

Eric Ludwig:

Thank you, Scott, for coming on today.

Scott:

Hey, my pleasure.

Eric Ludwig:

Yeah. Sorry we're not at our usual barbecue spot, coaching over lunch. Well, Zoom will have to do for today.

Scott:

Absolutely.

Eric Ludwig:

Yeah. Well, before we dive into the session, I'm curious, what's got you excited these days?

Scott:

Yeah. You know... Oh, sorry about my Dash there. That's got him excited.

So one of our recent conversations, all of which have been in this broader theme of our greater convergence as a couple while my wife Christie continues to make positive strides in her health, and we had thought through the possibility of Christie starting part-time work as a personal trainer at a gym, which she really gets energy and joy from. So, what I'm excited about is during these many, many years of chronic illness, I've served her in a variety of ways and what came out of our last chat was to see this possibility of her employment as another way to serve her, instead of viewing it as a way that it takes some of her limited energy, et cetera.

I'm happy to report and celebrating with you, that she says I've done that by encouraging her, helping her push through, imposter syndrome you know, do I have anything to offer these clients, et cetera. She's just gotten started last week. So, that's something that's top of mind still.

Eric Ludwig:

That's very exciting. So first, congratulations to Christie on getting the job.

Scott:

Yeah. Yeah.

Eric Ludwig:

Yeah and then, second, congratulations to you for being a loving husband to support her along the way. So, happy to hear that news.

Scott:

Yeah.

Eric Ludwig:

So on your email the other day, talking about this session, you wrote, let me quote, you'd like to, "Think through what will help us, you and Christie, maintain a perspective that her work is enhancing versus encroaching upon our marriage convergence efforts," end quote.

Scott:

Mm-hmm.

Eric Ludwig:

So what rises to the surface, as I read that back to you?

Scott:

You know, when we talked about this, last time it was theory and now it's practice.

So it was six, seven, eight months of waiting for the actual call. She'd applied at lot of different places and she finally got it started at onboarding, started working with the client. So it's real now. It's not just this idea that she might be might employed. So, it's real. She's got her first client. And so here we are.

Eric Ludwig:

That's exciting. Yeah. As we talk about this enhancing versus encroaching and the convergence; if we hit a home run today, what are we going to have in the next 20, 25 minutes that we don't have now?

Scott:

I would say, to outline a conversation with Christie and I'll probably have it right after we're done because it'll be noon here. And just to really outline that conversation where we can reflect a little bit perhaps on the past that I don't want to. I think, a time or two before when she did have part-time employment, it really took energy, it took life and I want to step into this with Christie as, again, not only theory from last time; how can we look at this possibility as one that enhances, but this is a reality now. And how is this going to enhance our converging as a couple? And we're so grateful the progress that she's made.

Eric Ludwig:

That's excellent. I'm grateful and thankful as well. So we want to leave here today, if I hear you correctly, with an outline for a conversation that you can have pretty soon after this call, that'll help with these convergence efforts with your wife.

Scott:

Yeah. Yeah.

Eric Ludwig:

Excellent. Okay. Well, where do we start?

Scott:

As I was preparing for today, just a lot of the great stuff happens between times, right? I thought maybe, certainly there are things that I can do that will help us maintain this perspective. There's probably one

key element of the outline, if you will. There's things that Christie can do to help us maintain this perspective.

Eric Ludwig:

Okay.

Scott:

And there's probably some things that are really joint efforts, where we're really pulling at the oars together. So, that's kind of what I came with as a start.

Eric Ludwig:

Yeah. I love that. Pulling the oar, because if one person's pulling an oar, you're going in a circle, right? So you have an oar to pull.

Scott:

Right on.

Eric Ludwig:

Move forward. I love that. Very good.

Well, maybe before we get to the oar, when you get to the other side of the lake, at the end of the conversation with Christie, what are you hoping for?

Scott:

I think, stepping out of the boat, pulling up on shore, hand in hand, saying this is really something new. You and I know, when we moved here, there was this sense that God's doing something new in us, and it's more than just the location. And again, part of that is her health, which is opening up other things for us and in our marriage. But this is a partnership, we're in this together. This is a good thing.

Eric Ludwig:

Okay. Newness, togetherness, those are some of the things on the other side of the shore that you're rowing towards. Okay, great.

So you said you put a little thought into this and you haven't [inaudible 00:07:42], there's some things that you'd like to bring to the conversation. What's important for Christie to hear from you? What do you want her to hear from you?

Scott:

I think one of the things is that I really do believe in her. This is new turf for her and I mentioned, imposter. She's gone through this great national certification to get ready to be a personal trainer. So, you have all this stuff packed in your head.

Haven't been able to meet in person like they would've, in terms of her practicum and now she's in a gym. So, just that I really do believe that she can do this, and expressing that, continuing to encourage her. When she gets home, she's got one person right now, and today she starts with her second, just asking how that went, just noticing what brought her life about that.

Eric Ludwig:

It sounds like you desire posture of curiosity as well.

Scott:

Yeah.

Eric Ludwig:

Yeah. So you believe in her, you're curious about how it went. What else would you like to contribute to the conversation?

Scott:

I think one of my parts of it is, I normally have a meeting scheduled at noon every day and with her shift, it's going to take into the dinner time. It's going from two to seven or whatever. So something I want to contribute, as we're both pulling at these oars, is that I'm going to free up to the extent that I can.

Obviously, we have no idea when she was going to start. So there are some things that are maybe hard to move but I'm just going to... You know, my oar and I'm going to try to block those noon times for us so we can have our dinner time, if you will, at lunch where we might debrief.

Eric Ludwig:

Okay. So it's expressing your belief in her, it's showing that you're curious and it's holding that space right after the meeting to debrief her. Yeah, and how do you think those three parts or those three contributions contribute to the newness and togetherness that you're looking for?

Scott:

Yeah, I think that, hey, I'm rearranging my schedule so that we can have lunch, that emphasizes the together piece. The belief in her, I would hope that, again, it's very, very common. I don't know quite this, how to adjust this exercise to compensate for this person's thing. It's again, expressing belief that she tested out on it so she knows it. It's just a matter of not doing it in practice. I think that will bring her some encouragement. And that I'm curious about something that, again, I've been an athlete all my life, but I don't know all the technical stuff about why. All these things that she's learned and just that curiosity, my hope is that that would encourage her as well.

Eric Ludwig:

Yeah, that sounds very encouraging. Anything else about your oar before maybe we look at hers?

Scott:

Yeah, I think that's a good start. Yeah.

Eric Ludwig:

Okay. Well, again, now Christie's not on the call, so to be fair, we need to focus on what's with you and your ability to control. But what are your hopes for what she will bring to the conversation?

Scott:

The last time she worked outside of her home, it became something that was really draining her tank. I think one hope for our conversation is that she would have, and she didn't in this last case, a way to express to her boss, she does have significant limitations, but again, just in a good way. When am I getting to that point where this thing, which generally would bring her joy, sometimes too much time, perhaps on her feet or whatever, would actually start draining energy on her tank.

So to have that conversation with her boss ahead of time and as the clients start to get added, if her load gets to that point where she needs to say, boss, I need to hold the line here so that this can continue to be a good thing versus something that will be a detriment as her tank draining, that would definitely impact our convergence, I think in a lot of ways. The things that we've been able to enjoy, starting to be able to enjoy as a result of her health, like a walk around the block, that's a big deal.

Eric Ludwig:

Yeah, yeah.

Scott:

And to have that encroached upon, if you will, [inaudible 00:13:36] just to get ahead of that as opposed to behind it.

Eric Ludwig:

Okay. So if I hear you correctly, Scott, you're hoping that Christie brings some sense of ownership or awareness of her own limitations so that this isn't too draining, doesn't drive you guys apart. Is that what I'm hearing? Yeah, very good. What don't want take place in this conversation?

Scott:

I certainly don't want to, with the oars, I don't want to push us backward or anything to get an idea expressed that, "I'm not for you, I'm not for this." This has been a long, long journey to even get her to this point, for her to get to this point where she was motivated to take a class to learn how to be a trainer, that she can help other people who have their own... There's tons of people walking around who have their own health challenges. And to see someone like Christie that, wow, I'd appreciate someone like you coming alongside me. I don't want anything to get in the way of that.

Eric Ludwig:

Yeah. Okay. That's great. So you mentioned that you wanted to have an outline of the conversation. I think so far we've been talking about elements of the conversation. How are we doing with your agenda here? What would be a helpful way to shape the next part?

Scott:

Yeah, I think we've got a good start on the outline, if you will. If we look at it from the standpoint of, if we're in a two person shell rowing across the lake. But then there's the times where we're both pulling something. I'm bringing a conversation or something, I'll probably be asking her in the conversation about some things that we will be doing together as opposed to just me and my or her and hers, if you will. So I think that piece would be good to press into a little bit. And I think we've got a pretty good handle or handle on those two pieces, yeah.

Eric Ludwig:

Okay. So there's still something missing around the togetherness.

Scott:

Yeah. If it's the me piece, the Christie piece, the we piece.

Eric Ludwig:

The we piece?

Scott:

Yeah.

Eric Ludwig:

Okay. Yeah, okay.

Well, let me go back to your opening words here. Enhancing versus encroaching. How might that word enhancing help clarify the we piece?

Scott:

Yeah, I'm going to come at that from the back door. One thing that wouldn't enhance, which I think is going to lead me to an action is... and there are some things in this world that we don't have control over. Even right now, Christie's boss could be doing an intake session with potential client and then tomorrow boom at 3 O'clock [inaudible 00:17:42].

I think, to the extent that's possible, not being surprised. So one we thing would be just to, in our maybe noontime conversation, to the extent we can walk through tomorrow's schedule.

Eric Ludwig:

Okay.

Scott:

Being surprised would tiptoe in that encroachment category, especially if there's, I'm not the most adaptable person in the world as you know. I'd like to have a plan, some structure and some order, just so that to the extent possible, we're not surprised. I know how best to support Christie and whatever household things that we're partnering out as empty-nesters, "Who's got dinner, who's got the dog, who's got whatever", so that we can support each other.

Eric Ludwig:

So what I'm hearing there, Scott, part of this conversation that you're having, it's important to do the debrief, the curiosity, the encouragement, but it's also important to look forward.

Scott:

Yeah. Pre-brief.

Eric Ludwig:

Yeah, pre-brief.

David:

Debrief and pre-brief. Okay. That's a new word for me.

Scott:

Yeah. Old military stuff David.

Eric Ludwig:

Oh, there you go. Very good. You know, you mentioned that you're not naturally that adaptable, which triggered in May that from our prior conversations, I know you're a strengths guy, so any of your strengths you want to... I know I'm leading here, but any of the strengths you want to bring to this conversation?

Scott:

So adaptability as a Clifton strength is really all about this relational flexibility I do have. So that's the absolute bottom one. Thankfully, I do have a ranger, which is more task flexibility, pretty high. If we frame it in terms of a task that can be accomplished, I can do some rearranging. That can in some ways compensate a little bit for that piece.

Eric Ludwig:

Yeah. Good. Good. You mentioned, Anna, we've talked in prior conversations about the importance of our faith. Anything from that set of resources you want to value yourself of?

Scott:

I think, again, this is not something Christie needs to do to put bread on the table for us and we're grateful for that. As you know, from our shared worldview perspective on that, it's an opportunity for her to really be a light, to be a blessing to the people that she works with, to help them flourish, those types of things. To that end, during our noontime conversation, the one we're going to have right after this, during our daily noontime conversations or whenever we work these in, there will probably be a perspective of even just praying for what each of us have coming up. I think that's a we thing.

Eric Ludwig:

That's beautiful.

Scott:

Whether it's the things that are on my calendar, my responsibility is the things that Christie has into this. Joe Bob, who's her next client, hey Lord, really help Christie to be present and helpful to Joe Bob. That type of thing. Sees it as a very real part of this being an enhancer for our marriage.

Eric Ludwig:

Okay. Very good. Very good. So the debrief, the pre-brief, the broader perspective, the prayer, we have a few minutes left here. Scott, what action do you want to put on paper based on what we've discussed so far?

Scott:

I have got on my handy iPad Pro transcript of our conversation, including these actions for me. So basically the conversations that we have each day, whenever they are each day, likely at the lunchtime, to include some aspect. The big action is just to have the first conversation, right. That's the first domino, if you will. Just to start this as we're adjusting a lot of things in our life, and so habitually now we're going to start having these types of conversations earlier in the day. But first action, have the conversation and the flow for that conversation. This very first one is, she's had a couple of these engagements already and just to ask some of those things that brought her life and possibly even, almost mirroring some things from coaching. What was her part in that and what did she really bring to that made that go well?

What would she think? Those types of things that we do in our conversations. So expressing that curiosity. I think in our first conversation also, it's just to have that very real sense of, we do need a guardrail here just to encourage Christie to have that conversation with her boss so that it doesn't get to the point where too much of a good thing, if you will. To have that as part of this conversation, this very first one.

And that may be an ongoing conversations just to, we'll both keep a pulse on that, to monitor that. If I sense that, again, I've come with 29 years of marriage, you can start to notice. It's through a thick heads like, "Christie, you look a little tired or whatever". For me to notice we're getting close to that guardrail now. And then again, give them a piece of pre-briefing the next day before we step into that.

I think we've got a really good outline of our first conversation and that could be a rubric, if you will, for upcoming ones. Not that you ever want somebody to be mechanical, but for a guy like me, mechanical is good.

Eric Ludwig:

Yeah. Can I share one more word with you?

Scott:

Yeah.

Eric Ludwig:

As you were talking about the first part of the conversation, and really, like you said, even using a coaching approach and what was your contribution and all that, it sounded like there may be an opportunity not just for a debrief, but a chance to celebrate as well. So I wanted to, how do you feel about that word?

Scott:

Yeah, I really like that. Okay,

Eric Ludwig:

Good. Well as-

Scott:

Energy in her tank for her next session, if you will.

Eric Ludwig:



Yeah, that's excellent. Just two more questions as you wrap up. One, is there anything else for today that you need to feel a closure for our session?

Scott:

No. Like I say, I always get a lot out of each one and as you know, serious about taking action on these things when we look each other in the eye again. No, just really, really thankful for the community that we're part of here and the privilege of having this time with you and with the rest of everybody.

Eric Ludwig:

Well, thank you, Scott. And final question, when we do look each other in the eye at our barbecue place in a couple weeks, what's the first question you want me to ask you?

Scott:

How's Christie's energy tank.

Eric Ludwig:

Okay.

Scott:

Yeah.

Eric Ludwig:

Energy tank. Well, blessings as you wrote across the lake over the next hour. And thanks again for coming online today, Scott.

Scott:

Absolutely. Thank you.

Eric Ludwig:

Alrighty.