

**EPISODE 326**

[INTRODUCTION]

**[00:00:00] ANNOUNCER:** Welcome to The Real Estate Syndication Show. Whether you are a seasoned investor or building a new real estate business, this is the show for you. Whitney Sewell talks to top experts in the business. Our goal is to help you master real estate syndication.

And now your host, Whitney Sewell.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:00:24.2] WS:** This is your daily Real Estate Syndication Show. I'm your host, Whitney Sewell. Today, our guest is Miles Anthony Smith. Thanks for being on the show, Miles.

**[0:00:33.2] MAS:** Thank you, Whitney. I appreciate you having me.

**[0:00:34.7] WS:** No, I'm honored to have you on the show. A little bit about Miles, he's the author of the *Why Leadership Sucks* series, teaching on how to eliminate frustration with leadership. He's also the Director of Digital and SEO content marketing. The *Why Leadership Sucks* series, I don't know why I haven't read that myself yet. I'm looking forward to this. Looking forward to this interview, Miles and appreciate your time. Tell the listeners a little bit about who you are and maybe where you're located and a little about this series before we jump in.

**[0:01:03.7] MAS:** Yeah, thank you, Whitney. I got my leadership start in my mid-20s. I was very fortunate to have had a formal position of leadership early on in my career. I think leadership certainly starts with leading yourself well, before you can lead a team, or your family, or friends, or what have you. I really got thrown into the fire at a younger age and went through lots of challenges, ups and downs, I think as anybody can relate to in life.

You certainly have both those times of on mountaintop experience and down of the valley and being in charge of directing people and motivating inspiring people towards a goal is something that takes a lot of practice.

Really for me, that's why I wrote the books, *Why Leadership Sucks* volumes 1 & 2, was to share some of those experiences and hopefully make your leadership experience suck a little bit less than mine did.

**[0:01:56.3] WS:** I like how you talked about leadership starts by leading yourself first. Could you elaborate on that a little bit? What does that mean?

**[0:02:03.8] MAS:** Yeah. It really starts with understanding who you are and how you're wired. This can take – I mean, there's lots of different personality tests, or even motivational type of tests, so you understand not just your personality, but what really drives you and energizes you.

There are several that you can take. Quite a few actually, one of the ones that I've used for myself, my family and other people is called a flag page. It's actually developed as a relationship tool, but really starts to help you understand what drives you, what energizes, what gets you going more than just your job description, or your job title, or what you do for a living. It's only starting there first and understanding who you are and how you're wired can you better understand how to better lead other people.

**[0:02:49.4] WS:** Could you give a couple examples, just so we can know how think about that?

**[0:02:53.3] MAS:** Yeah. For me, one of my main drivers, one of the things that energizes and motivates me is I filter people through two questions really, are you genuine? Are you fair? I know that for good or for bad, I might filter people, too many people out through that filter and miss some opportunities. At the same time, I know that when I approach people, that's really the primary thing I'm trying to assess and working with people whether I think they're trustworthy in business or in life.

Knowing that about myself, I can also protect against what I would say may be the negative part of that, or the potential negative part is that I'm a filter people too much and not get to understand really who they are and give them a fair shot.

**[0:03:40.2] WS:** Interesting. Okay. No, I appreciate that. You talked about having the benefit of starting in your 20s, making maybe some mistakes and having some hard things to deal with. It helped you to develop your leadership abilities and even into writing these books. Could we talk about some of those, or do you have maybe a few that we could talk about to help the listener to understand maybe what they're doing right now, as far as leadership issues that they're having and ways that they can solve those problems?

**[0:04:08.3] MAS:** Yeah, and there's lots of different things. Leadership is multifaceted, I would say a primary tenant is certainly that leadership, the only way you can learn this is to practice. You can buy my books, or other people's books, you can take different tests, you can learn all about yourself. Until you actually take what you have learned and actually try it and put it into practice, it really is going to mean much, but it isn't going to make you a better person. It's only into trying that. I think for me, it's learning from other people, applying that, learning something from that, okay, what could I have done better? What did I do well? You don't always beat up on yourself.

Some of us can be perfectionists. I don't know about you, but I'm a bit of perfectionist myself. Allowing ourselves to make some of those mistakes, because we are going to. We're not perfect. We don't know it all. That's part of the growing process is learning from others, applying it, figuring out what you can do to do better. That's one broad thing. I think another one is just understanding how important culture is to your organization. You can be successful at a personal level to a certain point, but in order to grow further and build a larger company, or larger team, you're going to have to learn how to motivate and inspire people. That is a whole different animal.

These days, people don't want to be told what to do. Certainly, the younger generations, but even the boomers and those, that's starting to change from a top-down style of leadership to a servant leadership. Doesn't mean a weak leadership, or somebody who's subservient; you have

to be in charge, but it flips the whole model on its head of us serving the people that work for us, not the other way around.

**[0:05:56.7] WS:** That is a great topic right there. I mean, serving the people that's working for us, instead of just having the mindset that they're serving us; serving them as well. You talked about you have to learn how to motivate and inspire people. That's not always easy. Unless, you're taking these things, you're learning like you talk about and you're practicing. Just like you said, you're going to have to practice these things. Help us to learn how to – I guess, get us started anyway and motivating and inspiring our team.

**[0:06:26.4] MAS:** Well, for me it starts really with going back to leading yourself well. In order to lead other people, you have to know who you are, your strengths and your weaknesses and how that's going to play with the team. They are going to look at you and most people can judge fairly quickly, whether you're authentic, whether you're just a fake, whether you're going to get in the trenches with them and actually do some work with them, or you're just going to bark orders. Now as a leader, you need to – you can't always be in the trenches doing the work, because that's why you have other people to help you do those jobs. You need to be able to rely on them.

They need to know they can trust you. Finding ways to build authentic trust with them is really key and it's something that's not – I guess, it's not easy and it's easy. People want real authentic. If you can demonstrate to them not just through your words, but through your actions that you're going to follow through on what you say you're going to do, that you actually care about them, doesn't mean that everything you want them to do that they're going to completely agree with, but you take the time to understand their perspectives.

At the end of the day, the leader has to make a decision, maybe that's opposite of what somebody wants, but you've taken the time to show them that you care and that you understand their perspective and even explain maybe why we're going to do something differently than they should have.

**[0:07:48.3] WS:** Nice. That's not easy is it? I mean, that's not easy to try to have a talk with your team and explaining maybe why you think something should be done differently.

**[0:07:57.7] MAS:** It starts from a position of humility. That's a position that we have to – especially as leaders, we like to be in charge. Obviously, there's a reason we're in charge. We want to do that. You have to have a certain level of ego. It's not so much suppressing that ego, but it's putting that ego in its proper place and really treating people with respect and dignity and really just proper etiquette, to be frank.

**[0:08:24.4] WS:** It sounds simple, doesn't it?

**[0:08:26.6] MAS:** It does.

**[0:08:27.2] WS:** Maybe part of it should be simple. Some of these leadership skills, we have to I think learn and develop over time, but some of it should be common sense, I think. Treating people like you want to be treated; obviously, the golden rule. Starting from a position of humility, I like how you said that. I mean, really just putting out there that, “Hey, I don't do everything right either, or I mess up all the time and I need –” The people that are on my team, I mean, I need their help. That's why they're working with me. If I could do it all, I wouldn't have them, right? I would be doing it. They're better at what they do than I could do it, that's for sure.

Moving forward a little bit. Some other challenges maybe with a larger team, or ways that while leadership sucks, but for us to get through some of those challenges, maybe even with a larger team or any challenges that you can give us examples of and how to get through them?

**[0:09:19.5] MAS:** Yeah. Culture is a big one, for me understanding. Part of that piece is your organization is going to grow and mature. Your department, let's say hey, this larger, small company and team, or it's a small department of a larger company. The needs of that business, or that department are going to grow and change over time.

The individual talents and skills and abilities, as well as just a cultural fit of people over time can change. I've run into that a number of occasions. It's very difficult, because you may be facing an issue where you just – your gut is telling you this person isn't a fit for this role. Maybe they were several years ago. The organization's changed, grown, or maybe it's shrunk. Again, those dynamics change quite frequently over time.

It would be equally bad of us to, or poor decision of us just to assume that those people need to always stay the same, or to change all the time. This is difficult, because we're dealing with people side of business and dealing with the fact that you may need to make a change. Hopefully, you can move them into a different role. Hopefully, it's not just a – if it's a performance issue, I always start with the perspective of what can I do better? Maybe what have I done wrong, or what – maybe nothing's wrong, but what are the things that I can do to communicate better with that person to give them better parameters within which to do their job?

Because a lot of times, it starts with the leader. It should. We need to really genuinely look inside and exhaust all of those potential things looking at it authentically, really from humility. What can I do better to help that person to succeed and give them multiple opportunities? I believe in giving people lots of opportunities to treat, or change their behavior, or to maybe grow into a new role.

Maybe they performed well, but it's just not a fit for where you're going. Give them that opportunity. You build that relationship and trust with them over time to move into a new role. That I find is one of the bigger challenges, because the dynamics of business, or moving quickly changing more rapidly. Being able to as an organization adapt those roles over time.

**[0:11:40.9] WS:** Okay. What are some common, I guess either misconceptions, or things like that that you see people in these leadership roles that we have, or that maybe we're blind to? Some things you commonly see, that maybe us as leaders are blind to in our organization, or even bigger than that, and smaller, whatever examples you have.

Maybe are obvious to you, because you've written books, you've really educated yourself on this topic, but where a lot of us that are in those roles and we haven't developed ourselves enough, right? I mean, we're not leading ourselves well. What are some things that were blind to that, or maybe obvious to you now that you weren't when you were in your 20s?

**[0:12:17.5] MAS:** Oh, it's a great question. I think one of the big things is communication. As a leader, we don't often realize the power of our words. We might say something off the cuff to

somebody and ask them to run with it and don't give enough clear communication, or don't take the time to go through what we really want them to do. I've seen this many times, people will run off and do something and they come back and you're like, "That's not what I was asking you to do, or I wasn't asking you to do anything at all, I was just making an off-the-cuff comment."

I don't think that you can totally eliminate those circumstances, or not have those at all, but I try to as a leader, because most leaders tend to think fast and want to move fast, generally, or faster than others. Let's say, that I try to check myself and force myself to slow down, so that I communicate and make sure and get that feedback from that at first and make sure we really are on the same page, in terms of what either I'm asking them to do, or just having a conversation about something.

It's easy to just get running and keep going and just give minimal communication that could be e-mail or verbal and knowing which you should give in which scenario, a lot of times when you need more than one or two e-mails back and forth. You need to have a dialogue, so that should be phone, or Skype, or in-person. There's a lots with communication I could talk about.

**[0:13:47.3] WS:** Yeah, communication is such an important part of any business or relationship, I mean, whether it's marriage, or whether it's in the office. I mean, communication is key. Let's spend a little time there. Go ahead.

**[0:13:58.5] MAS:** Yeah. It is very difficult. We all have our own biases, or our own things that drive us and energize us, or we filter things a certain way. Really taking the time with people to slow down, communicate, ask for them to repeat back, or just take back what they think you said to them and having enough dialogue.

You can't sit in debate things forever, or have – Obviously, you need people who can understand that communication well. As a leader, it's our responsibility to make sure we've done everything we can to not only communicate what we're asking to do, but give them the goals and parameters that guardrails within which to make decisions. That's another one. Giving them some freedom – they can't just make a decision within whatever they want to do, but give them some latitude, okay? If it's within this is the budget and this is the timeline and some – give your

people some opportunity to make some decisions. Allow them to fail, even if that hurts your business.

Now that doesn't mean you should allow them to blow up the company, but we all learn by making mistakes. If we don't give our people opportunities to make some of those mistakes with inbound, they're not going to learn. If we do, they will learn and be a much more valuable team member and contributor that will take more off your plate, because then they've learned how to make a better decision. They've learned some wisdom from that experience.

**[0:15:32.3] WS:** Otherwise, they're there waiting on you to make every decision.

**[0:15:34.9] MAS:** Oh, man. Then you're going to be the bottleneck, which I've seen some entrepreneurs and some leaders – I think they love it. Or there is some sick twisted thing. You're not going to be effective, because you've got to delegate. You got to be able to get up people to do that work and some of it has to be without your input.

**[0:15:53.3] WS:** How often are you communicating with your team, or are there maybe some specific annual meetings that are important? Or are there daily things that are happening on an app? Or are there weekly meetings that are in-person? How have you seen that to work the best?

**[0:16:08.6] MAS:** It depends if you're talking about your core team of direct reports, or indirect reports, or broader parts of the organization. It's your department, or your core team, that communications happen and usually every day, certainly more formally once a week; broader teams once a month, or once a quarter. It really depends on the situation and size of the company and what you're trying to accomplish.

The one thing I will say is generally, the more communication, the better. Now, I'm not a big advocate of having too many meetings and that can be a problem for some organizations. Usually, that's not too many meetings as it is too little decisions happening in meetings, or progress being made so they just have more meetings, instead of actually moving forward.

**[0:16:56.5] WS:** How do we make sure we're accomplishing what we're setting out today before when we have that meeting, that we are making progress?

**[0:17:02.9] MAS:** A couple of things. Certainly, having goals and objectives and an agenda for the meeting. I don't have any meetings I've been in where we just come in and we need – we know when you talk about this particular topic. We don't have an agenda. We haven't thought it out. If that's the case, we probably – and I realize everybody's busy and say maybe, we don't have time to set together the agenda. Then if we don't have time to set the agenda, then there are other things that we need to stop doing, in order to have time to do that that we're too busy and not focused on the right things, or the things that are going to move the needle. That goes back to having good organizational goals and objectives.

These are our ones and twos, rather than our three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10 that aren't as important. Because frankly, it's easy for us all just to be busy and feel like we're moving the needle that way, when it's going to be a lot more effective if we focus on the things that are the most important that are going to move us forward as an organization, or just as a team.

**[0:18:00.4] WS:** Wow. All right, Miles. Well unfortunately, we're running low on time, but just a few more questions. What's a way that you've improved your business slightly, even if it's within the leadership scenario that it was something that we haven't talked about, but some way that you've improved your business recently that we could apply to our business as well?

**[0:18:18.0] MAS:** Yeah, I'm going to go back to that culture piece and individuals working better together. Things that we going through is I work for a marketing agency and one of our clients actually has a leadership process that we as a team have gone through. The company's called initiative one. One of the things that's really done to help us is to break down some of those barriers, where we all feel we maybe have to hide things like, well – because we're all not great at everything. We have weaknesses, right? Rather than hide those weaknesses, let's get them on the table.

Or there – maybe they're not weaknesses of us individually, but they're of us as a team, or some way that I work with John and John's a fictional person, not a specific person. There are things that we need to be aware of about each other, in terms of how we could maybe not great on

each other, or not work well together. Then just have those conversations in a very easygoing atmosphere, “Hey, you said this the other day and made me feel like this, but maybe I'm totally wrong, or misinterpreted what you said.”

Really having those frank, but non-confrontational kinds of conversations, so that we don't build up negative energy against people when they probably didn't mean half, or any of what we took it that they said. It's really simple. A lot of these things in leadership aren't necessarily groundbreaking, but there's simple things that if you apply them regularly, will change your life and your business.

**[0:19:59.9] WS:** What is the number one thing that's contributed to your success and maybe outside of improving your leadership ability?

**[0:20:08.4] MAS:** People. For me, my number one thing is developing lifelong relationships, friendships, personal and professional. I mean, some of the best friendships I have are both personal – I'll add a third one to that; personal, professional and then spiritual. I don't delve too deeply into that, but for me the best friendships that I have are all in – I have respect and trust in all three of those areas with those people, in a relationship that's built on something that we can work together over the long-term. Really that's what it's all about.

I mean, short-term stuff is just not going to be able – it's not going to benefit you long-term. That sounds really simple, but I'm looking for those relationships that are going to benefit us mutually over the long-term personally and professionally. You can't really separate who you are personally from your profession, no matter what people will tell you. It all intermingles.

**[0:21:06.2] WS:** How do you like to give back?

**[0:21:08.3] MAS:** Oh, man. Lots of ways. I mean, you put me on a spot, because I mean, I'm very involved in my church, in the school, private school that my kids are involved in, both from a time standpoint, financial standpoint. I don't like the – can we go on spot, I don't to talk about that stuff, but I do. I like to give back to other people. That's why I wrote the books.

I mean, I don't get rich on making money off of books. I mean, I like to make a little bit of money, but I like to share what I've learned. There's no greater joy for me than if I can help somebody not make the same mistake, or if you help their life suck a little bit less in a particular situation, or just to make them feel better, that they're not alone, that's huge.

**[0:21:56.1] WS:** Wow. Miles, unfortunately we're out of time and I appreciate your time today and providing the content and the value to the listeners and myself, just why leadership sucks, or how it cannot suck really, and just improving this and practicing these things, so it gets better. Really understanding, it starts with ourselves. Thank you again. Tell the listeners how they can get in touch with you and learn more about you.

**[0:22:19.6] MAS:** Yeah. You get my books on Amazon, or if you're an audiobook aficionado, then go to Audible, Barnes & Noble, the NOOK and few those others are on as well. My website is [milesanthonymsmith.com/blog](http://milesanthonymsmith.com/blog) and you can read various content that I have with leadership, but in business in general. It's not all focused on leadership.

**[0:22:38.5] WS:** Awesome. Thank you so much, Miles.

**[0:22:41.0] MAS:** Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[0:22:42.3] WS:** Don't go yet. Thank you for listening to today's episode. I would love it if you would go to iTunes right now and leave a rating and written review. I want to hear your feedback. It makes a big difference in getting the podcast out there. You can also go to the Real Estate Syndication Show on Facebook, so you can connect with me and we can also receive feedback and your questions there that you want me to answer on the show. Subscribe too, so you can get the latest episodes.

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[OUTRO]

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