



EP289_Jeanne de Vries Sands

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.

Lisa Nichols 00:35

My name is Lisa Nichols and I have spent the last 24 years as both the CEO of Technology Partners in 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.

Lisa Nichols 01:04

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 delighted to have Jeanne deVries Sands on the show today. Jeanne is the Chief Information Officer at Summit BHC. Well, welcome to the Something Extra Podcast, Jeanne. I am so delighted that we can make this work and I know how busy you are. You're a big time CIO and busy, busy, but I appreciate you so much for taking the time to be on the show today.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 01:58

Thanks so much, Lisa. I'm excited to be here today.

Lisa Nichols 02:01

Yes. I am, too. So, you and I first met because your husband Edward was speaking at one of our tech Alex events. And you came out to support him and I got to meet you. And, and so we've become friends. And we're trying to figure out now you guys have since moved from St. Louis to Nashville. So, we're trying to figure out do we come there or do you come back to St. Louis? So, I'm sure that we'll, we'll figure that out.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 02:28

I hope so. It's been way too long in St. Louis is amazing. So, we'd love to come there. But Nashville has a lot to offer as well.

Lisa Nichols 02:35

It does. And we'll talk about that. We'll talk about that because it is it's a booming town right now. So, when I met you, you and Edward were both VPS tech execs at SSM. And I think at one point you were the you weren't you like the regional CIO Interim CIO for SSM.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 02:56

Correct. So, I joined SSM in 2018, after serving a variety of healthcare organizations across the country. And when I joined, I was the regional CIO for our Oklahoma ministry. And it was a great role. I really enjoyed it and was called up and asked to take a larger role at the corporate office and headquarters in St. Louis, where I lead all the clinical applications. So, SSM you know, \$10 billion organization in multiple states in the Midwest, great regional health care, integrated delivery system had a great experience there.

Lisa Nichols 03:32

I know that it is. It's a wonderful health care system. But you know what's so funny to me and, Jeanne, we'll talk about this a little bit, but you and Eduard are both now CIOs, the conversation has to be so interesting. And I love it. Because certainly you guys have a lot in common right. And a lot you can talk about lot that you can bounce off of one another, but I'm sure it the conversation is interested in your household.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 04:00

It's very interesting. When Eduard and I first met, we were both going through divorces and challenging times. And we were colleagues and peers at SSM. And then as our journeys in our careers continued, he became a CIO first and then I shortly thereafter, followed as a CIO, both of us in healthcare but in very different industries. He has since moved to a different role. But I think you know, this Lisa, working with someone who always has your best interest who can be both mentor, an advocate, challenger of what you're thinking about who can really push you to be your best, I think that's what we all want. And to have that both at work and at home. It's just such a gift.

Lisa Nichols 04:43

It is, it is. And you're right, I know what that's like too. Because Greg and I work with one another and he is always pushing me, right? To go to the next level. And I love that and we know what each other is talking about, right? And so, for you, you guys both being tech execs the same is true for you. So, before we get into a lot, you know of what you're doing today and in career. I really want you to take me back to your growing up years, where did you grow up? What were your interest as a little girl, because you've been in, you've probably been in healthcare technology almost your whole entire career, I think.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 05:26

That is very true, Lisa. And it might surprise people, but I've had a long career here. And hopefully it surprises people. So, I'm originally from the Midwest from Wisconsin, I grew up a middle child of some of educator, parents, both of my parents were college professors. And one of the things that really made an impact on me as a young adult was that my mother went back and got her PhD when I was 13. And so, those are the days of floppy disks, and lots of word processing, WordPerfect, and all of that, and I'm sure I was typing at least a part of it, to help her out because it was so difficult those days. But as I grew up, and as I pursued my educational goals, getting my bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin LaCrosse, followed by my Masters, I decided that, you know, I really wanted to make a difference. And when I graduated in 2000, making a difference meant having a website and being in that space. So, I started my career as a web project manager helping people create web pages in front page at a small multimedia company in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. And that was really exciting. But I knew there was more.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 06:37

I was very, very fortunate to get an opportunity to join the local health system, a well-recognized health system, Gundersen Lutheran in the western part of Wisconsin, right thereafter. And they said, hey, we'd love to have you serve as a liaison between our developers and our customers as we develop a homegrown electronic health record. So, this is pre the days of Epic being in the news and Cerner, they had developed their own tool called Clinical Workstation. So, starting in 2002, if you can believe it, I worked at that organization, helping their customers, the clinicians, the caregivers, the administrative folks to really use technology meaningfully. And I really feel like I found my calling in that space. So, fast forward a couple of years, I was looking for even more things to do. So, I had the fortune to move back to Milwaukee and join Aurora Healthcare, which is now known as Advocate Health, which last time I looked was the fifth largest system in the country. And I had an amazing, almost 10 years at Aurora Advocate, serving in the technology team. And again, really continuing to advance these are the days of meaningful use high tech, all these things that we've heard of in the industry, and just a very, very exciting time for electronic health records and maturity of that space.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 08:00

Fast forward a couple of years, I was recruited to take an amazing opportunity in New Mexico, which led to me leaving Wisconsin and moving to Albuquerque, where I had a chance to be a VP of strategy and planning at Presbyterian Healthcare, followed by progressive roles leading to me becoming their interim CIO, before I departed for SSM and that regional CIO position in Oklahoma City. So, lots of great experiences in my childhood, but really what was most meaningful to me is, again, this idea of education, and really working hard for what you want and progressive growth. And I think sometimes when I meet with folks that I've mentoring or earlier in their career, they say, hey, it looks so easy, or, hey, it happened really fast for you. And you really need to walk people through How did you get here because it was a journey, and there's not anything that I think back to that wasn't meaningful, whether it was my first failed project. You know, the first time my opportunity fell through, the first time I didn't get that job, I applied for all of those things. They made me who I am today as a leader and are so important in my story and who I am today.

Lisa Nichols 09:21

That is such, there's so much packed in there, Jeanne, I don't know if I can. There's so much packed in there. But the first thing I love, I love that your mom at, when young were 13 years old goes back. I mean what a model for you, right? To say you never stopped growing. You never stopped going to the next level. And you didn't mention this but I know you have a doctorate.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 09:49

I'm working on my doctorate. I have to do my dissertation. I'm so close. I definitely need that last little bit classes are done. Just have to finish my dissertation. And then I will be there myself. I'm very excited to be done that.

Lisa Nichols 10:04

No awesome. And I'm sure I mean, if your mom is still alive, I don't know if she is, but I'm sure she's so proud of you for doing that. The other thing I really love about what you just said, it's one thing at a time, it's there is no silver bullet, right? Jeanne? To success to get to that level, you've done the work along the way, and everything you've done, failed and successful things really prepared you for what you're even doing today. So don't ever discount any of those opportunities. So, let me ask you this. So, when you got tapped on the shoulder, go to Presbyterian, which I think was in New Mexico, right? You got tapped on the shoulder for that, Jeanne, or did you see something and apply? How did that? How did that come about?

Jeanne de Vries Sands 10:55

That's a great question. And I think, you know, often I, when I'm talking again to people earlier in their career, they think these opportunities just magically appear. And in most cases in my career early on, they kind of did, it was, hey, this makes sense. And maybe it wasn't a direct ladder. But it was this little side path to get to that next point, you know. You go from Project Manager, to business analyst to program manager, or whatever that pivot kind of is to get you to that position. As you get later in your career. It's really about the relationships and the people that you know, and then finding a need that really highlights your skills. So, I was very fortunate along the way, like so many folks to have people who were really sponsors or advocates for me, as well as mentors, I definitely had both. I actually did something Lisa, and I kind of cringe thinking about it, but it was what I did. I had a year and I called it the year of Jeanne. And it was about really developing me and focusing on what did I need to do? I asked people at that time, I was at Aurora Healthcare. And we had an amazing CHRO, Amy Rislov. And I asked her I tapped her on the shoulder and said, would you be my mentor? You're the head of HR for this large 40,000-person organization at that time? Would you be my mentor? And she so graciously said, absolutely. And when you're working with someone who's very different than yourself, who has a very different experience, they're able to expose you to different perspectives and different things that you never would have considered because they're not even in your realm of possibility. I'm a very methodical technology, kind of person. She's a little bit more free spirited, HR, you know, that there's no, no that they're thinking about.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 12:44

And so those opportunities were huge. So for Presbyterian, and for, I would say all of the opportunities that followed, it's really about having those conversations with people in the network, really expressing a desire to get to that next level, finding those possible opportunities, and then saying, hey, you know, I'm interested, because it's not just a, I see something I apply, and I'm sure a lot of your listeners have heard a lot about, you know, applicant tracking systems and how hard they are to permeate relationships, and folks you've worked with in the past, folks, you're part of a professional organ organization with those are your connections, and we have to use those connections to find those opportunities.

Lisa Nichols 13:32

Absolutely. I could not agree with you more, I've got a good friend, Orv Kimbrough that says your next opportunity is on the other side of a relationship. And, and so sometimes Jeanne, we think, Oh, that's the fluffy stuff, the networking, the real life, but, but truly, it's so important. And the operative word here is there's a difference between building relationships and just networking to me, but it's really building those relationships. And those people may hear of something, an organization needs something in and you want to be top of mind. You want them to say, oh, you know, who would be really wonderful at that particular role? It's Jeanne. And, so I could not agree more. Well, you've had just a wonderful, wonderful career, and I love everything you've said so far. But now you are at the CIO Summit BHC there in Nashville. So, some of our listeners may not know if they're in Nashville, they may but if they're not in Nashville, they may not know so tell us a little bit about Summit BHC.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 14:37

So, I'm at Summit Behavioral Healthcare. We call it Summit, BHC or SBHC. And we are a national provider of behavioral health services, both psychiatric and substance use disorder facilities. So, we have 37 inpatient hospitals in

20 states and we serve 1000s of patients daily with these needs. It's, and I think we all are touched in some way by behavioral health issues, especially since the pandemic, and especially since we're able to talk about it a little more freely than we have in the past. So, I joined Summit in 2022. And I've really been working to advance the maturity of technology, not only within our organization, but within behavioral healthcare, because it did lag a little bit behind traditional healthcare, which is even behind some other industries like retail or banking. So, I've been enjoying my ride here. We're physically located here in Franklin, Tennessee, right outside of Nashville, where we have a vibrant presence. And you know, what we're calling the healthcare hub of the country.

Lisa Nichols 15:44

Yes, I know. I've read that, the health care city is what Nashville is called now.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 15:50

Some great news about Cerner/Oracle relocating here. So, their new headquarters will be coming soon. I think we're very excited about what that means. And obviously, HCA, CHS, Acadia, lots of companies, Lifepoint. Lots of companies here.

Lisa Nichols 16:08

Very good. Well, okay, so you've already kind of told me, because I was gonna say, what has been what have been your big initiatives, and you've already told me you're maturing, not just your organization, but behavioral healthcare in general. So, I know you've gotten involved, and we'll talk about that you've gotten involved in several organizations? What kind of culture, Jeanne, are you trying to build within IT? Certainly, organizations have cultures, but always say that IT has cultures too, and you better pay attention to it because to attract the right people and the right talent, you've got to pay attention to your culture. So, what kind of culture are you building at Summit BHC?

Jeanne de Vries Sands 16:49

Well, as the first CIO here at Summit, when I came in, you know, I think it's kind of like a tool that you've never used, or an ingredient in a recipe you've never used, you've done without that. So, when I came in and said, hey, let's really look at technology as an accelerator as a lever, the organization kind of looked at me and said, help us understand how. So, for me, it's all about strategic partnerships. And that is both internally, but then also externally. As a smaller team and a smaller organization than the multibillion-dollar organizations, I've done it in the past, you really need to leverage not only your strategic partners inside the company, but also outside of the company to get enough bandwidth to do the work that you need to do meaningfully. So, for me, again, that partnership model is so, so important. And then it's all about collaboration, iteration, and constantly striving to improve what we're delivering. It's kind of that idea of continued excellence, and recognizing that we have an opportunity to grow in every space every day through small incremental 1% changes.

Lisa Nichols 18:04

Most of the time, it's not quantum leaps, Jeanne, to your point, it's little incremental changes.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 18:08

I wish it was.

Lisa Nichols 18:12

Sometimes it can be but most, most often it is not. So, tell me this, what do you believe are some of the biggest opportunities and challenges that are facing healthcare organizations today? In the tech in the emerging technologies, you and I've talked a lot about Gen AI, and some of the other things, but what do you feel like are some of the biggest challenges facing healthcare in today's world?

Jeanne de Vries Sands 18:37

I think when we start thinking about the challenges facing healthcare, you know, I don't see them necessarily as technology challenges. I see them as technology opportunities. So, we think about staffing, behavioral healthcare, no surprise, we don't have enough clinicians providing the care. We don't have enough practitioners, we don't have enough staff. We don't have enough of the nurses, the techs, all of those roles. So, it's really around how do we create models to optimize the folks that we have. So, they can be doing the right work as efficiently as effectively and as in the most satisfying way as possible. So, whether that's implementing HR systems, HR is tools that allow them to very easily do their training or electronic health records that allow them to spend more time at the patient's bedside, because they're not having to spend the time documenting. All of those types of things are things that we can do today to improve how we're providing care and behavioral health.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 19:42

You know, I also think that as we look at the future, it is going to be around how do we utilize and harness the technology, whether it's AI or other tools that are available to us to continue to evolve and change our operating model. If we think about health care, behavioral health care. It's a very similar to how it has been for 50 years, things need to change. And we've seen the stories about, you know, Walgreens and Walmart and everyone who's divesting their health care because it's so hard. The industry is hard. And so, there's a lot of folks coming into disrupt and having mixed results. But if we think about what is the future, it's really around different models that meet our patients where they're at, and address their needs on that continuum. So, it's not, hey, I have a behavioral health issue today. It's I have one for my life, and how do we deal with it full cycle instead of just that one point on the, you know, on the entire spectrum?

Lisa Nichols 20:51

No, that's good. Yeah. And I am, I'm confident and I know you are too, that a lot of these tools and emergent technologies are going to help, you know, the practitioners do their job more efficiently, so that they can spend more time with the patient. And it's ultimately about the patient, right? It's about getting better outcomes for the patient, having a better patient experience. It's about the patient. So, tell me this now. You know, you've already I love this, I was going to ask you about collaboration and partnerships. And we've already talked about that. So, it's like you've, you've read my mind, Jeanne, already. And some of the things I want to talk to you about. But tell me about, what about the digital divide? Do you have any thoughts around this and how we can, how we can get over the digital divide? And what I mean by that is there are people that do not have access, how can we? What can we do to provide better access to all?

Jeanne de Vries Sands 21:55

And I think that's always a problem in healthcare, right? The access to care. And I think in behavioral health, the way it manifests is, you know, capacity. And we know the industry metrics for us, is that right now, the number of beds available in behavioral health is 25% of the demand. And we know that many of the people who need these services aren't even asking for them. They're not there at that point of maturity to even know that they need them. So, if you think about that, and think about the real demand, it's even greater than that. So, when we start to think about the digital divide, and some of the opportunities there, again, Lisa, I think it goes back to this idea of meeting people where they're at. So, for example, on our website, we know that a lot of people want to connect with us. But you know, the, especially some of the newer generations, they just want to text, they want to text and they want to chat, they don't want to get on the phone and call and talk to someone about their problems. They just want to chat with someone and ask a quick little question. We allow them to do that through the use of our tools, for example.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 23:02

You know, a lot of times we're having to spend some time following up on patients, you know, maybe you reached out today, you weren't quite sure, in your substance use disorder journey if you're ready for that treatment, if it really is a problem that needs you to be an inpatient in a facility, you're not ready to take that leap. Well, maybe that means that we need to follow up with you multiple times. How do we put in place systems, which we have, so that we remember to follow up with you every day to really see where you're at. You know, over the holidays, we know that the holidays are a really hard time if you're dealing with things emotionally. So, how do we give people that extra touch point using technology so that they feel like someone's thinking about them, like someone cares about them.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 23:48

So those are all some of the things that we do to really cross that divide, but also to extend our physical bricks and mortar inpatient locations, so that we are able to help people get in. And then once they're in, you know, then it becomes a different conversation where we talk a lot about telehealth. We talk about some of the things that we do, you know, from a monitoring, from our alumni program for people that have successfully completed treatment and all those types of patient engagement kind of tools. But first, you got to get them through the door and they need to, you know, have we need to do everything we can so that they have that access that they require.

Lisa Nichols 24:29

Wow, I had no idea 25%, the supply is 25% of the demand right now I had no idea. I maybe we'll do a part two podcast because I don't want to get into that here. But you know, I would love to explore because we have seen a rise, right? I would love to explore the roots of that, Jeanne. I wonder you know if it's not, I mean, technology has a bright side and technology can have a dark side and sometimes I wonder about social media and what it's really doing to people's mental health.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 25:05

I think that's a very fair point, Lisa. And as a mother of two teenage daughters, you know, you definitely wonder about that. And I think we all see it. And then we go back to when we were young. And we didn't have that. And it's very much a difficult balance. And I talked to parents frequently, like, what are you doing? What are you restricting? What are you monitoring? What are you allowing? Because I don't think anyone has the answer. And I think for every child, it's a little different. But there is an impact. We know that every study tells us that. And the question is, how do you, how do you address that? How do you try to mitigate from that? And then how do you prevent it? And it's all of those?

Lisa Nichols 25:46

Well, we'll have to do a separate podcast to explore that, Jeanne.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 25:50

I'm very passionate about it.

Lisa Nichols 25:52

I know you're passionate about it. Well, let me ask you one more question. And we're going to take a quick break. So, this isn't your first rodeo, as a CIO, and we know that women traditionally do not reach that level as much as men. I know at one point, it was less than 25% of women that reached the CIO level. What advice would you give, if there's other younger female leaders out there that say, I would love to aspire to be a CIO one day? What would you tell them? Jeanne?

Jeanne de Vries Sands 26:32

I would tell them, Lisa, that you can do anything, and that your only limitation is yourself. You know, I've been very fortunate, again, to have people who have surrounded me who have treated me like an equal. And they've been a diverse group of people of all genders, of all ethnicities, of all abilities of all levels. And I've been fortunate and you know, going back to something we talked about a little earlier. I love the saying decisions about your career are made in a room you're not in, right? And so, this idea of how do you continue to show your interest? How do you continue, continue to advance yourself in a way that's authentic, that it's real. I make a very big point, and I do this in my LinkedIn, and I do this and everything I do, to really be authentic to who I am, as a person, as a wife, as a mother, as a CIO, because I think a lot of people think that they need to be something else. And I think we learn as we get a little older and a little wiser, that there are always people that we will not appeal to. And that's okay. We don't have to appeal to everyone. But if you try to appeal to everyone, you're not being authentic and true to who you are. And you appeal to no one. So how do you find that balance where you can be an authentic version of yourself.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 27:58

And I love Karla Evans, from Morgan Stanley, who has a couple books out, and she talks about the different versions of you and how they're all authentic, but you bring them to different conversations and situations. And I would say to those aspiring to be a CIO, think about your surroundings, think about your environment, and continue to bring to bear the best version of yourself to every conversation. Express that desire to get to that level, that next level, the next level beyond that, because so often we think people know, oh, they know I want that promotion. Oh, no, they know, I want this next opportunity. They don't know. And I can guarantee a colleague of yours of either gender is telling them that they want it. So, you need to be able to articulate where you want to go so that people can open that door for you. But it is possible. I guess I'm proof of it. There's many female CIOs that I've networked with and out there, and they're doing amazing work just like male CIOs as well. But you have to get comfortable with sometimes being uncomfortable. I think it strikes me every once in a while, I'll be sitting in a room and I'll recognize, I'm the only female in the room. And I don't think about it, because it's just natural to me at this point. But you have to get comfortable with being uncomfortable.

Lisa Nichols 29:16

Such great words of advice. I love everything you said and authenticity is so important, Jeanne and why be a carbon copy of someone else, right? But to your point too, it's important for you to let people know what you're aspiring to because people cannot read your mind. And I do, we talked about that. You know, our is your name being mentioned when you're not in the room? And you want it to be in a good way. You want it to be in a good way.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 29:49

Always in a positive way. That's kind of unsaid.

Lisa Nichols 29:53

That's right, exactly. Well, we're gonna take a quick break and we'll be right back with Jeanne de Vries Sands on this Something Extra Podcast.

AD 30:01

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 to simplify your processes in the smartest, most efficient way possible. The time to be swift and nimble starts now go to technologypartners.net/solutions and see what's possible.

Lisa Nichols 30:31

Well, welcome back everyone to the Something Extra Podcast with my friend, Jeanne. So, Jeanne, we've talked a lot about CIOs, this is not your first rodeo, how do you personally see the role of the CIO evolving? That's the first question. And then secondly, what are those traits that are going to be needed now and, in the future, in your mind to be a good CIO?

Jeanne de Vries Sands 30:56

That's a really good question, Lisa. And I know it's kind of a polarizing topic. The CIO role, by necessity has to span a lot of different disciplines today, whether it's infrastructure, security, applications, data and analytics. And what I think we've seen over the last couple of years is this hybrid role or these combinations, roles, CDIO, Chief Data or Chief Digital Information Officer, you know, kind of these hybrid roles coming together that live either as the CIO or above the CIO in some cases. So, definitely, that's something out there. As I see it, I think the CIO role continues to evolve to be something where you have a CTO on, which is the Chief Technology Officer role, focus a little bit more on the technology and the infrastructure and those elements, whereas the CIO role becomes a little bit more of a trusted business adviser, a change advocate, and an enabler.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 32:05

So, as I think about this goes hand in hand with their second part of the question around, what are those key competencies skills that I think are essential for someone to be successful as a CIO? Well, obviously, you need a technology acumen, you know, you don't need to know everything. I've never been a networking person, I've never been in a network closet, you wouldn't want me to be I'd screw something up, that's okay. CIOs come from a diversity of backgrounds, where they've done different things. But you need to have a general understanding of how technology works. Even if you're coming in as from a nursing background or a non-technical, you need to understand the basics of technology, the terminology, the nomenclature, the tools, the software, all of those types of things.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 32:52

So, there's that basic table stake's part, then we really go to the other part of it, which is most important, which is that strategic mindset, and the ability to really be a change advocate, and an influencer. Early in my career, I was a project manager. And as a project manager, you learn very quickly, you don't have people reporting to you, you have to lead through influence. And I often tell the story I was at a concert a couple of years ago, and traffic was stuck. And so, me and my friend waited in a car for an hour to try to get traffic out of this lot that we were in, and people kept pulling in in front of us. And we were never going to get out. And we were tired and wanting to go home and all those types of things. So, I'm like, I'm going to check this out. I'm a problem solver. Get out of the car, start looking people are all going to the left when they should be going to the right. And literally there was an exit 20 feet to the right that they could have been using. But everyone was queuing up to the left. So, there's some cars in the way. So, I start directing traffic. And you know, I'm there in the concert goer apparel, and someone says to me, do you work here? Well, of course, I don't work here. Like, you know, I'm trying to solve a problem. And we solve that problem we pull out and you know, everyone's happy because the traffic jam has dissipated for all of us going right.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 34:16

But that's really what the role of the CIO is. It's to figure things out. And to be that influencer, who can stand in a meeting with the CFO, the COO, the CEO and say, let's think about this. And let's remember that technology is there. I often tell my team, we solve a lot of problems from people, process, and technology perspective. And technology is usually the smallest piece of it. It's really when you start to dig in, it's really people in process many times that we need to focus on. So those are organizational change management opportunities that we need to really be able to, to own and dive into, even though we're by title alone, you know, the technology person. So, lots there, but that's kind of my thoughts about the key characteristics.

Lisa Nichols 34:16

I love it. Do you have traffic controller on your LinkedIn profile? I don't know, I didn't see that.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 34:53

No, I figure was only one. So, I'm not adding it quite yet. I have to do it twice, then I'll be able to put it on.

Lisa Nichols 35:00

And it's a great metaphor. It really is, Jeanne, for exactly what you just described in the CIO, the CDI, oh, the CTO is there to remove obstacles. That's what you did you were a problem solver, and remove the obstacles. So, the, the, the traffic could flow through and same thing with the organization is doing that same thing so the organization can continue to flow. I love that. Well, let's talk just a little bit. I know, I know. We don't want traffic to get worse in Nashville. But it might.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 35:59

I don't want traffic to get worse in Nashville. None of us do.

Lisa Nichols 36:02

I'm gonna get oh, with Oracle moving their headquarters there. I'm not really sure. But that's going to be great, I think for Nashville, but Nashville is booming. I mean, you guys made the move there about, I guess, almost two years ago. And we've already kind of talked about this, that it's dubbed the healthcare city. But you know, there is a there is a council I think it's called the Nashville Health Care Council. And I think you're a part of that, aren't you, Jeanne? Did you join that?

Jeanne de Vries Sands 36:33

So that is a yes and no, Lisa, to that question. So, Nashville Health Care Council has a lot of different groups, including leadership health care, I am a part of that group. There's a million different health care groups here in Nashville, including some more technology focused and some not so Summit, my company is not yet a part of Nashville Health Care Council, I think hopefully, in the near term, we will be joining. But I certainly am a part of this leadership healthcare group that is a little more of an intimate forum for discussion about key technology and key problems that have to be solved technology. And otherwise. There's a couple other groups that are super vibrant here in Nashville as well. We have our Technology Council, the National Nashville Technology Council, the NTC. And then also our HIMS chapter Health Information Management Society that has over 2000 members here in Nashville alone. So, we have a lot of really great groups of like-minded people, healthcare, technology, healthcare, and non-healthcare that are really coming together to say, how can we continue to grow our city in a meaningful way? How can we get the talent that we desperately need with our very, very low unemployment rates? And how can we continue to address the macro issues like the traffic?

Lisa Nichols 37:58

I think I read something yesterday, a stat it's less than 3% now, right? Unemployment, I wanna say.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 38:04

They say it's right around 2% in the county, we're located in. Yes, it is very low.

Lisa Nichols 38:09

Very low. Well, here's my point in bringing all of that up. I mean, truly it has been an intentional effort by Nashville to build this ecosystem. It's not just the healthcare organizations, cause you've got Vanderbilt Hospital there, you've got, you've got these amazing healthcare organizations, but it's building the whole ecosystem, right? Jeanne? And it's dubbed the healthcare city, but it's not by chance. I mean, it truly has been very intentional. And I just, I love that. Yeah, so let's see, I want to talk about for a few minutes. I want to talk about this because this is really important, I think. And and it's not just females, men as well, but Jeanne, you wear a lot of hats. You wear a lot of hats. And you're, I call it, it's either a hat wearer or a plate spinner, whichever one you want. But you're spending a lot of plates too. I mean, you're the CIO, you're involved in the community. You're a wife. I think you guys have, what, 4 kids?

Jeanne de Vries Sands 39:17

Six together.

Lisa Nichols 39:18

Six together. I mean, it's a lot. So, what are some of the strategies that you personally have used to, I guess keep yourself sane? Is one thing.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 39:31

I think question for us, Lisa, that's always a challenge, because as you know, my husband and I both have very demanding careers. And we're very fortunate, you know, there's the saying, it takes a village and it absolutely does. We're very fortunate. My ex-husband is very involved very, very helpful lives right down the street from us. So, it really does take a village for us to be successful. In our day to day. I had a child who had to go home sick yesterday unexpectedly from school. He was, was able to pick her up and address that. You know, I think it's also around

creating systems to deal with things so that you don't have as much to think about and to, to address on a daily basis. And what I mean by that is we all think about, you know, some of these famous CEOs that were the same outfit every single day. I don't, I'm not quite there. But regardless, you know, we have a certain routine, and we follow the routine, whether it's the time we wake up the things we do in the morning, what happens after school ends for our kids, what we do with the work day, where I start my day, where I end my day, there's just a lot of routines and structure we've put in place, because if you don't plan, you plan to fail, right?

Jeanne de Vries Sands 40:46

So, for us, exercise is a really important element that it's so easy to let go. And I did a LinkedIn post that resonated with a lot of people last year on this, just around how much I struggle when I'm home to decide between do I spend time with my kids? Do I spend time working or do I exercise and often I wasn't making the choice, that long term is probably best for me and my company and for everyone, which is exercise. So, when I travel, it's a lot easier, because some of those distractions are gone. And it's a different environment. But I've really recognized that for myself, if I don't exercise in the morning, even if that's just a short walk, then I might not ever get that exercise in for the day. So, it's building in these approaches, so that your guaranteed success. And you know, you hear a lot of people say start small, make your bed in the morning. So then when you get into it, at the end of the day, you feel like you've done something if that's the only thing you can do, it's something.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 41:42

So again, it's starting small continuing to build, but then finding things that you can structure and then also outsourcing, whether it's my ex-husband. We recently have hired a nanny who comes and helps us drive around the kids at night so that they can do their activities. It is very difficult to balance at all for any of us. And if I make it look easy, it's only because I have the support system. And it's only because I'm used to it at this point, because it's not easy for any parent, one child, six kids' job full time, part time, you know, at the house. It's hard for everyone.

Lisa Nichols 42:22

Right. I could not agree with you more. But what I heard you say is that there are systems there's non negotiables, there's discipline. There's discipline of how to lead and live, right? Jeanne? I mean, just that discipline and the consistency of doing the exercise, you're taking care of yourself, you're hopefully then showing up for your kids showing up for your business as your best self, right? And if we lose our health, and we've lost, we've lost, everything, right? Well, I know. And I didn't ask you this, but how was Tulsa, you and Eduard just went there.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 43:03

It was great. We love we love Tulsa we have been fans of The Gathering Place since I lived in Oklahoma City. And it is amazing to see. I don't know if it's a revival, but just the reinvigoration of what I think was a little bit of a sleepy town through the incentives that they did for people moving there over COVID. But also, just all the tech companies coming in and being located there. So, it's just really neat to watch is kind of at the bird's eye level it all happening there. But Tulsa is amazing. I'm constantly amazed by Oklahoma's investment in outdoor space, whether it's gathering place, whether it's just parks, walking trails. I could not believe the people I saw outside being physically active, which I think that communing with nature is so important and re-energizing for all of us.

Lisa Nichols 43:57

For our mental health. I mean, for myself, just taking a walk in the park gives me a completely different perspective. There is a author Mark Batterson. And he always says change a place change plus change of pace equals change of perspective. And I think so true. So true, right? Well, our mutual friend, Dan Roberts and Denise Roberts, who is now our CCXO, I know that you guys had dinner and Dan said you guys really had a lovely time. But you know, is there anything? Let me ask you this question, then we're gonna talk about something extra. Is there anything on your bucket list, Jeanne that you want to accomplish this year? Is there anything on your bucket list?

Jeanne de Vries Sands 44:46

Professionally or personally, Lisa?

Lisa Nichols 44:48

It doesn't matter. It just for fun.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 44:50

Okay. Now I think we always have a huge bucket list. So, I've been I tell people I'm on day probably 465 of my Duolingo journey, and I've been with my husband being Dutch. I've been trying to learn Dutch. And so, I think one of the things I'm really excited about is we're taking the whole family to the Netherlands this summer for a couple of

weeks. And I'll be really trying to practice my Dutch and really trying to embrace that culture, knowing that it ties so much to, to who my husband is and my stepchildren.

Lisa Nichols 45:25

I love that. I love it. See, I knew there would be something there that you're that you're doing, because you're just that type of person. Well, let me ask you. So, this is called something extra, Jeanne, what do you believe is the something extra that every leader needs?

Jeanne de Vries Sands 45:41

I think for me, Lisa, it's all about passion. And you know, I'm a very passionate person. And sometimes I have to tell people, I'm not yelling at you. I'm just really excited. Because I'm passionate about everything. I'm passionate about a certain Pico de Gallo, I'm passionate about projects we're doing. I'm passionate about a certain exercise routine. I like to do Les Mills, Body pump. I'm passionate about so many things, because they're important to me. And that's one of the things that I think people need to really help folks understand who they are. And I think the choices that we make with our very limited time and our very limited attention, show who we are. So, I really want to double down and be passionate about many of them.

Lisa Nichols 46:27

Oh, that's beautiful. I love that. Well, I have noticed that about you. You're just so passionate and so positive. And I think that's probably one of the one of the many reasons I love being around you, Jeanne. So hey, thank you so much. This has been so much fun. Thank you for being on the show today.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 46:43

I had such a good time. Thank you so much.

Lisa Nichols 46:47

I know that it's going to help our listeners. So, thanks so much.

Jeanne de Vries Sands 46:50

Thanks, Lisa.

Announcer 46:51

Thank you for listening to today's show. Something Extra with Lisa Nichols as the Technology Partners Production Copyright Technology Partners Inc. 2019. For show notes or to reach Lisa, visit tpi.co/podcast. Don't forget to leave a review on Apple Podcasts, Google Play or wherever you listen.

*Please note, the preceding transcription has been automatically generated and should be used for informational purposes only.