



## EP295\_ Chris Marshall

**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 delighted to have Chris Marshall on the show today. Chris is the founder and CEO of verified backups. Well, Chris Marshall, welcome to the Something Extra Podcast. I am so delighted that we were able to make this happen. And I have to say this was kind of a funny thing, you know, we had a little bit of technical difficulty. And you had as Jenny, you said, does this ever happen? And, and Jenny said only with technical people. Which we thought was so funny. But there was a firewall that was kind of keeping you from being able to utilize our platform, but we are making it work because that's what we do, right? Chris? We're problem solvers.

**Chris Marshall** 02:15

Absolutely.

**Lisa Nichols** 02:19

Well, I am really delighted to have you here. And you and I connected several years ago, Chris, I think it was probably to about 2015. Mike Jette, I'll never forget, Mike Jette introducing us to you, Chris. And I remember meeting you. And it's when you had Database Concepts, which you, you founded, I think 31 years ago. We'll talk a little bit about that. But I remember meeting you and thinking this has got to be the nicest guy ever. And you know what, you have proved me so right, because you are you're just a just a quality human being. And it's been fun to work with you. You know, we've provided some talent for you, the last, whatever, almost decade here.

**Chris Marshall** 03:06

That's been a great experience. You know, when you need really good people. You know where to turn. And for me, it's always been Technology Partners.

**Lisa Nichols** 03:15

Well, we so appreciate that. Well, like I said, we've got a lot to talk about cannot wait for our listeners to get to know kind of some of the things that you're doing. But before we get into that, I want to know a little bit more about who you are, Chris Marshall. So, if you could take me back to growing up. Did you grow up in St. Louis, tell me a little bit about your background growing up.

**Chris Marshall** 03:38

Thank you. So, I did grow up in St. Louis. I was actually born in New York. And it's kind of an interesting story. My parents had tried several times to have kids and there were miscarriages. And there were still births. And just, it was hard. And so, they went through the adoption process, and adopted me when I was 10 weeks old. It's been a wonderful experience. And after that, they were able to have kids sort of the old-fashioned way. So, I'm the oldest of

four. And we're all about two years from each other. But the great thing is my mom and dad always treated me like one of the gang, we were always the same. And I've always appreciated that, there was, this is like this is your brother not this is your stepbrother. This is your half-brother. And, you know, I just spent last weekend in California with my youngest brother. You know, we are close to this day.

**Lisa Nichols 04:35**

Oh, that is so beautiful. Well God bless your mom and dad, Chris. I'm so grateful for them. I'm grateful for all people that step out and adopt children. I've always just had a very special place in my heart, you know, for children that need a forever family. So, that kind of explains something to me though because I know you're good friends with my friend Marcy Bursac.

**Chris Marshall 05:00**

Right. It's amazing. And the work she does, and I think people don't understand, or there's a stigma around adopting kids out of the foster care system. But for the right adoptive family, it can be a beautiful experience.

**Lisa Nichols 05:18**

Okay, so now I get it. It's all clicking for me now. So, thank you for sharing it. So, you were the oldest of four. What did you like to do when you grew up? When you were growing up? Would you like to do?

**Chris Marshall 05:30**

I love to read. I love to just take long walks outside, we grew up in University City, here a suburb of St. Louis. And there was a park and there was a river that we could walk along and life was good. As I got older, I got into technology and computers. And we had one of the first Apple II computers. And I would sit up late at night trying to figure out code with that. And so that's kind of how things progressed.

**Lisa Nichols 06:02**

And that's good. I was going to ask you that, how did you get into it? But you know, before, before we talk about that, I, you I know you went to Wash U? And you got a degree in psychology. So, what was the precipice for psychology? Because I'm like, why did he do psych? Did he want to just study, you know, the human condition and human behavior? I mean, what, what was the precipice for that? And then yeah, I was gonna ask you about your transition then to tech.

**Chris Marshall 06:34**

So, it's really interesting. My dad encouraged me to go to Wash U, he was a professor there. And study Computer Science and Electrical Engineering double major. So, that's intense. And I did that for a short while. But I really enjoyed people, I ran the blood drive for a couple of years, I did a lot of like outward focused people-oriented things, that ended up feeling a lot more fun. And I didn't want to sit in a cubicle and program a computer by myself all day. And that's kind of where I saw things going. I enjoyed people. And so, psychology was a natural, just learning how to understand people and relate to people and all of that. It was also something I could do without extending my four years. And that was a blessing. And so, I just, you know, I did that.

**Chris Marshall 07:27**

A lot of people don't like what they're doing and don't want to switch or think they can't switch. And it was great to switch directions. So, I got out of Wash U, a long time ago, and looked around and realized that if I wanted to take psychology to the next level, that would be grad school. And I had just done college for four years. And I really didn't want to go back. So, I sort of drifted back into technology and technical settings, did consulting for a couple of big companies in St. Louis. And that's how that went. Because I had a, I got married 1990, I had a couple of kids, and it's like, they want to eat, and I can't do that as a psych major.

**Lisa Nichols 08:13**

Right. Well, I think you picked well, now I love psychology, too. And I remember because to your point, I love people. And I thought this would be really a lot of fun. And I had considered that because I had a psych professor, sometimes it's a professor too, right, Chris? that really kind of inspires you and kind of that light bulb comes on. And I loved her. And I was like, oh, I think but kind of to your point, I didn't really want to go on and get my doctorate in psychology. And so, I ended up majoring in accounting, kind of for the same reason thinking, oh, you know, we need to pay the bills. And I know I can get a job as an accountant, but I love it well, in the thing is, you know, long gone are those days, right, Chris? Where a technical person can just sit in a cubicle and not talk to people. That is not the way it is anymore, right? You are collaborating with teams. And so having that psychology background, I think, really is probably a good background for any field.

**Chris Marshall** 09:16

It is and you know, your whole life is going to be working with people in one way or another. And what can you do to enhance that and to enhance the other person's experience?

**Lisa Nichols** 09:27

For sure. Well, I know that you've done a lot in like data warehousing and that sort of thing. But like I said, 31 years ago, 1993, so Chris, you founded database concepts one year before we found a technology partners, so.

**Chris Marshall** 09:47

You're just a young company. You know, I had done consulting gigs for a couple of large companies in St. Louis. And it was always like, you know, I would go through a company, you know, a temping agency or something. And they had a six-month assignment. And you know, when this is over, we'll find you the next one. And that didn't really didn't really happen. So, through references, and some people I knew, I started doing computer work. And in the early days, it was more like, networking and installing hardware and computers. But it very quickly got to be database design and programming, which I really, really loved. And hence the name Database Concepts. And that served me very well and served my family well for a long time.

**Lisa Nichols** 10:39

Right. So, you know, and we'll talk about this, but you've been a serial entrepreneur, because you you're doing something a little different, or you've developed a product, and I want to talk about that. But what do you think, Chris, are some of the biggest lessons that you've learned along the way as an entrepreneur? Because it's not, it's not easy, it's certainly not easy.

**Chris Marshall** 11:01

There's like a certain amount of faith and trust. And, you know, this comes from, you know, our shared faith background, but, you know, when you're a W2 employee, and W2 employees are wonderful, right? But you know, your paychecks gonna come a week from Friday, and it's gonna be \$1,500, right? And so, you can just gear things around that. And, you know, when you're an entrepreneur, two things have to happen, you have to find the work, you have to do the work, it's three things. And then you have to get paid. And, you know, it's an amazing thing. You know, all my customers pay by cheque. And so, it's like, well, what's going to be in the mailbox today? It's sort of like, the magical thing to see what came in, but you start stacking up customers and assignments, and I mean, it works out we have five kids, they never missed a meal. And it's been a real blessing.

**Lisa Nichols** 11:57

I think you have to have a little bit of resilience too, don't you, Chris. Where does resilience come in? Because there are some days where you don't know what's going to be in the mailbox. I mean, in some days, you're, you may even be thinking, oh, is this really worth it? You know, someday not every day is unicorns and rainbows as an entrepreneur.

**Chris Marshall** 12:20

It's not, but I wouldn't change it. And there's a quick story. The flexibility is a beautiful thing. So, my wife was working in a medical office, and she had to be there every day. But the kids would come to me the night before and say, hey, Dad, I've got you know, Orthodontist tomorrow, can you take me at a loving, you know, kind of right in the middle of the day? And I would just say, well, let me see what the boss said. And then I turn and say, well, the boss just said, yes. So, I'll take you in the morning. But that's really cheesy. But for, you know, my youngest is 27 now, my oldest is 39. For all of those years, the boss always said yes. And that's something they remember.

**Lisa Nichols** 13:03

Oh, I could not agree more. I could not agree more. Well, you Okay, so let me ask you this. We're Technology Partners is a little bit different. I mean, we started as a solopreneur. Greg was, you know, we started because we both left corporate America. And he, he was consulting. And so, I pretty much started pro bono for, you know, for the first probably a year and a half until we had enough cash flow coming in. But I remember those early days, though, Chris, we were the shipping department, we were the accounting department. We were the delivery, we were the everything department. I mean, you've been a solo-preneur. How did you do that? Did you outsource everything that you know, and then just what you were best at do that? Or how have you managed that over the last 31 years?

**Chris Marshall** 14:04

It all really depends on the kind of work. I would guess that you and Greg wouldn't trade those early days for anything in the world. And same here, most of what I'm delivering with database concepts is software design, software, developed, installed, documentation, etc. So, there's not much of a shipping department. But what I've really found the

most beneficial was to outsource some of the really high-level projects. So, I do projects for a number of Wealth Advisors nationwide. And that's where I brought in Technology Partners talent, shameless plug for you guys. Because this guy is brilliant. He does phenomenal work. He's way smarter than me. And when he gets a project, it may be a six-month project, but by gosh, he is on budget, he is on time, and the clients love him and the clients keep calling back. So, those more complex jobs, were really rewarding to outsource.

**Lisa Nichols** 15:07

Right. Go find partners, right? With that. So, let's talk about inventing something new. Okay? You because you develop the patented technology that tests each and every database back up every single day to ensure usability and currency. The company is called Verified Backups. You started this during the pandemic, Chris.

**Chris Marshall** 15:33

A pandemic baby.

**Lisa Nichols** 15:38

The pandemic, baby. So, tell us more about that.

**Chris Marshall** 15:40

And I want to come from the angle of like the interest story, not just a product plug. But over the years, a couple of my customers had data disasters, one was a lightning strike that fried their server. It was a stock trading company. I'd written their software. And they couldn't trade any stocks because it was on a local server. Five years before that, I had set up a daily encrypted backup that brought their data to my server, they knew about it, it helped the development. I was on the beach in Florida, when they got hit, I got a phone call, I restored them to the day before, all they needed to do was get a new computer that didn't smell like smoke. Because that was non-negotiable. And then I had another company that got a virus that wiped out every file on every hard drive. And when they called me into look, I looked at their backups. And they had a payroll system for 350 people. In People's Republic of Illinois, you have to have complete payroll records. And that had not backed up in 9 months. And their IT people didn't know it, the owner of the company didn't know it. And you know, that could be disastrous. So, fortunately, they had senior managers who came in sort of after-hours to manually enter 42,000 payroll records. But you think of a little mom and pop shop, that might not be possible.

**Chris Marshall** 17:10

What I realized is, companies don't know if all of their stuff is backed up, especially their databases. So, I focus on SQL databases and my SQL, the only way to know if it's backed up, is to test it by doing a restore somewhere else. 23% of companies never do that they never test their DR plan. I know you'd like to meet all of them and do work for them. 50% of the remaining companies test once a year. And you know, we live in a world where the engine on the airplane you fly in is tested every other day. You know the brakes on your car are tested every time you turn the key on. And we have a situation where we do this once a year. So, I invented a product to do something similar to that first company, create a daily, create a daily encrypted backup, copy it to a secure location on Amazon. And then Amazon does a full restore every day. And then I do some date checking to make sure that they don't have old data. And then they get a you know, they get an email. Dear Lisa, you know we have a copy of your payroll inventory, ERP, whatever. Today is June 18 and we see data through June 17. So, I call it a verified backup. Put that together and 2020 started taking customers on and 21. And one of my advisors said you ought to see if you can get the IP for that, you know, patented. So that's another story. My brother's a lawyer. I went through somebody in his firm in New York. Phenomenal, super smart. And six months later, I had a full US patent.

**Lisa Nichols** 19:07

That is just incredible.

**Chris Marshall** 19:10

Which just means that like, apparently Microsoft didn't think of this or they would have had the patent.

**Lisa Nichols** 19:16

Yes, for sure. I'm glad that you beat them to the punch there, Chris. Yes. Well, I was going to ask you, I said no back up. Let's just back up a little bit, but no pun intended.

**Chris Marshall** 19:34

I get that all day long.

**Lisa Nichols** 19:35

I know. So, you know, I was gonna ask you what do you see as the future of protective technologies and is that Verified Backups?

**Chris Marshall** 19:48

Verified Backups is going to be a player in that because nobody I found in four years of research, does what I do. Nobody does it every day. Nobody does it on the remote copy. A lot. can happen, you know, these are computers, right? We went through a couple of computers just to get one that would work for this podcast and the great thing is nothing bad was gonna happen if we couldn't find another laptop. But if you can't find a backup, so we're just growing and adding customers and having new customer sign up with me this morning. And it's a SaaS, a SaaS product. So, everybody needs more than one backup. And not that they have to use me. But you need more than one you need. You know, you have two kidneys, you have two legs, you have two braking systems in your car, why would you have only one backup of your critical IT stuff.

**Lisa Nichols** 20:42

Absolutely, absolutely. And to your point before, it can be disastrous? It could it could shut you down. Well, Chris, we've got so much more to talk about. And I cannot wait to dig into more. But we do need to take a quick break. And we'll be right back with Chris Marshall on this Something Extra Podcast.

**AD** 21:00

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 a talented technologist 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](https://technologypartners.net/solutions) and see what's possible.

**Lisa Nichols** 21:30

Welcome back, everyone, to the Something Extra Podcast with my friend Chris Marshall. So, Chris, you know, I really want to reiterate this. So, really, you talk about, you know, a lot of companies are doing this backup, they're not doing it daily, you know, really you said what separates good from great, when it comes to backups. And you said it's testing the data, testing the data. And sometimes they'll do the backup, but they won't test the data. And I believe that that is where Verified Backups really comes in. And you're doing it daily. I see as I think about verified backups, I see is one of the biggest benefits, Chris is peace of mind.

**Chris Marshall** 22:12

Right. And, you know, it's interesting, people don't know sometimes what they don't know. So, I do two things. One is I provide backup services. And two, I get on LinkedIn. And I have a community and I talk about, like, why this is important. You know, if somebody listens to me, and they go double or triple their backup resources, and it saves them, then I've done a great service. Whether or not I'm you know, whether or not they're a customer.

**Lisa Nichols** 22:43

Absolutely. Well, I appreciate that. Well tell me this, you know, there, there is a rise of cyber-attacks. In fact, I heard a CIO one time say, it's not if you get attacked, it's when, you know,

**Chris Marshall** 23:00

Right. I heard 85% of companies have been attacked in the last year.

**Lisa Nichols** 23:07

85%.

**Chris Marshall** 23:08

And the other ones just didn't notice or didn't fess up.

**Lisa Nichols** 23:12

Wow. So, listeners, if you don't get anything else out of this podcast today, please, please, please make sure that you're backing up your critical systems, and testing them. You know, we'll put all of Chris's information in our show notes. And if he can help you, I know he would love to. So, Chris, you know, technology is moving at a rapid, rapid pace. How do you personally stay on top of everything and what is trending? What is coming? How do you stay on top of looking around the bin to see, you know, the future of technology? What do you do personally?

**Chris Marshall** 23:55

So, I do a lot of research on my own, and I do a lot of reading. And then I have a couple of really smart advisors that are in, in the field, in cybersecurity, in these areas. People you probably know, and we talk and so I, you know, appreciate when they can keep me up to date on something but then, you know, ultimately, it's my responsibility to kind of see where things are headed anyway.

**Lisa Nichols** 24:25

Well, you, you started the podcast by saying when you were a little boy, you love to read? So, it sounds like you still do. Do you have like a, do you have something that you're reading right now that would be of interest at all to our listeners.

**Chris Marshall** 24:40

So, I really resisted reading Extreme Ownership, which is written by two Navy SEALs Jocko Willink and Leif Babban. And the reason I did is like, I don't know if all the cowboy stuff would apply to me, my business the people I serve and so on. You know, I was incorrect. So, these guys are Navy SEALs deployed in Iraq, after 911. And a lot of firefighters and a lot of leadership stories and things like that. But then, so they talk about the battle stuff, which I think is cool. But then they also talk about like, okay, how does this principle affect business? How does this principle affect leadership? Lead one from yesterday, literally, I mean, so they have the book, Extreme Ownership, they have their secondary book, The Dichotomy of Leadership, that every good tendency of a leader can be overdone, and you have to find a balance. So, yesterday, they were talking about how leaders have to be humble, but not passive. And to find, to navigate that we've all seen leaders who are very stuck on themselves, and they're miserable to be around. But humility doesn't mean that you don't push back when something's going to cause a problem. And, you know, raise somebody's awareness. So, that's just, that's just one, but I'm really, I enjoyed Extreme Ownership. I'm about I do Audible. They didn't have Audible when I was six. I don't know why. But I'm just about like, 10 minutes from done with our second book, highly recommend it.

**Lisa Nichols** 26:21

I have that book. I have Extreme Ownership on my shelf. But I've not read it now. So, now you just inspired me, I'm going to read that sounds. That sounds really amazing. I just had Patrick Lencioni on the podcast, Chris. And he wrote The Ideal Team Player. He's written lots of books, but the ideal team player, and there are three things that make an ideal team player and humility is one of the three. So, being humble is so important.

**Chris Marshall** 26:56

And you can really lead people effectively even on a large scale without being a jerk.

**Lisa Nichols** 27:03

Absolutely. I cannot agree more. Well, let me ask you this, you've been at this for a long time. Now, we're I'm not telling you that you're old, Chris, because we're not old. But you've been at this for a long time. So, how do you personally stay motivated and passionate, because sometimes, when you've been at something for a long time, that passion can wane. But I don't see that with you. How do you personally stay motivated, and passionate?

**Chris Marshall** 27:33

I look at the benefits. You know, I told you the story of the kids and the orthodontist. But my wife and I talk about this all the time, you know, like the businesses I've created have really given us a knife, a nice lifestyle, with some flexibility and some freedom. And we talked about that. And that really motivates you to do it another day, because I see the good of it.

**Lisa Nichols** 27:57

Right. You, you wrote something here, and I want to talk about this for a minute, you said when a valuation of a company is being conducted, there are three things at the top of the list. And I agree with all of these, I would add one more, it's EBITDA wants to know what is your EBITDA, right? When you're valuing the company. But number one, you say it's a dedicated talented workforce with visionary leadership, intellectual property and branding, then the third one is defined processes, enterprise software, and protected data. And you said sometimes, that protected data is the thing that companies don't think about, or leaders don't think about.

**Chris Marshall** 28:44

Right. Because it in a normal day, like, if you're a CISO, the very best that can happen is that nothing happens that day.

**Lisa Nichols 28:56**

It's a good day.

**Chris Marshall 28:59**

Right. So, senior leaders can, can take that for granted not, not meaning to but well, you know, I didn't have a heart attack yesterday, and I'm feeling pretty good today. And I don't think I'm gonna have one tomorrow. So, I'm going to focus on the 400 other challenges on my plate.

**Lisa Nichols 29:16**

That's a good point. Well, let's dig into this a little bit. I'd love for you to unpack these because some time ago, you came up with three guiding principles. And when I look at these, I think they're so simple, yet they're profound. And I would love for you to unpack each of these if you can. But your first one is encouragement is the currency of greatness.

**Chris Marshall 29:42**

That could be attributed to Lisa Nichols. No, because you and these are three things that's interesting. I didn't get them from Google. Two of them you won't find on Google, now, one has showed up. But what's a simple way to remember what I need to do through my day encouragement as the currency of greatness, what I, how I interact with everybody that I run into, if I do that with encouragement, you know, that's what I believe makes great people and great leaders.

**Lisa Nichols 30:14**

That's beautiful. I could not agree more. And sometimes I always say our words matter, Chris, don't they? And so, my prayer is always let my words be words of life. And not words of death, because we the power of the tongue, it weighs three ounces, Chris. It can, it can hurt, or it can encourage, right? So, thank you for that. Number 2, discipline is the gateway to freedom.

**Chris Marshall 30:52**

And nobody likes the notion of discipline. I'm a big fan of Billy Joel. And he's just done his 100 sold out concert. And what nobody really thinks about with Billy Joel. And I first heard the "Piano Man" in 1976. I won't say how old I was then. But Billy Joel had to spend an awful lot of his early life doing scales. And he had to do an awful lot, spend an awful lot doing chords, and he had to spend an awful lot like memorizing little pieces of music, and to be able to do what he does now, but like the freedom to do everything he does, came from the discipline to do it. And that's really true for a lot of it's true for athletes. It's true for us in our lives. Like if we put the effort in today, that will give us freedom. And you know, comfort tomorrow.

**Lisa Nichols 31:49**

So, good. I love that. How about number 3, you never lose by being generous.

**Chris Marshall 31:57**

You don't. And it's so interesting, because in our world, there's like hundreds of good causes. There's hundreds of great charities. And sometimes people get overwhelmed. You know, I would say just pick one. And, you know, like, what are some things you can do to be generous, if you read a book you like, send it to a friend. Amazon makes that super easy. And if you see somebody on the side of the road, and it looks like they need help with their tire, and you can do that, like do that. If you have a resource, such as the ones I've gotten from Technology Partners, like take really good care of them and pay them above average scale and, and that like that won't ever come back on you in a bad way.

**Lisa Nichols 32:46**

I cannot agree more. And I love what you just said, because it's not just when, when people talk about generosity, Chris, it's not just money. We're not just talking money. It can be generous with your time, it can be generous with your skills, your talent, somebody asked you to meet with a friend that needs some mentoring. I mean, that's giving up your time, and maybe a little bit of wisdom, hopefully. Those are three wonderful guiding principles, you could probably write a book on those three principles, Chris.

**Chris Marshall 33:21**

it would be 18 words long, but you know.

**Lisa Nichols** 33:25

I somehow think it could be longer than that. Well, I've got to ask you this. I got to know this. I've got to know the answer to this question, Chris. Because you currently work about 18 hours a week. I want to know how you do this and still run a successful business. Clearly, you've got a lot of other priorities like family, and I know you're very charitable and working with charities. I'd love to know how you do it. How do you organize your time? Tell us the secret sauce.

**Chris Marshall** 34:00

Thank you. Well, and this isn't my programming business. So, I run both companies still. And over the years, I've built up a great clientele. And I do something that's really a niche specialty. So, I can charge more. And again, back to like the joys of being self-employed or solopreneur or whatever. I can hand pick the clients, I can hand pick the work, and I can hand pick the bill rates. And because of that, I have more time to you know, take my wife to the doctor or take the kids somewhere or go out to California to my brother's ranch and, you know, chase goats around or whatever. Sometimes that's hard if you're a full-time employee, because you don't dictate anything.

**Lisa Nichols** 34:49

Well, how do you so how do you organize your time do you like say you're working two and a half hours, you know, two and a half days a week or is it four hours every day, I mean, what? How are you doing that?

**Chris Marshall** 35:04

You know, it's interesting because it seems to mostly just work out. So, like, if I looked at my billing software, which I also wrote, for the last year, it's right at 18 hours a week. I've had a couple of like 20-to-25-hour weeks, and I've had some 10-hour weeks. But I look at the current clients, I have the current projects that are on my plate. And I schedule something with each of them every week to move things forward. And I just sort of I leave myself margins here and there.

**Lisa Nichols** 35:36

That's, that is awesome. I love that. What is that, the four, what is it the four-hour workweek, is that right?

**Chris Marshall** 35:46

Right.

**Lisa Nichols** 35:47

So, you got to get it down to four hours, Chris.

**Chris Marshall** 35:52

And that's the goal. And because Verified Backups as a SaaS product as that expands, that's going to happen.

**Lisa Nichols** 35:59

Very good. Well, tell me about this, because I know that you were that 18 hours. You also make time to run half marathons. I don't know if you've ever run a full. Have you ever run a full marathon? I think you've done like 30 over 30 of these half marathons.

**Chris Marshall** 36:17

Thank you. I'm not all in a row. So, I ran a full in '21. I ran my 39th half marathon on Saturday.

**Lisa Nichols** 36:26

39th. Oh, my word. What got you into this, Chris, what inspired you?

**Chris Marshall** 36:34

It's interesting, I signed up for something called a Tough Mudder. And it's like this, you know, did it with a bunch of friends. And it's this kind of, you know, rough and tumble mud crawl pit thing. But it was like 11 miles long. And so, I'm like, I better be able to run 11 miles. So, I went out and over a period of time, like starting at a quarter mile, one day, people think that they're gonna start and they're gonna go out and run 6 miles tomorrow. And, you know, you can hurt yourself. But I do my best thinking when I'm running, like, life seems more like the challenges in life seem more overcome able, I just made a word, when I'm running, and so, I really love that. And people tell me that they're too busy to go to the gym or go run or do whatever. And when you exercise, that's a gift to your family. Because you're going to be around some more days, and you're going to be available to them some more days.



**Lisa Nichols 37:35**

Right and sometimes do you think Chris, like when you really master a discipline in one area? That oftentimes it spills over to other areas, too?

**Chris Marshall 37:49**

Because I'm big fan of atomic habits. And he talks a lot about that. So, our most recent one was cleaning the kitchen every night. I like the kitchen clean. So, I cleaned it for 150 days in a row, and then I missed a day. So, no big deal. You start over. But that was a habit that I found serving me in other areas.

**Lisa Nichols 38:10**

That's so good. Well, tell me this, what have you learned and I could put words in your mouth. But I don't want to do that. What have you learned through running these half marathons tell me about, you know, the training and the fortitude and the resilience to keep pushing. Tell me about those things?

**Chris Marshall 38:32**

It is all of those. And the crazy thing if you want to be a runner, you have to run. So, I actually had a running coach that I hired recently, and she has me running more days a week. But that's, you know, that's a good thing. You know, people don't have to run they can do yoga, or Pilates or walk or go to the gym. But that that discipline like I'm out four days a week running. And Thursdays, I don't feel like going there's never a day that I finish that I wish I hadn't.

**Lisa Nichols 39:04**

Isn't that the truth? That is, that is the truth. And what I've talked to so many people about, it's just getting started. With anything, right? It's the hardest thing.

**Chris Marshall 39:17**

That first, you know, that first step is the hardest. So, agree with a friend that you'll meet at the gym tomorrow at six and you're you'll wake up and you'll feel tired, but you're not going to let your friend down. And so, you'll go to the gym like there's, there's ways to hack all of that. And then once you start doing it, it just feels amazing.

**Lisa Nichols 39:40**

It feels amazing. Goodness gracious. It's been several years ago now but our controller Christy McNary. And I, we would get up and do a 6 am boot camp at the why. And we did that for a couple of years. And to your point. It's like some days it's like oh, I don't really want to do it, but I didn't want her I didn't want to let her down. So, I would make myself but find a friend. When do you run? Do you run in the mornings, Chris? Is that part of your morning routine?

**Chris Marshall 40:10**

It is. So, the hotter it gets, the more I run, it had a great run this morning. And I just think you have to be smart. If it's 95, you're taking a lot bigger toll on your body, or the heat is. So, I mean, I was out this morning at 6:30 and felt amazing.

**Lisa Nichols 40:28**

Very good. Well, Chris, this is called something extra. I have to ask you, what do you believe? Is that something extra that every leader needs?

**Chris Marshall 40:37**

So, we sort of touched on it with humility, but I think every leader needs to be a follower. And there's two aspects to that. One is, are you following your leadership? But on the other side, if you have employees, and direct reports yourself, are you following them? Because a lot of them are very smart, and have great ideas. And if you come in and you know, I'm the big boss, and I'm, you know, impeccable, you're gonna miss out on the people on your team. And so, decisions have to be made and leading has to be done. But what can you do to learn from the people, if you will, that God has placed on your team? What can you do to learn from those people, and in the process, teach them more about leadership?

**Lisa Nichols 41:28**

That is amazing. I have never had anyone on the podcast, and we've done almost 300 of them, say that a leader needs to be a follower. But I there's, you could unpack that there's, there's a lot there. Because you're following not only what you're saying, as a leader, right? Are you, are you drinking your own champagne, so to speak, following your people learning from your people. And for me, it's following a higher power in my life, you know. So, that's really beautiful. Chris, thank you so much for sharing that.

**Chris Marshall** 42:10

If it's okay, this happens with our kids, too. So, my youngest is 27. My oldest is 39. So, my 31-year-old came through town last night on her way on a trip stayed with us for the night. And she was giving my wife and I like better ideas on how to meal prep and do all that stuff. And I'm like, if I sit here, like I know it all, which I don't, I'm gonna miss this blessing. And she had some great ideas sent me some links. I mean, it was a phenomenal thing. And we're going to try it. And then we're going to call her and send her some pictures of it. Because that's my way of following one of my kids and learning from that.

**Lisa Nichols** 42:48

Oh, that's just beautiful. I love it. Thank you so much. Well, Chris, this has been so much fun. I knew it would be. I told you in the beginning, I knew that we were gonna have fun. You're just an amazing human being and we are blessed truly to partner with you all these years. So, thank you, my friend for being on the show today.

**Chris Marshall** 43:08

Thank you for having me. This has been a lot of fun.

**Announcer** 43:11

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