

## Something Extra EP 114 - Elizabeth Haberberger

**Lisa Nichols:** 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 6,000 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 and 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.

I'm excited to have Elizabeth Haberberger on the show today. Elizabeth is the president of Dale Carnegie St. Louis. Well, Elizabeth, oh my goodness. I am so excited for this interview because you and I, we have got so many similarities and so much to talk about, and you are just such a delight. I'm so glad that we were able to meet. I guess several people that we both know said, "Hey, you two need to know one another." I still remember the first time you came into my office, and we just had an awesome chat. I'm so excited for our listeners to get to know you today and understand a little bit about what you're doing.

**Elizabeth Haberberger:** Thank you. I'm happy to be here.

**Lisa:** Well, let's get started. I know that you are one of seven kids. Aren't you the oldest?

**Elizabeth:** Yes, all girls too.

**Lisa:** Wow, your dad gets a double gold star.

**Elizabeth:** Yes, he does.

**Lisa:** I want you to tell our listeners a little bit about what that was like growing up. I have said your mom and dad need to be in the hall of fame or something because I know that they were huge influences on you. Tell our listeners a little bit about growing up.

**Elizabeth:** It was busy, to say the least. There was never a day where you could just sit and say, "I'm bored. There's nothing to do or no one to play with." My mom was a stay-at-home mom, my whole life, so we were very lucky. She was there to pick us up, take us to school, get us to practices. She would put dinner on the table every night. We would eat as a family. It didn't matter if we had practices, games, whatever. She would make dinner. We'd sit down and eat. My dad was always in sales, but he always made a point. He would be at every game, every speech debate, every class field trip. They were both extremely involved.

They taught all of us from a very early age, one, the importance of family and surrounding yourself with people who love you and who give you positivity and support you. Two, we've learned independence. Very quickly if you wanted to do something, okay, you want a peanut butter and jelly? Well, go make it. You want to figure this out? Well, go outside and start practicing. From a very early age, they supported us a hundred percent in whatever we wanted to do, but then they also-- they didn't do it for us. They made us go out and figure it out and fail and learn from it and try again and not quit and continue to try.

**Lisa:** I have said to you, those are good parents. Sometimes it's easier to do things yourself, but you're really not helping your children when you don't let them fail, when you don't let them do things on their own and figure it out. I really seriously think that they were putting leadership qualities in you when you didn't even really know that they were.

My mom, she made sure I did not have a second of free time. I, like you, I did gymnastics, I did dance, I did piano, I did voice lessons, flute lessons, guitar lessons, you name it. You tell a funny story where one time, your mom from gymnastics forgot to even pick you up.

**Elizabeth:** We got to pick. We couldn't do everything we wanted to do because then she would literally have been a taxi driver. You could do one thing all year. I always did dance or gymnastics, and then you could pick one other thing. After dance, your job would be to go out on the stairs, and you would just wait until you see the big blue van and then you go get the van.

Well, we knew that some nights you might go out there and some nights, maybe have to like two or three times, but you'd go out there and you'd be waiting for 5 minutes, 10 minutes, and then you'd say, she forgot. You'd go in, you'd ask to use the phone, you'd call, and she'd answer "Partial residence." You'd say, "Mom," and then you hear, "Oh no." She'd like slam the phone down, and she knew right away. "Oh, I miss you." She missed to take us up.

**Lisa:** Talking about teaching you critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills, I just laugh because I know there was a story in college where you were going into your apartment, and there was a big spider on the front door. You call your mom and go, "Mom, there's a spider." Your mom said, "Figure it out. I'm 300 miles away."

**Elizabeth:** Yes, they were always there for us. I knew immediately I could call her, but they also weren't going to solve my problems. They would be there to support and listen, but then at the end of the day, you have to do something about it, Elizabeth. What are you going to do? If we weren't willing to do it, they weren't going to do it for us. Either we did it, or it didn't get done.

**Lisa:** Right. Those are such great lessons for parents that are listening. Let's go in and start talking about your career. I know you went into college thinking you were going to do something in marketing, but then you ended up pivoting. Tell us about that journey, and then I really want to get into what you're doing today.

**Elizabeth:** I didn't really know what I wanted to do. My dad was always in sales. My mom, before she had me, was a teacher. Coming straight out of high school, I started selling Cutco knives. I loved it. I thought it was the coolest summer job. It was challenging. I got to make some money, and people had always told me, you are just like your dad. I just thought, well, I don't know. I guess I'll go into marketing, do sales, marketing.

It was about three years into college. I was about a year away from graduating. I vividly remember sitting in this class. It was Marketing 350. I was down at Missouri State. I was sitting in the back row, and we had a guest speaker come in. I don't exactly remember what he did, but he started asking people in the room questions. What do you want to do when you graduate? He calls on somebody, and they had an answer immediately, "I want to work at a design firm doing marketing for them." He calls on the next person, and they know exactly what kind of marketing they want to do.

I remember sitting in the back of the room thinking, please, God don't call on me, because I have no idea. I don't know what I want to say. I thought, well, maybe I'm in the wrong place. I started to decide, what do I want to do? If I don't want to do marketing, what do I want to do? I was coaching competitive gymnastics. I coached for about a decade. I loved it. I said I love getting to work with these kids, be with some developing skills. You can't be a gymnastics coach. That's not a degree, but teaching is. I shifted to elementary education, graduated with a degree there, and I went on to teach fourth grade for the next four years.

I had always thought there were two things nobody really taught anyone, kids or adults. I was very lucky to have my parents who taught me these things. One was anything about money. How do you buy a car? Should I just get 10 credit card? Nobody teaches you that. The second is anything about people. How do you just show up and talk to somebody? How do you get them to like you? How do you effectively communicate with people?

I got into teaching thinking that's what I wanted to. You get to do a little bit of that, but there's a lot of other stuff that goes into being an educator.

It was not what I was supposed to do. There are lots of incredible teachers out there, so hats off to you because I understand how hard it is. I only did it for four years. I knew I wanted to do something else. When you go into teaching, your job is teacher.

**Lisa:** Right, but you know what, everything we do is a preparation, either to be excellent at that or for our next assignment. I look at that, and I think, wow, what a great start for what you're doing today. Let's move into that. You did a full circle. You think you were going into business, then you were a teacher, and then you circled back, and then you ended up at Dale Carnegie.

**Elizabeth:** I did. I didn't have any idea what Dale Carnegie business was. I had heard of the book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. My grandpa and my grandma, they actually took Dale Carnegie when they were young. My grandma and grandpa were always big with them, but I didn't really know what the business was. I just knew that it was like teaching but it was more for adults, soft skills, and they had a part-time opening, and that's what I really wanted. We've got two kids now, we had one at the time, and I thought, "Well, I guess this will be a good place for me to start and figure out what I want to do."

I started working part-time the very first night of my Dale Carnegie course that I took. Within five minutes, I just remember looking up at my instructor and thinking, "Oh my God." It was incredible, just the passion and the energy and then you start watching all of these other people that are going through this experience and they're changing and they're growing and you're changing and you're growing, and it's like, how do you not want to be a part of that? How do you not want to give that to other people? So I did. I went from part-time to full-time. I moved from an operations role, I got certified as a trainer, got into the sales side of the business, and then two and a half years after I started, I took over the office.

**Lisa:** Yes, they asked you, "Can you run the office?" I think you talked to Andrew, your husband, about it, and he's like, "I don't think that's a silly idea at all, I think you can do it."

**Elizabeth:** Yes, because I said no at first. I said, "No, I cannot do that," and then I did.

**Lisa:** Right, I just love it. I want to back up for a minute because I want to talk about Dale Carnegie. I've not gone through any of the formal training, but I remember as a young business professional reading *How to Win Friends and Influence People* a long time ago, and when people come into our organization now, that is one of the books I always say, "Go get that book." Elizabeth and I would both recommend. If you have not read that book, get that book. I just promise you, you're going to learn a lot.

This book, and Elizabeth and I have talked about this, it really does not mean that you have to start at the very beginning because the book is really a book of principles, so, you can start right in the middle. You told me I could tell every principle [chuckles] in order, but can you pick just a few of them off the top of your head that are your favorites?

**Elizabeth:** Yes, the whole book is divided into three sections. There's 30 principles that he wrote. First section is all about becoming a friendlier person, getting people to like you. Second section is all about willing cooperation, how do you win people to your way of thinking? The third set is all about inspiring action. How do you get people thinking or doing things differently?

In those 30 principles, if I had to pick two that would be my favorite, the first one is principle number nine, make the other person feel important and do it sincerely. In order to do that, you've got to know who somebody is. That's really one of his principles that if you can make someone feel important in a very sincere way, they're going to be there for you when you need it. That would be one of my favorites.

The other one that I love is principal number 17, try honestly to see things from the other person's point of view. Not always easy to do, but when we truly can put ourselves in someone else's shoes, it allows us to better empathize with them, better connect with them, and better help them get whatever they want, whatever they're trying to do.

**Lisa:** I say try to be more interested than interesting.

**Elizabeth:** Yes.

**Lisa:** A lot of people are singing, "Oh, I want to tell all about me." The other thing I was thinking about 17, it's the whole Maya Angelou quote, "People will not necessarily remember what you say but they'll remember how you made them feel," so important. Thank you for sharing those. Elizabeth and I both love the book. Go get the book. We've got so much more to talk about, but we need to take a quick break and then we'll be right back with Elizabeth.

**Voice-over:** We at Technology Partners understand the difficulty to find work that is engaging, yields high pay, and facilitates a work-life balance. Over the past 25 years, we've enhanced the IT teams of over 244 client companies and placed more than 3000 IT professionals with them on short-term or permanent basis. Our staff includes over 300 experienced IT professionals. If you're looking to take the next step in your career, visit [jobs.technologypartners.net](http://jobs.technologypartners.net), apply for a job. One of our expert recruiters will be happy to connect with you.

**Lisa:** Elizabeth, you decided to jump on to the entrepreneur wagon.

**Elizabeth:** I did.

**Lisa:** You aren't just running the Dale Carnegie, you actually bought the business. What was that journey like?

**Elizabeth:** I bought the business in January of this year. Talk about timing, I just said, "If I can get through this, I'm going to be able to get through anything." John Sedgwick is one of my big mentors and he had talked to me about buying the business and again I said no. I said, "I'm not ready. I don't think I want to." I really just sat back and thought about the fact that what we do you has such an impact on people's lives, and I want to be a part of that.

I want to have a career that I love, and there are so many people who don't. They don't get that chance. Maybe it's because they don't go out and try to find it, but they don't have a job that they love. I know that corny saying, "If you love what you do, you never work a day in your life," and I believe it. I wanted to do something that I was passionate about and that I loved, and so I said, "I'm all in."

**Lisa:** I know that probably in our listening audience, there are people out there that are going, "I wish I love my job but I feel stuck." I know for you, you talk about there's a couple of times in your life where you felt stuck. Do you have any advice for people if they're sitting there going, "I'm just not passionate about what I'm doing," what would you say to them?

**Elizabeth:** If you're feeling stuck, like, you don't know where you're going, the first thing we've got to figure out is where do you want to go? If you don't know where you're going, you could either end up going in the wrong direction, or worst of all, you end up going nowhere at all, and then five years from now, you look back and say, "I wish I would have."

The first way to get yourself unstuck, and we get to do this with people all the time as you have to have a written-out vision. What do you want from your life? What are the things that you want to be doing? Lookout 18 months from now, where do you want to be? What kind of job do you want to have? What kind of lifestyle do you want to have? What do you want your family to be like? How do you want to feel about work? How do you want to feel physically, mentally? Write it down. Writing it down is step one.

Step 1.2 is, you have to tell yourself your vision. You have to actually know it. Dale Carnegie says our thoughts make us who we are. Instead of spending the time thinking about, "Oh, this is really hard right now. I'm feeling stuck. I don't like this," well, that's all our brain starts thinking and then that's what happens. We stay stuck, we don't like this. If we start getting out of that pattern, and we've got this vision for who we want to be and what we want to do, that's step one to get there.



**Lisa:** I agree, it's so important. Know where you are, know where you want to go, and then let's work on that gap.

**Elizabeth:** Yes, we say all the time, we've got something we call the cycle of performance improvement. Figure out your vision, where you want to go, then you've got to have the right attitude to get there. You can't just say, "It would be nice if I had a job I liked," or, "It would be nice if I got that." You have to say, "I'm going to. I'm going to make this happen." Then comes knowledge, you might have to learn something new. Maybe you don't have the skills right now. You've got to get the knowledge but knowledge isn't power until it's applied. Then you have to practice, and so often, people try to practice on their own. Practice with a coach, get a peer. We've got to find people who can help us to practice so that we're practicing in the right way.

One of my favorite quotes, "People say practice makes perfect," they are liars, it doesn't. Practice makes permanent. What are the things that you're practicing? If we're practicing the wrong things, it's going to be so much harder to get to that vision, so we've got to make sure we're practicing the right things, and oftentimes, you have a coach or someone there helping you do that.

**Lisa:** Great advice. You talk a lot about growth and getting out of your comfort zone. I got something else I want to talk to you about the comfort zone thing. Something you're doing and I just think it's so cool. You've got an analogy that you use with a lobster. Can you tell our audience that analogy?

**Elizabeth:** Yes. Lobsters have really hard shells. Big lobsters have big shells, little lobsters have little shells, but a lobster shell can't grow, the shell can't get bigger. What happens is that a little lobster starts to grow and all of a sudden it's like, "This thing is getting a little tight, it's uncomfortable," but it keeps going. Then a little bit later it's like, "This is getting really uncomfortable, very tight," until the lobster finally gets to the point where it says, "I cannot take this anymore. It's so uncomfortable, it's so tight," and the lobster will shed its shell.







**Elizabeth:** Dale Carnegie has lots of different programs on leadership, management, sales, communication. Looking at 2020, we know people are starting to determine what are our goals, what are the things that we're going to focus on. If you're looking for some development in any of those soft skill areas for you, for a team, for your organization, reach out to us. We get to work with tons of businesses here in St. Louis across the country and across the whole world, and so we'd love to see what we could do to help you reach your goals.

**Lisa:** Very good. How would they contact you? Just Dale Carnegie St. Louis? What's the URL?

**Elizabeth:** You go to [stlouis.dalecarnegie.com](http://stlouis.dalecarnegie.com). You can also find me on LinkedIn. I'm pretty active there, so you could see a bunch of stuff for me there too.

**Lisa:** Very good. I hope we have a lot of our listeners that will join you in some of those classes. Elizabeth, this has just been so much fun. Thank you so much for making the time. I just think I could spend hours and hours and hours with you, so thanks so much for being here today.

**Elizabeth:** You're welcome. Thanks, Lisa.

**Voice-over:** Thank you for listening to today's show. *Something Extra* with Lisa Nichols is a Technology Partners production. Copyright, Technology Partners, Inc. 2019. For show notes or to reach Lisa, visit [tpi.co/podcast](http://tpi.co/podcast). Don't forget to leave a review on Apple Podcasts, Google Play, or wherever you listen.

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