

Something Extra EP 118 - Tom Hill

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'll 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 had 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.

I'm very thrilled to have Dr. Tom Hill, on the show today. Dr. Hill is an author, international speaker, entrepreneur, and the CEO of Hill's Angels. Tom, oh my goodness, I am just about to burst with excitement. Just being with you here for this 30 minutes, I just cannot wait. Thank you so much for taking the time to be on the show today.

Dr. Tom Hill: It's my pleasure, and I love touching people's lives.

Lisa: I know you do, and we're going to get into that. You and I met, probably 2012, 2013, through Gary Baker. I remember you coming into our office and sitting down with Greg and I, and we just absolutely fell in love with you.

You've just done so much. I told you, I remember your 80th birthday, but now you're 85, and my goodness, you've done so many things, but go back for us if you would, 85 years ago. Let's talk about where you were born. Let's talk a little bit about how you grew up, and then we'll get into a lot of other things.

Dr. Hill: Okay, so I was born in 1935, in the middle of the depression. My dad turned out to be a turkey farmer. He raised about 100,000 turkeys every year, it was just crazy. He decided to have his own breeding stock, so he created his own turkey breeding stocks, bought an airplane, a force packer airplane, had me and my brother-- I was 15 and my brother was 18, had us get our license, and our summer job was to deliver those turkeys. [laughs]

Lisa: I remember reading your book, and talking about, you were 15 and you were flying an airplane. [laughs]

Dr. Hill: Yes.

Lisa: Before you drove a car. It's so funny.

Dr. Hill: Yes, so we did that in the summer, and then one thing lead to another. I went to the University of Missouri, and then the same took off there. That was a very beginning.

Lisa: Yes. It was you and your older brother?

Dr. Hill: Yes, Roger.

Lisa: I've never asked you this. I don't even know what you majored in though when you went to the University of Missouri.

Dr. Hill: Physical education, primarily at Mizzou. This is a fascinating story, talk about God winking and coincidences. I'm sitting on the step to [unintelligible 00:03:39] house at the University of Missouri, waiting for the class to start, and a guy comes in and sit down next to me, and we strike up a conversation.

I didn't know him, and he said, "How'd you like to be a high school teacher?" I said, "Well, I'm just a junior." He said, "I can get you a teaching certificate in Missouri," which was 30 miles away. I applied as a junior, bought a motorcycle, rode it 30 miles one way, started in February, [chuckles] to teach school.

Lisa: Great time to buy your motorcycle. [chuckles] February.

Dr. Hill: Yes. I did that for two years, then went back to Missouri and got my degree in Physical Education, coaching in physical education.

Lisa: You were not even graduated and you had a teaching job. [chuckles]

Dr. Hill: For two and a half years.

Lisa: That is crazy. Now, you were a professor at Mizzou, what did you teach?

Dr. Hill: I started out teaching high school education, coaching basketball, and football, and then went back and got my masters at Kirksville, what was in Northeast Missouri state, and then God winked and gave me a free scholarship to Mizzou to get my PhD in Educational Administration.

I became superintendent of schools, for two different schools for eight years, was that, and then God winked again.

Lisa: Yes He did. That's when you pivoted and jumped onto the entrepreneurial wagon. You had an incredibly successful real estate business, right? RE/MAX?

Dr. Hill: Unbelievable.

Lisa: What was that like? Why did you make that job?

Dr. Hill: It was God's fault. [laughs]

Lisa: Okay. [laughs]

Dr. Hill: He winked. [chuckles] My wife and I had been in Florida on vacation and we're getting ready to come home, and it was-- A guy I roomed with since the university, lives in Atlanta. We all stopped and have a coffee with him. His name was Harold McPherson. I called him, I said, "You got time for--" "Yes, stop by." We stopped by.

Now, I had a great job, I was a director of 4-H, for the state of Missouri. We had a 100,000 kids, 20,000 volunteer, staff of 135, and we were living in Colombia. We had it made, life was just great, and so we stopped and had a coffee. He said, "Tom, how's the university?" I said, "Well, it's good. You're never going to be rich, but you've got a great life touching a lot of lives." He said, "Why don't you come down to Georgia and sell RE/MAX real estate franchises?" He said, "I own the rights to RE/MAX for the whole state of Georgia. Why don't you come down and sell franchise?" I said, "Harold, I'll tell you what I think? I think that's the stupidest-- [laughs] Why would I do that? I've never sold anything. I don't know anything about real estate. I'm 50 years old, got a great life."

We talked, and finally, I was thinking, "Well, he might be pretty rich, maybe he'll make me a nice offer." What he got in mind it was a straight commission, and you pay your own expenses. [laughs]

Lisa: Oh my goodness. [chuckles] Not quite what you were thinking.

Dr. Hill: That was what I think.

Lisa: All commission?

Dr. Hill: All commission. We start driving home. Now, you've met Betty, haven't you?

Lisa: Oh yes. I love Betty.

Dr. Hill: She has a great insight. Not a professional insight, but it's a great insight. We're driving home and she said, "What do you think about Harold's offer?" I said, "It's the dumbest thing." [laughs] "We'd have to leave the kids, sell the car, we're 50 years old" da, da, da, da, da, da. We talked about it for a while and she said, "Tom, let's go for it."

Lisa: Wow.

Dr. Hill: Risk everything.

Lisa: Risk-taker to the max. Wow.

Dr. Hill: We went home and sold the car, retired from the job. RE/MAX didn't have any training on how to sell a franchise, but you could go through the classes if you'd bought one. I went to do the class and left the university on March 8, and moved to-- Just by myself first, to Augusta, Georgia - this here is God winked story.

Betty's still in Columbia, waiting for the house to sell, and our son, Scott, was a junior in high school in Hickman. Just waiting for him to graduate. I'm down in Augusta, Georgia, living in a travel trailer. I've been there two weeks, and nobody would talk to me. I couldn't get an appointment with anybody because I didn't have anything. I didn't have a realtor license.

Lisa: Right, and you didn't have contacts. It wasn't like you grew up there or anything, so—

Dr. Hill: Didn't know anybody.

Lisa: Yes.

Dr. Hill: I hadn't made a single presentation. It's Friday morning, I know I'd agreed to speak in Ohio State University on Monday, so I just couldn't wait to get through that week. I woke up Friday morning, living in a travel trailer next to Fort Gordon. They're in Augusta, Georgia. It'd been raining and the concrete out front was covered with leaves and mud, but I reckon going to be there, for just another day or two, so I stepped on the metal step of the trailer and my feet went up and I went [laughs] mud and rain and leaves. I could remember, Lisa, as if that happened here. I'm in that situation then to myself, "Dr. Hill, you've lost your mind."
[laughter]

I thought, "What am I going to do?" Now, typically, most people would have gotten up, cleaned up and went on to Ohio, but I thought, "Well, I still got to do something." I had an address for the guy I wanted to meet man, so I started looking for him, got lost, saw a guy standing out in front of his office having a smoke. I roll my window down, I said, "Excuse me, sir, can you tell me where such and such address is?" Then, "Sure." He said, "Who you're looking for?" I told him, and he said, "I know him. Come on in, we'll call him" as the Southern hospitality.

I go in, we called, the line busy. I called again, he said, "Why do you want to see this guy?" I gave him a brief presentation. He bought my first franchise. I became the number one RE/MAX franchise salesperson in the world, in eight months.

Lisa: In eight months?

Dr. Hill: Yes.

Lisa: Tom. I did not know that part. I knew that you had been incredibly successful, but that is incredible.

Dr. Hill: My friend, who owned RE/MAX in Georgia, said, "We'll try to buy some territory if you can sell them." He called me one day and said, "Tom, I got good news and bad news." [laughs] "What's the good news?" He said, "The owner of RE/MAX is going to let us buy Kentucky and Tennessee, and you can move to Nashville, Tennessee."

He said, "The other good news is that, instead of costing a \$150,000, it's only going to cost you \$10,000 to buy 49% of Kentucky and Tennessee" which was good because my original goal was to own for 50% of one state, so now I'm 49% owner of two states. That was in September 1986, and then Ohio came up for sale and he said, "You want to buy that?" I said, "Well, I don't have any money." He said, "I'll pay for it and give you the 49% if you'll run it."

Now, we have the Southwest Ohio, we had Cincinnati. We agreed to do that. Now I'm a part-owner of three states. One of our attorney came to manage it and said, "Tom, is there any more states?" and I said, "Well, there's three more, it's for sale." He said, "You're going to buy them?" and I said, "No, we're both out of money now."

He said "Where are they?" I said, "We got Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi." He said "If I put up the money, will you give me 20% ownership?" I called my partner and he said, "Sure," so we bought it, and I had to run it. Now I'm running six states, running an organization I've never had a license. [laughs]

Lisa: Oh my word, that is an amazing story. Well, you know what I'm sitting here thinking about, Tom? We've been playing monopoly with our eight-year-old grandson, Sawyer. [laughter]

I am thinking this is like monopoly on steroids. I did not realize that but that explains a lot.

Dr. Hill: We had it made. We're living in Niceville, a great place. We love Niceville. My daughter, Terry, had moved down and joined us and all that. We couldn't decide on what we're going to do next.

Our son-in-law is getting his master's degree in Indiana University so we drove up to Louisville, Kentucky, where I had several franchisees, spent the day working with them. We went to bed, the hotel there and everyone's gone. came our son-in-law the next day so I woke up at 2:30 in the morning and it was a dream just as vivid as a movie.

In the dream, I had sold my partner, Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio, and bought him out of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, which some, we never even thought of, and we moved to Mississippi, so I woke up with it just like a movie. I said this is crazy. Number one, we had three of our kids working for us, father to three kids. [laughs] We'll have to move to Mississippi.

Our office is right next door to a new mall. My partner and I own 51%, why would he wanted to-- Finally I woke Betty up at 5:30, and I said "This is crazy, but I got to share this dream." I told her what the dream was and I said, "What do you think?" She said, "Let's go for it." [laughter]

In two weeks, that dream became a reality. At first we moved to Jackson, Mississippi, and had the three states there to run.

Lisa: What a story. I love it. Betty just had this gusto about her and just a risk-taker.

Dr. Hill: Yes.

Lisa: Just saying, "Let's be all in." I just love that.

Dr. Hill: She had a gift.

Lisa: Yes, for sure.

Dr. Hill: Yes.

Lisa: I've told you you guys had just an amazing love story.

Dr. Hill: Yes.

Lisa: At some point, you pivoted and I know that you've had this big BHAG, [chuckles] Tom, and I'm thinking you're probably pretty close to it. You had this big, hairy audacious goal of saying you wanted to touch a million people. I know how much you've touched me. I just had a friend that met you. I'm just like going, "Oh, my goodness."

I remember we were looking at Denver at one point. I remember you saying "You need to meet this person, this person, and this person." Literally, I think, you know people all over but you started with the coaching, coaching people, and running the ego summit. I know you measure success in a different way. It's not just what your bank account says. Right?

Dr. Hill: Right.

Lisa: You look at six different areas of someone's life. Can you just run through those real quick?

Dr. Hill: Okay. One of my staff members came into my office when I got to university, and threw a couple of cassette tapes on my desk and said, "Tom, you might enjoy this. It's Jim Rohn." I'd never heard of Jim Rohn, but Betty and I live alone, we really warm out. We sat down on a Sunday afternoon, 1984 at the university. We came up with six sayings. We said, the most important thing in our life, if push comes to shove, is our spiritual life, that we're spiritual beings having a physical experience.

Number two was our health, have to take care of your health. If you don't take out your health, you're going to be a burden to other people. Number three was relationship and then your professional life, your emotional life and financial.

We came up with a theory that money is attracted, not pursued by who you become. Who wants to hang around you, and buy from you, who want to associate with you. Those became that we measured. We sat down and write it ourselves and no separate from each other, went to different parts of the house and I gave our marriage a 10, and she said "Uh-uh."

She said, "No, I'll give you a hug. I'll let you have a nine." [laughs]

Lisa: A nine? [laughs] There's always room to grow. Right? I love that.

Dr. Hill: Yes. Those became the six priorities. We sold the business in '94 moved to St. Louis. In fact you'd appreciate this term. Betty was originally from St. Louis. I'm originally from Kirksville area. She said, "Where are we going to retire?" and I said "Nashville, Tennessee," and she said "I sure will miss you." [laughs]

Lisa: Oh. [laughs]

Dr. Hill: She was coming to St. Louis. [crosstalk]

Lisa: She was coming back to St. Louis. Oh my goodness

Dr. Hill: We had an airplane, we had a boat. We had it made, had a good life.

Lisa: Yes.

Dr. Hill: People start coming to me and say, "Well, Tom how did you do all that? You built a company from 40 agents to 1000 agents, etc." When I coach and when I speak, when I tell a story, and eventually write a book. That all came out of that, God winked.

Lisa: I love it. We're going to dig into that more, but we need to take a quick break and we'll be right back with Dr. Tom Hill.

Speaker 3: Let's face it, the future is mobile. There's a good chance that you are listening to this show right now, on your phone. Have you explored how you can move your business mobile, too? Our mobile apps team at Technology Partners makes it their mission to move our clients into the hands of their employees and customers, and change their business processes to meet the demands of their users.

Let's work together and build a dynamic mobile app for your team. Go to tpi.co/mobile-apps and get the conversation started about how we can help you get your new application off the ground.

Lisa: Tom, we've got so much more to talk about. I hope that we can get it all in. I just want our listeners just to learn from you. Every time I'm with you, I learn from you and I love that about you. You're such a giving person. I know why you're blessed beyond measure.

You truly are blessed beyond measure.

Lisa: You said a lot flowed out. When you took over that franchise, there were 40 agents, and how many offices?

Dr. Hill: Four.

Lisa: Four. When you took over the three states, you ended up with 100 offices and 1000 agents. That is just incredible. You met somebody, you met a gentleman that said, "Come write, Chicken Coup for the Entrepreneur."

Tell me that story. I think that's so funny.

Dr. Hill: Yes. Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen, the co-founder of *Chicken Soup*, they wrote the first book, and 33 publishers turned them down and said "Nobody's going to read those stupid stories because they're not about famous people." They sold over 100 million copies. Peter Vegso became their marketing guy until they heard me speak and asked me if I'd want to co-author a *Chicken Soup* book, which I had no dream about it. I said, "What do I got to do?" He said, "Really not much." I said, "Sign me up."
[laughter]

Lisa: That's the best kind, right?

Dr. Hill: It's crazy. That was a God wink. I wasn't looking to do it. Yes.

Lisa: You've laughingly told me that your books are free, but if I want it autographed, I had to pay you \$100.
[laughter]

Dr. Hill: Yes.

Lisa: I love that. Well, you've gone on to write other books. There may be one of our listeners out there, Tom, that says, "Well, I would like to write a book. Maybe I have a book in me." You believe in the power of books. I know that you, for years now have been telling me, "Lisa, you need to write a book."

I did start to *Something Extra* book. It's on the shelf right now, but we did pivot and start to *Something Extra* podcast, which is awesome. Somebody may be going "I'd like to write a book" but you don't always have to write. You can get a ghostwriter, right?

Dr. Hill: Absolutely. I've found a guy-- He came to me and said, "Tom, I want to write your life story." I'd given nine speeches in eight cities in five countries - He said, "I want to write your life story."

He interviewed me for an hour, every Monday morning, then you go write a chapter and then come back. I had a professional writer, had a professional publisher. Yes, it just works. One of the things I ask people to do if they hadn't even thought about writing a book. If they do, get a blank journal, on the outside of the journal, put My Life Story. As you think of things, just make a note so that when you get ready to write them, you'll be remembering.

Lisa: You'll have those stories already there. You know what? I couldn't agree with you more, because there is lessons I'd learned when I had the eyes to see and the ears to hear, in the ordinary things of life, Tom.

Dr. Hill: Yes.

Lisa: Whether it's working in the garden, or something that happens with one of our children, or in business or whatever, you can learn things every day, if you have your eyes open.

Dr. Hill: My grandfather's grandfather got on a boat with his family, in 1848 on the Ohio River and Kentucky, floated down the river to Mississippi River, went up the Mississippi River. He could have written that down. He could have handwritten the things that he learned and run a legacy. I encourage that with everybody.

Lisa: Okay. You're a voracious reader, you're not just an author. You read a lot. What is your rhythm now? Your reading rhythm? Are you reading a book a week or a day? [laughs]

Dr. Hill: It used to be a book a day, but now I've slowed down and gotten older, it's only a book a week. [laughs]

Lisa: A book a week. Oh, my goodness.

Dr. Hill: I met this guy in Salt Lake City, Utah, who'd sold his business for \$100 million, traveled around the world, got to Japan, found a reading system called Infinite Mind, and he bought the system, brought it back in.

I think he spoke at one of my summits. You'll quadruple your reading speed and you will create a legacy.

Lisa: It's called Infinite Minds?

Dr. Hill: Well, that's a company. The actual reading system is E-Y-E-Q to play on words, IQ. EYEQ [chuckles] Advantage.com.

Lisa: Great.

Dr. Hill: My people that I know that goes through that will quadruple their reading speed with 90% retention. It just works.

Lisa: How many books do you think you've read, Tom, over your lifetime?

Dr. Hill: Just over 1000. I've never kept a real account of it. There are a million books out there I haven't read. [chuckles] I got to get busy. [chuckles]

Lisa: Isn't that true. Somebody was just telling me earlier today, about the book *When, W-H-E-N* by Daniel Pink. She was just talking about how awesome this book is. I said, there's just so many books, so little time. That's why you have to have a system like this so that you can really accelerate your reading.

Dr. Hill: One thing that I've developed myself, when somebody gives me a book or said, "Tom, you need to read this book." Rather than sit down and try to read the whole thing, cover to cover, even speed reading, I turned to the back of the book and read the author. Who's the author? What's her background? Then I'll read the introduction, then I read the first chapter or read the last chapter, and then I decide if I'm going to read it or not, because I've gotten most of the good stuff out of it.

Lisa: Very good. Well, Tom, you've written lots of books. You can go to Kindle, his books are on the Kindle. I have met so many amazing people through you, Tom. We've attended several of your Eagle Summits. Paul Young, that wrote *The Shack*, is a good friend of yours. I met John O'Leary who, everybody loves John O'Leary. I met him through you. That's the first time I'd ever met John. Brett Blair, Dr. Roger Hall. There's so many people that I've met through you. I don't know where you are on that continuum of reaching a million people, but you got to be close.

Dr. Hill: Somebody said, "Tom, you need to meet Gary Baker." I went and met Gary Baker and in the process, he said, "Oh, by the way, I just heard the best speaker I've ever heard. You need to meet him, his name is John O'Leary." Now, this was on a Monday. He said, "John O'Leary." He said "I don't have his number, but you need to meet him sometime." Wednesday, I get an email from one of my clients in Raleigh, North Carolina. He said, "Tom, I just heard the best pick-up I've ever heard. It's John O'Leary. You got to meet him." Friday, Betty and I are in a small town in Iowa, opened up the local paper, there's a picture, John O'Leary.

Lisa: Oh my goodness. [chuckles]

Dr. Hill: I said, "God, I get it."

Lisa: I get it. I'm supposed to meet John O'Leary. He's just amazing and he's inspiring so many people. You've got four mantras and I want you to share with our listeners about your four mantras?

Dr. Hill: Somebody asked me, he said, "Tom what made a difference in your life? What's the principles?" I came up with four. We wake up every morning, we should be committed, be the best person we can be with our God-given gifts." Some people have different gifts. My wife had the insight. I didn't have that gift, but she had a gift, so one idea, committed, be the best person.

Number two, when we wake up in the morning, we need to be committed to make a positive difference in every life we come in contact with. For example, I ask all my clients to give \$100 bill every 30 day to a total stranger. It's amazing. That has happened-- Yesterday, I gave it to a lady who just came over from Bosnia. She didn't just left her husband. He's abusive. Just \$100 are going to be a lot of different things.

Be a networker, God winks when you meet somebody, follow up, see where it goes, and then be a reader. One idea-- Well, actually Lisa, you and I could have done *Chicken Soup*. Anybody could have done it, but they executed better than anybody else. Those are four mantras and they're not crazy, they're just work. [chuckles]

Lisa: They're simple, but they're so profound. Tell me-- This is called something extra. What do you believe is this something extra that every leader needs?

Dr. Hill: To wake up in the morning, 100% committed to making a difference in everybody's life. If you'll do that, the doors will incredibly open. It don't have to be money. It can be connecting them with somebody or asking them to read a book or give them a book. That's the extra. Most people don't do that.

Lisa: Can you imagine, Tom, if everybody would? Say, "I'm just going to make a difference, even if it's a very small difference in somebody else's life today," can you imagine what our world would be like?

Dr. Hill: It change it. I was in an airport not too long ago. There was a young soldier there telling his family goodbye. I gave him \$100 bill. He cried.

Lisa: Oh, [chuckles] that's awesome.

Dr. Hill: Didn't have to be \$1 million. [laughs]

Lisa: Right.

Dr. Hill: Yes. I think that's life. Sometimes it's just to compliment or introduce him to somebody else.

Lisa: Sometimes it's the simple things, I think, really it can make a big difference in somebody else's life.

Dr. Hill: Oh I agree.

Lisa: Well, Tom, this has just been so much fun. I have absolutely loved doing this interview with you, but I do want to give you the opportunity. If there is something coming up or something-- It could be going and get one of your books, reaching out to you, making a connection, having a virtual coffee that you want our listeners to know about, and how they can get involved.

Tom: Real quick story. I'm sitting on my deck, 1998 and I'm thinking about Jim Rohn. I asked Jim Rohn if he ever meditated, he said, "Well, I ponder." [chuckles] I started to ponder and I thought, "Wouldn't it be fun to put together a group of people from all walks of life, with no agenda, to see what happens." I invited six people to Phoenix, Arizona, and then we brought 67 people to Chicago and we've done it 60 times all over North America but because of the COVID, we're backing off and to see where that go. If you get in my website, keep track on there, and then also my newsletter. I've got about 10,000 readers.

Lisa: Right. Sign up for the newsletter. How can they do that? How can they sign up for the newsletter?

Dr. Hill: drtomhill.com.

Lisa: Good. They'll get on the list. You mentioned Jim Rohn. I do want to mention one thing about Jim Rohn. I say this all the time. One of his famous quotes is-- And I'm probably not going to say this exactly right. He said, "You are the average of the five people that you hang around with." I just think that's such great advice.

Dr. Hill: Yes, that's where I came up with my third thing I think that so important is, have a network, have a system. I've got a system that I use, which it should be on my website to make those plans because one person who's attracted to you can change your life forever. It could be a spouse, could be an employer, whatever.

Lisa: Right. No, could not agree more.

Dr. Hill: Lisa, this does work.

Lisa: It does.

Dr. Hill: Jim Rohn said " You know what? You sleep under a pyramid and rub crystals together."

Lisa: Oh my goodness, Dr. Hill, this has just been such a delight. Thank you so much for making the time. I just know your wisdom is going to impact our listeners. I know what an impact you've been on our life, mine and Greg's. Thank you so much for who you are and what you're doing and keep pressing on toward that million. You're probably at the 2 million mark now. [chuckles]

Dr. Hill: Maybe three.

Lisa: Exactly. Thanks for being on the show.

Dr. Hill: Thank you, Lisa. My pleasure.

