leader resource and renewal center." And that was really the beginning, was just a word from the Lord saying, "Got a job for you to do." And the language was actually very specific. "I need you to build a Christian leader resource and renewal center." Well, for the first 25 years of the history of Blessing Ranch, we were very, very strong on the renewal piece. And so we've had over 4,000 pastors, missionaries, and their families through our intensive model since the early '90s and it's been great. But here's where I'm going with the story.

Dr. John Walker:

One of the best things I did three years ago was I fired me as the executive director of Blessing Ranch, and it was time. But the coolest thing ever then from my perspective was being able to name then my youngest daughter, Dr. Charity, to lead Blessing Ranch into the future. And we said, "We have no idea what that will look like." But why I get excited about Charity's leadership is she's been able to lead the ranch into a position where we are now poised to be the resource center as well. And I'll let her tell you more about that. But it's a very exciting time for us. It couldn't be cooler as a father than to see Charity just blossom and grow as a person, but then really as a leader and being able to lead our organization. So we're excited to be here with you today, William. Very excited.

William:

And excited to not be here with us in an office but a little ways away. You can make some space now, right?

Dr. John Walker:

Yeah, right, right. Absolutely. Absolutely.

William:

Hey, when you think about the succession, I always tell people, "I'm not very good at this. I need to get better at it." But my annual review, which just happened, is a one question review and it's a pass/fail test. And the question is, "This year, did I make myself less necessary to the growth and running of our company?" And it's pass/fail. Some years, I do better than others. This year was probably not as much of a pass. It was a pretty weird year where I had to be a little more involved than normal. But what advice would you give people who are on the short side of where you are, maybe where I am. I'm early 50s or maybe even accelerated a little bit to 60. And oh my gosh, this pandemic is... This ain't what I signed up for. What advice would you give folks who are starting to think down the road of succession through either what you've learned or what you've counseled others?

Dr. John Walker:

I'll give a thought or two, and then Charity, I'd love to hear your perspective on that as well then. In our specific situation, I was the founder of Blessing Ranch. And that has its upsides. That has its downsides. I'm going to put this in the context of Einstein and his statement about insanity. If you keep doing the same thing over and over again and expect a different outcome, well, that's pretty insane. And so it was time to do something different. The big question then is, how do you let go? I think I'm an intuitive leader. And so I run quick. I run fast. I make decisions very rapidly. And that's not Charity's style. Charity is more reflective. She's much more like her mama and she loves collaboration where I was much more of a lone ranger. And the biggest thing and it sounds so trite, but it is so real, is how in the world after all these years do I let go? When I actually have a little bit of experience, when I have a few thoughts about what works and what doesn't work and have stubbed my toes enough.

Dr. John Walker:

But the reality is if Charity's not given free rein to lead and in a way that works for her as well as the organization, then she'll always be stifled. And so in our unique relationship, her growing edge was she had learned how to lead beyond her father's shadow. And that was really, really important for her development, but it was also really important for my development. So that would be the one singular thought I have, is existing leaders have to learn how to let go and not become a part of the founder syndrome, which says, "Yeah, kind of sort of letting go, but I'm going to continue to run this thing from afar or through back channels or whatever the case might be." And how Charity has responded has been remarkable in my estimation. She's grown from this shy little girl when she was a little girl to this amazing leader now. And I think that's partially because she was given the freedom to lead in a way that worked for her, not in a way that worked for me.

William:

That's so good. You all have helped us over the years with many successions where we've sent you the incoming person to help get them onboarded, or the outgoing person to help them. And in all the successions we've done, I'm yet to meet the pastor who said, "I'm rounding out my career. I want to finish well. I think what I'll do is I'll go high control and blow up my church." So either or both of you, what are the mental traps people should watch out for as they're trying to let go and I think the enemy tells them, "No, you have to stay in control." So are there some triggers or mental traps that either you would mention that we might look out for?

Dr. John Walker:

You want to take a stab at that or you want me to, Charity?

Dr. Charity Byers:

Well, I'll just give one thought here and then maybe you can add another. This may be an obvious thought, but I think the biggest thing we're always watching for is our pride. And again, nobody sets out to say, "I'm going to be an egotistical leader that's full of myself." But when it comes to succession, what we're having to let go of is everything we've invested in for decades and everything that feels so dear and personal, and everything that has represented what we hope to say is a life well lived. And when we get to heaven, God say, "Well done good and faithful servant." And we're having to let go of all of that and let somebody come in and perhaps do it differently.

Dr. Charity Byers:

So it may not always be the arrogant person who falls into that trap of pride. It may also just be the average person who just in some sense, wants to guard and protect everything that has felt so dear to their heart. So I think we just all have to be on the lookout for that trap of pride in our heart and just truly be able to stand upon what has been, and let something new be ushered in without it really threatening any of what that has meant for our own value, our own contribution over the last many years.

Dr. John Walker:

And very similar, I would just hitchhike onto that and say it's just so easy to think my way is the best way. And therein lies the pride that Charity is talking about. And somehow believe that I'm the only one that has this vested insight into what's best for our organization. And the truth is, and actually, I put this into words with Charity, I think Blessing Ranch has risen as high as it can under my leadership. And it's really time to make way for movement. And that's exactly what's happened. And I don't think that movement would have happened under my leadership. So respect is a great deal of what's involved in going forward. Mutual respect versus pride. And the ability in letting go to be able to say... Another major mental trap is to think, "I'm the only one that has real insight into this organization. And if I step back, it's just going to all crumble." Well, the reality is it might, but it also might actually escalate and go in a whole new direction, which is where Blessing Ranch is poised now.

William:

That's great. Well, Dr. Walker, thanks so much for taking time. In succession fashion, we're going to get you out of the relay zone and focus-

Dr. John Walker:

Outstanding. All right. Great to see you, William, and you'll have a wonderful conversation with Charity.

William:

Thanks. Charity, it is so good to see a succession in real time. And I'm just wondering, you're stepping into this. Tell us a little bit... So let's back up just a little bit. Tell us about Blessings Ranch. A lot of people wouldn't know, is that a place? Is it a website? What is it? And then how long you've been doing what you're doing, and let's springboard into some real time issues that people are facing.

Dr. Charity Byers:

Okay. Well, as John mentioned a little bit ago, it's been about a 25-year history for Blessing Ranch, and it began with that call that God put on his heart. Blessing Ranch, once upon a time, was much more of a place than it is today. It began as a large ranch out in Northern Colorado. And it was kind of a retreat for Christian leaders where they would come and spend a week and receive intensive counseling as they were with us. And about six years ago, we transitioned the entire ministry from that ranch in Colorado to the Tampa Bay Area of Florida. And so it's still in a sense, is a place. It's just becoming much more than a place. So we've preserved what we've always done, though not on a ranch in Colorado anymore. We still provide the intensive counseling services in the very same fashion that we used to do. And so that is still alive and it is still a huge heart of Blessing Ranch to care for the Christian leader.

Dr. Charity Byers:

Kind of what we say is we want every leader to be living well, leading well, and hopefully finishing well in the end. And so beyond it just being a place, though, as he talked about earlier, the original call of God was to be both a renewable and resource center. And so over the last few years, we've tried to become more than a place by trying to capture what it is that happens in our small counseling rooms and package it in a way that can be shared much more broadly with the church community. And so one of the most recent things we've done is published our first book, which is called Unhindered. It captures the process of heart change that we lead people through in our intensive weeks with them. Along with it, we've got a study guide. We've got a video course. We're just trying to do a number of things that can help translate what does take place one on one into some different ways of contributing just to the church community.

William:

Wow. So jumping from there into you guys are the experts. You help people who are in crisis. This has been kind of a crisis here. I was talking to a friend of mine who is an attorney and he practices what's affectionately known as family law, although they're very few families left when he's done practicing law.

Dr. Charity Byers:

That's right.

William:

And I said to him, "Hey, I don't know that I want to know the answer to this, but I'm guessing your pipeline for new work is pretty dang strong right now." And he said, "Yeah, it's pretty bad." So what's going on that's brought us to this crisis point? And what are you seeing as unique challenges coming out of 2020 and into '21?

Dr. Charity Byers:

Yeah. Well, if we just broadly reflect on what this year, 2020, has been, on one hand, there's nothing new as far as crisis is not new. And we can look around our own communities, our own country and across the world and just see strife and struggle and suffering happening all over. So on that respect, there's nothing new about 2020 except kind of what we are seeing right now, is that 2020 has produced what we call compassion fatigue kind of at a collective level. So compassion fatigue is this idea that we get kind of pressed and squeezed by stress to the point that kind of our own protective mechanisms are weakened enough. That something comes out of us that we don't recognize or something that we've been trying to hide.

Dr. Charity Byers:

So we see this happen at an individual level all the time in our offices. It's the person who's coming here with a personal crisis. Their life is imploded. Ministries falling apart, marriages falling apart. Everything around them is just falling apart. But right now, what we're experiencing, again, is kind of this collective compassion fatigue where it's not just the individual, it's the family, it's the church community, it's our society just sort of experiencing this together. And so I think what we've kind of watched happen, actually, over this year is that because of the circumstances that 2020 has brought to our lives, we've seen it really open this window into our inner world.

Dr. Charity Byers:

So the way that that's happened, again, is with this compression fatigue that's taking place in our life, it strips us of all the things that are our protectors. So that might just be our predictable life. The ways that we feel in control. The ways that we are kind of just going along with our proven path of success. And those things help us feel okay enough so that we go on about our lives without sort of the shadow side of us or the weak link within us getting exposed as often. But under these kinds of circumstances, when all those things are stripped away like our predictability, our capacity to feel in control, or just our proven paths of success, it strips us of those protective mechanisms and these other parts of us start to show themselves in ways that we don't often see.

Dr. Charity Byers:

And so I think the unique opportunity of 2020 is actually having a window opened into our inner world. And we can either look at that as a really, really bad thing that we want to avoid and just say, "Cover that back up." Or we can really challenge ourselves to take a closer look and sort of face what I think is a unique and actually pretty amazing opportunity to begin to understand our own hearts differently.

William:

That is so good. My experience with you guys in the crisis mode that a lot of people over the years have come for, how do I heal up, is I would love to have a field guide for how to avoid having to come to you. So I'm the optimist where the glass is half full. This coffee cup will be half full all day long no matter what. What are some warning signs for people if they're like, "I'm doing fine. I'm grinding on '21. Vaccines are coming. Everything's good." What would be some of the, "Oh, that's a yellow light. Watch out?"

Dr. Charity Byers:

Yeah, absolutely. Well, I think a couple of quick things would be one, people are telling you they don't recognize something about you. They're saying, "What's going on? That's not you. This isn't like you." That kind of feedback, we really have to pay attention to. I think another quick thing would be if we're seeing emotional reactions coming out of ourselves that don't match our circumstances. So it might be in either direction. An overreaction where you're seeing yourself overrespond to a circumstance, or it may be actually an underresponse too where you just don't feel what you think you should be feeling. More of a numbing response where maybe I should be a little bit upset about that, but I'm just not anymore, or I should be angry about that, but I'm just not anymore. So either an overresponse or an underresponse can be a great clue that something's going on inside of you, you need to pay attention to.

William:

So vocabulary words I've gotten tired of in 2020. Pivot, so tired. Honestly, I'm kind of tired. This risks sounding like I'm not making a big deal out of things, but I'm tired of the word unprecedented. And as I look history, this is not... Christians are not getting sawed in half for their faith.

Dr. Charity Byers:

That's right.

William:

A third of Europe died during the bubonic plague. That's not happening. This is not unprecedented. I do think pastors particularly are faced with this really strange riptide of you've got a pandemic and who knows what to do with that unless you're over 100 years old? And we're alive and during the last one. Or not just that, but racial tension that in my limited experience and audience, there are people taking it from all sides no matter what they say or don't say on the civil unrest around racial-

Dr. Charity Byers:

That's right.

William:

And then throwing in there third, we had this presidential election which kind of polarized and it's almost like PTSD afterward. For people who are sitting out there saying, "I'm just getting battered," what would be some words that you would have for immediate coping or encouragement?

Dr. Charity Byers:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Well, I think all of that is absolutely true. And numerous conversations that I've had with particularly pastors and leaders over the last couple of months, I think within those, one of the themes that I have heard is just that leadership has never felt more impossible. And man, that really struck me just to hear that from people, it's never felt more impossible to be a leader. And this isn't coming from the 20 somethings who are brand new to this game. It's coming from the 50s and 60s who have had a few decades under their belt of this. So I think there's great compassion for the impacts that this has had on everybody walking through these simultaneous hits. And as you said, kind of the PTSD-ish feelings that we sort of have now as a response.

Dr. Charity Byers:

So I think a couple of words to leaders in these positions. One of those would be just to continue to remember why you're doing what you're doing. And that may sound like a simple statement. But when we start to look at all of this before us and we envision 2021, and yeah, the calendar is going to roll over into a new year. And maybe there's a vaccine on the way at some point, but this is not as if it's about to all be better in the coming days here or coming weeks here. So as we look ahead to all of that, we just have to remember, "What is it that God has asked you to do? And why are you doing it?" There's so much to manage. All of the relational tensions from all of the things that you've named and still continuing to figure out the pivot and all of that. But you don't have to be the expert in all of those things. You just have to remember what it is that God has asked you to do. And you can't be the champion of everything out there, though, everybody may expect you to be. You have to know, what has God asked you to do?

Dr. Charity Byers:

And so I think you just have to hold dearly to that or otherwise, you risk getting sort of overwhelmed by everything that's on your doorstep and everything that people are trying to put on you to do in the face of all of this stuff. So it's not to be ignorant of those things or to not address what needs to be addressed but just to remember the main thing that God has asked you to focus on and to do that well. And I think in addition to that drum that we beat, of course, all the time with leaders is just the drum of soul care. And there's just never been a time where it's mattered more than now after everybody has been through all of this over the last few months and a lot of people are just feeling tired, beat up, I'm done. I don't have anything left in me to give, especially with all of these circumstances that feel so impossible.

Dr. Charity Byers:

And so everybody just has to keep in mind that you've got to be breathing life back into yourself as you go on and as you go through this. And so it sounds like a simple thing to say, "Everybody should know that by now." But the number of leaders who don't do it is pretty alarming. So it's just a call to come back to some of the basics of just letting your heart have life breathed back into it by God as you try to navigate all that you're doing.

William:

So I have made a prediction. It's actually not a prediction. It's just an observation of what I already see happening because people come to us thinking about making a change in their job before the job change ever happens. Right? So we kind of get a preview, right? And I have seen record numbers of people saying, "It's time to make a change." They're not retiring, but things have changed. Maybe they want to move because they want to be in your family. Maybe they're just tired. And I'm also seeing people who are 60 to 62 years old who thought they had five more years left and now they're like, "I don't know."

William:

So help me understand, how do you delineate between when you're just tired and when it's actually time to make a change? Because I think changes happen when there's a shake up. And God has really shaken the tree hard this year. And there may be good reasons to seek out a change this year. I think 2021 will be the year of massive turnover. And I'd love to have some advice from you about how to know when it's the right time to look for something new versus hunker down.

Dr. Charity Byers:

Yeah, that's a great question. The first thing that it makes me think about is just trying to really notice the difference between your own internal voices and God's voice. You basically need to examine your motivations for wanting to make that change. What is it that's inside of you that's telling you, "It's time to go?" So what would be the wrong voices to listen to? Well, one would be maybe a voice of inadequacy that just looks at the challenges ahead and it says, "I don't have what it takes to do this." Clearly, there must be somebody better to do this than me. But God may not be saying that to you. It might be your own voice of inadequacy and you better not be listening to that.

Dr. Charity Byers:

So another voice not to listen to may be a voice of fear. Maybe it looks ahead at all there is and it just says, "I don't know how to control that. I don't have the answers." So clearly, it must not be me. Maybe in another direction here, you've been pretty beat up by some of the relational tensions that have been there through the elections and through the racial conversations. And you've just started to absorb that and the voice inside you says, "Nobody respects you anymore." Those are all just examples of voices that we better examine clearly. We better recognize them as our own voices and not God's. And we better let God minister to those voices so that they don't get a vote in whether we're done or not.

Dr. Charity Byers:

And so we got to invite God in there to say, "Hey, what do you have to say about me?" Instead of what all these circumstances and all of this external pain has tried to say about me and let him into that conversation because those are moments where I would say somebody is at risk of being prematurely

done. So there are, of course, different cases where God is leading somebody to do something new. Maybe it is time to be done. Maybe you're not the right fit to take this organization into its future. And maybe he's got some different plans for you. So knowing what God's voice sounds like, it's just not motivated by pain. And the first examples are all motivated by pain. I've been hurt and it's told me this. Inadequacy, shame, fear, those are all pain-filled words. So you know those are not God. God's voice is free of those things. And so I think that's a good cue there to know who's talking.

William:

Wow, that is so good. And it's such a tightrope. I've watched it for years. I've tried to figure it out in my own life. But on the one hand, I like to run marathons. There's probably a boatload of counseling involved with unpacking that. But I like doing that. And I'm convinced that the times that I'm about to quit are the times that if I'll stick with it, I'll see a big breakthrough, right?

Dr. Charity Byers:

Yeah, that's right.

William:

But the shadow side of that for me is I hang on to things too long sometimes. And I forget that Jesus was always getting in trouble with his friends and his disciples for moving from town to town and village to village. So anything that it's so helpful to figure out, when is it the voice that's God saying, "Hey, it's one big kingdom. Come work in this part?" And when is it, "I'm just afraid or I'm tired?"

Dr. Charity Byers:

That's right. Yes.

William:

So let me shift gears just a little bit. We're broadcasting this or dropping it or whatever the right word is, I'm getting old, during the wintertime. So I live in Houston where you can still be outside in the winter, but most people can't. And so now they're stuck inside. And they're probably stuck inside with the same people they were quarantined inside with. On the one hand, God says, "It's not good that people be left alone." But on the other hand, it's like, "I am so tired of looking at you and you're making me crazy the way you do this, this, and this." Are there no quick tips for counseling? But do you have any pointers for people who are kind of tired of being around the people they've been around and don't want to say it out loud? What would you say to people that are struggling with the togetherness of this last year or so?

Dr. Charity Byers:

Yeah, absolutely. It's great perspective on just the impacts now. Even if you're not quarantined, it's too cold for so many people to get that space and there's still so many limitations on our lives. I think one of the first things is to acknowledge here is I think we have to just take a look at our circumstances and decide whether they're just difficult or whether they're toxic. And I think we have to know the difference between those things to guide a little bit of our external response. If they're toxic, we need to respond a little bit more dramatically. And then if they're just difficult, if they're just difficult, I think it's a call for us to just learn how to love people better. How do we become more patient? How do we become less judgmental? How do we just love the other in spite of some of their annoyances and that kind of thing?

Dr. Charity Byers:

So I think that's just one quick thing to ask yourself. Is this just difficult or is this actually toxic? But I think one of maybe the deeper things that I would call people to do is to challenge themselves in these kind of circumstances where we're just struggling with people around us to become more curious than you were just cautious. Let me explain what I mean by that. Cautiousness is this idea of, "I just need to maybe put up boundaries with people. I need to limit my interactions with them because they're just driving me crazy." That's about cautiousness. But curiosity is a very different approach.

Dr. Charity Byers:

Now, first of all, let me just acknowledge, I'm not saying that cautiousness is bad. Cautiousness is good with people we do need to have that measure in our life. But I think a much deeper need is to become curious with our own hearts. Become curious about how this is impacting me and why. So why do I feel what I feel when I'm having a conversation with you? Or why do I respond the way that I respond when you do X, Y, or Z? And I think this is so important to become a student of our own hearts because there's so much power that we actually have to manage our own hearts, but we don't realize it. So we begin to think that the only answer here is to manage my circumstances. Either change your behavior or limit my exposure to your behavior. But actually, we have a lot of power by managing our own hearts.

Dr. Charity Byers:

So I think we got to begin to ask ourselves these kinds of questions because this type of curiosity will really show you how to guard your heart in a powerful way. It will show you how your heart can be ministered to. So let's just take for example, if I use a personal example here, my husband struggles with some anxiety. And sometimes, his cautiousness in life, always wondering about the what ifs or how things could go wrong tends to drive me nuts sometimes and I start to get really, really annoyed with that. And so I think I've got to get curious and I've got to ask myself, "Why is there such an annoyance with that?" What is that saying about my heart? Is that hitting a sore spot within me? Meaning is it triggering some kind of pain within me? Is it a character issue that it's hitting where I'm not loving patiently or unconditionally enough? Just getting curious about my own heart and being able to manage those things instead of just, as I said, instead of just being cautious, really being curious.

William:

That's great. That's great. So as we dropped this episode in to the front end of January, I'm reminded when we talk about performance reviews or somebody who's gotten in trouble at work and you're trying to figure out a path of correction or what have you, I always tell people, "Make the period of restoration or correction longer than two weeks, a bare minimum." And they say, "Well, why?" And I say, "Well, have you ever been to the gym the first two weeks of January?" It's absolutely crowded. Now, maybe not this year, but people are... But the sustaining of habits seems to be so rare. It's rare in my life and I think it is rare in others.

William:

I got to take it outside of the Bible, probably the best book I've read in the last five years is Atomic Habits. And James Clear, I mean, amazing, amazing book with not just facts, but man, if you're a preacher and you want illustrations about keeping habits, just buy it for the illustrations. But as I read that, I thought he makes tiny changes that make a huge difference. What encouragement would you give to people who are like, "I'm tired of making changes or I just fell off the wagon and I lost my habit of

change." How would you encourage someone who's struggling with the battle of starting something new or sustaining a new habit?

Dr. Charity Byers:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). That's so important. And those concepts of Atomic Habits are priceless. It's such a great resource to really show us how to turn just desire into great discipline in our life. I think a couple of things. I think the first thing that I would just acknowledge is that this is probably very much in line with the heart of this book, but it's really just about simplicity and not complexity. And so that's the whole idea, right? Of you're starting with very small changes that make a big difference. And so it's not just about wanting to add more and do more. It's also about going back to the heart of things and going back to the basics in our life. And so I think we have to just really be mindful of that as we're saying, "What needs to shift in my life?" It's not always about new things that need to be added. It's often about coming back to things that have been lost.

Dr. Charity Byers:

So that's just one simple perspective I'd throw out. But I think probably something I'd love to just highlight a little bit more is that as we're thinking about somebody perhaps wanting to follow through with New Year's resolutions where they're wanting to make a shift in their life and they're trying to employ all the great things they learned after reading Atomic Habits, what ends up happening to a lot of us is that we're just not able to win because there's too much competition within us. So what that competition is is the things within us that have been written on our hearts that are actually competing with the new things we're trying to do.

Dr. Charity Byers:

And so we often think that willpower is the answer, right? If I just will myself, if I just do it, if I just put it on my calendar, that that's my answer. And of course, those things are good. We need all of that. But there's just often an unaddressed competition that's going on in our hearts that we just don't even know is there. And it's often the reason why we find ourselves a month or two months down the road just sort of giving up. So this internal competition, it's like the thing within you that self-sabotages you. So it might be, for example, something you believe about yourself. That could be a source of internal competition. Maybe it's just this belief that you have that says, "Well, I pretty much fail at everything I do. So I'm bound to fail at this too." If you don't recognize that as your internal competition, what's going to happen? Well, of course, you're going to fail at this too because that's your expectation.

Dr. Charity Byers:

Or maybe your belief about yourself is that everybody else really matters more than I do. So that's the person who's going to have a hard time putting these good things in their own life ahead of what could be done on behalf of somebody else. And that's the heart of a servant for sure and that's good. But we can't lose the perspective of being good stewards of ourselves as well. So there can be those things we believe about ourselves that end up being the competition to all of these new things that we're trying to do. And it also can just be things we've learned to do over the years that sort of become the shoulds of our life and they end up being the internal competition.

Dr. Charity Byers:

So maybe an example of that would be we've just learned to be a people pleaser and that's kind of our way of feeling okay in life, if we just keep everybody around us happy. Well, maybe that's competing

with the thing that you're trying to do differently in your life or maybe kind of your should in a different sense is I'm just supposed to beat myself up for everything I do. That's just the way I do life. I do something and I just have to criticize myself and beat myself up. Well, maybe that becomes the competition for whatever it is you're trying to do. So with all of that said, we've got to recognize that there is internal competition here often going on with a lot of these shifts we're trying to make in our life. And if we don't address those things, then our willpower and our great disciplines that we have just tend to fall short. So our response really needs to be to unhinder our hearts from these things within us and allow God to rewrite that story within us so that we've got no competition left.

William:

That is so good. Well, so many things to take away here. And I'd love for people to know how to get in touch with you or with Blessing Ranch. And it's not a ranch but...

Dr. Charity Byers:

We still have a facility. So we're still a Blessing Ranch. Yeah.

William:

Yeah, no. How can people get in touch with you?

Dr. Charity Byers:

Yeah. Well, one of the best ways to find us would be our website. It's blessingranch.org. You can also give us a call, phone number is 970-495-0920. And if you want to check out our brand new book, Unhindered, you can find that at availleadership.org/unhindered. And we are giving away free copies. You just pay shipping. So if you want to take advantage of that offer, you can find it on that website.

William:

Wow. Well, I am so glad, Charity, to have gotten to spend the time with you and the future for Blessing Ranch is bright.

Dr. Charity Byers:

Thank you.

William:

I am glad to see you take the reins.

Dr. Charity Byers:

Thank you so much.

William:

Yeah. It's a long shadow to get out from under but you're already doing it.

Dr. Charity Byers:

That's right. But as he said, he's given me freedom to do that. So thank you very, very much.

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William:

And let me just say to everybody listening out there today, if you're fatigued and we didn't hit on your issue, hey, you're not alone. I mean, this has been a killer year, year and a half. And maybe one of the best things I've seen come out is a real conversation about mental health and about the need to get help if you really are feeling down. So I would encourage you to call Blessing Ranch to seek out professional help if you need it. You're not alone. If you think you're messed up because that is why Jesus came. We all are messed up at one point or another. So if you want to get in touch with Charity, follow the links there. You can go to vandercast.com and receive show notes and links to everything and an update on what's coming next. Well, look forward to talking to you again soon. Hang in there. Find some good health and be prepared. 2021 will get better.

Announcer:

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