

## EPISODE 1404

[INTRODUCTION]

**Jim Sheils (JS):** When I did all those interviews, Whitney, over 10 years ago, I was asking What is the biggest concern you have when it comes to your children, especially teens? The answer came back, this was really interesting, like 99% the same. I don't know if it was the theme of the time, but I think it's still relevant today. They all said this, "I want my kids to appreciate what they have". And that resonated with me.

[INTRODUCTION]

**Whitney Sewell (WS):** Jim, welcome back. Just honored to have you again and be able to continue the conversation. You've said so many great things that I know if the listener and myself will just implement one or two of the things you have talked about, then it's going to change everything for our children, our spouses, our family life, and help us to really make what's already claimed is most important, actually, most important, right? As busy entrepreneurs, and businessmen and women. And so Jim, I want to jump into as the listener potentially has older children, right, maybe they've not been doing this, probably as guilty as I am, at times at work, or to quote busy, right, and we just haven't spent the time to build those relationships. But we really want to know why we really desire to, but we've not been intentional enough to make that happen. And maybe they are 15 or 16, or whatever. And we're trying to do that now. But there's something standing between us right and we've not built that relationship. Helps us to dive into some experiences or some things that we can do to help break that barrier down.

**JS:** I think one of the first things is especially people going oh, my teams will never go for it. I think you got to apologize and say, Look, I've been super busy, I've been wanting to spend more time with you. There's no strings attached. There's no lectures to this, I just want to get together and have a good time. And that I'll start with the book right behind you, you start to put that into effect. And I talk in the book about ways that, you know, you can start to have that really raw conversation of saying, look, there's no catch here, just time is fleeting with you. And

I want to enjoy the time that we have, let's get together. That's a great way. Another great way is the old-fashioned adventure, whether it's a weekend or a week, you know, or we've been lucky to do lots of six-week adventures, I really liked those. And I've been able to implement those. But let's start with a weekend or a week. And here's my advice. This is so simple way. If you're going to plan an adventure with your family, go on the adventure completely. What I'm seeing a lot now with entrepreneurs with that badge of honor, is they go on vacation, they're a complete dud. Like our 11-year-old self would be like, gosh, this guy is lame. Like he's just half grumpy, not paying attention. While you go to the pool, I'm gonna make these calls. Be there. Go all in on the adventures.

**JS:** These are the things that forge relationships and memories. Somehow we've all started to, at least, I was guilty of this years back, to work through. Yeah, we get to plan the vacation, we go in there but we don't participate. It's a really, really disappointing thing for our kids and for ourselves because this time is fleeting. So, I like to go back to the simple thing of, yes, the book behind you, start to plan on these one-on-one days with your teens. Tell them, let them miss a day of school. Oh, no, don't say that. Well, 50 years from now, what's going to be more important? A day that they missed school to connect with us and set that example or one day at school? You know, if you have to bribe them that way, I would do it. Because of these moments, I saw what it did for my son. I've gotten thousands of notes like the one you read to me before, of the difference it makes. So start with that. Go back to the old thing of planning a short family adventure. And when you're there, be there, don't check out and say I've got you all here now. I'm gonna go work. Be there, go all-in. So when you're coming back, you're gonna have some work on your plate. But man, you're going to be recharged. Your family is going to feel honored, they're going to feel closer. You're going to be probably more charismatic and funnier and more memorable, which is what we all want as parents.

**WS:** Jim, as a busy, successful entrepreneur, speak to the prep work that you do before an adventure like that, business-wise, like in the grind. You're speaking to your employees or your business partner? How are they prepared for this adventure as well? So, you're checked out of business but you're checked in on the adventure? What are some things we should think about so we're just more mentally there?

**JS:** I think coverage is important. Knowing and coverage. Your team should know if you're going away. Sometimes I'd be guilty about my team would be calling me and my wife would say, hey, we're going on this three-day weekend. Did you let them know? And I'm like, oh, no, I thought I could take the call so I was the problem. But if you have a good camaraderie with your team, like our team, family is a core value. You know, if something comes up with family, we're all there to support each other, encourage each other. We've been to each other's weddings and done adventures together with our team and their families. So we look for coverage, like hey Jim is going to be out for this three-day weekend. No, don't you worry about it. We're gonna handle this but we'll talk about it on Monday or Tuesday. So I look first of all you let your team know that you're going to be traveling and hey, they really want to go all-in. Secondly, start that culture of coverage. Like right now my EA is out this week. And we're all covering for her. You know, she's having a great time at a family wedding and is out in the wilderness doing some camping and we're going to cover for her. So, if you start that, and you trickle that down, it can be huge. If you're the type that says, I don't care if you're with family in that, guess what, they're going to try to drag you into stuff when you're traveling and why shouldn't they?

**WS:** Yeah, love that if you're doing that for your team members, they are going to be inclined to do it for you as well. Respect that boundary. Love that, and cover for you and just preparing them ahead of time. Anything else that you would add there, as far as you know, those boundaries, we're trying to knock down with an older child, maybe we've not built a relationship with and you said, got to apologize, I love that. Just go to them say hey, I messed up and then creating an adventure or letting them out of school. They must probably be going to be on board with that. Love that. But anything else you would leave us on that note?

**JS:** When I did all those interviews, Whitney, over 10 years ago, and I was asking, "What is the biggest concern you have when it comes to your children, especially teens?" The answer came back, this was really interesting, like 99% the same. I don't know if it was the theme of the time, but I think it's still relevant today. They all said this, I want my kids to appreciate what they have. Now, most of these people were hard-working entrepreneurs, probably first-generation

wealth like myself, I don't come from any money. And that resonated with me. It was like, I want my kids to appreciate what they have. We've worked hard for this. Lack of appreciation, there's no joy. So, I really want my kids to appreciate what they have. And so many other people share that. One of the best ways, you know, getting back to experiences, and this is in our education matrix. I could probably send you a picture to include in the show notes of our matrix, financial intelligence, personal development, and relationship skills. There's only one subject that appears in all three, only one, and that's service and contribution.

Active service and contribution, Whitney, is the thing that I feel is the best offense and defense about our kids becoming unappreciative of what they have.

**JS:** I can think about my oldest who's 18 now. When he was 12, we went to Mexico with a group Homes for Hope. Just him and I and we built houses. And there he was. It's an incredible organization where we all went down as a group of entrepreneurs, we put in the money, they bought the little plot of land. It would have taken them 20 years to save for the house, we stepped in to build the house. This beautiful family, you know, we built the house in two days, they're crying, but my son had a really big breakthrough. Because one of the kids in the family was his age, a 12-year-old. And needed to use the bathroom, so they invited him into their little tent. They're living in this makeshift tent. And once you need to go the bathroom, the kids were, you know, they were playing soccer, motions him in. And then, they're in this little tarp, you know, not barely, barely livable, really Whitney is their bathroom, which was a PVC bucket, and a board cup half out. And my son, you know, at the age of 12, you cannot teach those kinds of lessons in the classroom. This is where experiential learning comes in. I mean, what he saw and felt right there and reflected back to all of us at the end of the day, it was pretty emotional for me. Like I never realized what I have, I didn't realize that. This. And it's such a powerful lesson.

**JS:** So we're always trying to get involved in active service and contribution. We've done foster care, which was a big thing. We've done different surfing events, you know, we're a very ocean-oriented family. So we've gone taking handicapped children surfing, we've taken blind and deaf kids surfing, wounded warriors surfing. So that they're seeing that we've done service work in Guatemala, Mexico, Costa Rica, and here locally. And yes, we make our teams get

involved. Because the only way to instill that value of not just thinking about ourselves, I think is in active service and contribution.

**WS:** A lot of that recently, there's a local group nonprofit here in our town that serves food to lots of families all over the town. And I was trying to do this almost what you're saying and got our kids involved, because it helps them to see when we were going into some really rough parts of town, and they get to see why other people have to live, right. They see other people on the streets, they get to see homes that they've never witnessed before, you know, in this kind of shape and disrepair. And so I love that, you know, we're this act of service and contribution, how you talk about it shows up in all three of those lessons, right, that you're trying to hit for your kids. So, anything else around that you'd like to leave us with? I want to ask you to elaborate on maybe as much detail as we can in just a few minutes. You said there were like seven or eight rhythms in the last segment that you and your family have. Would you care to share some more of those? And maybe we don't have time to go into detail, but I'd love to know some more. I'd love to implement some more myself.

**JS:** Yeah, sure. I think you know, planning and experience, planning is half the fun. And you say we don't have time to do that. Well, try going back to the dinnertime challenge. Cut off for just an hour a day, all of a sudden you have this time freed up or you're not rushing to a text or have social media thread or an email or a show. They can be really fun to plan together. And when you plan these, get them involved, you know, our kids, my wife, and we want to do these. Well, we don't really want to do that at all. And you know, we'll take input and we'll try to plan adventures together. So, getting them involved in the planning of a vacation or a weekend getaway is huge. Service and contribution, huge. Getting them involved at events. Like you and I have met. I'm the weird guy who brings his family. I want my kids soaking this stuff up like a sponge and yeah, we'll still do fun stuff on the side. But I want them to learn that. So these things all feedback into how do we create these, how we do this. Well, it's our rhythms. You know again, what's a great starting rhythm? The dinnertime challenge. Once a day, turn that phone off for an hour usually around dinner. Enjoy each other. At dinner, we ask the same question every night. What was your weirdest part of the day? What was your best part of the day? What's the weirdest?

With our teens, have their friends come over. Hey, we're doing best and weirdest? So here we are. Phones are off. There's no phones allowed at my dinner table. I'm a pretty mellow guy but don't pull the phone out at my dinner table. You know, because I'll say, hey, no, that's not our rules here, that goes away. So that's one rhythm. Just the dinnertime challenge and we do 'best and weirdest'.

**JS:** Date night. That's a huge thing, Whitney. Every Wednesday from 5:30 to 8:30. We probably won't go into it now but we do what's called date night with a question. So date night with a question for us. If you go on a date with your wife, Whitney, and you don't kind of prepare, it's going to be, how is the day at school for the kids, nice weather we're having, you know, oh, did you get the car clean? Like real romantic stuff, right? We prepare deeper questions now, Jamie and I. We have a little deck of cards, you know, we go through them then for more. But you know, go with some deeper questions that keep you dating. So, date night with the questions is a huge one. The book behind you, spending a day a quarter with each one of my children. Absolutely huge, absolutely monstrous for the relationship. I also do an overnight with my wife every quarter. So, one overnight a quarter with my wife is super important. That's another rhythm that we do. We also do Sunday meetings. This is a weekly one. Sunday meeting is just, what's good with the week? What didn't go good? What are we doing next week? Well, I'll tell you why that started. Because when my sons, had been with them a few years, my one was getting pretty sad. We're like, what's wrong? He's like, dad's going away and I had no idea. And we're like, well, we mentioned it to you. He was running around the yard being a kid. He's like, I had no idea he was leaving, I just feel sad I didn't know he's going. So we started to have Sunday meetings where we'd say, hey, we're here meeting. Dad's going to be gone for a day this week just so you know. And it's just a time to discuss and be there. So Sunday meeting is a pretty big one as well.

**JS:** You know, we try to plan at least two big adventures a year. So you want to do you know, vacation planning. If you can do one a year and only do one a year, that's great. You know, we try to do more than two. Now we've worked up to that. But that's a really important rhythm. For me, twice a year, normally I go away on an overnight, just me. I do nothing. I might hike. I just completely decompress. I encourage my wife to do the same thing. Because sometimes we all

get overwhelmed. Sometimes we need just that quiet stillness to write and reflect. So at least twice a year, I'll do an overnight with just me. I'm actually going to Ireland this year to see relatives for a whole week. This is a big one for me, just me. We're going to try to bring the whole family and my wife and I said, you should go. So I'm going to just go and hike Ireland, the west coast of Ireland quietly and I'm planning on writing a lot of my reflections out on that, you know, for fun, no pressure, but for fun. So that's another one that we have. And then we have holiday traditions. You know, I know that's old-fashioned. But you know, every Friday after Thanksgiving, we're going to get our Christmas tree at the Christmas lot. Every Thanksgiving almost every year, there is a monstrously huge Thanksgiving hosted in our house and our kids look forward to that. And their cousins look forward to that. We have traditions around on Christmas, on the Fourth of July with our fireworks. So around the holidays, we do have certain things that we do over and over. So that's a couple of I don't know how many of that that I gave, but those are some ones that hold our family life together.

**WS:** That's incredible. That's a bunch so I was taking notes of all of them and I love that and I wanted to ask you about and I love it too, you mentioned you know going away even yourself right, you're away for at least one night, and encouraging your wife to do that. Also two big adventures per year. You know, you mentioned that this Sunday meeting. I love that and then I noticed I've been and I travel a lot as well. And even recently, it's like over the last two months. It's like I'm going every week for like two to three nights, it seems. One morning I was leaving really early. And I went up to tell my boys goodbye and one of them's like, well, you're leaving? No, you're going anywhere. You know, and just in the rush of things are just, you know, they're traveling so much. Well, I didn't think to tell you I was leaving again this week. And so I love that idea of the Sunday meeting.

**JS:** Yeah. Because you tried to tell him, you might have told him that but they were running around the front yard or with their friends, they're not focused. And yeah, it's pretty profound that you just said you've had the same thing where they're like, wow, I didn't know you were going. And it's nice that you're missed. But they're also feeling a little cheated, like, hey, I wish I was in the know, you know, and you could say, oh, well, you weren't paying attention. But I'd

rather take the responsibility and say, I can make them better aware that I'm going to be traveling. How lucky am I that they're actually missing me!

**WS:** Yeah, right. Yeah. Wow. No, I love that. I'm gonna talk to my wife about that today. I hope that we'll implement that.

**JS:** And of course, getting back to obviously, Teen Mastermind nights are a big rhythm in our family. That Tuesday night, things are busy. There's sports, jobs, social lives, our own stuff. So we may try to make it one simple night. And it's like, that's our night of that learning. You guys got to learn these lessons. It's gonna give you an unfair advantage in life personally and professionally I want to see that for you, brings us together, it's great subjects to learn together. That's a sacred night for us tonight. Actually, we're recording on a Tuesday here. So it's actually tonight.

**WS:** What's the timeframe on that? How long does that meeting typically last? I'm sure it varies some, but I just want to --

**JS:** Two hours, maybe two and a half. Sometimes we'll go for an hour and a half. Sometimes we'll go for three hours. But it's held there. You know what I mean? So I'd say it's standard about two hours.

**WS:** I was just thinking about connecting like dinnertime, and then time for that. How do you handle that? I know dinnertime and it can seem so busy. Getting done at the dinner table and like you said to we talked about it in an earlier segment. Dinners used to be 90 minutes, allows so much space, where I mean, I've military law enforcement background, I'm just like, hey, let's get a ton with dinner, right? Otherwise, we'll sit there for an hour with the smallest meal with some of the kids, right? So just wondered how you make that transition or say, hey, you know, dinner is over. We got other things to do.

**JS:** I'll break down Teen Mastermind night for you. So three nights a week, we have a local chef who is so dang affordable, so tasty, and healthy. He makes meals for us. You know, Jamie, my



wife works in 18 summers with us and she's a great mom helping them with a Waldorf school in town, five kids ranging from five months to 18, something had to give. And I said, look, I love for you prepping. This might be something you want to give up. She has Tuesday night tonight, our meals getting delivered right here. Super yummy for everyone. We don't do a ton of electronics here or TV time but we allow some. There's a night where we do something that, you know, most people would steer away from, but we let our two younger ones, get a TV thing right in front of it and watch a Disney movie. And I know the effects of letting them be separate and not be five and seven-year-olds running into our team mastermind to eat their dinner habit. It's part of what we need to do as a family. And then the rest of us are at the dining room table eating and enjoying it there. So we have the meal prepped for us for that night. Our little ones? Yep, we're giving them a dinner movie. You know what I mean? Not we would do any other night of the week. But we're like, we need them settled. So we can be with our big guys. And that's what we do. And that's what the setup looks like for the night.

**WS:** Love that. I love that. That's incredible. I appreciate too the transparency behind that as well, just exactly how you all do it. But then also, you know, the willingness to even hire out some of the things like that potentially your wife would be doing or maybe you as well or, you know, that takes away from that time, right? And the willingness to figure that out. I know that it's not always easy to find somebody that can cook or bring meals in or maybe other things in the home as well. So yeah, that's incredible. credible. Yeah, so few last things Jim, I want to ask you, what are some of the most important metrics that you track? And I asked that question, and it can be personally or professionally, but what would you say are just some of the most important things that you track?

**JS:** Well, business-wise, you know, the biggest mistake I made becoming a real estate investor is not having clean books. I think everyone's books are a mess, and then they get them together. So I keep really clean books every Thursday morning, you know, from about 9:30 to noon, our CFO comes to our house and we sit with her Jamie's involved. We let our team sit in. I'm very open about money with my kids, I have some rules around it and some values so they know that nothing's guaranteed to them. Nothing's going to be handed to them. But I want them to understand how money works. So the metrics for business is having to have

real books and a real dashboard for your businesses where cash positions are is what's coming in and what's going out. I look at that very intently every Thursday. That's some of a huge metric. And then I think family-wise, there's a simple metric, you know, do your kids still want to hang out with you? I've been really lucky. Like, we've done a lot of vacation slash events this summer. It's been great. And people have given the compliment, wow, your older boys really like hanging out with you. I'm gonna say, yeah and I tell terrible dad jokes and do my best to annoy them and give them a hard time you know, and be that fun, silly dad. But they do, they still like to hang out with us. So for me, that means we've done something right. So, I think that's a big metric. And this does not mean and, again, I'm not military, Whitney, but you know, I have a lot of military family in that. And I believe in certain boundaries and guideposts. So I wouldn't call me an easy dad but a fair and loving one. And this isn't just give them everything they want. They want to hang out with you. And actually, that usually backfires when you attempt that, but I think a big metric is that simple one, do your kids still wanna hang out with you? You know, your 16, your 18-year-old that do. So I feel pretty good about that metric. And it's something that we all want to look at in question.

**WS:** Love that. It's telling, right? It's an honest metric for sure. So you shared the seven rhythms. I also want to ask you maybe about some daily habits that you are disciplined about that have produced the highest level of return for you.

**JS:** I have to exercise every day. I'm just like that working dog that I need to exercise. If not, I probably don't think straight. I get a little shaky and for clear thoughts on that, you know, I'm ADD so that really smooths things out and, and gives me focus and better results. So exercising daily. And normally for me, you know, my morning is, I'm definitely military on this one, you know, the alarm goes off at six, rap my wife up. We usually pray for about 10 minutes out of bed. I walk the beach, usually half the time just listening to the ocean, the other half listening to something inspirational, like a podcast. Watch the sunrise, do some sprints. Then back home and then you know read over some basic notes, goals, visions, and then my family is usually up and I spend time with them. That's the start of my day. That's the daily habit that's huge for me, and that dinnertime that I talked about, you know, going into the other side of the day. We try to have dinner together, you know, five days a week, and six for the teens with teen

night, and then we do best and weirdest. So those are two things that I do daily, starting the day and then at dinnertime.

**WS:** I wanted the best and weirdest question as well. I think when you can be more specific about some questions instead of just how was your day, right? That brings out a conversation that you wouldn't have had otherwise. What about the number one thing that's contributed to your success?

**JS:** You know, the biggest compliment I've ever had, when I've had to go back to leadership programs that go to these people you work with and ask them what characteristic you possess that men want to work with you or invest with you or come to one of your family masterminds. And the biggest compliment that I've had is I have the ability to build trust easily and quickly. And I mean, that's a huge compliment. So that's something that I think has helped my success. I've been able to build trust and a lot of relationships, and I think, keep that trust. And that's been big for me.

**WS:** And then also how do you like to give back? You've given back so much to us today. But anything else you'd like to highlight?

**JS:** I really love active service and contribution. You know, we've helped fund some alternative education schools in our area. Something that I really care about is improving education for our kids. And really, this whole 18 Summers adventure. It has spawned to help other entrepreneur families, you know, I still make the majority of my money in real estate, to be very honest, you know, and then we do well in the education okay. But it's really more of a labor of love for me.

**WS:** Yeah, it's definitely given back a lot to myself and others as well, that I'm connected to. So, Jim, it's been an honor to have you on the show. So grateful for just your transparency. And just the practical steps to a lot of people have these sayings and philosophies are try this thing, whatever, but you're doing it and you lay it out very simply. I think it's like, try these things, do these things with your spouse, these date nights, your you know, the those Tuesday nights, I love the practicality and how you lay it out in the book as well. Again, I want to tell the listeners

also, if you will email us at [info@LifeBridgeCapital.com](mailto:info@LifeBridgeCapital.com) and put in the subject line “Family Board Meeting Book”, we're gonna send you a free copy. And so I hope you'll reach out. I hope you'll take this book very seriously. And Jim has definitely been so gracious to share with us today. Jim, how can the listeners get in touch with you and learn more about you?

**JS:** Yeah, the best way to find out about us is [18Summers.com](http://18Summers.com). You can see what we're up to. We also have a podcast which we want to bring Whitney on for the amazing work he does with fostering and adoption and that's something that my wife's looking forward to and so, the 18 Summers Family Podcast is a great way to learn more about us and the things we're doing.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[OUTRO]

**Whitney Sewell:** Thank you for being with us again today. I hope you learned a lot from the show. Don't forget to like and subscribe. I hope you tell your friends about The Real Estate Syndication Show so they can also build wealth in real estate. You can also go to [LifeBridgeCapital.com](http://LifeBridgeCapital.com) and start investing today.

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