

Something Extra EP 014 – Jack Lannom

Lisa Nichols: I am so excited to have you with us today. I was thinking about today. 1 podcast is just not enough to contain Jack Lannom. I'm excited for our listening audience to get to experience you. Let's jump right in. We have a lot to talk about. Tell me about your beginnings. How did you start your career and we'll segue into some other things.

Jack Lannom: Before that I just want to say, it is such a blessing here with you. After listening to you, I'm going, I have to be here. That you were so gifted, Lisa. Listening to you on this and you know how to bring out the best in people.

Nichols: That means so much to me coming from you.

Lannom: I appreciate the question. How did it start? Because I'm 71.

Nichols: You don't look 71.

Lannom: Thank you. I started this over 45-47 years ago, the company. People say, how did it all begin? People first international. I was in college. I was in my 3rd year. I was studying psychology at Middle Tennessee State University. My dad told me, son you're going and you're studying psychology. Come to work for me at our plant. It was in Nashville called Afco Corporation. They did all the wings for the Hilton 11 a lot of space stuff and satellite and things there. My dad was the general manager for all the employees. He said, come to work for the summer. You would drive to work and then come home and we'll debrief and you tell me what you're learning and what the insight is. You really need to know the real world. You're getting the academic stuff, here how it works in the real world. After a couple of weeks, he turned to me and drove me home, and says what do you think? I said, I don't want to be critical but the guy that you have, the supervisor, he brings out the worst in me. I want to go home and take Prozac. I need a counselor and take a positivity shower after this guy. That's what everybody says about him. He never says anything good, he doesn't reward, no celebration, he's always waiting for you to mess up, he's critical condemning and condescending. He's the captain of the C team. Dad said, could you do better? I said, No I'm not saying I could better but I know how I feel. The phrase we used that people only remember 2% after 24 hours of what you said to them. However people remember 100% of how they made you feel for the rest of their lives. He made me feel terrible. If you were to ask me, how do you feel about you when you're around me? I would say, I don't feel good about me or you. You bring out the worst in me. The energy was low around him. They didn't believe in us. It was all about him. He was a prisoner of his own self-importance. It was all about hubris, arrogance. No humility in this guy. The degrees and the pedigree, knew more than us. He said, son this is what we're going to do. We're gonna start a company, a corporation. My mother said, I remember when we started the corporation at the kitchen table. He said, I'm you're dad and I never could do what I wanted to do which was be an entrepreneur. I got married young. Had you and your brother. I got the job and the paycheck, the security for your mother and you guys. I always wanted my own business, I'm going to do it through you. I'm gonna live vicariously to you. Don't worry about it, I know all the business end.

Nichols: How old were you Jack?

Lannom: I was 22. That's when the company started. He incorporated and he taught me everything then after school. I started getting other people coming on board. It just took off and I started writing books. I'm the most

unlikely person writing a book. When I spoke back at our high school in Antioch, I spoke to 2000 students. They told Mrs. Williams, my English teacher, he said well Jack is gonna speak today and he's a published author. She started laughing. That's not the Jack that I know. He didn't know anything about grammar. When I spoke she was going, what happened to you? You're a published author. It was such a blessing to get people in the company that really understand it's all about people. That's the name of our company. People First International.

Nichols: I love that story. Good for your dad. Taking a risk like that. When you were talking to him about this person that made you feel awful, how did he receive that? Had he recognized that as well? I'm sure that some of the employees that probably come to him maybe complaining about this person. How did he receive it? Did he recognize it? Did he see it? Sometimes I don't think the leader always sees because that person may not be that to them. Right?

Lannom: Great point. He did not know it. He didn't recognize it. A lot of people in that position are very powerful people. Very dominant. They're not about care to develop people. People were afraid to speak up. That they would be fired. He was protected really. I told my dad he says, wow that's really interesting. That guy does a really good job of saying to me what I want to hear but really it is duplicity. He has a different face to you guys. He has 2 faces. It was really good. It didn't do well with that guy. I'm not trying to tattle on the guy, but he said, no no, I want to know. A lot of people in position, they don't realize that you have people in your company that are snakes. There are 4 types of people in every company, we have the snakes, stars, lightning bugs, and busy bees.

Nichols: Can you unpack those for us? First time I've heard that.

Lannom: A snake in an organization, they're like a Bernie Madoff. The passion is there, the performance is amazing but it's all about them. It is all focused to them. They draw everyone away from mission, vision, and values of the company. It becomes them. They want you to genuflect when they walk in the room, bow and worship them. They think they're the 4th member of the trinity. That is the snake. They will deceive you. The lightning bug is the person that if you look at a grid, and you think about the y axis and x axis. Y being high passion, x being performance. The snake is really they pretend like it's passion like a Bernie Madoff. High EQ. High emotional intelligence, off the chart Bernie Madoff was. High IQ. Performance is there but it's deceptive. They're very deceptive. They are the snake. The lightning bug, they have high passion but they're low in performance. My mother said when I was little kid, let's go said hunting for lightning bugs. It was a dark night, put a little mason jar with holes on top of them. It was the moon, there was no light that night. I said, there's a lightning bug! I grab it, off, and the lightning bugs, they go, yes let's do it! Let's go for this project! And then, where are they? They're the rubber crutch. They're on and then they're off. High passion but low performance. The busy bee, they're high performance but low passion. They don't have the heart for it. They're your helper and very good at working, but they don't really have a heart. They're results oriented, task oriented, not relationship oriented. We call them loveless. The star is the person that is like the North Star. The passion is there. It's a bright star. The steadiness of that. The performance of the North Star, you can always count on them. Depend on them. That star is not shining for themselves. Is to care and develop others. They will delight you, and the lightning bugs they will disappoint you because of the rubber crutch. The snakes, will deceive you. They will deceive and harm you. The busy bees, they will discourage you because the heart is not in it. It's a different way of looking at an organization. Back to your point about the guy that was in dad's company, he was a snake. Snakes are very deceptive. They a lot of times will hide who they really are to their boss. I've been doing this now over 40+ years. I've seen these 4 people in all organizations. People spend more time with the stars. Really develop your stars.

Nichols: You don't want to lose the stars.

Lannom: No, No, No, Those are your high potentials. You really want to invest in them because the energy is there, the passion, the performance, and you can count on them, depend on them, and rely on them. Trust in them. They're your high trust experience people.

Nichols: We've got so many things to talk about. We have to talk about Martial Arts. We'll share the video for those of you who don't know Jack. He held the world record for the most pounds of ice, breaking with his bare hands. You are a kung Fu grandmaster. Talk to us a little bit about that. How did you get into that? I want the listening audience to hear this was a hobby for you really that you had 5 schools in Nashville. How did you get into it?

Lannom: I was 17 years old. I was in Nashville. The girl that was beauty queen had cheerleaders there at our high school. She looked like she was 25 when she was 17. I was close to her and she invited me to come to a party to meet her boyfriend. Her boyfriend was the Tennessee state champion in the martial arts. It was all Kung fu. This was in 1965. No one knew Kung Fu. It was karate. I got to meet him at the party. I got to learn about who he was and then he said how would you like to take some Kung Fu lessons. It would help you with football and track and all your sports with the speed and discipline and all those things. Flexibility. I said, yeah I love it. I became his first student. His name is Grandmaster Schaffer. He's in the hall of fame right now. I did not know who his teacher was. His teacher became one of the most famous martial artist on this planet to ever live. I didn't know it. His teacher would come to Nashville and privately tutor him and pass all of these to us. He would read a letter from his teacher and his teacher said, I'm gonna be the role of Cato in green hornet the TV show so his teacher was Bruce Lee. We didn't know how great Bruce Lee was. We got into all that and I began studying and became a teacher in his school. I got all the football team into it. We gotta do this. My grandmaster would look at me, what you really want to learn. I really want to learn to break bricks. He says, very shallow. It's not about the discipline. It's about breaking bricks. You wanna impress the girls? I said, yes I do.

Nichols: I think you might have been competing for that beauty queen.

Lannom: He said anybody can be backyard brick breaking black belt. It's very seldom that bricks ever attack you. Went to a local brick yard and got a brick and tried to break it. This is after 2 weeks after getting into the Kung Fu class. I gave the break to him and he looked at it, and he says, my son, do you know what kind of brick that is? I said no sir. He said, this is a fire brick. No one breaks fire bricks. Here, go and find bricks with holes in it. Little bricks. I started with the Kung Fu and went through it. 6 different styles in kung Fu and became a 10th degree black. That's a grandmaster.

Nichols: You ended up having 5 schools in Nashville. You were doing this as a hobby. You still do that today? I've been to your house and I've seen the dummy man that you spar with. That's great.

AD: We're going to take a quick break and will be right back with Jack Lannom.

Nichols: Recently, I was presenting to a group of people. One of the questions that came up. We were talking about the management of time and how important it is to do time studies. We only have 168 hours in the week and where your time goes and how you spend it is really important. Someone raised their hand and said, I love the concept of time but I want to know more about energy. How do you manage your energy? When we talked about you breaking 3000 lbs. of ice, I would imagine there's so much of that. It's a mental game for one. There's this energy coming out, can you talk to us about it. I bet there's a lot of people asking how to manage their energy.

Lannom: The whole concept is fascinating. One of my grandmasters was an Asian man. Little guy, 120 lbs. I would look at him and was thinking I know I'm stronger than you but he had something that I didn't have that you would

look at me and say big muscles. I'm not making fun but being Asian he would say, You big muscle but little mind. The point was that you do not understand in the west, you don't understand the eastern concept of energy with regard to the thinking. There's a style of kung fu that was introduced to that's called sheng yi and it means the idea. The idea is where the energy comes from. That's where all the energy comes from. What we've learned with regard to energy and companies, we walk in the company. We have what is called the net trust score. Net promoters score. We do an audit in the company and we developed something called net trust score. We see a low trust energy and then the low trust energies because of the people of the idea that don't have the idea of what it means to be human. The whole energy of what he tapped got me into, he says, you have so much more energy than you realize but it all starts with the belief of innate dignity, who you are, the image of God. Your worth, you have immeasurable worth and untapped potential. It's the idea starting to think about that your mind is so much stronger than your body could ever be. He would do things like breaking a brick. If I would tell you things that I saw and do, it's no exaggeration, you wouldn't believe it. I knew then, there was something? He was the one that introduced breaking ice. He would take his hand, he put his hand over the top of the ice and there'd be no leverage at all. He would move his body and get his self into a state. It was a mental state that he got into and then all of a sudden it's like his body would explode from 3-4 inches, he would hit the ice and he'd break all the ice. I'd look at that, I was going, what happened? Grandmaster, you can tell me, you're not from our planet. You're visiting from planet kung Fu. He says, no. Then I learned the whole secret of the ice breaking, with the energy but it's all of the mind. We have a 5 step process of the energy. It's called the thinking, from thinking, it's the emotions. From the emotions, it's the language, from the language, it's the behavior. From the behavior it's the results. The energy starts in the thought. Then thought for companies, because we moved from customer experience, in 2017 the language in the lexicon became e-ex which stands for employee experience, but they don't know how to do that. They talk about it.

Nichols: They know they need to be talking about it.

Lannom: They do not know how to get that energy. The energy, people talk about value added. It should be value recognition. It's the understanding of the value of the innate dignity. Immeasurable worth and untapped potential of the human spirit. It starts with that idea and that belief in the person and realizing that I know who you are. Oh, you read my resume. No. I know you're made in the image of God. I know what it means to be human. That's what we don't know. That's where the energy starts. It's with the thinking of the leaders, of believing that everyone is made in the image of God. Regardless of race, nationality, gender, I don't care what it is. I'm looking at you. When I believe that, As the bible talks about it in 1 Corinthians 10:24, "let no one seek his own but each one the others well-being." That comes from a philosophy of knowing that you really are made in the image of God. You have innate dignity. There's nothing that Lisa can do to make herself more human. We do brains, brawn, books, status appearance, and performance. I had made 10 billion dollars, I'm warren buffet. Doesn't make you more human. You can't do that. That's our problem with energy. The energy comes with the belief the philosophy of what it means to be human. Everyone that's adopting that now, grocery stores, publics, southwest, they're all talking about the people first culture.

Nichols: You said there were how many companies are there?

Lannom: 27 companies that we've documented. They're all talking about people first culture.

Nichols: I want our listening audience to understand people first more. People first is not just you. People first, you are made up of research, scientists, neuroscience, all sorts of things. 5 PhDs, you guys are constantly doing research. You've written 70 books.

Lannom: 4 years of experience, we've written 70 books collectively all of us have on this whole subject of organization. What's the secret sauce? They talk about it but they don't really know what it is. We have 1 of our

people as PHD and OD. Lisa McKnight. All of them will tell you that what's missing is the understanding of what it means to be human. That's the energy. That is the energy, that's the secret sauce. We're global leaders in the whole concept of human value economics.

Nichols: There are few companies here in STL that I know of that are certified as people first companies. You've also certified states haven't you? Or cities? Or something Jack, Right? I don't want to misquote. I'll let you talk about that.

Lannom: We're in the process of doing that. We've talked to Charlotte, NC. Talked to them about becoming the first people first certified state. We're working on that and doing that but it's really, when a leader understands it's not about me. When you don't come to work. The company is not gonna fold. But if everyone in the company doesn't come to work it is going to fold.

Nichols: The employee experience is so important. You want people coming, you want them bringing their whole self to the organization.

Lannom: The philosophy is, learning how to think more of others without thinking less of yourself. That's the philosophy of people first.

Nichols: CS Lewis that is my favorite definitions of humility. It's not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less. There is a huge difference. Where do you think executives sometimes get wrong and we've kind of talked about that but just crystalize that for the audience.

Lannom: This whole concept of trust. This is where they get it wrong. They need to understand that you need to do an assessment on your organization to truly understand where you are in this whole understanding of trust. Have I developed a high trust culture? Do I have a low trust culture? This year, mercy hospital. They approached us and we have 45k employees and every January, we give out our engagement assessment. I said, we looked at the engagement of all 45k employees. What we like to do since the book came out on trust, they said, we would like to take your trust statements and put it on our platform. Just curious, is there a correlation between engagement and high trust. The flip side, is there correlation between low engagement and low trust. Our whole team, we did that for them. Took a few months to do it. Put it out to all their employees and came back and guess what they discovered. They said, This is amazing. There is a definite correlation between, directly correlated. They found where there was low engagement it was always low trust, always. When there was high engagement there was high trust. The whole thing with leaders that Price water house cooper, when they came out, in 2016, with their global assessment with CEOs. They said, 55% of CEOs said they believe low trust was a threat to the organizational growth. They said, that we're not doing anything to increase it, then you ask, why? Someone asked them why. They said the reason, we don't know where to start. We don't look at trust as an educational initiative. We don't look at it like any other educational domain that can be learned developed and sustained. Do research on that, there's been 50 years of research on trust. Guess what they say? There's no common definition of what it even means. What we did, we went and did all the research. We've been in this space of trust for over 25 years. Our definition of it, there's 7 keys. We have a proven system that any CEO, any leader, can take and develop a high trust culture. We call it the 7 keys for mastering high trust to the low trust world.

Nichols: I love that. What's so exciting about that Jack, if you do have a low trust culture? It doesn't mean you have to stay there. This is the "well this is the way it is", no. You can actually do things and you got the 7 keys to help that organization go to high trust culture. Organizations all the time. People talk about NPS. Why should we be talking about the net trust score?

Lannom: That's the problem. It's the antecedent. It really should be the thing that you take first to get that right. Because then you will always have a high net promoters score. You have the promoters not the distractors.

Nichols: Absolutely, What leaders working today, and you can name people from your past or today, that you really admire and what is it that you admire about them?

Lannom: I admire the new CEO of mytech industries, Mark. I've known Mark for about 5 years now. He came out a couple of years ago as the new CEO of mytech industries and there in the trust space, 90 countries, multi-billion dollar company. All over the world. What I admire about him, he gets it. He is the star and my whole thing of the quadrant, Mark is the star. High performance, High passion. What he's all about it's not about Mark. He's all about care and development. He's humble. Not hubris. He really understands the 7 keys of trust. May I give you the 7 keys?

Nichols: Absolutely, please do.

Lannom: Character, Competence, Confidence, Caring, Communication, Consistent time, Commitment. You can teach that to 8th graders in 30 seconds. That's why I trust him.

Nichols: I love it, Very good. This is called something extra Jack, I want to hear from you. What do you feel like the something extra that every leader needs, we kinda touched on some of those?

Lannom: They need to ask everyone, do you trust me? That's what they need to ask. Look them in the eye, please I really want to be honest. Do you trust me? Where that needs to start, is not start there in the organization. It needs to start at home. You need to go to your mate. Do you trust me? With my wife in 2010 I was starting to believe all the press clippings about me. My national awards, my book, a keynote speaker, at a conference for 3 days. At the end of the conference, she came to me and says, can we go back to the hotel room and talk. I am going, uh-oh. She said, you know the book people first? I said yes. I knew she said the way you were treating me was not very honoring. I was going wow. I said, I didn't. I blindsided. She said, some of the things you were saying, you were treating me. It's like you're the big guy on campus and I'm nobody. I'm your wife. I should be the queen. If you're the king, am I the queen? It wasn't respectful. She said, you know that my keyword is respect. We sat there in the hotel for 3 hours, learning how Jack Lannom was becoming more trustworthy and I ask her. After 3 hours, and said, it's that good? You need to tell me anymore. She said yes but you couldn't handle it. I said, I don't want to ever have this happen again. For all these years, I look at her and ask her. Give me an audit with regard to these 7 keys of trust. Help me see my gaps. Lisa, that's something more. We need to start at home and look at our mate and say, here are the 7 keys. Would you give me a frown, a neutral, or a smiley face. Go through all 7, and ask. It takes a lot of courage, what you will find out, when you are willing to look at yourself when the eyes of another person, the truth, and say, you know what honey, here. I'll let you down and care and really get into the dialog and that's gotta be really painful for you, I was wrong. Will you forgive me? That's where the growth is. Family is where it starts.

Nichols: Family is where it starts. That's a great question to ask your children. Jack. I wanna give you the opportunity to talk about what you really are excited about that's coming up. There's a book on the table here, the people first effect. I've actually listened to the audio version of that. Would highly recommend it to everyone. You got another book coming out. What are you excited about that you want our listening audience to know?

Lannom: The thing that I'm excited about the most is, I wrote this book. The people first effect and I did it to be turned into a motion picture.

Nichols: That's right I think I remember you telling me that.

Lannom: I did it for that. As a young person, I've written movie scripts. That's always a joy that as a young person. Love good movies so I wrote this with all the dialogue to turn it into a movie. I found a movie producer. This man, I met him in Washington, DC last year. He said, I'm going back to Hawaii and LA. Let me look at the books. I'm looking for good movie scripts, especially faith based. He read the book on the way to Hawaii. He called me from Hawaii. He said, I cried like a baby. He said, let's produce it. We got the prospectus out, I'm out raising money now for the movie. It's called "The Awakening". That's the name of the movie, the subtitle is, and belief changes everything. It's to really launch this whole movement. People first revolution. That's what it's all about. To really understand what it means to be made in God's image and for leaders to take this people first message and really honor the people by understanding that every person I have in my company. It's not about human doings. It's about human beings. So that every human being is unique and that person not just in the fingerprint that's unique, but the soul is unique. The personality. There's only 1 Lisa Nichols. There's only 1 you. That's why I'm here. I want to interview you sometime. The something extra is realizing that they come to your company, in your organization and only they have something extra. That maybe the person that's gonna take your company to where it is to that next level because they have something extra.

Nichols: Very good. Jack this has been such a delight. I love every time and every moment of time I get to spend with you.

Lannom: Can I just say this, As a gift to your listeners, the net trust score, like the net promoters score, if anyone would like to have a free assessment we have a 1 hour free assessment. Our executive coaches do. They would email jack@thinkpeoplefirst.com. This email me if you'd like to have a free 1 hour assessment on your own company to see where you are. Are there any gaps? We can help you with that to really understand your net trust score.

Nichols: Thank you for that. That's a gift. I can't imagine anybody that wouldn't want to do that. Thank you very much!