

Something Extra EP 071 – Jeff Koziatek

[00:00:03] **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 were 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.

[00:00:25] **Nichols:** 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 in is 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.

[00:01:04] **Nichols:** 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.

[00:01:29] **Nichols:** I am excited to have Jeff Koziatek on the show today. Jeff runs Core Authenticity, a human development company committed to creating a world where people live bold, authentic lives, generously serving each other. Jeff, I am so excited that this worked out. Thank you so much for making the time to be on the show today.

[00:01:49] **Jeff Koziatek:** I'm excited to be on your broadcast. This is amazing. I've been listening to a lot of the episodes and it's my turn. And I'm so excited.

[00:01:55] **Nichols:** And it's gonna be amazing. So, I heard Jeff, we both spoke at the Chesterfield Leadership Conference. Jeff went before me and I was like, oh, darn. I have to follow Jeff. But no, seriously, I said in the audience and I was captivated. I was captivated by your story. I was captivated by everything that you were talking about. And I wrote down get Jeff on the podcast, So, I'm so glad that it worked out. And I can't wait for our listeners to understand

your story. And just I think you're going to give us a little mini coaching session here today is when you think that you're going to do. So, growing up, what was growing up like for you?

[00:02:38] **Koziatek:** I grew up in Ballwin, here in St. Louis. I have a younger brother and I picked up two messages early on as a kid. Message number one was find something you love to do and make that your job. So, my parents were totally supportive of whatever I wanted to do. I found out about six years ago one of my friend's parents asked my mom when they were going to stop supporting my theater passion and my mom said, we're going to support it as long as Jeff wants to do that. I was like, Mom, you could have told me that 40 years ago. That would have been great. But the fact that I had really supportive parents like that allowed me to step out and follow my heart. The other message that I picked up was unintentional and that was your worth is in what you do. So, if I wasn't performing well in school or in sports, creating art or on stage and I felt like I saw a lot a lot of the backs of people's heads. And so, I learned if I perform, then people paid attention. And so, I kind of really distorted that message. And that drove me to do as much as I possibly could to get you to pay attention to me, which is not a healthy way of life.

[00:03:47] **Nichols:** No, it's not. And that's probably, being vulnerable here, that's probably a lot of the reason that I resonated with you because I kind of grew up that way, too. I was in music and I became accustomed to performing and to the applause and to the attention. When you talk a lot about the personal worth account. And we you are relying on that to make those deposits into that account, it's not healthy. So, before we really dive into that, I know that you were an entertainer. And so how in the world did you get into that? I mean, what was it that inspired you?

[00:04:30] **Koziatek:** I started acting when I was four at my church. I continued to act through junior high and high school. I was gonna be a film actor out in L.A. and that was the whole goal. And along the way, I picked up juggling and I learned behind the scenes stuff. I worked in a costume shop, produced and directed films and videos, and I worked in the box office at the Meremac Community College's Theater. And so everything built towards that. And then I moved to L.A. to make that a reality. But I moved there three weeks after I met Brandy, who would become my wife.

[00:05:06] **Nichols:** And Brandy was here and you went to L.A.?

[00:05:10] **Koziatek:** Yeah. And so, we dated long distance. And then I moved back and proposed and we got married. And that was a little over 14 years ago. And everything kind of shifted. It was really interesting because as a performer who looked for my value in what I did, I had an old business partner, we would do a show about an hour long show. And then afterwards we'd spend two to three hours decompressing and we'd talk about what worked, what didn't work, what we like, what we should keep in, what we should take out, all of that stuff. And so, when I got married, I thought, oh, well, here's my new partner. So, I would do a show and I'd come home and I would unload on my wife for three hours. And after five minutes, she'd just glaze over. And initially, I didn't think that she understood what I was doing. Or really respected or really cared. And then one day it just hit me. I'm like, oh, wait a minute. My wife seems to care about me for more than what I do. Is she OK? Like, because I had not experienced that before. Right. That was a really good learning process for me and a great gift from her to be able to just sit in.

[00:06:17] **Nichols:** Not about what you do, it's about who you are. Yeah, right. Very good. I think a lot of people struggle with where their personal worth comes from. So, you for many years you were getting that from extrinsic things, right? So, people and accolades and that sort of thing. But at some point you made a pretty radical shift.

[00:06:42] **Koziatek:** I had help.

[00:06:43] **Nichols:** You had help? We all need help. So, what was that like?

[00:06:48] **Koziatek:** I was doing a radio interview promoting this big conference coming up. And in between takes, I was talking with the host and I was explaining how I had a photography business, video business and my performing business. And I was married and had kids. And I was trying to focus by did know how to do that because the lens that I had said find something you love to do and make that your job. I love art and people. That's a big lens. And so we're sitting there talking about this. I said I've spent the last four years trying to figure this out. And he said, I can help you. I said, no, you can't, because I can do it. And in an hour. And I said, no. I've been spending for years on this. He said, OK, maybe two hours. But we sat down, we talked and he did exactly what he said.

[00:07:33] **Nichols:** This was the radio host? Wow. But he is really a life coach it sounds like.

[00:07:40] **Koziatek:** Jeff Arthur with the Values Conversation. And so we sat down and we talked and all of a sudden I had this new framework that said, no, here I have value and worth as a human being, apart from what I do, apart from my mistakes, apart from my circumstances, my relationships, what I have. All that aside, just being alive, there's value there. Not only that, but then here, here's what I value personally and professionally and in my relationships. And here's my core vision and mission statement personally. So, then it was like I had a new lens and I could say, OK, well, does a video production align with this? Yes or no? Just because you can do something doesn't mean you should. And I was able to set that aside and set the photography aside and really dive into performing. And why that resonated with me in the first place.

[00:08:31] **Nichols:** What was you why?

[00:08:32] **Koziatek:** I think it resonated because I love to make people laugh. I love to be able to present something, offer up a different perspective or thought on something.

[00:08:40] **Nichols:** Maybe the light bulb goes on and that person's head and that feels good.

[00:08:44] **Koziatek:** And for me, with entertainment, I work really hard to create a safe space for you to take the mask off you wear to survive and have a genuine laugh next to somebody you don't know. I think there's a lot of value in that. And so as an entertainer, I would watch a lot of people come in and take mask after mask after mask off. And then I get to meet who they are as a person and who they're pretending to be. And then afterwards, you'd watch them layer back up and go back to life. And I thought, there's got to be another way that we can help them or help them beyond just a 30/45 minute show. And so that's when I started speaking so I could give people tools to live in that space longer than the show. And then I got certified to do life coaching so I could walk with people to help create that sustainable change. And then I'm out. That is really cool.

[00:09:29] **Nichols:** Right. Well, I know that you told me a story about how at one point you were doing 300 shows a year and 200 of those were compressed in the summer months. So how is that even possible? Because there's not 200 days in the summer?

[00:09:50] **Koziatek:** I remember hearing Jay Leno once say that he did 300 gigs a year on top of hosting The Tonight Show. And so that became my benchmark. I thought, OK, if I'm going to be successful, I need to be doing at least that many shows. That makes no logical sense. But

that's where I was. Yes. And so, I pushed and pushed and that's what I was doing. And it got to a place where I was averaging 300 to 350 shows a year. The problem was most of that happened in the summer with library shows and fairs and festivals and corporate events and things like that. So, during that time, my wife essentially became a single mom and I'm just running all over the place. That wasn't so bad when I was single. It wasn't so bad when my wife and I were newly married. But then when we had kids, things started to get really challenging because I noticed that their behaviors would change during the summer months when I was just gone. And I started to be more aware of how it was impacting my marriage in a negative way, because I really like my wife and I want to spend time with my wife. And for six months out of the year, we weren't.

[00:11:01] **Nichols:** You're like, this is not like two ships in the night. Probably,

[00:11:03] **Koziatek:** Yeah. Missing in the night. And that's not how I'm wired. So for me, it was about how can we still serve other people through entertainment and serve other people through speaking, but also serve my wife and serve my kids in a healthy, balanced way. So that's why we're moving away from the performing and doing more speaking and coaching. I'm super excited about this. Check this out. We're getting ready to unveil this one for one corporate Youth Empowerment Program. So, I'll go in and I'll speak to a corporation that believes that their people are their number one assets. They want to pour into their people. And they also believe that they should pour into the community. So, when they bring me in to do a keynote with every hired keynote, they will also be sponsoring a free presentation for local kids. Whether that's in a school or scouts or Big Brothers, Big Sisters or like a youth conference, and they'll get that for free. And then we're going to continue to pay it forward and ask the kids to raise money for an organization that they want to support. And then I match up to \$1000 of that.

[00:12:05] **Nichols:** That is incredible. I have not heard of anybody doing something like that. It's very innovative.

[00:12:11] **Koziatek:** We're trying to bring the corporate and community aspects together. The value piece, I don't believe you can just stamp that on somebody's forehead. It takes relationship, it takes time and it takes investing. And so, this is a way for corporations do that with their own people. And also to give back more than just here's a check. We bought you a bunch of computers. There's a need for all of that. There is. I'm just saying, here is another piece we can bring to the puzzle.

[00:12:38] **Nichols:** Well, now you've really got me thinking. Now I'm on a totally different tangent. They can now, who would I have him go speak to? Which group of kids so we can talk about that after. That's really awesome. So, is there a name for this? Like the one for one or..

[00:12:53] **Koziatek:** It's the One for One Corporate and Youth Empowerment Program. Or we just call it One for One for short. But so with that, you know, we'll go in and we'll do a keynote that's based on personal worth and how that plays out when we lead others, when we work as a team or how we communicate or how we use grit. And then for the kids. We'll either do a presentation about effort, focus, mentorship and persistence, or we'll do a presentation on following your dreams or we'll do a grit presentation for them. Or just do straight up comedy, entertainment.

[00:13:29] **Nichols:** Now, have you done any of these yet?

[00:13:31] **Koziatek:** They're all programs that I've done already. But now we're going to we're going to partner them together in 2020.

[00:13:37] **Nichols:** I think it's brilliant. So, we're going to take a quick break and then we'll be back with Jeff Koziatek.

[00:13:44] **Ad:** Hi, everybody. I just wanted to take a second and tell you about something our team at Technology Partners can do for your business. We've spent over two decades partnering with organizations and helping them solve their IT needs from a 360 degree perspective. A huge part of how we solve those needs is by developing custom applications of all shapes and sizes. If your team is looking for software and an out of the box solution just isn't right, it's time to consider how we might be able to help. Go to tpi.co/customapps and learn more about our awesome capabilities.

[00:14:20] **Nichols:** Welcome back. So, Jeff, I'm holding your book, *Blueprint for Value: 52 Habits to Discover and Strengthen Your Personal Worth*. And we'd already talked a little bit about that. You talk a lot about your depositing or you're withdrawing from your personal worth account. Right? So I've read this and there's a few of these that I kind of want to take a little bit of a deeper dive into. And the first one, this first habit is number nine. Listen, sometimes I think we have some challenges around that because we like to talk, but sometimes we don't really take the time to listen. So, the way you started this out is a stop the busy, be still and listen to your heart.

[00:15:02] **Koziatek:** There's so many demands on our time out there and so many distractions; "squirrels". I mean, everything is so..

[00:15:08] **Nichols:** Purple squirrels is what we call them here.

[00:15:11] **Koziatek:** So, is that like a purple cow or is it different?

[00:15:13] **Nichols:** No, it's a different than a purple cow.

[00:15:17] **Koziatek:** Oh, yeah. I mean, it's just there's so much. And we tend to glorify busy, myself included. I used to say; Well, I I've done 300 shows, I'm so amazing.

[00:15:27] **Nichols:** Right. It's almost like a badge of honor.

[00:15:28] **Koziatek:** Yeah. And it's NOT. But that's not how we sell it. We sell it as something very important. And so, you know, everybody's talking about, you know, you need to work all the time. And what are you constantly doing to work on your business and work, work, work, work, work. And the idea of having a personal life outside of a work life, that line has almost been erased. Right. And so if we can stop just for a little bit and just tune all that out for a second and just stop listening to the voices over here that say you need to do more, or you need to pick up five more clients. We need to sell X amount. Just stop for a second and quiet everything and listen to the inner voice inside of ourselves. I think that can have a huge impact on our personal work.

[00:16:11] **Nichols:** I could not agree more with that number 23, and I do agree with this one, too: Attitude. You can choose your response, persist or quit. You say here, equip yourself with a resilient attitude to weather this storm and overcome obstacles. You get to choose your attitude.

[00:16:31] **Koziatek:** You can always choose what happens to you. You can always choose how you respond. I think a lot of times we forget that. We think, no. This happened so I have to do this. And then we get an attitude that comes from a fixed mindset that says, No, this is the way it's always gonna be, and we can never turn the page or I'll never become more than what I'm at now, or this relationship will never improve. And I feel like your attitude drives all of that. The relationship may or may not improve. You may or may not get the promotion you want. But

the attitude will carry you through whatever you're facing. And you might end up going to a completely different direction. That's not necessarily bad.

[00:17:14] **Nichols:** Well, and there's a lot of scientific studies out there, too. Jeff, your attitude, truly, I mean, if you worry and if you've got if you're always anxious and you know, the sky is falling. I mean, it can manifest itself into some real physical health. It.

[00:17:31] **Koziatek:** Yes, exactly. I once heard somebody say you have rose colored glasses. But he said if you're wearing the rose colored glasses and everything looks red, everything looks great, and then you miss the things that you really need to pay attention to. So, he was saying wear rose tinted glasses. So, there's a spectrum there. It's not everything is not all red. I mean, you're right. You're still looking for the positive, but you're also being aware of what's in front of you.

[00:17:58] **Nichols:** Number 29 is: All in. And I love this, I'm gonna read this it says: If you want 100 percent level results, then give 100 percent effort. In the circus you have to go all in. If you were to cautiously jump from one trapeze bar to another, try to walk on a ball or casually walk on a tight wire. You would fail. Commit 100 percent to experience success earlier more frequently.

[00:18:26] **Koziatek:** I talk to a lot of kids that want a career in performing arts and they're getting this advice that says, well, that's great. But what's your fallback plan? What's your backup plan? You know, that's great that you want to become a performer, but maybe you should get an education degree as well. I'm of the mindset. If you're planning to fail, then that's where you're going to go. Right. If you really want to do this, but you're spending all of your time and all of your investment over here in Plan B, then that's what's going to happen. That's why I think it's really important to engage with yourself first and be real and honest with your skill set, with what you're lacking and with your opportunities to improve. If you know that, then you can say, OK, this dream that I have in my heart, this is attainable. I'm not there now. But I can get there. But I'm only going to get there if I'm all in. In the in the acting world, I'm competing against millions of other people that all want the same job. And so, if I'm not committed I'm not going to succeed.

[00:19:24] **Nichols:** I completely agree with that. I love that. So, number 30 is weeding. And I love this, you said just because you can doesn't mean you should.

[00:19:35] **Koziatek:** No. That was really difficult for me because when my value was tied to external force, it was all externally based on what I did; I couldn't say no. If you asked me to do something, I said yes. Yes. And that was yes. Yes. Yes, yes. Yes. Whether it was photography or casting, or I was not able to set a healthy boundary and use the word no. Or look at something that I was doing and say, OK, this season has passed. It's time to set it down so that we can grow. The next thing that's not easy to do.

[00:20:07] **Nichols:** It really is not easy because there are a lot of good things to do. I was coaching one of our young salesmen not too long ago and I said just really knowing where not to focus is just as important as knowing where to focus because you got limited time. To your point, though, Jeff, I think this is really an important thing to understand and to recognize as well. There are seasons and maybe during this season it doesn't mean that you're not going to do that thing. You know, sometimes I'll say even when somebody asks me to do something, you know what? I cannot do that right now. Not right now. But, you know, it doesn't mean I'm saying no forever. There are definitely seasons.

[00:20:50] **Koziatek:** And not only with that, but when you're looking at what you do for a living, if your business has a season in it. In my case, if I've been working as juggling Jeff for 20 years and now it's time to set that down and it's time to really put all of my time and attention and effort into speaking and coaching and writing more books, it can be difficult to make that transition and pull that weed to make room for the next if I find my value in what I was doing. I think weeding is almost impossible. We're looking for external value.

[00:21:25] **Nichols:** Right. You just gave me the perfect segue way because you said juggling Jeff. So, what is the hardest thing that you've ever juggled? I can't think in flaming swords or something like that.

[00:21:37] **Koziatek:** You know, everybody wants to flaming swords. You can juggle swords. You can juggle fire. But it's not complete until you put them together. The hardest thing I've ever juggled was probably shot-put. They're really, really heavy. **That and cats**, because cats don't let go.

[00:21:59] **Nichols:** Oh, goodness gracious. We may have to have you back in and have you juggle some cats. Well, this is Something Extra. So, I know that you had told me that there is a story, there's something extra that you had in one of your mentors. Can you tell us that story?

[00:22:17] **Koziatek:** For me, everything I did was a reflection of my value. When I met Jeff, my coach, and I shared with him stories of my life and stories of my work and he listened without judgment. I did not know what to do with that initially because I had never experienced that before. He was able to show up and be present and see me and recognize that my behavior was not who I am, but it was all learned to deal with either pain or pleasure in the past. And he was able to set all of that aside and just see me and just love on and care for me and try to help from that perspective. So, the fact that he was able to show up with no judgment totally changed my life. And so that's one thing that I try to carry on for other people when I coach, it's a judgment free zone, it should be safe. They trust me with stuff and I don't give advice.

[00:23:12] **Nichols:** And you don't give advice?

[00:23:13] **Koziatek:** No. The whole concept of my coaching style is to help you find your own answers. So, I don't want you to become dependent on me. It's all questions and it's all listening, you know, from the book. So, to help you see around blind spots that you might not be aware of. If I just tell you what to do next, then when the next problem comes up, what are you going to do? You're going to call me and be like: What do I do? But if I can help.

[00:23:38] **Nichols:** You're trying to take people through the thought process so that they can continue to do that for themselves.

[00:23:42] **Koziatek:** Exactly. It's all about equipping them. And that all comes from Jeff. The other thing that I wanted to say, when you're looking for something extra, I think leaders have to have to have to understand that their value is internal because you can't give what you don't have and you're not going to see value in somebody else beyond what you see in yourself. And I love my Angela's quote. You know, "people don't remember what you say or how you said it. They remember how you made them feel." Well, the feeling comes from the heart, and the heart is your value piece. So, if you get that right, your heart's right. And then you can engage people in conflict or conflict resolution or just, you know, as a team and the relationships won't get destroyed.

[00:24:25] **Nichols:** I love all that. Well, thank you, Jeff, so much for this mini coaching session. I feel like I've been coached. So, that was awesome. So, thank you.

[00:24:33] **Koziatek:** Thanks for having me.

[00:24:34] **Nichols:** So, talk to me a little bit about what you've got that you're excited about. And we've already touched on it a little bit. But I want you to dive a little bit deeper. Tell our audience, our listeners how they can get involved, how they can engage with you if they're interested.

[00:24:48] **Koziatek:** I'm really excited about the One For One. I've been to a lot of schools and a lot of youth organizations that don't have a whole lot of money, but they have a need and a feel like this One For One is a great way to respond to that, because you have a lot of corporations out there that have a philanthropic mindset and they want to do something they want, but they don't necessarily know what to do. And I feel like this is a great way to lead because you have a corporation bring me in for a continued growth and development of their people. So, they're modeling that for the kids. So, the kids get that message that the learning never stops, that they are worth investing in. So, then we go and do the shows for the kids and then passing that on to help start teaching them about paying it forward by having them pick a charity. I'm very, very excited about that.

[00:25:40] **Nichols:** If someone's out there listening and said, yes, I want to bring Jeff into my organization, how would they contact you?

[00:25:47] **Koziatek:** They go check out my website, coreauthenticity.com and then you can shoot me an email there or you can give me a phone call and then we can set something up.

[00:25:57] **Nichols:** Well, I hope you have lots of people reaching out to you after this episode, Jeff.

[00:26:01] **Koziatek:** Well, thanks. I think there's a real big need out there. And to take a corporation that that is doing amazing things already. Why not integrate them even more into their local communities? So, it's not just serving a narrow now. They're tied to the next generation of leaders. So, we're developing current leaders and we're growing future leaders and we're all getting connected and doing it together.

[00:26:23] **Nichols:** Brilliant. I love it. Let's do this thing. So, thank you so much, Jeff, for making the time. This has just been so much fun. I think we could probably sit here for hours and hours. I would love to do that. So, thank you for being here. Thanks for having me.

[00:26:38] **Announcer:** 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. Don't forget to leave a review on Apple Podcasts. Google Play or wherever you listen.