



EP293_Kristin Bonham

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.

I'm delighted to have Kristin Bonham on the show today. Kristin is the Regional Vice President of North America at dsm-firmenich. Well, Kristin, welcome to the show, my friend. I'm so delighted to have you on today. Thank you so much for making this work.

Kristin Bonham 01:53

I'm so excited. Lisa, I've been looking forward to this for several weeks now. So, so glad to connect.

Lisa Nichols 01:59

Well, we're gonna have fun. And I just know that your wisdom, your leadership journey, Kristin, is really going to help our listeners. So, I always like to start by kind of going back and telling our listeners, how do I meet these people? You know, they want to know, how do you find people to have on your show, right? And I was thinking about it. And you and I met for the first time I believe, when I was in the Monsanto Supplier Diversity Program.

Kristin Bonham 02:23

Correct.

Lisa Nichols 02:24

Isn't that when we met and you were one of the speakers and you and I just kind of instantaneously connected and I'm grateful that we've remained friends.

Kristin Bonham 02:33

I am too. I do remember that. And it was just such a, I think we had such an immediate connection, you know, on how we looked at leadership and how we looked at some things in our community and growing in our faith. And so, I've always, I've always appreciated that relationship for sure.

Lisa Nichols 02:49

Yes, I have too. So, we've got a lot to talk about today. You've had an incredible leadership journey. But before we dig into that, I would really like for you to take me way back. Take me back to your childhood. Tell me how you grew up. Where did you grow up? Did you have siblings? I'd love to hear all about that.

Kristin Bonham 03:08

Awesome. Well, I grew up in, usually if you if you're from Michigan, or you've been there, you have to use your hand to describe which is a little bit hard on a podcast, but I grew up in the mitten I grew up in the thumb of Michigan. And, you know, one of the things that I, I'm so proud of and it's carried me throughout my career is I was born and raised on a farm and I have such a love for agriculture, and not just agriculture, but the people of agriculture. And so, I grew up

on a small dairy farm at the time. You know, we would always joke with my dad, we didn't he didn't get modern technologies until we all left for school. And then he had more, a bigger barn and different things to do that with but you know, I'm really proud. I actually just came back from there last weekend and our family farm is still alive. And well, my brothers on the farm. My parents are, you know, in their mid-70s, and they're still very involved. My dad was just planting corn. My mom runs the books. And so, you know, for me that was that beginning that I had. I had a brother. I have a sister also, she's a very successful attorney. She lives in actually in London with her family. And so, I grew up in agriculture involved in organizations and I ended up going to Michigan State and majoring in ag business ag journalism, and that's really the field of agriculture. I've stayed in my entire life.

Lisa Nichols 04:41

I love that. Well, I was going to ask you what inspired you because I didn't know that you went to Michigan State but I want to go back. Kristin, did you have chores on the farm? I'm sure you did.

Kristin Bonham 04:52

I did. You know I, I did. I and I'm an early riser ever since that, Lisa so, you know, you're kind of here. Like, well, I got it, you know, early enough to go milk the cows that was me early enough to milk the cows, you know, and that that was really just, just part of what we did. We were raised in a way. And I think my mom and dad, I saw my mom, my mom was a school teacher as well at the time, but she was always, you know, very active doing those things I saw my dad farming, even today with technology is super hard work. And so, that's how we help the family. You know, we milked the cows. You know, there's a lot of new technologies to help control weeds, but at the time, we would go out in the summer and, you know, if we, if we behaved and worked well till about 2pm, my mom would take us to the neighbor's swimming. And so, I've, I've always had just this, this hard, you know, this, this work ethic that was so foundational for me, because I see so many people in agriculture, doing that, and it you know, that's what we did at the time. You know, we went to, we went to we went to work.

Lisa Nichols 06:01

You learned the value of hard work, Kristin, you also learned that it took a team, everybody doing their part, right? I have to ask I'm gonna ask you another quick question. So, you I know that you grew up in the thumb. But was it a small town? Was it a big town? Tell me a little bit about the town? And I'll tell you why I'm asking you that question.

Kristin Bonham 06:20

Super, super small town. In fact, every everyone was celebrating just last week, and they got the first Taco Bell. And I think we had, you know, McDonald's, maybe 15 years ago. So, very, very much a farming community. It actually Sebewaing, Michigan, where I grew up is the home of the Michigan Sugar Festival. So, sugar beets, and some of those specialty crops are big, but you know, absolutely. My, my high school class was 68 students. And that was probably a bigger class at the time. So, in, in grade school, you know, it was in the 20. So, for sure, small town.

Lisa Nichols 06:56

And the reason I'm asking you that, Kristin, I cannot even tell you and Jenny needs to make a notation of this so we can go back. And really, look, I can't tell you how many leaders I have had on our very successful leaders that came from small towns, many of them came from farms, Todd Finders, I don't know if you know that name, he's been a serial CIO came from a small farming town in Iowa. I mean, it's really remarkable. I'd love to do a whole study on that. Because I think, number one, what I observed because my town was about 30,000 when I was growing up, but I could not get away with anything. Because my mom knew everyone.

Kristin Bonham 07:39

That was the case it especially my mom was a teacher at the school. So, that was definitely the case for sure. For each of the students. But, you know, I think you're so right, you know, right from a standpoint of just it was it was that sense of community, you know, and looking out for one another and I started an organization it was, you know, future, future farmers or FFA and 4-H and doing those local projects together and volunteering it was, it was just part of what you do, and you did as a as a child to get that experience. And, you know, I really look at that service mentality is something I've always, you know, really tried to carry on with carry with me, and then my husband and I tried to instill that in our kids for sure.

Lisa Nichols 08:22

We'll do a deeper dive on it. If I ever go back to get my PhD. You know, it could be my, my body of work that I contribute, but I know and this is how you and I met at a school you took the territory sales rep at Monsanto. Kristin, and you spent 25, I counted up, you spent 25 years at Monsanto, you know, and you had about eight different roles while you're there. On average, she was in each role for about three years. I mean, you had, you know, some really incredible career ascension, you know, some great success at Monsanto. But tell me about this, you know, because

you probably didn't even really know at the time, or maybe you did, especially if you were doing 4-H and maybe taking some leadership roles in some of these other organizations, but how did your early years at Monsanto, really shape your leadership style? And then I would love to know what your leader what, you know, what's your leadership style today? And in your journey, have you seen your leadership style evolve? So, how did those early days shape you?

Kristin Bonham 09:32

And it was really interesting, Lisa, because if I even look back at, you know, my degree in, you know, ag journalism and ag communication, I didn't always know that I wanted to do that. I knew, I wanted to be involved in agriculture, because that's really what I knew. But it wasn't till I got to college, and we always talk about, you know, mentors and advisors in my college advisor. To this day, Dr. Heinze, and I still call him for big decisions. And what he did for me now was just he helped me see something in myself that I did not see. And I think in particular, as, as women, and as you look at different roles, you see this all the time, if there's a new job description, and there's 10 things on the job description, you know, as women, we tend to look through that description and say, there's, there's three of them, I could absolutely rock but there's a couple and then I'm sure I couldn't do that. And we, we have to stop doing that to ourselves, right? But he, he really instilled in me from a very young age of helping the site see possibilities. And when I, I met, I got my first job with Monsanto, I was actually in the Michigan State dairy club, and I was selling cheese as part of a one fundraiser. And I met somebody that worked for the company, and he said, you know, what are you doing for an internship, and it was two internships, and then I went to work for them. And I, I knew that for me, you know, I did the journalism route, maybe because it was easier than hardcore math skills. And I felt like my, you know, I had a really good ability to connect with people. And so, I just started out in my career looking at, you know, what are the things that I'm really good at? Because I think so many times we just look at, where, where are my gaps, and, yes, I'm not as good as on an Excel spreadsheet or whatever that did, versus I really tried to figure out what was I good at. And then very early on, I had the opportunity because we really launched a new technology that was unheard of, for customers, I got to learn from so many awesome people that had been in the business for years more than me. So, when you're new to a job, whether it's your first job, or the job that I just, you have a good six months to just be a sponge and learn all the information. And so, I've always taken that into the each of the roles that I've done of who is the network that you surround yourself with, is a huge part of how I've learned different businesses, and then how I've tried to operate as a leader. You know, if you move into a role, and you try to be one of the business I worked in with cotton, I knew some of the people that worked for me, had more experience growing cotton, knowing cotton, all those different types of things. But I figured out how to work through them, in order to help be successful. And I've always been, you know, I've always approached every role that I've done of how can I be a service? How can I be a service to the people that work for me? How can I be a service to the industry that I love? And as long as you keep that through going through your mind and the tough times, you know, you'll get by and do the right thing. So, you know, just a little bit of how I look at those different things.

Lisa Nichols 13:14

So, you're a servant leader. The other thing I'm thinking about with you, Kristin, you were doing Strength Finders, you were leaning into Strength Finders when Strength Finders wasn't cool, you know, because you're saying what are the things I'm really good at? I think that's a great way to approach it, right? Because sometimes people are like, well, you know, where are my weaknesses, but no, look at what you're good at. And then, try to combine that and I think, I think you'll be successful.

Kristin Bonham 13:42

And maybe with that you pick on, you pick up, you know, you really anchor on a skill that you're really good at, in order to go into a new role. I can think of a couple roles in that were early in my days to say, you know, you're going to be the leader of our Customer Care Center. And there's one way that you can look at it to say, what do I know about managing a Customer Care Center, but the other side was, we need to build a team of people that know how to talk to farmers. And I can do that. Okay, so the strength that I brought into in that example was I'm going to help people learn what farming is about, you know, what is important to farmers. And then you build on those skills with the people that have you know, those other you know, assets that you don't have or experience, you know, but, but take what you're good at to build on what that looks like for you.

Lisa Nichols 14:37

Well, that's a beautiful way to look at it. And I think about Kristin. That's what a team is, right? You're good at something. I'm good at something. You know, Jenny's good at something, you know, another colleague is good at something else. And you bring all those things together, hopefully in alignment toward a common purpose and a common vision. So, I really do love that. Well, you know, you've been very successful in your career. I mean, what besides that you've already told me I think communication I was wanting to ask you, you know, what are the key things and the key traits, you think that's really helped you? And I think I've already heard, great communicator, great team builder, collaborator. I mean, are there other things? I mean, you probably very quick to learn to, and you've got

so me humility about you, Kristin, because you know, you don't come in to it as going. I've got all the answers. Are there any other traits that you can think of that we haven't mentioned that have helped you?

Kristin Bonham 15:40

You know, one of the one of my favorite books is *The Ideal Team Player*. And I have held, by Patrick Lencioni. And, and I've held on to that book for so long, because I think, you know, and that is really about, you know, humble, hungry, and people smart. And so, I think those are, you know, three really good words to say, you know, I was very fortunate to work for my first company for over 25 years. And so, it really helped me learn when I was a leader in the business and saying, hey, here's what we need from sales. Oh, Kristin was in a spot like that, like she understands that she understands some of that she understands customers. So, I think that is a piece of it. And I think the hungriness for me is, you know, wanting to do more, it's a little bit, you know, the hustle, right? The Hungry is hustle. And then the people smart piece of that Lisa is, and I think that can be some of the most rewarding work we will do is how do we identify people to be in the organization. And they can't all be like us. Diversity, and playing to people's different strengths is so, so important. And I've had so many leaders along the way helped me see examples of that. But I think as I continue to build in my skills, it's just something that is so top of mind to say, it's really a collective group effort, what are all the different skills that we can put together, because you can learn any business, but I think some of those fundamental, you know, people skills. And then I always really try to be approachable. I think that's so important as you as you grow in a leader, whether it's to customers, whether it's to people in your organization of you know, let's just have a conversation about the, you know, the, the business and you don't want to people to feel like they're on a on a hot mic. But you I've got to know deep within people in my organization, what I'm trying to do have, you know, what really matters. And I want people to feel comfortable and not just saying, oh, the business is great, and everything is going good. But hey, where do you need help? And where do you what things would be better for our customers? Because at the end of the day, that's most important. So, you know, how do I carry myself in a way that does that.

Lisa Nichols 18:13

That's so good. You don't want people to feel penalized for coming in saying or even like when, when things are not going so well, you want them to come and tell you, right? So that they can get the help that they need. And you can figure it out together. So, that's really good. That's good wisdom. Well, let me move into another topic here. I mean, you truly are known for mentoring women person. I know you're passionate about seeing women move into leadership roles. You've already talked about Dr. Heinze, which I just love. Yes, you know, it's telling me I know that he saw something in you that you didn't see in yourself. What were some of those other traits that made him such a good mentor?

Kristin Bonham 18:59

I, you know, a huge one for me when I when I think about him is just, just a just approachability, you know, he was a he was a he was a cool guy, you know, he made it feel like, not scary when you go, we're going to a college orientation. But hey, how you doing? You know, and he could just really, you know, read the room pick that up well, from a standpoint, and I think always just very visionary, very, very passionate about the work that he did very passionate about students. I think that's one of the biggest things that I see today having two children in college and one's going to be a senior next year is, you know, the faculty and staff. He was my advisor, but also a teacher. It is so clear to see whether people right off the bat believe in you and what they're doing, or they don't. And so, I think that passion, the teaching that passion to develop to say I am creating future leaders in agriculture, you know, and what I'm doing is he was the guy to do that, you know? And so that really inspired me to say, you know, what are those things that I can see in the others? Or, or help them take that the next step where I find that so rewarding? Because if I don't do it, who will? You know, who will pave the way for the next person?

Lisa Nichols 20:22

That's such a beautiful way to look at it. Well, let me ask you this, when you enter into a mentoring relationship with a mentee, what do you expect from that mentee, Kristin? Because it's a two-way street? It truly is. And I often say, to the mentee, I'm putting the onus on you to follow up with me come prepared. But what do you expect? And because there may be people out there that, you know, they're looking for a mentor/mentee relationship, and there's, there's a responsibility on both sides?

Kristin Bonham 20:41

Sure, so, you know, I think one of the things that's most important is, is being intentional. I remember early on in my career, probably when I first got to know you through Monsanto, we had formal mentoring programs, which was fantastic. I think a lot of companies at the time weren't doing those sorts of things. But, you know, I had to learn early on to show up and be intentional in the conversation. And I feel like when you're looking for mentoring, you know, it's important to say, how are you doing? How's the weather? What are you going to do this summer, but get into the meat

of it, and talk about things that will help you develop things that you're having challenges with, I think, be intentional. And then I think as a mentor, you have to lead by example. You know, I always try as much as my schedule gets busy. If I have somebody in my organization that reaches out to say, hey, I just need some advice on this, or how are you looking at this? or would this be a new opportunity, you have to make time for that. So, I think you have, in order to be a good mentor, you have to set up time for that. You know, and another one is, is just really creating that safe space for, you know, the dialogue is so important as well, to really, you know, help people know that, you know, you're not their boss, you're sometimes not the friend, you know, some of the, some of the mentoring and in coaching is, you know, this to Lisa, it's hard. It's not always just what people want to hear. But, you know, I'm, you know, I'm here to support you. And here's how I see it, or here's a different perspective. So, those are some of the things that, you know, I see. And then I always push people that mentoring to have a development plan. Don't assume that your manager, your leader, whatever situation has a plan for you. Make sure you are the keeper of that plan. Now, you know, getting check ins along the way. But I think that's hugely important is really figuring out what is that development plan and doing things like that, and you're the owner of your plan.

Lisa Nichols 23:10

That's great advice that's quotable, that's quotable right there, Kristin. That needs to go on a wall somewhere. Well, let me ask you one more question. And then we're going to take a quick break. And we got more things here that I want to talk about. But for young women that might be listening out there, Kristin, you've been very successful in your career and have ascended through roles. And now you're, you know, VP role, and we'll talk about that, but what advice would you give young women who are aspiring to that leadership role? What would you what would you say to them?

Kristin Bonham 23:48

To prioritize themselves. You know, unfortunately, Lisa, and I, you know, I was, I was so really blessed. My husband was a, was a wonderful stay at home dad, and was really allowed me to focus on my career, and we have, you know, three wonderful children that are growing up too. But still, with all that going on, it was very easy for me to make excuses of how I had to do for everyone else, versus do for myself. And, you know, I think we and I honestly a little bit has been through COVID and, you know, 20 years ago when I went out of school, you don't even hear the word you know, well-being that wasn't something you talked about at work, right? And so, I think it's, it's prioritizing myself understanding that I need to be well both, you know, mentally, physical, being kind of the right frame of mind in order to be good for my family, good for the people that I work with. So, that's a huge area which I think young people do a better job of this than I probably when I was coming out of high school, but I also think they have a lot a lot more noise, a lot more things they have to filter through. So, prioritizing self is hugely important.

Lisa Nichols 25:05

We'll dig in that to that a little bit more later on. But right now, we're going to take a quick break. And we'll be right back with Kristin Bonham on the Something Extra Podcast.

AD 25:16

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. It's time to be swift and nimble starts now. Go to technologypartners.net/solutions and see what's possible.

Lisa Nichols 25:47

Welcome back, everyone, to the Something Extra Podcast with my friend Kristin Bonham. So, Kristin, you and I just had a little sidebar conversation here. And you told me something that you have kind of advised your kids about, as they are looking at different fields. What is that advice that you had given them?

Kristin Bonham 26:05

So, Lisa what I shared with them is really I wanted them to see and, and how I tried to be in my, my career and pick different choices, but it's okay, you know, to be the diverse person in the field. Look for teams that are diverse, there's so many opportunities there. So, for me growing up, in my field, I was there were times when many, many times when I was the only woman in the in the room. And the way that I look at that I can remember a couple of situations where I didn't want to doubt myself, but like, what am I doing here, but if it is not me, paving the way for someone else, who, is who is going to be that? And I think each of my three kids, my daughter's an aerospace engineer, my son's going into human business resource management, and my daughter is going to be doing agriculture business. And so, I want them to feel super excited about that. And then really think about, what am I doing that super cool that somebody else is going to be inspired by? So, thanks for asking that.

Lisa Nichols 27:17

I love that. I love it. Well, we've already kind of talked a little bit about this, but you know, besides mentoring women, I know you're very passionate about getting women into leadership roles. But you're also known for building high performance teams. Kristin, so, what are some of the key qualities that you look for in those team members when you're building a team?

Kristin Bonham 27:38

Great question, Lisa. It seems like that, that is one of the most rewarding things I've been able to do. And one of you know, if you look at everything you do, one of my favorite moments is just seeing a team of people come together. I think at the end of the day, you know, I think a high performing team, to me, has a good amount of vulnerability, and really candid discussion, and I have been able to have the privilege to manage some really awesome teams in the past. And what was wonderful about the best teams that I can think about is they would disagree. Sometimes we would violently disagree, you know, on topics, but at the end of the day, everybody left the room, and we had dinner together and we knew it was for the common good. So, I really feel like you know, doing that and, and allowing a space where it's a learning and growth, learning and growth mindset, both from how we look at the business to how do we look at each other. You know, I love seeing teams when you know somebody is gonna go on vacation, hey, how can I help you? Absolutely, tell your team they can call me so really that, you know, building that culture not only within our leadership teams, but the other teams that we support. And I like to manage teams that people like to be around each other. You know, I think that's so important is who I show up at work for is, you know, I can leave very satisfied to have. I like the people that I work with, right? And we, we learn to get along we have fun I think having fun is so, is so underrated, you know, a lot of times with a team. Maybe, I'm the brunt of the joke, but we laugh a lot together. I think I think healthy teams laugh a lot together. And so, I just think that's really important.

Lisa Nichols 29:41

Happy teams are going to be more productive. You know, you spend, I have a friend that wrote a book called 49x and he's like, they spend 49x time more time with you 49 times more with you than they do. Do you know even at their local church on a Sunday, so it's really important. And then you know, you've got to store and steward that, right? And so, I love, I love everything that you just said here.

Kristin Bonham 30:12

I was just going to add Lisa, sorry, the you know, one thing that I was thinking about that as well, too. And, you know, I have had some really dynamic leaders on my team or in their position, you know, maybe leave the company maybe leave for a new division in a different role. And is as hard as that is at the time, I always want my team members to know that I want the best for them. And I think that's a really important when you look at that, because if I am, I'm so protective of somebody that I have on the team that I don't give them opportunities, or I tell them oh, you know, they're, you know, I can't really lose them right now. I'm really not supporting them and what they can do. So, I think that's really important as well, at the end of the day. Caring about People First is so important to establish how you're trying to run your business.

Lisa Nichols 31:07

I could not agree more, could not agree more with you, Kristin. Well, let me ask you this, because you have you've managed teams all over the globe, you've managed a hybrid workforce. Do you have any strategies for keeping a team motivated and feeling engaged? Because we're all kind of trying to figure that out? There's very few companies, I think, anymore that say, Oh, everybody has to be in the office every day of the week. Do you have any hacks for how you've managed that? And to keep people motivated, engaged and feeling like they're part of the team still, even if it's hybrid?

Kristin Bonham 31:50

For sure. So, we actually, for my work now that I've been in my role in about four years, and, you know, it's interesting, because when I, when I started this job at this new company, after 26 years, it was just at the start of COVID. And I still wonder today, like, oh, would I have done this, because I didn't meet my boss at my new company for 18 months, because of travel restrictions, and he sits in Switzerland. But we are remote, we keep most of our roles, really all of our role's hybrid, but I really think it helps us attract, you know, a talent pool. One of the things that we've really focused on as a team, and it goes to, you know, we do engagement polls, and different things like that is, people want to make sure that there are still growth and development opportunities. So, one of the things I like to do within my teams is, you know, let's not just have the leader of the group for operations present on something, if we have a talented person within our organization that can talk about something, bring them into the leadership team. So, I think when you're in a hybrid situation like we are, growth and development can get more challenging, because you're not just going down to in talking to somebody at the office and having a conversation. I think the other thing that is has really served us well is we focus quite a bit on recognition. And we could probably still do it more. But we almost do a

People's Choice Award at the end of the year. So, all, all year, I'll do town halls with our broader organization, which is about, you know, 150 people on any given day, and we have peer nominations, so, not just what does Kristin see, but what appears see? And so, we have an awesome category of all these nominations we touch on and a quarterly basis, we do end of the year recognition. And then we have a People's Choice Award winner. And I'll tell you, it's the best. It's one of the best Christmas presents, because our entire December call, we've done this now for two years in a row. It's just all about recognizing people. And so that is that is really a way it's recognition. And it's also I think one of the things we really learned from COVID is sometimes when you have a conference call check ins are so important, like hey, let's, let's just because you can't see, you know, we can see a little bit through a team screen, but I want my team to feel okay, like, hey, my son's been up sick all night, and I am it's going to be hard for me to talk about this topic today. Could we skip? You know, creating that environment that it is safe for people and really, you know, checking in on them before we're just going in right to the heart of the business.

Lisa Nichols 34:38

Diving right into the business.

Kristin Bonham 34:40

I think that's really served us well for sure.

Lisa Nichols 34:43

I love that, Kristin. I love that. Right. Just getting the human element right first before you dig into the business, right? Because that's I that's a really good advice. I love that. Well, you've already talked about it. But you did leave Monsanto/Bayer during COVID and went to DSM. Is it firm-e-nich? Is that how you pronounce it?

Kristin Bonham 35:08

Firmenich. Yes, yes. Different.

Lisa Nichols 35:09

Firmenich. Okay, headquartered in Switzerland. For our listeners that don't know what the company does tell us just a little bit about what the company does. And then I have a few other questions for you.

Kristin Bonham 35:21

Sure. So, the division that I am in charge of is the animal nutrition business. And I started very early in my career in the animal in the animal side of the business, and so about 26 years, but, you know, we provide essential vitamins, minerals, you know, you think about it like, enzymes, you know, really anything that you could dream up that, hey, as a human, I'm working on probiotics, or gut health products, animals need those too. So, we provide those essential nutrients to customers, where you buy your meat, milk, eggs, poultry, pork, chicken, and beef, too. But we do have, we also have a human side of the business. From that standpoint, we have we're very active, we have a taste, texture and health business, which is pet food is a big component of that. And we have a, Firmenich, what that, what that their business brings to us is a world-renowned leader in fragrance and beauty. So, from your highest end colognes that you would purchase to what is the scent in laundry detergent to what is the center of the flavoring, they're put in Starbucks, or some food ingredient, we're involved in that as well. And really about, you know, how do we bring progress to life, connecting everything from perfumes all the way to animal? So, it's pretty cool and exciting to learn those brands and learn the business and most of all meet the people.

Lisa Nichols 36:56

Yes, for sure. Well, I think talking about the people aren't there about 30,000 employees, globally, something like that. It's, it's a large organization.

Kristin Bonham 37:07

It's a very large organization. Yes. And so, it's been a, it's been a unique journey for our company, you know, every, I think every year since I've been at the company. You know, I think 21 days into my job, we made a huge acquisition and in our in our division, so, I think constant change, constant want to, you know, improve. But there's so many different things just like there is on the human side, there's so many new tools for farmers and agriculture. Some of those are digital, like you work out in your business. So, it's a really exciting space to be involved in. And, you know, our food supply is so important to our livelihood. And so, I really feel like that's a really important cause to be part of in my role.

Lisa Nichols 37:54

We could probably do a whole podcast on that, Chris, and just a bigger purpose, because that's one of the things I've always admired about Monsanto is I know that the big overarching purpose was to feed the world. And I'm like, how

much better can you get than that, but yours is very critical as well, because it's the supplements and the minerals and the enzymes that are being put in the food for both the animals and humans, right?

Kristin Bonham 38:22

And just like us, you know, we won't do very well without vitamins. Sometimes there's food sources, but animals, animals need them as well, too. So, it's a really rewarding because you are, it's helping feed and clothe the world.

Lisa Nichols 38:35

That's awesome. Well, I want to get a little bit more personal with you. You've got a very big job. You've already talked about you have a husband Vince, three kids, Vinnie, Maggie and Carly. And you serve in the community you serve on some boards and stuff. Kristin, I have to ask you, how do you manage it all?

Kristin Bonham 38:54

So, that's a great question. I, you know, Lisa, I, I love it. I am a busy bee. It's, it's hard for me to you know, sit down and take a break. But I always feel like, whatever I'm involved in, you know, there's some opportunity to give back and, and that's where I get my energy. I get my energy through people. You know, I grown up, you know, seeing, you know, really, if you would just start with my parents, like they were always involved. You know, and yes, I couldn't do it. And so, I have a little bit of that, you know, mentality. But I think one of the things that I really do try to do every day is, you know, keep myself focused, you know, take care of myself exercise. One of the cool things that we actually just started this year, and it's really been a great routine for me just in the morning because I'm a morning person. If you asked me to do a hard project late at night, it is not going to happen. It needs to happen in that 4:30-5:00 window. But in addition to that, my daughter had been sick. And we were trying to figure out some things. But I started the practice of I wrote her a daily inspiration or daily devotion every single day before she went to school. And today was our last day of school. So, it was the last devotion. But, you know, I just think things like that Lisa just really helped keep me centered. And I think now, especially with the focus on well-being, I'm so much more aware when I'm not, you know, when I'm not at my best, really catching myself saying, hey, maybe you need to take a walk. I know, yesterday, I went to visit, you know, one of our customers, I had so much energy from that customer visit, but I realized, boy, I went to two weeks with just being in my office, right? And so, sensing yourself being self-aware, and also, as I've grown, I'm not afraid to ask for help. And so, that's maybe something where, you know, my kids were younger, and you're balancing all these things, but I'm not afraid to ask for help. But I just, I just try to keep myself really, really centered I, you know, most of the things that we worry about. They turn out okay, or you know, it passes. Exactly, you know, trying to have that, you know, piece about yourself in what you do, you know, really helps keeping me centered.

Lisa Nichols 41:33

Well, I know we've talked about this a little bit, but I know how important your faith is to you. So, when you're writing these devotions to your daughter, I always say when I'm teaching something like that, Kristin, and I say, I'm serving up what I'm eating. So, do you kind of take what you are learning? Maybe in your quiet time? And then you more threat to her? Or how do you tactically, how do you do this? I would love to hear how you go about writing these devotions to her?

Kristin Bonham 42:01

So, that's a great one. Because, you know, I subscribe to you know, just a lot of the different things whether it's the joy, FM, you know daily podcast, or, you know, things like that come in. Sometimes for me, it's just a word. Because if you think about your day or the week, you know, this, this week is finals, right? So, it's, it's worry. So, you know, maybe that's a key word, but just really thinking and reflecting about what's important. And sometimes it's about the current circumstances. But sometimes it's where do you want people to see, and I think, you know, we're where I get the most energy is, is really thinking about what, what inspires people and never underestimate what you might be doing to inspire somewhere. So, sometimes you have to think about these devotions or reflection in a future state. So, where do we want to get to in this, you know, what is this look like, at the end of the day. So, I usually I just, I just trigger on keywords and, you know, go through some devotionals that I have, or that kind of my, my trusty ones that I have, or just, you know, there's so many tools out there to do that. But thanks for asking. It's really brought me a lot of peace of mind. And I actually have a couple of coworkers that from time to time, I'll text that to them. Hey, I just wrote this for Carly today. You might need this. So that's been fun as well.

Lisa Nichols 43:30

I love it. That's beautiful. Well, don't, don't be surprised if I rip off and duplicate that one from you.

Kristin Bonham 43:40

You can have. Yes, yes.

Lisa Nichols 43:43

Exactly. I'm going to ask you about your favorite quote, and then we'll talk about something extra. Do you have a favorite quote, Kristin?

Kristin Bonham 43:54

I do have a favorite quote, in my favorite quote is from my dad. And the quote is you can't out give the giver you know, who is our Lord and Savior, right? And so when I think about that, in the perspective of what he what he shared was, it actually goes back to my roots because if you're a farmer, you cannot plan what your year is going to look like. You truly can't. You don't know if it's going to rain, you don't know what it's going to be, drought and my dad just always had the sense of calm and like, you know we'll be provided for you know, and especially when you think about that, quote, you can't outgive the giver. I think about that from serving some serving people from serving people in my work and my church community. That is about my time. That is about my talents that is about money, that is about abilities. You know, they're all a gift from God. And it's my duty to serve, you know, to serve Him in that way. So, I just I always love that quote. And it's just been such an anchor to me and whatever I've done.

Lisa Nichols 45:18

Okay, I just had another epiphany. We'll talk about it in a sidebar conversation, but I love what you just said. And I think that there is probably something really special about farmers, because they do have to learn to trust. And there's a reliance there, out of their control.

Kristin Bonham 45:38

There is. Sometimes on a farm you would say, you know, you have 40 chances. Because every year that you would, you know, farm in that case, so it's just, you know, a very, there's a lot of trust put into that there's a lot of. You know, I remember days, we would just sit in the garage and look at the clouds and you would just you would just pray that it rains. You know, it's, it's really quite humbling when you think about agriculture and how reliant and then how committed you know, farmers are, too, you know, feeding the world. It's, it's farmers are some of my most favorite people in the world. And those people that work around it. So that's, that's where I get my inspiration.

Lisa Nichols 46:25

I agree. I agree. Well, let me ask you this. This is called something extra. Kristin, what do you believe? Is that something extra that every leader needs?

Kristin Bonham 46:34

I think every leader needs to prioritize themselves and give themselves a little grace. That's, you know, that's my advice is prioritize yourself and give yourself a little grace. It's okay.

Lisa Nichols 46:50

Love it. Kristin. Thank you so much. This has been so much fun. I've absolutely loved having you on the show today, girl. Thank you.

Kristin Bonham 46:59

I have enjoyed it so much as well, Lisa. Fantastic, fantastic. Highlight of my week.

Lisa Nichols 47:05

Hey, listeners, just a quick note to let you know that we won't be releasing an episode next week. We hope you take this time to enjoy with your family and friends as we celebrate our nation's independence. Have a fantastic holiday and we will catch you next time.

Announcer 47:19

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.

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