



## EP287\_Marcylle Combs

**Lisa Nichols 00:03**

Chromosomes, little strands of nucleic acids and proteins are the fundamental genetic instructions that tell us who we are at birth. Most people are born with 46 chromosomes. But each year in the United States, about 6000 people are born with an extra chromosome, making them a person with Down syndrome. If you've ever encountered someone with Down syndrome, you know that they are some of the kindest, most joyful people you will ever meet. They truly have something extra.

My name is Lisa Nichols and I have spent the last 24 years as both the CEO of Technology Partners and as the mother to Ally. Ally has something extra in every sense of the word. I have been blessed to be by her side as she impacts everyone, she meets. Through these two important roles as CEO and mother to Ally, I have witnessed countless life lessons that have fundamentally changed the way I look at the world. While you may not have an extra chromosome, every leader has something extra that defines who you are.

Join me as I explore this something extra in leaders from all walks of life and discover how that difference in each of them has made a difference in their companies, their families, their communities and in themselves. If you'd liked this episode today, please go to Apple Podcasts or wherever you listen and leave us a five-star rating.

**Lisa Nichols 01:35**

I'm excited that Marcylle comes on the show today. Marcylle is an entrepreneur, business owner, speaker, author and the host of the 50% Podcast with Marcylle Combs. Well, Marcylle, welcome to this something extra Podcast. I'm so grateful that you are making the time to be on the show today. Thank you so much.

**Marcylle Combs 01:55**

Well, I'm so excited to just get to sit and visit with you for a while.

**Lisa Nichols 02:00**

Isn't that the truth? I mean, when you and I first met, I'm like, oh, I could spend a lot more time with this woman. So, as you know, because you're a podcast host too, what all good podcast hosts do is say come on to the show. And then we can spend even more time with each other. But I, I'm wanting to give a shout out. I always love to do this. I think it's good for our listeners to understand how connections are made. And you really never know Marcylle, right? Where a connection is going to necessarily come from but I have to give a shout out to our mutual friend Will Hearing.

**Marcylle Combs 02:33**

Oh, absolutely. He's a great guy. And it's he said immediately, you must meet Lisa.

**Lisa Nichols 02:42**

That's what he said to me about you. So, here we are. So, thank you, Will. We appreciate the connection and for you thinking of us. But Marcylle, oh my goodness, you're a mom of five. You got Jeremy, Josh Jacob, Jonathan and Ivy. And I remember the first time I talked to you, you said Ivy just fell out of heaven and you guys got her. And we might talk about her a little bit. You're also gammy to six grands, right? You're the wife of Craig, you are a multi time business owner, one very large healthcare business that you sold about five years ago. You founded I don't know how many, maybe three or four or five companies? You know, you host the 50% with Marcylle Combs podcast, you're a speaker, community leader. Wow. I'm just like, I'm tired. Just reading all that I have to know. What is your secret? Where does your energy come from Marcylle?

**Marcylle Combs 03:40**

Do you know that is the really big question makes me tired to think about it, too. But you know, I always said kind of bore easily. So, I have to fight that just a tad to say what new thing can I do so I'm not completely bored in the process. And in for me, I always wanted a big family. I thought that would be great fun. And I will tell you, it's been a blast. The most fun thing I've done in my whole life.

**Lisa Nichols** 04:13

Is your big family. I mean, right. And you've got five kids so you may have more than you know, six grands before it's all over.

**Marcyille Combs** 04:26

I don't know if they're quite as crazy. You know, my second son I really only two of my children have children. My first and second son and the second son went first and had four kids. So, you know thank goodness for him because the rest are all on kind of delay and I don't know if they are gonna get there not. But I'll be happy with, that's the best job ever to be a grandmother. I can't tell you it so.

**Lisa Nichols** 04:56

I could not agree more. You know, Greg always says Marcyille. He always says, you know, I thought Jordan, Paige and Ally, I thought I love them with all my heart. But when Sawyer came along, he showed me the other 75%.

**Marcyille Combs** 05:14

Absolutely, absolutely. My husband used to stand in front, my first grandchild and he his name's pops. And so, he would sit in front of them at six months old, and go pop, pop, pop. I mean, that's cheating.

**Lisa Nichols** 05:35

That is, that is cheating. But well listen, we have so much to talk about. But before we dig in, I want to just talk about you growing up. And this is funny to me, because I know the very first time here's what you said to me, you probably don't even remember what you said. But you said, I am a Texas girl through and through. And you said I was born in Texas, and I have every intention of dying in Texas.

**Marcyille Combs** 06:04

Now, that is the truth statement. I am a Texas girl and I love Texas. And I can be I can you can get my dander up a little bit. If you try to talk about Texas again, we're a huge day with multifaceted people living in it. And you know, I love to travel but I love to come back home.

**Lisa Nichols** 06:33

Well, it is a great state. And I think I had told you in one of our conversations that we had an office there six years, and I loved it. I really, I could have been a Texas girl too. But I was born in Kentucky. And now I live in St. Louis and that's home. So now I know that you went I want to kind of start getting into what you? What else did you did you grow up with siblings? Did you grow up with this big family, Marcyille?

**Marcyille Combs** 07:00

No. I had one sister who, we grew up in the country and outside the Metroplex. But truly there were 72 kids in my graduating high school class. So, I grew up right down the road from my grandparents., My parents worked, they were working class people. We didn't we didn't have a lot of money. But we always had food. We were always clothed those kinds of things. But I, I guess somewhere along the way, I just was a determined little thing. Probably not your dream child, if you want to know the truth. My older sister, which really, I miss to this to this day, she died in her early 30s. And that could be part of why I wanted to bring family because I, you know, I only had the one sibling and then when, when she was gone, there was just me. So, you know, I grew up, as I said, down the road from my grandfather, we had a big lake on the property so I would fish with him. And when people know me now, they can't imagine a little girl who used to pluck earthworms out of the dirt and put them in my pockets so then I could go fish, you know, fishing.

**Lisa Nichols** 08:26

Fishing with your grandpa?

**Marcyille Combs** 08:27

Yes, so, it was a good time, you know, in the Metroplex, we were far enough away from Dallas, and the name of the town is Rockwall. Far enough away, but close enough. My great-grandparents had farmed there, my grandparents had farmed. And it you know, in many ways, it was a very good town. My, my home life was fairly turbulent. My parents had a lot of, you know, struggles just, you know, they might say dysfunctional, I would say, how do we, how do we define functional?

**Lisa Nichols** 09:11

Aren't we all?

**Marcylyle Combs 09:14**

Yes, I'm a little worried mine might say that. You know, what do you do? But, but truly, I always wanted to go to college. I was the first college graduate. My parents nor my grandparents went to college. So much something I really wanted to do. So, from that perspective, you know, when you're a little girl who rose up outside and not a lot of money, I'm not sure what I was thinking. I was just thinking, truly no matter what, I'm going to get this degree.

**Lisa Nichols 09:53**

Well, I think, I think honestly Marcylyle just in kind of the, the small amount of time never spent with you, you would tend to kind of get bored easily. You're a curious person, you've got a growth mindset, you know, and we're gonna talk about that. But you're through and through you're a learner and an explorer. And so, I can definitely see why even then you thought, oh, I need to go get this degree. And, you know, so tell me about that. You went to Dallas Baptist University. I think you got a degree in nursing, right?

**Marcylyle Combs 10:25**

At that time, in fact, I think thing might just have brought it back. But at that time, they did have a nursing program. And so I went to college, there actually was a cheerleader in college, with my husband, who was not my husband, then. Who had always been a football player in high school. So, it was hilarious that they, some friends just begged him to try out. But it was a blast. Small Christian College, I am a person of faith. It was a great time of growth, just from a personal level from that faith-based perspective, to really know people who prayed. Now my parents didn't pray over meals, but my grandparents did. But I didn't know anyone who prayed any other time. I mean, wow, that that's a concept. So, you know, you can see maybe I was curious. Some things I just didn't ask about. I know a lot of people who went to church, but I didn't know any people who talked about prayer. Well, Heaven only knows you got a prayer with a meal. He's not get indigestion.

But you know it Dallas Baptist was a great time. And then I got a degree in nursing. And really, in my mind's eye, I thought my husband was going actually went to Dallas Theological Seminary. And I thought, well, when he finishes, then we'll have kids, and that's kind of in my, in my mind's eye. And I always tell the story with my friends of faith that I am also, I felt like a good Christian mother just stayed home. And so, there was truly a lot of a lot of changes, which we don't have a long enough podcast to tell that whole story. But there were a lot of changes happening within me. So, he went to DTS, and then we moved to Lubbock, Texas because he really didn't want to do full time ministry. And we moved to Lubbock, Texas, so he can get his PhD. Which he took. He said, we'll be up there, Marcylyle, three to four years. And I don't know if you've ever been to West Texas. But the best people that walked the face of the earth, the best employees, you'll ever I will there, but that is the beginning and the end of the environment. It's got a lot of other good things. And so, my luck friends, don't blame me, as I said, the best people you'll ever see. But the wind blows and the dirt is in your ears and your eyes.

And, you know, anyway, 11 years later, we moved from Lubbock. But I want to put that in because it was in Lubbock, where I found home health, which would become my real calling, where I bought my first agency. So, from a faith perspective, I believe God led me there, even though I didn't want to go. And I went to work even though I didn't want to go to work. And I really found what God intended for Marcylyle Combs to do. I appreciate women who have the option to stay home. But that just wasn't God's path for me.

**Lisa Nichols 14:04**

Right. I love what you just said, because I know that that was a struggle for you, because you had something in your mind that this is the way it was to go. Right, Marcylyle? And it didn't quite go that way. But when you look back at your life, you can probably say God position you just where you needed to be and what you needed to do. I read something this morning and it said, get comfortable saying yes to God's yes. So, whatever it is that he has get comfortable with that but you know, I really because you did buy your first health care agency in 1994. What was it like to go from a practitioner, a nurse to now you know, an entrepreneur and you know, you were an individual contributor and all of a sudden now, you're leading this agency. What was that like Marcylyle?

**Marcylyle Combs 14:59**

You know? I always say I have a lot more guts than I do brains. So that's probably what led to that. The truth is I had become the director. And the only reason I took a director of an agency is kind of like a manager of that unit. And I only took it because I had real struggles with the only other person because our, our boss was leaving, our manager was leaving. And I didn't, I knew I was going to have to change jobs if the other person took it, because I already knew. And the truth is one to your slider, and we became friends. And she continued to work for me. So, I understand I was 30 years old, 31 years old at the time, I took the director job. And then about nine years later, I moved and buying that same agency. So, I took the director didn't know what I was doing, didn't know any of that, and then fell in love with growth. And I had, you'll love this illustration. The owner of the agency was just my age, and he was a

pharmacist, and he would come into my office now again, another day another time. And he would have cowboy boots, which I grew up in the Metroplex, no one I knew wore cowboy boots. And so, he would put his boots up on my desk and sit and talk to me. And I would think, who are you? We are still friends today. He's my biggest mentor in business.

But he would tell me things like, you know, another little town Marcyllie, in Plainview, the office can only be so big, but in Lubbock it can be as big as you want. While I didn't know any better, so I just kind of believed him. And he would tell me things like, the most important thing is to bill and collect. Bill and collect, then you're out of business. But really, I for him started three more offices, I just did everything grow this thing. And then due to circumstances, his own life, he said, I want to sell this. And, and truly, I can't tell you the next part without telling you this part, but he backed along for me to, to buy credit to run this Medicare Home Health. And then he also let me pay him out for the dollar amount. So, if it hadn't been, for him one his business knowledge and to his ability to believe in me. Why he did it? I don't know if you met him today, if he would tell you why he took that chance. But he took that chance on me. And then truly, I think he had a vested interest in my success.

So, for me, you know, to the on the agency go to bed. And we had you know, we were young and dumb and didn't come from families who had money. And we, we, you know, had what, a lot of young and dumb people credit card debt and that kind of stuff. And we had spent years getting out of debt. And so, all of a sudden, I go to bed one night, and I set for my house completely out of debt. And I wake up the next morning and I have a million-dollar loan and I have a million-dollar line of credit.

**Lisa Nichols 18:55**

Scary fear.

**Marcyllie Combs 18:58**

And then, you know, we proceed to move back to the Metroplex. And so, I just remember walking outside my house. And we had spent \$200,000 on a house, which I know nobody would, everyone would think that's cheap, cheap these days, but it was a huge stretch. So, I have a big house loan, a big school, I mean a big loan and, and my husband is finishing up his PhD. And there's, I'm kind of the primary breadwinner and I looked around and thought, this is insanity.

**Lisa Nichols 19:38**

Not anything thing like you would have ever dreamed, Marcyllie?

**Marcyllie Combs 19:43**

Well, you know, really, I think there was part of me that thought once the kids are in school, maybe I'll have my own business. But I never, you know, this is why I say from a pure faith perspective. God's dreams for us are so much bigger than our dreams. You know, the other thing I have to say, here about this mentor friend of mine who continues to this day to be now we're both old, but a friend of mine, when he said to me, what is your, what's your financial goal? And remember, I'm making, I think \$25,000 a year, it's late 80s, you know, early 90s, I mean, I might have been up to like, \$35-40,000 by then. And I said, I would like to make, I would like to have in the bank \$6 million, without, you know, without any debt. And I like to be, you know, to be being paid really well. And you know, what he said to me, not what my friends would have said to me, as you are out of your mind. He said that's not near enough more so. And I thought, wow, if he's saying that's not near enough, that must mean that's possible. So, it, you know, it's great to have mentors that believe more of you than you believe of yourself.

**Lisa Nichols 21:35**

I could not agree more, right? And I've talked to so many successful people, and I know that you have too, that that is a common thread. There was someone in their life that spoke into them something that they did not even see in themselves. It's a common thread. I love it. Well, I want to just say one more thing and then we do need to take a quick break. But you that business that you purchased, I think you grew that Marcyllie, I think this is correct to correct me if I'm wrong, but I think you had about 1200 employees in multiple locations, multiple states. It's just incredible.

**Marcyllie Combs 22:19**

You know, it really through, its, you know, I took that business, I sold that business formed a management company, managed all the home health services for a large corporation, I mean, hospital system, then I ended that. And then I started, the last business was that we were about, you know, we were about \$70 million when we sold in revenue. So we went, I mean, I started over, as I said, I don't always have good sense. I started over three or four times. So let me add something to I, I didn't do that. It was always me and the bank. So, I was just a breath away, then I you know, I'm responsible. It was just service organization and response for all these people. And I also was, you know, I have all these children. Like you go to college and do all those things. So, truly, I had a CFO who said to me, Marcyllie, I can, I

can predict everything as far as cashflow, except for the prayer part. And so, you know, when you're at the brink, and you think, the government just decides to upgrade their software system. And so, they shut down for two weeks over the holidays. Well, guess what? When do your employees want to get paid, in the holidays. So, we would pray our way to having enough money to make payroll. And I think our payroll was about sorry, was about \$1.2-1.3. Every two weeks were sold. So, it was a big deal.

**Lisa Nichols 24:33**

Incredible! Well, we've got so much more to talk about. But we do need to take a quick break and we'll be right back on to something extra podcasts with Marcyllle Combs.

**AD 24:41**

In business, the tendency is to seek out partners who are bigger, faster, stronger. When it comes to IT, you should be looking for smarter, faster, better. That's just a you'll find with the talented technologists at Technology Partners. Our experts develop custom solutions to tackle your most complex challenges all the simple buy your processes in the smartest, most efficient way possible. The time to be swift and nimble starts now. Go to [technologypartners.net/solutions](http://technologypartners.net/solutions) and see what's possible.

**Lisa Nichols 25:11**

Well, welcome back everyone to the Something Extra Podcast with Marcyllle Combs. So Marcyllle, I have a lot of questions for you about leadership. And, you know, what do you think your leadership style is? And do you think you've seen it evolve over the years?

**Marcyllle Combs 25:28**

Well, I hope, you know, my, my goal is that my last breath on this earth that I would have learned something that day. I hope that I can always no matter how old I get, that I can learn. And so, it has been one of the things that I've tried to push myself and to be able to say, what groups can I sit in? What arenas cannot be in where I am uncomfortable? You know, I think especially I've done a lot of things, you know, I failed a lot of times to, thankfully, never anything horrific, but a lot of individual fails. And, you know, to just say enough is enough, and I'm tired and I, I am just gonna pick flowers with my grandchildren and feed the donkeys. But something within me, and I believe that is a God thing, says you, you have to, you have to push yourself, Marcyllle.

So, you know, I think my leadership style is, and I actually have a book coming out either the end of this year or the person next year on a particular kind of friendship management, if you will. So, I try to be a true friend to my employees, but also we them be a leader, you have to make hard decisions, you have to make controversial decisions. And you have to be willing, I think humility is a strength and not a weakness. But I think you have to be a strong, you have to be a strong person to be able to lead others and to survive in this world. So, if you asked me that I sent in my deepest friendships are people that I've worked with along the way. And they are, there are times that they've been unhappy with me and vice versa. And I have had to fire people. My personal philosophy is I try not to hire anyone I don't like. So, if I don't like them, then I don't hire them. And then then my bar is I have to find some piece of them to love. And because if you can love some portion of a person, you, you can help them grow and forgive a lot of other things. And I will say I've never found anyone I have found people it was harder to find something to love.

**Lisa Nichols 28:39**

But if you search hard enough, long enough.

**Marcyllle Combs 28:43**

You can find it and really, I have had the wonderful I used to always tell everyone you know, I love the best thing is Rainbow Sherbert. I know people will need it these days because it's not healthy. But you know, I love all the colors. All the colors and personalities make a better organization. And so, if I have to give a short answer, it comes down to kind of those things, you know, if you love people, and you look for the right people, you don't have to worry about the laws because your, your standards will be above the laws.

**Lisa Nichols 29:25**

That's good. Well, okay, so you've kind of already touched on this a little bit, but the buzzword we hear all the time, with the exception of Gen AI that's just about every meeting I'm in it's what about Gen AI, generative AI, is culture and how important culture is so, you know, what kind of culture did you strive to build with, with the agency?

**Marcyllle Combs 29:55**

And I think, you know, we broke it down into. I was always in a people business, but I think all business is people business. So is that we had a culture where you could grow, it was a safe environment, safe emotionally,

psychologically, physically, that you could take a risk. And yet, it would be okay. That we, we were customer obsessed, that when we were in the public, everything was great, we were great, everything was great. When we got back to our home court, then we could complain or whatever.

**Lisa Nichols** 30:46

Break it down and talk about what went, right? What could be improved on, right? So, you always did that retrospective?

**Marcyille Combs** 30:54

Any we provided a lot of support. But if we lost a customer or didn't get a deal, we talked about, what did we do wrong? What could we have done different? Even if we did all the things right, what, what ingredients could have made this work? And the answer, even for myself, was never, you know, that there was nothing. We had to have, even today, we have to say, what can we what could we do different so the outcome would have been different next time? Where can we achieve. And so, I think the culture would be one that loved, enjoyed the people we work with, it was never acceptable to just get along with our coat coworkers. We call people to a higher calling than that. We said it was patients first are walking in a home, we're taking care of a real live person with a family in a situation they don't really want to be in.

I just experienced that because my husband had a total knee, which he's gonna love me giving his PhI right here on a big podcast. But, you know, for the first time with my husband, had I experienced home health and not only home health and home health where I didn't know the agency. So luckily, I knew the therapists, so we requested the therapist so it's been a great time. But you know, simple things like letting the family know, before you're coming. How am I obsessed with doing the right thing? Not because in our world, the regulations say not because the law says it, but because it's the right thing. And I, you know, I didn't always have good news for my employees, but I try to give them the truth. You know, if we couldn't do raises, or we couldn't do certain things, I would go to them with the truth. This is what we have. And I will say, I should knock on wood, I was never, I was never sued by an employee. Most employees would say they miss our culture. And so, if you are they learned something that took it to their next place. I love new college grads because they bring, you know, they bring an energy. Yes, you're a whole lot of trouble. But they bring new energy and they are so fresh.

**Lisa Nichols** 34:01

And ideas, and movement, and enthusiasm, and passion. And, I do too!

**Marcyille Combs** 34:05

I don't know if that answers your question, Lisa.

**Lisa Nichols** 34:11

Absolutely. I mean, it's an amazing culture that you built there and it's so important. It's a culture that's really focused its people centric. People centric and I, you have to be obsessed with your customer in your in your case, it was patients, right?

**Marcyille Combs** 34:31

We talk a lot about we are talked a lot about internal and external customers, or our internal customers who are our employees, and we used to do a lot of fun things called surprise and delight. So, we would try to do some celebration. They weren't expecting. It doesn't always cost a lot of money. Like it's 100 degrees in Texas, so we would try to bring in ice cream. So if nurses came in, and you wanted an ice cream bar, and of course for the diet conscious.

**Lisa Nichols** 35:06

We would try gelato or something.

**Marcyille Combs** 35:10

We would have to have keto or, you know, whatever is homegrown, avocado on a stick.

**Lisa Nichols** 35:19

But always rainbow sherbert Oh, my goodness. Well, Marcyille, I mean, I started this whole thing by saying all the things that you do, and I'm just like, you know, I'd be it's, you do a lot, you do a lot. So, in 2007, as if you weren't busy enough, you founded a nonprofit called 2612. I want to know, first of all, what's the mission of 2612? And then where does that name come from?

**Marcylyle Combs 35:53**

Well, it comes from Isaiah. So, it was formed, you know it's funny, you, you wake up and you have an idea. And you think the idea is going to do one thing. And then when the other thing comes about. We begged our law firm, which is a wonderful law firm, I'll say their name here, Haynes and Boone. And then we begged them to do the nonprofit articles of incorporation for free, which was a nonprofit. I have my friends, I'm going to send this to a couple of frames from there. But, you know, we, we set it up really thinking that the, the nonprofit would be a place where our employees would have an opportunity to give back. So yes, we took donations, and really none of the administrative overhead, all of that came from my corporations. So, we covered all the operations through profits of our company. And then any of the work we did employees could give, we also allowed them we always had a second choice of United Way or someone they could give to too, because we wanted to, you know, never be accused, that we could not offer both for employees, because we didn't want it to be, you know, an arm-twisting kind of thing and really never was. So, all of those funds, we did and, and we also did matching, so if an employee took off three days to do a trip with them, we would match that with three days.

**Marcylyle Combs 37:42**

We felt like, and, and the employee did have to pay for some portions, because I really felt like, and Becky Hines who helped found that felt like, the employee needs to have some skin in the game. It can't just be that we are hosting all of that. So, we did things. We always partnered with another ministry. So, we went to Haiti with Mission Discovery. We went to Belize, which was kind of just a roundabout, how I ended up we helped hospice in Belize. Really, we helped them take their, their standards to the Ministry of Health. And as far as I know, they're still enacted today. I went about nine different years to them. So, an employee, we did emergency type situations with Samaritan's Purse, and it's not my favorite, by the way, I had no skills. And so, they gave me a wheelbarrow. Well, if a girl is not used to rolling the wheelbarrow in and out like with the Hurricane Ike and that kind of stuff. At the end of the day, you can no longer move your arms. And so, they would not give me anything else except the wheelbarrow.

**Lisa Nichols 39:06**

Wheelbarrow duty. Oh, my goodness.

**Marcylyle Combs 39:10**

You know, we did all kinds, we went to Bulimbo in Africa, but again, always with another ministry so that we didn't bear you know, all the.

**Lisa Nichols 39:25**

Right. The logistics and you know, they already knew what they were doing. We've done the same thing, Marcylyle, we've done several mission trips, but it's always been with a ministry that knows what they're doing and it's wonderful. So, you yourself, you've done about 30 different mission trips, I think worldwide. But you know, I'm tell our listeners if they have not done that, how, how do those mission trips really inform how you live life forward for you. I mean, I've got my own ideas around what it did for our family, but I'd love to hear for you, How that maybe changed even the way you thought about things?

**Marcylyle Combs 40:04**

Well, you know, let me tell you the shallow part first so that people can if they're sitting out there, I always felt like some are called to give and some are called go. Marcylyle's called to give because Marcylyle is a creature comfort girl. And so, all the pictures that I had seen, did you know they there were no creature comforts involved in that. Let me give you the little a little my heart. I by, we had a pharmacist at that time, or once upon a time that was working for us and she was going to teach just elemental pain control for, for the hospital in Belize and then they're there. They call it palliative care, but their hospice palliative care there. And she got typhus, our pharmacist, and couldn't go. And truly, I was the only one and, and when it first happened, Becky Heinz, who was head at 2612, while a great woman of prayer, she began to pray that Marcylyle would feel compelled to go.

So, six weeks before they're going to go, I say to her wrong thing to say if you don't want to go. You know, I just felt this voice to go. And I, I would have to do a lot of work a lot of education. I mean, all myself to be able to do this because, you know, just a lot, but because of the audience we were teaching, I was going to be considered the expert. And so anyway, I ended up going and what happened was, we got in the car with a little Dr. Beatrice Thompson. And she was a volunteer doctor in the in the country of Belize, a tiny country, in South American if I have this, right. So, you know, if your callers say this, all right, they can call in and say there's the only English-speaking South American country, so I can speak the language. She put us in the car with her. And we drove to see patients. So, there's no reimbursement. I mean, I'm coming from, we're mad because Medicare insurance companies aren't paying enough. We don't have you know, our employees are all complaining. These are all volunteers. And they were physician led teams, because the physician was the only one who had a car and had the money to buy gas.

You know, fast forward, I fell in love. And I didn't enjoy the part that I knew I wasn't going to enjoy my home. Not my whole family. But most of my family went one year as we did education for their group would bring in educators, all of them never been so hot in my life. In a rain forest, in a in a conference room, it was a real conference room without A/C. And, you know, we all went and all did that together, it brings you to task. You know, we think we live in a society where we never have enough. We just don't have enough. We don't have enough, we don't have enough. And once you go there and you see people with so little giving so much, that it is heart stopping. I mean truly, it's heart stopping. And I can honestly say I'm not one of those people who said, I'm dying to go on a mission trip. I can't wait to go. I really, I would love to send you Lisa. And truly, even after I love the people and I'd love to go see them. I did not from a creature comfort perspective want to go. Even though we ended up, I ended up finding a place that did have A/C. And so, since I was paying all administrative overhead, let's just say that's where we stayed.

**Lisa Nichols 44:46**

That's where you stayed. That's so funny. Well, let me ask you about this because in 2015, you founded the W Conference, which is aimed at empowering women in the workplace, what really inspired you, Marcyllie to create this conference? And what do you hope that? What are the impacts that you're hoping for from this conference that you founded?

**Marcyllie Combs 45:11**

Do you know what, I love the W conference? And really it was from a heart perspective that I especially for women of faith, who are working full time, which really the statistics these days are, let's get with it. Conservative Christian Churches, women are working. And I never felt supported. One was, oh, you work? Well, yeah, there's four boys, and they all need to be fed. But I didn't say that, obviously, because I felt bad about it. And then the next step was, oh, you travel, like you leave your children?

**Lisa Nichols 45:57**

Who takes care of your children while you're gone?

**Marcyllie Combs 45:59**

And so, I felt like that, I mean, just an overwhelming burden that we needed to bring a group together to say you are supported. Here's how you do it. Here's how I did it. Here's, here's women speaking. And remember, we didn't have a lot of money to pay speakers. So, I had to get almost famous, not famous, and many of them had become fairly famous. So, people like Alli Worthington and Ellie Holcomb, and, you know, people who've gone on to really, so I caught them, right? I remember when I called them up.

**Lisa Nichols 46:45**

In the beginning?

**Marcyllie Combs 46:46**

I got to get them almost famous. Anyway. So really, that was our number one goal is how do we support women in the workplace that, you know, are trying to do this thing, and trying to do a good job. One of my sons gave me the greatest compliment a few years back, and he said, mom, no, you weren't there for every practice in everything. But you were there for the important things. I remember flying to Dallas from a conference, getting in my car, changing clothes in the car. Don't do that in the Dallas traffic, don't do that. But I did. Running to the football game, walking my son, her senior night on to the field, getting back in the car driving back to the airport, going back to my destination. Because it was so important for me that my kids know that I was there for them. That was really, you know, you that has to stay if you're working. That's I mean, I get a TV. I didn't watch TV for 100 year and I'm not saying what you have to cut out. I didn't volunteer at church anymore. I did my kids and I did my work. My work became a ministry. Because you know, you cannot do everything.

**Lisa Nichols 48:26**

Really and truly, Marcyllie, that is, I just I love what you just said, that's the greatest advice for. I always say no matter what kind of cape you think you're wearing, you can't do everything. And you got to say no. And, you know, I mean, I same thing with me. I mean, now we have, we've been fortunate because we've been able to hire help at various time. But I always say I never outsourced going in buying a prom dress with my girls. That was what I wanted to do with them, right? But do I need to be the one to pick up the cleaning every time? No, I mean, the cleaning needs to be picked up.



**Marcylyle Combs 49:10**

Or clean the toilets.

**Lisa Nichols 49:11**

Clean the toilets, exactly. No, for sure. I mean, we've had we've had the same helper at her home for since our kids were babies. You know, she's in her 80s now. But and but you would never know it. I mean, she's got a lot of energy, this woman but there are choices. And so, like for me, I now don't know about you. I don't have a lot of hobbies. I'm not saying there's a, you got to take time for yourself, right? But I don't like Go and play tennis with girlfriends or anything like that. I mean, there are choices. So, when you say yes to one thing you're saying when, when you say yes to one thing, you're saying no to something else and you just have to figure out what your non negotiables are.

**Marcylyle Combs 49:58**

Absolutely, absolutely. And, you know, you can't be more right. You know, Ivy is much younger than the boys and Craig went to Iraq. When she was in middle school, our youngest son had gone to college. And I hired a nanny for her. But, and really, after she grew up and went to college, I kept the nanny for me, because I said, you know. In fact, she still works for me. Ivy's been out of college for a long time.

**Lisa Nichols 50:38**

That's funny. Well, I'm going to talk about one more thing, and then we'll talk about something extra. This is, I found this really inspiring. Our CCXO, our chief client experience officers, Dan Roberts, and he says it all the time that growth never happens in the land of comfort. So, you, in your 50s, Marcylyle, but you, you're really like 29, you look like you're 29.

**Marcylyle Combs 51:06**

Just don't ask my children's age.

**Lisa Nichols 51:10**

When you were in your 50s, you kind of decided to go put yourself in a semi uncomfortable position, because you wanted to grow. And I found this so inspiring. You actually went back in your 50s to get your master's degree.

**Marcylyle Combs 51:24**

Yes. And I talked six of my executives and to going too.

**Lisa Nichols 51:29**

Yes, that is so wonderful. I just love that, you know, when you did your master's in organizational leadership. What did you, what did you take from that? And, you know, what was the precipice for that particular degree?

**Marcylyle Combs 51:46**

Do you know what the truth is, I always from, the plan in my head, you know, the one that didn't quite work out? Was that Craig's last year of seminary, I was gonna go back and get my masters because and I was gonna get nursing, I was going to be a man. That's what I was going to do. If you asked me, then I was never going to sit behind a desk all day. I was always going to be with the patient. You know, what can I say? But so, it was a life goal, that fast forward, after all these years, I just, I always felt like I wanted to get my master's degree. By this time, I thought, well, I'm just gonna get my MBA. And so, I again, I am not a onesie, I'm a twosie. And so, I always think if you're gonna do something, do it with a group of people to have fun with. And so truly, we checked out MBA programs all, remember what year this was, I mean, this was 2011. So online programs were not the standard. It was really hard. Anyway, through a series of events. We found a gal Her name is Dr. Kathy Crockett. She was leaving this program actually, which all roads lead to Lubbock, we would tell you that in our company, but and she was leading a master's in leadership program. I had one phone call with her. We were sold. We got to go with that group to China to speak through an interpreter. I didn't want to go to China, either. I had told her when we started the program. I would like an overseas experience. But I would like it to be in Italy or Greece or she calls up and says How about China? I was like, did I say China? No.

**Lisa Nichols 53:53**

I said Italy.

**Marcylyle Combs 53:55**

You know what women are in leadership are the same worldwide. And even through an interpreter. We cried with some women. Their leadership job was so hard. We then went to Italy in a lighter day. I'm on the foundation board for Lubbock Christian University still. Because you know, I'm not Church Christ. So, I am on the foundation board. I said,

y'all know I'm not Church of Christ, right? I spoke for their commencement. So, I will say that was just one. It was a life goal for me. It would not. It really didn't make any from a financial perspective.

**Lisa Nichols** 54:42

You had already been doing the job, Marcyllle, but you know, I just love it. I mean, it just shows me that you are going to continue and so I mean, there's so much more we could talk about. You've been inducted into the Hall of Fame. You'd like to have a book coming out. There's so much more we could be talking about, but I know whatever you do, Marcyllle, you're going to continue to grow, you're going to continue to make a difference. And I'm going to go back to something you said at the very beginning that I just love. And you said, the last day that you learned something is going, you're, you're praying the day that you die, you know, and I absolutely loved that I had the privilege last year of having Ken Blanchard on the Something Extra Podcast, and at the time, he was maybe 83, 84, something like that. And he said, you know, Lisa, he goes, so many people I've seen 30-year-olds say, oh, the best is behind me. The best is in front of me. I'm gonna live with gusto for the rest of my life. And I've just I've never forgotten that, Marcyllle. And I, I want to be that too. And I know you do too. So. But let me ask you this, this is called something extra. What do you believe? Is the something extra that every leader needs?

**Marcyllle Combs** 56:07

Do you know, I thought about this, and I listen to some of your interviews. I would say it in and I kind of said it at the beginning. I think it's love and I think it's loving what you do. Loving the passion, loving the new. The new thing loving the challenge loving your people that you get to work with, or meet or, or develop. Sure, they irritate you, but for love, that's all the extra you need.

**Lisa Nichols** 56:44

Well, what does Scripture say? Love covers a multitude of sin. I mean, love trumps everything right? It really does. And I could I, I'm with you on that one. I do believe in fact, and 2021 my word, which I had two words, but then I had a good friend. That's a marketing branding guy. And he goes, it's okay, Lisa, just put a hyphen in there. So, my word for 2021 was Love-More. And what I meant by that is, love your people more, love your family more, love what you do more. How do you love, whatever the challenge. It's kind of funny to say you love a challenge, but really loving to learn how to solve problems and challenges. I mean, so I, I'm right with you on that one, Marcyllle. But thank you so much for being on the show today. It has just been such a pleasure to spend this time with you. And I know that your journey and all the insights that you share are going to help our listeners. So, thank you for that.

**Marcyllle Combs** 57:50

Oh, Lisa, thank you so much. I'm honored to be here and I, one of mine this year is to love the moment I'm in and this is moments that I have enjoyed immensely.

**Lisa Nichols** 58:07

Me too, take care my friend.

**Announcer** 58:11

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