

Spring 2018

# Oral History Conversation with Deb Martin

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## ORAL HISTORY CONVERSATIONS WITH CHANGEMAKERS

By Students in PHILOSOPHY 332: Business Ethics | Spring 2018

DEB MARTIN  
(ELDER HELP OF SAN DIEGO)

Conducted by Jintian Chen, Aalia Inamdar, Alex Magoon, Gianna Rusca, and Guangzhou Shen

00:00:00.000 --> 00:00:01.970

This is an oral history conversation on

00:00:02.250 --> 00:00:04.440

social enterprise between students in

00:00:04.570 --> 00:00:06.896

business ethics from the University of

00:00:07.126 --> 00:00:09.214

San Diego and Ms. Debra Martin

00:00:09.594 --> 00:00:11.422

CEO and Executive director

00:00:12.032 --> 00:00:13.720

of Elder Help of San Diego.

00:00:14.640 --> 00:00:16.927

Deb before we begin the conversation

00:00:17.707 --> 00:00:20.271

and just by way of introduction to scholars

00:00:20.321 --> 00:00:23.597

who will be listening to the recording of this conversation

00:00:23.777 --> 00:00:27.813

Could you give us a brief overview of what Elder Help of San Diego does?

00:00:29.083 --> 00:00:31.420

I can, Elder help was founded in 1973.

00:00:31.420 --> 00:00:33.280

Their primary mission

00:00:33.280 --> 00:00:36.300

is to serve seniors who are living in  
their homes and trying to remain in their

00:00:36.790 --> 00:00:38.220

homes by using

00:00:38.240 --> 00:00:43.810

a wide range of social services and volunteers to provide companionship,

00:00:44.070 --> 00:00:48.590

errands, transportation, social services,  
access to benefits, and things like that so

00:00:49.460 --> 00:00:52.940

it's evolved over our forty five year  
history but that's the mission of it.

00:00:54.520 --> 00:00:59.720

Could you tell us more about your background and what got you into working with Elder help?

00:00:59.820 --> 00:01:04.260

I can and my background is born and raised  
in San Diego I was in corporate event

00:01:04.260 --> 00:01:09.090

meeting planning and ran those companies  
for many many years I did that for twenty

00:01:09.280 --> 00:01:15.020

five plus years. My parents were older  
when they had me so by the time I was ten

00:01:15.030 --> 00:01:18.900

most of them are in their sixty's and older so I grew up around what I consider

00:01:18.910 --> 00:01:24.570  
cronies and older adults and I got used  
to that population and being with them and I got

00:01:24.580 --> 00:01:28.940  
very comfortable with that and as they  
started aging encountering

00:01:28.950 --> 00:01:34.990  
challenges I got more involved with some  
of their troubleshooting, some of their

00:01:35.000 --> 00:01:39.400  
issues they were having. My mom who was  
eighty one and living independently

00:01:39.410 --> 00:01:44.000  
by herself up in her condo  
up in San Marcos had kind of

00:01:44.010 --> 00:01:45.160  
a stroke of memory loss,

00:01:45.170 --> 00:01:51.180  
a sudden memory loss and even before that,  
caring for her when I saw cable companies

00:01:51.190 --> 00:01:54.780  
come in and install new boxes and not tell  
people how to use them and their T.V.

00:01:54.790 --> 00:01:59.760  
programs for everything to their day to day  
routine and the destruction of that or

00:01:59.800 --> 00:02:01.710  
when she lost her license at the D.M.V.

00:02:01.720 --> 00:02:05.370  
And they took her license and she couldn't

drive home and she was trapped in the DMV

00:02:05.380 --> 00:02:09.750

parking lot for three hours so I kept seeing  
all of these distractions in this lack

00:02:09.759 --> 00:02:14.270

of awareness and care for the aging population  
and then and she was hospitalized

00:02:14.280 --> 00:02:18.420

expectedly and then we had to discharge her and then  
we had to figure out if we could get her

00:02:18.430 --> 00:02:20.510

home or not and it became so

00:02:20.520 --> 00:02:24.900

traumatic and emotional and difficult that  
I decided that was something I was going

00:02:24.910 --> 00:02:29.280

to really invest my future time in.  
So I semi retired from the corporate road and

00:02:29.290 --> 00:02:29.590

created

00:02:29.600 --> 00:02:35.770

a business plan and to start my own for  
profit it home company that would focus on

00:02:35.780 --> 00:02:41.010

home modifications, security checks, wellness  
checks, using technology, geared towards

00:02:41.020 --> 00:02:45.980

adult children and by accident and coincidence  
I found out Elder Help. They were a non

00:02:45.990 --> 00:02:46.640

profit doing

00:02:46.650 --> 00:02:51.340

a lot of the same work and they hired me  
because I had my own business at the time

00:02:51.350 --> 00:02:55.840

they hired me as a consultant to come in and  
help their financials and their staffing

00:02:55.850 --> 00:03:01.100

and their attrition and some other things  
and then through that I became the

00:03:01.110 --> 00:03:06.760

accidental executive director of Elder Help and  
They were a client of mine for about eight

00:03:06.770 --> 00:03:09.250

months while they did an executive  
director search they had

00:03:09.260 --> 00:03:14.180

a separation with the prior executive  
director and at the end of that they asked me

00:03:14.190 --> 00:03:19.070

if I would stay on permanently and I accepted.  
I haven't looked to go back to full time work

00:03:19.080 --> 00:03:23.480

because I was still raising our son but I was  
passionate about the mission about the work.

00:03:23.550 --> 00:03:25.760

The team needed leadership, which started

00:03:25.770 --> 00:03:30.430

a lot of new really good new work and I wanted

to continue see it coming to fruition so

00:03:30.440 --> 00:03:32.120

I stayed with it and I've  
been there about five and

00:03:32.130 --> 00:03:42.770

a half years now. So I noticed on Elder help's page that you have a law degree, so how does your law degree come in to play with what your doing for Elder Help?

00:03:42.780 --> 00:03:44.360

Well I had an undergraduate, I had

00:03:44.370 --> 00:03:48.920

a business admin degree with an emphasis  
in law and as part of that undergrad

00:03:48.930 --> 00:03:53.500

emphasis I did take the first six  
months of law school. It helped

00:03:53.510 --> 00:03:57.660

a lot in the corporate role because I was  
running companies and acting as a C.E.O.

00:03:57.660 --> 00:04:04.430

so I was responsible for contracting and agreements between us and our clients

00:04:04.440 --> 00:04:09.180

and local hotels that created policies  
and procedures and structure and H.R.

00:04:09.190 --> 00:04:10.560

And everything that goes into running

00:04:10.570 --> 00:04:16.450

a company so obviously my skills around  
that were very useful and the non profit side,

00:04:16.459 --> 00:04:19.540

not as much for still anytime you're  
running a company, any just

00:04:19.550 --> 00:04:24.070  
experience I think studying law in  
business just gives you good best practices

00:04:24.080 --> 00:04:27.820  
you know hopefully. And skill sets that  
you'll use across the spectrum of running

00:04:27.830 --> 00:04:30.790  
any kind of business.  
So working for a non profit, what are some of the challenges that you faced in the corporate world?

00:04:40.520 --> 00:04:44.780  
I think that some of the differences  
are in the corporate world especially as

00:04:44.790 --> 00:04:45.230  
a C.E.O,

00:04:45.230 --> 00:04:50.590  
most of our clients from are interested  
in our salespeople in the relationship

00:04:50.600 --> 00:04:51.860  
builders so I could be

00:04:51.870 --> 00:04:56.200  
a little bit more behind the scenes I was  
there creating the infrastructure, making

00:04:56.210 --> 00:04:59.780  
sure the tools were available to the  
frontline in the staff and the sales but the

00:04:59.790 --> 00:05:00.760  
clients wanted relationships with the



00:05:00.770 --> 00:05:04.590  
the salespeople, they didn't need  
to physically see me to know that the

00:05:04.600 --> 00:05:09.320  
company was running well or that we were  
taking care of their proposals properly or

00:05:09.330 --> 00:05:14.150  
executing their programs on the  
not profit side, they want to see me, they

00:05:14.160 --> 00:05:18.370  
want to you know who's representing the  
agency, what is their are their ethics, their

00:05:18.380 --> 00:05:21.440  
integrity, how is the money  
being invested what is

00:05:21.450 --> 00:05:25.920  
their philosophy, so that's one thing is  
they physically want to see me

00:05:25.960 --> 00:05:26.920  
a lot more and have

00:05:26.930 --> 00:05:32.090  
a relationship with me and then of course  
the fundraising piece, is nonstop and it's

00:05:32.100 --> 00:05:35.470  
all the time and again a huge  
amount of that falls to the C.E.O.

00:05:35.470 --> 00:05:37.090  
we do have

00:05:37.100 --> 00:05:40.630  
a director of philanthropy who is amazing, she's from here actually she worked at USD for

00:05:40.640 --> 00:05:45.950

thirty something years in the paralegal  
oversee the college graduate program

00:05:45.960 --> 00:05:52.440

I believe but. She's fabulous and  
she helps offset and carry the load

00:05:52.450 --> 00:05:57.370

tremendously but they still want to see  
who's leading the agency and what do they

00:05:57.380 --> 00:06:02.810

represent and then the third thing I just  
really say is that getting funders and

00:06:02.820 --> 00:06:07.370

the industry at large to understand financial  
surround nonprofits the financials

00:06:07.380 --> 00:06:10.370

are done differently you  
do a budget without

00:06:10.380 --> 00:06:14.590

a real profit margin and time so if they  
don't want to really see you make too much

00:06:14.600 --> 00:06:17.810

money but you can't there's too much  
money either so you have to have

00:06:17.820 --> 00:06:18.630

a serious you know

00:06:18.640 --> 00:06:23.850

a narrow window for targeting your financials  
in so I think about you know we're

00:06:23.860 --> 00:06:28.010

about one point four million dollars  
agency riches almost pure profit group

00:06:28.020 --> 00:06:32.620

probably about a six seven million dollar  
small business if you look at us like

00:06:32.630 --> 00:06:36.360

a thirty percent profit margin or something  
like that so that's another thing too

00:06:36.370 --> 00:06:39.980

is you got to find that sweet spot right  
there where you're not making too much

00:06:39.990 --> 00:06:43.540

money but they're not losing too  
much money and the funders have

00:06:43.550 --> 00:06:49.370

a hard time especially in Human Services  
real back and I think the overhead is

00:06:49.380 --> 00:06:52.320

people you know they often say we don't  
want to see your overhead MORE THAN THIS

00:06:52.330 --> 00:06:56.430

percent of your total expenses or really  
want to see your program expenses to be

00:06:56.440 --> 00:07:00.580

less than eighty percent of your law is  
different for every nonprofit depending on

00:07:00.590 --> 00:07:05.460

what their mission is and what they did  
there were some that would be the probably

00:07:05.470 --> 00:07:11.030

the three key takeaways that I would  
pinpoint So there is little difference as.

00:07:12.450 --> 00:07:19.450

Long. As. There's now I didn't it

00:07:19.460 --> 00:07:23.610

wasn't hard for me and  
actually ever to my manager of

00:07:23.620 --> 00:07:25.220

a to go into other help first as

00:07:25.230 --> 00:07:28.060

a consultant before I became  
executive director for

00:07:28.070 --> 00:07:32.510

a couple reasons is as I'm someone  
as they had hired me they were quite

00:07:32.520 --> 00:07:39.490

a mime I also wasn't. I could've said this  
so executive directors in the nonprofit

00:07:39.500 --> 00:07:43.970

run with the board the board is the boss  
and so they have this weird dance between

00:07:43.980 --> 00:07:48.290

running the company and being responsible  
for day to day and vision and strategy

00:07:48.300 --> 00:07:53.950

somewhat but then you have the board which  
oversees that and manages the well that

00:07:53.960 --> 00:07:56.070

can be a difficult relationship that isn't

00:07:56.110 --> 00:08:00.780

a very different thing for me to have I  
would choose to be in charge economy shots

00:08:00.790 --> 00:08:02.110

and I don't think much about

00:08:02.120 --> 00:08:06.420

a board or going to them to get permission  
or things like that and coming in as

00:08:06.430 --> 00:08:11.640

a consultant I was my pa the board but  
I didn't really care so much what they

00:08:11.650 --> 00:08:15.290

thought what they needed because I was  
there at his home what was working what

00:08:15.300 --> 00:08:20.390

wasn't working I didn't need to be mindful  
of their feelings or their relationships

00:08:20.400 --> 00:08:24.130

or any of that so I came in to say this  
is ready this is it ripping you guys have

00:08:24.140 --> 00:08:28.160

dropped the ball you need more accountability  
you need work checks and balances and

00:08:28.170 --> 00:08:31.310

they could just take it because that's  
where they repay me for and I'll send my

00:08:31.320 --> 00:08:35.780

shift over to the executive director and  
they're my boss and I've gotten used to

00:08:35.789 --> 00:08:37.409  
having a dialogue with them in

00:08:37.419 --> 00:08:41.039  
a certain way and now I need  
to be either bit more or less

00:08:41.049 --> 00:08:42.990  
a respectful but I need to be

00:08:43.000 --> 00:08:47.570  
a bit more diplomatic and incorporate  
them into the decision making in

00:08:47.580 --> 00:08:51.570  
a way that was fairly different than when  
I did it as it is in the corporate run so

00:08:51.580 --> 00:08:55.260  
for me my skills are very transferable  
obviously the biggest learning curve in

00:08:55.270 --> 00:09:00.360  
Human Services for us understand it restricted  
and restricted grants and how to do

00:09:00.370 --> 00:09:06.240  
the financials and. You know  
our government contracts and

00:09:07.030 --> 00:09:10.830  
compliance with Federal Fair Housing  
Monson all of these things I mean I knew

00:09:10.840 --> 00:09:13.760  
nothing so I had to just  
get in there and do

00:09:13.770 --> 00:09:18.850  
a rapid nosebleed assent on learning

everything there was not just about running

00:09:18.860 --> 00:09:23.880

a nonprofit contracted financing and then  
Egypt and everything that was an agent

00:09:23.890 --> 00:09:28.450

space and who are the players in that  
respect to be doing so there is definitely

00:09:28.460 --> 00:09:32.430

a lot of there and there but this goes  
for actually for the transferable and I

00:09:32.440 --> 00:09:36.510

think you see a lot of for  
profit upper management X.X.

00:09:36.520 --> 00:09:39.470

Moving into the nonprofit space  
as they get out of their careers

00:09:39.690 --> 00:09:46.260

a little bit. Oh so it's. Just  
like one of the this is her

00:09:46.270 --> 00:09:52.620

Tiger and like what. I just

00:09:54.160 --> 00:10:00.110

read. Up in this one here jump on  
there they're under it's burning

00:10:00.600 --> 00:10:07.540

a lot more. I think kind of your  
comment that. Heaven help you

00:10:07.550 --> 00:10:12.600

out I think if I understand what you're  
saying is just I mean we actually don't see

00:10:12.610 --> 00:10:16.030

a lot of lot of people retiring in San Diego unless they live here because of how

00:10:16.040 --> 00:10:20.110

expensive it is and because housing is terrible but of the richest and then in the

00:10:20.120 --> 00:10:25.730

United States. And so and the kind with you do

00:10:25.740 --> 00:10:30.250

a lot with isolated seniors who don't have any family or they don't have anything

00:10:30.260 --> 00:10:33.370

on the really to advocate or be a part of their life in

00:10:33.380 --> 00:10:39.440

a decision making role at all so and the statement around aging is that I think

00:10:39.490 --> 00:10:43.130

especially in Southern Californians we just don't want to deal with and

00:10:43.770 --> 00:10:49.800

then I mean we're in the land of Hollywood in Bostock's and we don't want to

00:10:50.000 --> 00:10:54.520

think about it in Toronto half of it it's very invisible it's not like come assess

00:10:54.540 --> 00:10:57.620

down in San Diego streets downtown which I used to rip down



00:10:57.620 --> 00:11:02.070

a lot it's very visible you see it it's a  
blight it's in the business area it's in

00:11:02.080 --> 00:11:06.140

a tourist area and everyone is coming  
together we put millions and millions

00:11:06.180 --> 00:11:10.670

of dollars Toto in this nest and the numbers  
are getting worse our population is

00:11:10.680 --> 00:11:15.700

super invisible and they often times  
loss life and they're not socialized

00:11:15.740 --> 00:11:18.410

and that's a huge problem you  
know the isolation the it's

00:11:18.420 --> 00:11:22.330

a chronic disease and hospitalizations  
and training their savings and their

00:11:22.340 --> 00:11:27.100

resources so there's that piece of it for  
sure and then I feel that there's no good

00:11:27.110 --> 00:11:31.500

way to get people to understand  
the impact of aging until it's

00:11:31.510 --> 00:11:36.810

a condom so we have funders who are  
really good in health and maleness and

00:11:36.820 --> 00:11:40.370

understand what we do and they've given  
us hundreds of thousands of dollars but

00:11:40.380 --> 00:11:43.900  
until their parents started being discharged  
from hospitals or going in the school

00:11:43.910 --> 00:11:47.420  
of nursing or getting back home you could  
tell about this from the light bulb went

00:11:47.430 --> 00:11:51.150  
on and all of a collison a patent  
you know I need to figure out

00:11:51.580 --> 00:11:55.700  
a placement for my mom I need Scott nurse  
and I need someone to come in my mom's

00:11:55.710 --> 00:11:56.270  
house once

00:11:56.280 --> 00:12:01.380  
a week and each lost her license until  
that happens they don't like doesn't go on

00:12:01.590 --> 00:12:03.880  
and so there's not a way  
or we haven't found

00:12:03.890 --> 00:12:08.900  
a. To get people to kind of role play that  
early enough so they realize what it is

00:12:08.910 --> 00:12:13.380  
because Must the time they come to us are  
panicked and it's too late and I'm out of

00:12:13.390 --> 00:12:16.620  
work says bill because it's preventing you  
know we're trying to get in their homes

00:12:16.630 --> 00:12:20.280  
early we're trying to prevent falls for  
prevent hospitalizations we're trying to

00:12:20.290 --> 00:12:20.650  
give them

00:12:20.660 --> 00:12:27.650  
a say affordable way to stay. Efficiently  
and people don't think about that so

00:12:27.760 --> 00:12:31.840  
that's a huge obstacle to representing  
a population I don't know whether

00:12:31.850 --> 00:12:38.830  
this answer your question. So just building off that  
so I don't it's my family and

00:12:39.150 --> 00:12:45.830  
people that are around my elderly that suppose to  
intend to help their own

00:12:45.840 --> 00:12:50.170  
grandpa friends it's never want to do anything for him  
and I saw you there I was doing so I

00:12:50.180 --> 00:12:52.590  
don't know if you experience  
that Elderhelp

00:12:52.610 --> 00:12:58.520  
try to help me help it's  
OK now I want to help you that's

00:12:58.520 --> 00:13:03.910  
a good point what we really try to do is  
foster independence so the key thing is

00:13:03.920 --> 00:13:08.040

that this population wants to stay in control  
they're totally capable they want to

00:13:08.050 --> 00:13:10.500  
maintain their independence  
and it's kind of

00:13:10.510 --> 00:13:14.690  
a mess that they're looking for dependency  
or handouts or support most of them

00:13:14.700 --> 00:13:16.130  
don't want that they just need

00:13:16.140 --> 00:13:21.130  
a little bit of help to do that and so  
what I think is just making sure they

00:13:21.140 --> 00:13:24.940  
understand they're being independent means  
availing yourself of certain resources

00:13:24.950 --> 00:13:29.100  
if you can't get it done the other thing  
that helps with the other help is that

00:13:29.110 --> 00:13:31.040  
we're not a family  
member because they have

00:13:31.050 --> 00:13:33.890  
a natural resistance to have  
an average station with

00:13:33.900 --> 00:13:37.740  
a family member so we can have the  
conversation or facilitate it or be

00:13:37.750 --> 00:13:42.640  
a proto that we can help identify what

are the supports in the family that they

00:13:42.650 --> 00:13:48.550

have been in their inner circle and maybe  
help them figure out how best to use that

00:13:48.740 --> 00:13:52.580

and often times it's not  
complicated sad I like to tell

00:13:52.590 --> 00:13:56.330

a story about this one John a man  
who was disabled about it he was

00:13:56.340 --> 00:14:01.890

independent and alone that I'm doing great but he  
had crutches and he could not physically

00:14:01.900 --> 00:14:02.320

anti his

00:14:02.340 --> 00:14:07.490

Trash that was all he just. Get it down the  
stairs into the back trash can then you

00:14:07.490 --> 00:14:12.240

can get the trash can out to the curb  
some months went by this trash

00:14:12.280 --> 00:14:17.160

I asked him in his apartment and of course you  
can imagine that that affected his prior

00:14:17.170 --> 00:14:21.500

to self esteem he didn't go out of the house  
he did invite people over hygiene and

00:14:21.510 --> 00:14:25.980

other things and fortunately some of referred  
him to us and we immediately sent our

00:14:25.990 --> 00:14:29.750  
staff over and they emptied out themselves  
like eight bags they just kept taken

00:14:29.760 --> 00:14:33.010  
things out to the trash and now  
we send somebody over once

00:14:33.020 --> 00:14:37.910  
a week just to take out the trash so this  
isn't expensive it is not complicated but

00:14:37.920 --> 00:14:42.540  
it missed one eighty between is he going  
to be hospitalized I have chronic disease

00:14:42.550 --> 00:14:47.770  
and have serious serious health issues or  
just find someone can take out the trash so

00:14:48.150 --> 00:14:53.150  
what we do can be that simple and it can  
have an astronomical health and wellness

00:14:53.160 --> 00:14:55.750  
impact on their ability to stay independent

00:14:55.760 --> 00:15:00.240  
and there are common to  
be fine they don't have any issues with

00:15:00.440 --> 00:15:04.590  
asking for what they need or what they do  
so no where to go get it so I don't know

00:15:04.630 --> 00:15:08.910  
that helps either but definitely using us  
to help facilitate those conversations

00:15:08.920 --> 00:15:09.910

this is huge.

00:15:20.630 --> 00:15:26.060

We have a lot so we have five hundred volunteers  
and they range from nineteen to about

00:15:26.070 --> 00:15:32.820

ninety three and if they are amazing on  
average most of our volunteers to work to

00:15:32.830 --> 00:15:37.220

have children of their own they still find  
time to donate time every month to spend

00:15:37.230 --> 00:15:42.400

time with our clients and then we have our  
own retirees of course you do the same

00:15:42.520 --> 00:15:47.590

and last year for example we provide  
transportation to that our volunteer driver

00:15:47.600 --> 00:15:53.700

program or volunteers did about eight  
thousand writes I'm just found in tears and

00:15:53.710 --> 00:15:59.200

the volunteers in general. Donated almost  
twelve thousand hours of time which is

00:15:59.210 --> 00:16:00.200

the equivalent of five and

00:16:00.210 --> 00:16:04.690

a half years of time compressed into one  
year of service which I think is an

00:16:04.700 --> 00:16:09.660

amazing selfless thing that they did and

I mean Elderhelp does not exist without

00:16:09.680 --> 00:16:14.220

the volunteers and that's true for most  
nonprofit so we do have millennial and when

00:16:14.220 --> 00:16:18.080

they come in we make sure  
everyone understands what the expectations

00:16:18.090 --> 00:16:23.390

are what the orientations going to be like  
how to understand the Gerontology proud

00:16:23.400 --> 00:16:27.890

of it and working with seniors in the time  
commitment and not in their hours and

00:16:27.900 --> 00:16:31.040

their time so we can  
document that I mean it's

00:16:31.050 --> 00:16:34.800

a huge amount but definitely we see more  
college students and we're just immediate

00:16:34.810 --> 00:16:41.080

post grad students come to offer  
service so it seems like it is.

00:16:55.870 --> 00:16:59.670

a full time outreach manager and all  
she does is pave the Pam pavement for

00:16:59.680 --> 00:17:01.960

volunteers and we fly or

00:17:01.970 --> 00:17:06.420

a lot of Starbucks let me tell you and if  
they are social media that's still our



00:17:06.430 --> 00:17:11.400

best recruitment tour believe it or not and she attends every health fair or she goes to

00:17:11.410 --> 00:17:17.339

every community civic event the lions the Elks the rotaries you name it. And of

00:17:17.349 --> 00:17:23.109

course we have to try to have an active social media platform and most of the time

00:17:24.069 --> 00:17:26.640

if we can just explain to the member doing we can get

00:17:26.650 --> 00:17:31.060

a lot of interests and we use our existing volunteers as word of mouth as well

00:17:31.310 --> 00:17:36.510

because every one of them will say that they get more back then they gave and if you

00:17:36.520 --> 00:17:38.850

can just get someone to prioritize a time and be

00:17:38.860 --> 00:17:44.540

a part of our program they feel it's dividends back to them more so than anything

00:17:44.550 --> 00:17:46.900

that they're doing so it's really word of mouth

00:17:46.910 --> 00:17:51.260

a lot of it and they're firing and being showing up at every possible thing we can

00:17:51.270 --> 00:17:57.890

and just using our existing relatives  
to keep spreading the word.

00:18:09.850 --> 00:18:14.730

holes which. Has the age difference  
between a volunteer and a client post

00:18:14.740 --> 00:18:21.210

a challenge no not that  
I'm aware or. It's.

00:18:21.900 --> 00:18:27.160

Been phenomenal I mean that's the cross  
neuron and mentoring they each get from

00:18:27.170 --> 00:18:30.470

each other I mean we have so many stories  
where the senior learn how to use

00:18:30.480 --> 00:18:34.410

a computer or go to a you know

00:18:34.530 --> 00:18:38.670

a Pinera they never been there you know  
who knows what it is and the younger

00:18:38.680 --> 00:18:42.250

especially younger twenty something thirty  
something or learning about history

00:18:42.510 --> 00:18:47.470

education artifacts are things that might  
be in their home stories about there are

00:18:47.680 --> 00:18:52.970

three Germany stories about you know them  
the Middle East to come to America to

00:18:52.980 --> 00:18:53.150

have

00:18:53.160 --> 00:18:59.160

a safe harbor for their family and  
so like I said the mutual benefit is

00:18:59.170 --> 00:19:02.800

we've not on  
rare occasion you may find

00:19:02.810 --> 00:19:06.920

a senior that they use maybe some of the  
younger is not quite as respectful as they

00:19:06.930 --> 00:19:08.090

would like maybe

00:19:08.100 --> 00:19:13.170

a little bit too casual or slimy or something  
like that but we've never had it but

00:19:13.180 --> 00:19:16.680

it's recently to my knowledge to point  
where they've asked to be replaced or have

00:19:16.690 --> 00:19:21.820

that person changed they recognize that  
they're donating their time and we have

00:19:21.830 --> 00:19:27.480

pretty strict policies about for both the  
client and the volunteers these are our

00:19:27.490 --> 00:19:32.030

values these are our expectations this  
is how we engage with each other and we

00:19:32.040 --> 00:19:34.460

expect them to follow that if they have

00:19:34.470 --> 00:19:38.180

a hard time following and that may be  
one of the few reasons we would ask them

00:19:38.220 --> 00:19:39.470

to leave our service.

00:19:50.470 --> 00:19:55.030

I have I have yes I've done the  
driving in me also there is

00:19:55.040 --> 00:20:00.480

a simple resident occupancy hotel downtown  
that we provide social services twenty

00:20:00.490 --> 00:20:02.500

hours a week and this is

00:20:02.510 --> 00:20:06.340

a contract with the city were housing  
commission and there's about one hundred

00:20:06.350 --> 00:20:11.450

thirty units and the residents there  
are fifty five sixty plus and

00:20:11.460 --> 00:20:16.710

a lot of them are borderline homeless  
very low income some behavior how alcohol

00:20:16.750 --> 00:20:18.880

drug you know drug usage it's

00:20:18.890 --> 00:20:23.480

a little bit different from our usual  
client I can tell and so we provide social

00:20:23.490 --> 00:20:24.600

services there it's funny our it's

00:20:24.610 --> 00:20:28.840

a man rate and it's been phenomenal as far as getting them to come together as

00:20:28.850 --> 00:20:33.070

a community access their benefits be more respectful of property management and

00:20:33.080 --> 00:20:36.020

their space and I go down there and I command that

00:20:36.030 --> 00:20:40.760

a few times and touch some computer classes and you know we all try to do

00:20:41.080 --> 00:20:45.400

a little bit I think it's important for me to be in the field and do that I can't

00:20:45.410 --> 00:20:51.160

do it as much as I like but I love I tend Oliver we have workshops at our office we

00:20:51.170 --> 00:20:55.760

do computer classes we do fix at home improvement classes and I usually pick up

00:20:55.770 --> 00:20:59.030

a drive seniors to and from that and attend the classes so now.

00:21:05.670 --> 00:21:06.990

My goodness that's

00:21:07.000 --> 00:21:13.180

a very good question you might not have enough tape for me to think about. I don't know

00:21:13.190 --> 00:21:19.050

I always think it's interesting maybe not  
for me but I just love watching when we have

00:21:19.070 --> 00:21:25.750

our workshops and things I just love  
watching the volunteers with their heads bent

00:21:25.760 --> 00:21:29.170

over the seniors and everyone kind of had  
to gather around that I mean give the

00:21:29.180 --> 00:21:33.510

technology workshop seen them try to teach  
them how to use their phones you know

00:21:33.520 --> 00:21:37.500

the apps on the phone and understand all  
that it was just touched my heart to see

00:21:37.510 --> 00:21:42.210

everyone kind of and then just I'll set my  
car and I'll see this young man helping

00:21:42.250 --> 00:21:43.140

this older woman with

00:21:43.150 --> 00:21:47.840

her walker get into the office and how kind  
and caring they are to each other that

00:21:47.850 --> 00:21:53.370

stuff gets me every time so it's really  
just the humanity and the compassion of it

00:21:53.570 --> 00:21:59.310

is amazing, and I haven't had any  
crazy stories but every time I ride in

00:21:59.320 --> 00:22:03.180

a car with a senior I hear it and I learn  
something new a new story.

00:22:03.180 --> 00:22:05.790

I rode with a woman a few months back that she was

00:22:05.800 --> 00:22:10.640

a huge activists you know in the Washington  
marching and of course they are all

00:22:11.590 --> 00:22:15.500

Quite unsure about why they're still  
marching but you know telling all the stories

00:22:15.500 --> 00:22:20.320

about their activism and their rights  
to get the vote out and all of that so I

00:22:20.320 --> 00:22:26.700

never tire of hearing the legacy and I  
think that we need to put it more respect

00:22:27.120 --> 00:22:31.830

and one thing I often say when I'm speaking  
about what we do is that

00:22:31.830 --> 00:22:33.540

what Elder Help does is so important

00:22:33.540 --> 00:22:37.100

and I think everyone should respect and care for and mind our elders,

00:22:37.100 --> 00:22:44.230

I think as a community we're only as healthy and  
together as our ability to take care

00:22:44.430 --> 00:22:49.470

of the under-served or the invisible  
and our others and I think we have

00:22:49.480 --> 00:22:52.650

a duty and I was say it's not just a  
human dignity thing that I think it's

00:22:52.660 --> 00:22:56.040

a human decency thing.

00:22:56.040 --> 00:23:01.880

Going off of that, I come from a more community-wide culture, and

00:23:01.880 --> 00:23:04.500

in the past few years I have seen my mom having to go around

00:23:04.500 --> 00:23:08.780

taking care of all of the different elderly people around in my family

00:23:08.780 --> 00:23:11.490

With that different mentality that we have here,

00:23:11.490 --> 00:23:13.750

what is something that we can improve upon to become more caring

00:23:13.750 --> 00:23:17.290

and become more accepting of these elders that we have around us

00:23:17.290 --> 00:23:19.700

and to maybe get rid of the stigma

00:23:19.700 --> 00:23:22.680

and try and help them out more

00:23:22.680 --> 00:23:27.150

and help people become more open towards helping them?

00:23:27.150 --> 00:23:30.250

Especially in collectivist cultures, my family is Indian,

00:23:30.250 --> 00:23:33.020

and they don't like asking other people for help



00:23:33.020 --> 00:23:37.440

but even if you help them, they'll be like, "go away, stop!"

00:23:37.440 --> 00:23:39.320

It's interesting you bring up culture because

00:23:39.320 --> 00:23:41.830

we definitely see a difference in culture in approaching aging.

00:23:41.830 --> 00:23:43.670

I mean, I think generally speaking,

00:23:43.670 --> 00:23:45.400

most other countries and

00:23:45.400 --> 00:23:49.180

ethnic groups are better about caring for aging

00:23:49.180 --> 00:23:55.290

I think maybe their family size, their sense of duty and responsibility is more ingrained.

00:23:55.290 --> 00:23:57.660

Our overall population is not super diverse,

00:23:57.660 --> 00:23:59.510

it is a large Caucasian population

00:23:59.510 --> 00:24:05.470

and it is mostly women, average age 80.

00:24:05.470 --> 00:24:06.970

A lot of them widowed

00:24:06.970 --> 00:24:12.050

and so, I think there is definitely a culture issue there for sure,

00:24:12.050 --> 00:24:17.880

and I also think that within the communities, even within San Diego, there are pockets of communities,

00:24:17.880 --> 00:24:19.440

like the Somalian community,

00:24:19.440 --> 00:24:21.800

they do take good care of themselves within their community.

00:24:21.800 --> 00:24:26.060

The Indian community, they may not ask or want it, but within they're a little bit better,

00:24:26.060 --> 00:24:27.390

about taking care,

00:24:27.390 --> 00:24:31.190

but I think what I always say when I'm out speaking and on panels

00:24:31.190 --> 00:24:35.610

is that I ask everyone in the audience to just take a look around their neighborhood

00:24:35.610 --> 00:24:36.420

or their apartment building,

00:24:36.420 --> 00:24:39.990

and just be more mindful, so the first thing is to be more aware

00:24:39.990 --> 00:24:42.880

are there people around you living alone? At any age?

00:24:42.880 --> 00:24:44.680

They need to have a companion.

00:24:44.680 --> 00:24:47.720

These recent fires up in Napa and Sonoma were huge right, because

00:24:47.720 --> 00:24:50.380

the largest loss of life was 75 plus,

00:24:50.380 --> 00:24:53.450

and most of them just didn't have anyone to help them evacuate,

00:24:53.450 --> 00:24:59.096

which is tragic.

00:24:59.206 --> 00:25:00.683

We talk a lot about what happens in

00:25:00.683 --> 00:25:03.703

San Diego when we have these evacuation orders and someone is living alone

00:25:03.703 --> 00:25:06.283

and they can't drive, I mean it is a terrible thought.

00:25:06.283 --> 00:25:11.699

So, be just mindful of paying attention to your community, who's in it.

00:25:11.699 --> 00:25:15.116

Do you see someone struggling to get the trash can out? Every morning,

00:25:15.116 --> 00:25:18.374

I walk every morning, a couple of miles, and I'm constantly running in to people

00:25:18.374 --> 00:25:21.172

doing things that they probably shouldn't be because of their age.

00:25:21.172 --> 00:25:22.252

I have to be very careful,

00:25:22.252 --> 00:25:23.462

do you need help with that?

00:25:23.462 --> 00:25:26.552

Because you don't want to be demeaning or send a message they are not capable.

00:25:26.552 --> 00:25:29.032

But I just say, I'd like to give you a hand with that,

00:25:29.032 --> 00:25:32.862

or you find ways to do it that doesn't feel like you are taking

00:25:32.862 --> 00:25:35.760

anything away from them

but you know there's not

00:25:35.770 --> 00:25:39.730

a lot of answers other than I'm the legislative government advocacy side there's

00:25:39.740 --> 00:25:44.630

a lot we can be doing to bring more light in and awareness and illustration than an

00:25:44.640 --> 00:25:48.430

individual side is just being mindful. I was at the airport

00:25:48.440 --> 00:25:52.540

a few months ago coming back from Chicago, and late at night it was really cold and

00:25:52.870 --> 00:25:53.520

there was a woman in

00:25:53.530 --> 00:25:59.070

a wheelchair, easily seventy plus sitting by herself out front. Hundreds of people

00:25:59.080 --> 00:26:03.000

walked by her she was out there promised an hour and that one person stopped,

00:26:03.000 --> 00:26:05.200

so I watched her for a

00:26:05.210 --> 00:26:07.880

little while then I went over and just said you know do you have

00:26:07.890 --> 00:26:13.870

a ride coming and are you warm enough? And she said yes I do and I am, and she

00:26:13.880 --> 00:26:19.380

stops me thank you so much for asking and  
I talked I told the story on another show

00:26:19.390 --> 00:26:23.700  
because I was so, she was so shocked that I  
just stopped and asked her and again it

00:26:23.710 --> 00:26:25.960  
took nothing you know thirty  
seconds over there do you have

00:26:25.970 --> 00:26:31.170  
a ride, are you OK? Thirty seconds back,  
so it's around us all the time.

00:26:31.180 --> 00:26:34.450  
It's somebody in line at the you  
know the seven eleven and someone in

00:26:34.460 --> 00:26:35.420  
a park you know having

00:26:35.430 --> 00:26:40.990  
a hard time finding their car or their  
keys or it doesn't have to be complicated.

00:26:42.770 --> 00:26:44.373  
That's awesome!

00:26:44.373 --> 00:26:49.136  
I guess one of my other questions was going to be, you kind of answered it a little bit, but

00:26:49.136 --> 00:26:53.970  
how can people that maybe don't have as much time, or financial resources, maybe like some of us,

00:26:53.970 --> 00:26:54.870  
can get more involved,

00:26:54.870 --> 00:26:58.900  
and I think you kind of already elaborated on it, but doing your best to look after the community.

00:26:58.900 --> 00:27:01.900

I guess it is more difficult for us here,

00:27:01.900 --> 00:27:07.220

we are not around as much, probably where we are living and on campus

00:27:07.220 --> 00:27:09.830

but if there are any other ideas you might have on how people like us

00:27:09.830 --> 00:27:11.320

could get more involved and help out?

00:27:11.320 --> 00:27:14.480

Well I think that. For

00:27:14.480 --> 00:27:16.010

Elder Help once you become

00:27:16.020 --> 00:27:19.220

a volunteer you can do as much or as little as you want. We ask for your

00:27:19.230 --> 00:27:20.380

commitment just to create

00:27:20.390 --> 00:27:23.710

a relationship with the time that we spent in training and oversight that you're

00:27:23.720 --> 00:27:26.100

invested, but it can be as little as a couple of hours

00:27:26.110 --> 00:27:30.900

a month and it can be something specific to an interest or thing that you like

00:27:31.610 --> 00:27:35.500

maybe you like organizing bills and paperwork

and that's all you want to do maybe you

00:27:35.510 --> 00:27:38.330

just want to drive people but you don't want  
to spend time with them in their home

00:27:38.340 --> 00:27:40.020

visiting and we have

00:27:40.030 --> 00:27:43.550

a lot of people that you just want to  
visit being home but what we try to do is

00:27:43.560 --> 00:27:46.960

match your interest with the interest of  
the seniors so we have people that say

00:27:46.970 --> 00:27:51.270

look I want to learn Indian cooking and  
you know they've they've been paired up

00:27:51.280 --> 00:27:54.880

with volunteers and found out I love to  
cook Indian food you know that's practice and do

00:27:54.890 --> 00:28:00.420

stuff together so they start creating  
their own things that they enjoy doing

00:28:00.430 --> 00:28:00.920

together and

00:28:00.930 --> 00:28:04.750

a lot of our volunteers start bringing  
them into their family going with them to

00:28:04.760 --> 00:28:09.580

church, having them over for their holiday  
dinners. It's different for everyone, but

00:28:10.080 --> 00:28:15.340

it can be tailored to your schedule or  
to your likes and your interests so

00:28:15.350 --> 00:28:20.080

that it doesn't you know it can be you  
just maybe taking your homework over to

00:28:20.090 --> 00:28:22.340

somebody's house and sitting  
with them while they needle

00:28:22.350 --> 00:28:26.440

point and they just want companionship  
or someone to talk to or walk the dog or

00:28:26.450 --> 00:28:27.232

whatever it is.

00:28:29.282 --> 00:28:31.522

I'm going to back track a lot right now.

00:28:31.835 --> 00:28:34.025

To when you started your own business,

00:28:34.025 --> 00:28:38.675

what were some of the more interesting memories you had or

00:28:38.675 --> 00:28:43.700

the difficulties you went through, when you started your own business independent of Elder Help?

00:28:43.700 --> 00:28:48.340

I did before Elder Help so I had  
been in the corporate world and event

00:28:48.350 --> 00:28:51.890

meeting planning like I said for over twenty  
five years I started my own consulting

00:28:51.900 --> 00:28:55.460



business called the Deb Martin Group,  
and it was to handle

00:28:55.800 --> 00:28:59.460  
a lot of event meeting planning clients  
that I had had relationships with and also

00:28:59.470 --> 00:29:03.350  
any business you know if they needed help  
with budgeting your or running it or

00:29:03.360 --> 00:29:07.650  
selling it or mergers or anything  
to do with the operating of

00:29:07.660 --> 00:29:13.580  
a business and of course the challenge is  
and I was caring for our son primarily at

00:29:13.590 --> 00:29:17.810  
the time to so the advantages was the flexibility  
of it but that can always be the

00:29:17.820 --> 00:29:23.110  
disadvantage, some people are made to work at home and some people are not and then

00:29:23.210 --> 00:29:26.790  
you kind of have to start taking work that  
you might not take if you didn't have to

00:29:27.170 --> 00:29:31.490  
so you don't quite have the luxury of cherry  
picking if you're more concerned with

00:29:32.010 --> 00:29:32.490  
making

00:29:32.560 --> 00:29:36.320  
a certain amount of money to cover your  
bills and all that so I just got smarter

00:29:36.330 --> 00:29:41.700

with it. It's healthy when you don't have to have the business that for the

00:29:41.710 --> 00:29:45.130

projects and the clients I really didn't want to work with I just charge them

00:29:45.140 --> 00:29:49.790

a lot more and then if they still wanted to hire me I would say well the the worst

00:29:49.800 --> 00:29:53.060

thing I can say the best thing is that they're still paying the bills and then the

00:29:53.070 --> 00:29:56.010

other clients for fine, but again it wasn't

00:29:56.020 --> 00:30:00.490

a difficult transition for me and I liked the flexibility of it and I liked being

00:30:00.500 --> 00:30:03.730

able to be there for my son when he was he's

00:30:03.740 --> 00:30:09.630

a little special needs so we had to make some accommodations for him so I liked

00:30:09.670 --> 00:30:14.010

being available to do that and evolved on its own.

00:30:15.775 --> 00:30:19.002

I'm interested, I want to work for a non-profit in the future.

00:30:19.002 --> 00:30:22.782

But with my family's background of how are you going to pay the bills,

00:30:22.782 --> 00:30:24.610

so how was that transition?

00:30:24.610 --> 00:30:30.580

Did you think it was better that you had your own business at first and then moving into the non-profit sector?

00:30:30.580 --> 00:30:33.960

Or did blessings just happen and then you ended up?

00:30:33.960 --> 00:30:35.350

That's a good question.

00:30:35.350 --> 00:30:38.870

I was fortunate enough  
to be fairly successful in my corporate roles

00:30:38.880 --> 00:30:39.740

so from

00:30:39.750 --> 00:30:45.010

a financial standpoint I had done my savings, I own my house I had some retirement

00:30:45.330 --> 00:30:48.090

so I could probably afford  
to take a little bit of

00:30:48.100 --> 00:30:51.710

a pay cut to go into the nonprofit to  
work for my self. First of all, which was only

00:30:51.720 --> 00:30:55.270

supposed to be until my son graduated from  
high school and then I could afford to

00:30:55.270 --> 00:30:56.020

take

00:30:56.030 --> 00:31:02.230

a salary cut somewhat in the nonprofit space, so there's definitely financial considerations

00:31:02.240 --> 00:31:07.930

for sure. People who do it, it has to be your heart and they're certainly and

00:31:07.970 --> 00:31:09.410

an ascension you know

00:31:09.770 --> 00:31:15.300

a way that you can ascend into higher paying positions and running the company.

00:31:15.300 --> 00:31:22.360

But if you're looking for that doctor, attorney kind of money that's never going to

00:31:22.550 --> 00:31:24.870

happen in that way. Although, there are some C.E.O.'s make

00:31:24.880 --> 00:31:29.940

a lot of money but I will tell you for me personally I negotiated

00:31:29.950 --> 00:31:34.870

a lower salary and I had them freeze it for the first three years because I wanted

00:31:34.880 --> 00:31:40.040

the financial freedom to hire people to pay them what they deserve for what I

00:31:40.050 --> 00:31:43.180

wanted to do to get increases to people I was it doubling up on their

00:31:43.180 --> 00:31:48.130

responsibility as I slowly created the team and the leadership and I didn't feel

00:31:48.150 --> 00:31:52.710

right having my name and my payroll with that that big chunk of money by there

00:31:52.760 --> 00:31:56.780

if were only making nine hundred thousand and I'm making ninety thousand you know already it's

00:31:56.790 --> 00:31:59.080

like almost ten percent a budget so I had

00:31:59.080 --> 00:32:03.648

a hard time with that and that was my choice I had them freeze it and I focused on

00:32:03.648 --> 00:32:07.350

hiring new people and paying them more money and getting the team in place so I had

00:32:07.350 --> 00:32:13.770

a leadership team finally the board forced me to take an increase and I accepted it

00:32:13.780 --> 00:32:16.030

only because it looked bad on the 990.

00:32:16.040 --> 00:32:19.750

That my salary wasn't moving and it didn't look good the funders to say well that's

00:32:19.760 --> 00:32:21.640

not really about a confidence in their C.E.O.

00:32:21.650 --> 00:32:25.280

That their salary isn't moving and they

would come in and say why isn't her salary

00:32:25.290 --> 00:32:31.810

moving so do the good of the agency I had  
to take an increase but ya I

00:32:32.090 --> 00:32:34.660

you know you certainly want to make  
good money. You want to pay the bills and all

00:32:34.870 --> 00:32:40.540

that I think it's easier being older and  
longer in my career to be able to make

00:32:40.550 --> 00:32:43.060

some sacrifices now where  
I probably would have had

00:32:43.070 --> 00:32:47.030

a harder time in my twenty's and thirty's  
Well yes and no you know if I didn't

00:32:47.040 --> 00:32:47.180

have

00:32:47.190 --> 00:32:51.920

a family in my bonus weren't as big it's  
probably would be perfectly fine the hospitality

00:32:51.930 --> 00:32:57.350

industry isn't extremely high paying either  
and I ran multiple offices and we had

00:32:57.360 --> 00:33:03.260

sixty full time staff and about five hundred  
part time and it was not the highest

00:33:03.270 --> 00:33:08.900

paying so what I was able to give them as  
the environment control flexibility time

00:33:08.910 --> 00:33:12.670

to take care of their kids if you work late  
come in late. You know things like that

00:33:12.990 --> 00:33:19.600

and great benefits so found other ways  
trying to create their work life experience

00:33:19.790 --> 00:33:20.620

that wasn't just about

00:33:20.630 --> 00:33:27.010

a paycheck and in elder help I pay one  
hundred percent of their benefits because

00:33:27.020 --> 00:33:31.940

it's. The full reimbursement  
from mileage which

00:33:31.950 --> 00:33:36.640

a lot of non-profits do the charity  
reimbursement rate we pay the full reimbursement rate.

00:33:36.650 --> 00:33:38.150

So there's things like that we have a match for

00:33:38.160 --> 00:33:42.630

a 401K so these are things that dollar  
for dollar are more affordable to give to

00:33:42.640 --> 00:33:43.500

employee than just

00:33:43.510 --> 00:33:47.240

a dollar for dollar increase in their  
salary because that's more expensive for us to do

00:33:47.250 --> 00:33:52.960

I don't know if that answers your question

but you know when you're younger and your

00:33:52.970 --> 00:33:57.760

expenses are lower the salaries aren't that bad compared to other industries but

00:33:57.770 --> 00:34:01.620

certainly if if you know. Big money.

00:34:01.660 --> 00:34:09.530

Working from home were you able to build relationships with other non-profit organizations before you got to Elders Help.

00:34:09.530 --> 00:34:16.190

Or is the non-profit completely different from your personal business. It was very different I mean I have sat on

00:34:16.270 --> 00:34:20.730

boards in volunteered and or worked non-profits like the deaf and heart of hearing

00:34:20.739 --> 00:34:24.050

camp and the children's center for hearing and talking up in Ensenada

00:34:24.320 --> 00:34:25.320

and others from way back

00:34:25.330 --> 00:34:31.790

a back but not to the point where they offered me any

00:34:31.800 --> 00:34:36.080

education or integration or any way that I can incorporate it into the work I was

00:34:36.389 --> 00:34:39.940

doing with elder help in fact that was my professional relationships that became more

00:34:39.949 --> 00:34:45.449



necessary like we were evicted from our building and had seven days to find space

00:34:45.460 --> 00:34:49.460

you know I reached out all my for profit people and the real estate people I

00:34:49.469 --> 00:34:54.510

knew and the office building brokers and things like that so now there wasn't

00:34:54.520 --> 00:35:00.970

a lot of overlap there are almost two entirely different minds two entirely different bubbles.

00:35:00.980 --> 00:35:07.590

So would you say that where you are in life right now is your true calling or are you progressing into that

00:35:08.830 --> 00:35:12.930

I think its my true calling I mean I'm passionate about aging in senior and

00:35:12.940 --> 00:35:16.540

really people who are going to be in it for long time. We need younger people coming

00:35:16.550 --> 00:35:21.510

in and caring forth the mantle the legacy and I have some board members and

00:35:21.520 --> 00:35:27.230

colleagues who want me to go into politics and it scares me and but they think

00:35:27.240 --> 00:35:31.720

that we can make greater thing around these policies and aging if there's more

00:35:31.730 --> 00:35:37.070

people doing the political side of it so I don't now but sometimes you feeling like you can

00:35:37.080 --> 00:35:43.370

do more here behind the scenes kind of tipping  
the windmills where no one can see you versus

00:35:43.380 --> 00:35:48.690

be out there for everyone to see even. So I don't know but now it's my passion I hope to

00:35:48.700 --> 00:35:49.510

always be

00:35:49.520 --> 00:35:53.960

a involved in aging and somehow I've never  
said I absolutely will if something else

00:35:53.970 --> 00:35:59.060

comes along but I can't imagine that  
doing anything else. Do you imagine yourself

00:35:59.110 --> 00:36:02.600

being in the political light since that disposition

00:36:02.600 --> 00:36:06.770

Do I let myself? Could you let yourself, or manage yourself

00:36:06.890 --> 00:36:10.230

Well I if the positions some  
what political you know I work

00:36:10.240 --> 00:36:12.300

a lot of legislators and I share

00:36:12.390 --> 00:36:16.530

a group called the San Diego Senior Alliance  
which is around eighteen nonprofits and

00:36:16.540 --> 00:36:21.160

some for profits that meet every other month  
and about aging and we were really big

00:36:21.170 --> 00:36:27.690

on advocacy legislation awareness and  
all the legislative aids from all the local

00:36:27.740 --> 00:36:31.990

Congressmen and women and political  
offices come to that meeting and we do

00:36:32.000 --> 00:36:35.750

a lot about what bills are coming what bills do we need to pass what's happening

00:36:35.760 --> 00:36:40.490

with the Older Americans Act what's  
happening with the Cal Freshman reimbursement Section

00:36:40.500 --> 00:36:43.940

eight housing so we're  
very involved and have

00:36:43.950 --> 00:36:49.090

a lot of strong connections and relationships  
locally and state through that so.

00:36:50.680 --> 00:36:51.680

As C.E.O.

00:36:51.690 --> 00:36:52.930

Of any nonprofit there's going to be

00:36:52.940 --> 00:36:56.960

a political advocate piece I don't travel  
up to San Francisco all the time to do that

00:36:56.970 --> 00:37:01.490

kind of advocacy like many do but within  
the circles of people that I work with

00:37:01.500 --> 00:37:06.160

there are people doing that work  
for us for sure

00:37:06.170 --> 00:37:11.770

you can't get away from that its always there especially  
the social services budget cuts current

00:37:11.780 --> 00:37:16.700

administration taxes and everything that  
happens at the national level affects our

00:37:16.710 --> 00:37:21.840

ability to do we're doing right now were looking at  
you know human services being cut

00:37:21.850 --> 00:37:26.120

by billions of dollars were looking at the  
tax cuts were reducing the benefit for

00:37:26.130 --> 00:37:29.360

people who don't need to ask corporate  
and individual you know there's

00:37:29.400 --> 00:37:33.760

a lot of things out there that are competing  
with our ability to do it we do and

00:37:33.770 --> 00:37:34.950

all these things only mean

00:37:35.010 --> 00:37:40.590

a greater need because population is  
affected now it's doubled in need because of

00:37:40.600 --> 00:37:44.450

all these things are impacting them negatively  
and the tools we need to do the job

00:37:44.460 --> 00:37:46.090

are being taken away so it's

00:37:46.100 --> 00:37:52.210

a perfect storm for crisis even  
more than the one we have right now.

00:37:56.080 --> 00:38:01.140

Going off of that just talking about legislation is there any bill currently

00:38:02.860 --> 00:38:08.770

That is on you guys radar that is very important for Elder Help if you can inform us.

00:38:12.200 --> 00:38:15.530

If there was one thing you could share with us

00:38:15.540 --> 00:38:18.290

not with great detail. We did a brief thing about a month

00:38:18.300 --> 00:38:21.780

a half ago and I can't think of anything  
specific right now I mean requests for

00:38:21.790 --> 00:38:26.600

looking at avoiding anything to  
Social Security Medicare that stuff should

00:38:26.610 --> 00:38:30.860

not be touched I don't I think Medicare  
can be more efficient social security

00:38:30.870 --> 00:38:36.340

that's just should not be touched. You  
know the taxes already been pass so right now

00:38:36.350 --> 00:38:38.040

we're having a hard time  
with that we're having

00:38:38.050 --> 00:38:41.670

a hard time with the housing money that's  
been taken away but it's coming in

00:38:41.680 --> 00:38:45.600

through some other places so it's hard  
to see what's going on but there's not

00:38:45.610 --> 00:38:50.850  
a specific bill right now that comes to  
mind I could research and get back to I

00:38:50.860 --> 00:38:55.250  
think I should I probably should know more  
than I do but that's what I got I always

00:38:55.290 --> 00:39:01.870  
get for it sometimes it's  
just too hard to pay attention to politics

00:39:01.880 --> 00:39:05.470  
were not funded government wise for the most part we do  
have some hug money that comes through

00:39:05.480 --> 00:39:09.900  
community development block grants mostly  
around our housing and our shared housing

00:39:09.910 --> 00:39:10.640  
program which is

00:39:10.650 --> 00:39:15.240  
a roommate matching program but we only  
have about thirty percent government

00:39:15.280 --> 00:39:20.570  
funding. And so we're not impacted as  
much as some non-profits have fifty sixty

00:39:20.580 --> 00:39:24.610  
eighty percent of their funding  
government and so it's a pro

00:39:24.620 --> 00:39:28.070  
a con on one hand it's nice to know you

have that steady income month after month

00:39:28.530 --> 00:39:31.130

and the other hand it can go away like that and it's

00:39:31.140 --> 00:39:34.770

a good chunk of your budget and then you  
don't have anything to replace it so

00:39:34.780 --> 00:39:39.110

we like the ratio that we have  
the diversity of it only having thirty

00:39:39.120 --> 00:39:44.290

percent but we want to keep that  
we don't want to drop. So you've

00:39:44.300 --> 00:39:50.990

mentioned some financial and political obstacles that you guys have facing at Elder's Help

00:39:51.360 --> 00:39:57.770

With this change of demographics within American population with baby boomers going into  
retirement,

00:39:57.770 --> 00:40:00.770

with less people getting born nowadays

00:40:00.770 --> 00:40:07.360

What challenges do you feel like would affect the help our elders

00:40:08.160 --> 00:40:14.800

at a point where we don't have enough people to be helping all this people that are aging

00:40:15.540 --> 00:40:19.810

or are there other types of challenges that you guys would see in the future

00:40:19.850 --> 00:40:22.760

We're seeing it now and to your point your right.

00:40:22.800 --> 00:40:27.380

It's the fastest growing population out there by far and they say ten thousand

00:40:27.380 --> 00:40:30.150

people a day in the United States  
turn sixty five ten thousand

00:40:30.160 --> 00:40:35.240

a day turn eighty five it's more than forty  
percent of the senior population and

00:40:35.250 --> 00:40:40.350

as of three years ago it was due to  
double by 2020 and so

00:40:43.520 --> 00:40:50.420

maybe twenty thirty and I have to check  
that but. There is not an easy fix I mean

00:40:50.430 --> 00:40:56.110

it is the fastest growing population I often  
times say that with this population I

00:40:56.120 --> 00:40:59.810

get people who don't want to fund us because  
they want to fund children or people

00:40:59.820 --> 00:41:04.170

getting started in their life which  
is great but they said you know they

00:41:04.180 --> 00:41:08.400

had their chance the seniors had their chance  
they were taken care provided they had

00:41:08.410 --> 00:41:13.400

their trip wherever they are now is it at  
their circumstance of choice and I say

00:41:13.410 --> 00:41:19.250

that that's not accurate because what's



happening is this perfect storm of living

00:41:19.260 --> 00:41:23.610

longer than they planned. There would be times in the Social Security system you know wasn't

00:41:23.620 --> 00:41:28.740

equipped no one understood or plan for that at that time. Now we've had enough years

00:41:28.750 --> 00:41:31.000

for people of starting know that they live longer and plan

00:41:31.010 --> 00:41:35.330

a little bit better but right now we're in that place where they're living longer and

00:41:35.340 --> 00:41:37.380

they weren't able to provide a plan for it so that's

00:41:37.390 --> 00:41:42.090

the first one then you know the health care has become so expensive so they have an

00:41:42.100 --> 00:41:46.450

unplanned medical event all the sudden it becomes catastrophic to their

00:41:46.460 --> 00:41:50.600

financial picture. Or their ability to get out and then there's the other thing

00:41:50.610 --> 00:41:52.080

that happens for a lot of them I said

00:41:52.090 --> 00:41:57.740

are widowed so they no longer have the benefits or earn anything around that and they may

00:41:57.750 --> 00:42:01.990

have drained their savings providing care  
for their spouse or loved one and all the

00:42:02.000 --> 00:42:05.880

sudden they're not only widowed but they've  
lost income and they've lost their

00:42:05.890 --> 00:42:11.210

retirement savings this could happen to  
anyone of any affluence any geographical

00:42:11.220 --> 00:42:17.550

location and they didn't make poor  
decisions or do anything randy or

00:42:17.590 --> 00:42:23.930

careless it's just all these things  
coming together so living longer having

00:42:23.940 --> 00:42:28.350

an explosive population having  
less people to care for them is

00:42:28.410 --> 00:42:32.770

a crisis in the making and for the  
caregivers themselves for those who do have

00:42:32.780 --> 00:42:37.130

caregivers who are seeing them leave the  
work force right so that's affecting your

00:42:37.140 --> 00:42:40.940

earning potential your retirement we're  
seeing stress and health issues for those

00:42:40.950 --> 00:42:46.520

caregivers. That affects our workforce it  
affects the productivity of our American

00:42:46.530 --> 00:42:49.260

corporations and their output so it's

00:42:49.270 --> 00:42:54.510

a domino all the way so the reason Elder Help works is we're prevented So

00:42:54.520 --> 00:42:57.820

hopefully we're getting in there to find a way to prevent

00:42:57.860 --> 00:43:01.700

a lot of these things from happening we're trying to prevent caregiver burnout

00:43:01.740 --> 00:43:04.860

we're trying to prevent the expense of caring for

00:43:04.900 --> 00:43:09.370

a senior and we have an employee family caregiver program where we go into local

00:43:09.380 --> 00:43:14.740

corporations and we counsel and train and educate working caregivers you know family

00:43:14.750 --> 00:43:18.900

caregivers who work full time but also caring for an aging love one so that they

00:43:18.910 --> 00:43:23.570

don't burn out and their promotions they're not passed over for promotion or raises

00:43:23.580 --> 00:43:27.900

and then that just dominoes all the way through their earning career receive

00:43:27.910 --> 00:43:31.630

a huge need to take care of the caregiver  
too because that's the next epidemic

00:43:31.670 --> 00:43:32.910

after the been happy

00:43:32.920 --> 00:43:40.430

a nation. You're supposed to. Just

00:43:40.480 --> 00:43:47.420

as most capable. For you  
know he will lend to.

00:43:49.780 --> 00:43:53.030

People so. There's

00:43:53.040 --> 00:43:58.380

a shift the ones leaving these households  
entering the plural how how does that

00:43:58.390 --> 00:44:02.560

affect maybe the perceived security here  
for them people that the cotton pickers

00:44:02.950 --> 00:44:09.360

people. And how how do we run some  
school area. To caregivers in the

00:44:09.370 --> 00:44:11.120

workplace sorry asking about

00:44:11.130 --> 00:44:16.700

a male and female the difference if you  
are feeling. Somehow that you have.

00:44:19.750 --> 00:44:25.690

Lost the use of the piece of woman care  
for Carrie because every man Mark.

00:44:26.900 --> 00:44:33.580

Curry corporate career is so how that. Shift  
with other people have to come in and

00:44:33.620 --> 00:44:37.450

take your place take your place  
however I hope that creating

00:44:37.470 --> 00:44:44.230

a child list of people or even if you  
come. I think I understand your question

00:44:44.400 --> 00:44:49.300

and to chip parts to it one bit yes right  
now the majority of caregivers are female

00:44:49.310 --> 00:44:51.540

just their dress that really are  
part although you are seeing

00:44:51.550 --> 00:44:56.100

a huge influx of milk every caregivers  
and fact I don't know the last number I

00:44:56.110 --> 00:45:00.420

should have I say forty to forty two percent  
of caregivers for now showing up as

00:45:00.430 --> 00:45:07.140

male and every year I go to the  
American. Society of aging conference

00:45:07.540 --> 00:45:09.520

and the last time I was there they had

00:45:09.530 --> 00:45:13.440

a huge number of break outs I'm dealing  
specifically with male caregivers and the

00:45:13.450 --> 00:45:17.530

impacts of that and how that affects earning potential and things like that but in

00:45:17.540 --> 00:45:22.300

the Rep force you're just seeing that millions of dollars in lost productivity are

00:45:22.310 --> 00:45:28.300

happening from I said people taking leave the absence retiring early and stressing

00:45:28.310 --> 00:45:32.730

health leaves all of that is affecting you know Rush domestic product affecting

00:45:33.120 --> 00:45:38.480

bottom line. And you're seeing more people leave the workforce experience qualified

00:45:38.490 --> 00:45:42.240

people and then you're trying to replace him with new incoming reports that don't

00:45:42.250 --> 00:45:46.720

have that skill set so our corporations and in

00:45:46.730 --> 00:45:52.720

a larger thing are like I said our overall economic health is very much affected by

00:45:52.830 --> 00:45:58.910

that turnover and transition I'm not sure I'm answering your question. Sure

00:45:59.660 --> 00:46:00.090

OK.

00:46:09.210 --> 00:46:09.700

Was.

00:46:16.250 --> 00:46:20.510

I know just in my entire career.

00:46:22.940 --> 00:46:26.500

Wow. The end of the TAFE.

00:46:30.640 --> 00:46:34.450

You know I am I'm going to have a really hard time answering that because I'm

00:46:34.460 --> 00:46:38.390

a big believer that everything happens the way it should and it really all evolves

00:46:38.400 --> 00:46:41.590

especially the challenges and the hardships and I have had more than my share.

00:46:43.010 --> 00:46:47.480

Especially with my hearing loss and you know I was running companies early on in

00:46:47.490 --> 00:46:50.760

the other ship positions and I was told that I couldn't do the job because of my

00:46:50.770 --> 00:46:56.490

hearing loss and I had to make a lot of accommodations and and get

00:46:56.500 --> 00:47:03.010

a lot of people to help me and. You know it's

00:47:03.780 --> 00:47:07.580

there's been some tough separations from prior preparations I worked for after I'd

00:47:07.630 --> 00:47:09.040

been there a long time and created

00:47:09.050 --> 00:47:11.620

a lot of body of work that I was  
really proud of and created

00:47:11.630 --> 00:47:18.470

a team that I really admired.  
The corporate road tax and you

00:47:18.480 --> 00:47:24.070

have to. Not take things personally really  
just kind of stay true to your integrity

00:47:24.080 --> 00:47:29.380

your reputation be especially if you are  
good at what you do and you have staff

00:47:29.390 --> 00:47:33.400

that follow you people want to take you  
down when you leave because they don't want

00:47:33.410 --> 00:47:37.460

the staff to bow in you and they need to  
bring in the new leadership and so the big

00:47:37.470 --> 00:47:42.040

thing I had to do is just trust my reputation  
and my integrity and make sure that

00:47:42.050 --> 00:47:46.590

when the dust settled the everything  
that I had always been all the ways I

00:47:46.600 --> 00:47:51.790

conducted my business with stay true and  
that people would follow that and I'm

00:47:51.800 --> 00:47:56.820

a big believer in The Four Agreements I use



those cards and every staff meeting at

00:47:57.140 --> 00:48:01.530

other how I used them before in my corporate life when I felt we needed complete

00:48:01.540 --> 00:48:06.840

culture shift that need to be around integrity and accountability and focusing on

00:48:06.850 --> 00:48:11.520

work and not on people and they gossip and stuff and they became

00:48:11.530 --> 00:48:15.830

a huge parent ever culture shift in my corporate role and now I use them in the

00:48:15.870 --> 00:48:20.930

nonprofit world because. We can only have so many people today there's

00:48:20.940 --> 00:48:25.410

a lot of people we can't have and it can really rare on the staff and the softer

00:48:25.420 --> 00:48:30.060

records by train and so we make sure that they just keep focusing on what they can

00:48:30.070 --> 00:48:34.450

do and not take it too personally so it was not grounded in answer to your question

00:48:34.760 --> 00:48:38.890

and I can't think of any major regrets or things I would have changed I think

00:48:38.900 --> 00:48:43.120

everything's gone the way it was supposed

to and if not I you know still do what

00:48:43.130 --> 00:48:49.900

you do. For the exam and so I'm kind  
of survivor versions and should

00:48:49.910 --> 00:48:56.360

be. A serious it was

00:48:56.420 --> 00:49:03.370

a small reference here's bus  
tours with. What the US is

00:49:03.380 --> 00:49:08.880

history as far starting out your career  
is about you want to do yes I'm doing it.

00:49:10.510 --> 00:49:14.820

And having a dream you say  
that like getting have had

00:49:14.830 --> 00:49:21.050

a good. Life you know stuck  
here. Well I would say that

00:49:21.760 --> 00:49:25.980

the comic comes over time because first  
time to get in we have to carry dues and

00:49:26.020 --> 00:49:30.610

figure out what we want to do what we're  
good at and so early on I was that is

00:49:30.620 --> 00:49:34.110

important to reporting be willing to do  
anything and this isn't news to guys

00:49:34.120 --> 00:49:36.410

everyone says the same thing we really do

00:49:36.420 --> 00:49:40.120

a lot of different things and then you  
start finding out what you're good at or

00:49:40.130 --> 00:49:44.000

what you're interested in and I was made  
of this of the skills that it would take

00:49:44.050 --> 00:49:47.960

to get to that next thing and I thought  
I had these and I didn't have these and

00:49:47.970 --> 00:49:52.360

then I say how do I get these families I  
need to spend more time with Ali I've been

00:49:52.370 --> 00:49:54.110

mentored by her you know I need to go meet

00:49:54.120 --> 00:49:57.440

a stakeholder in the industry that  
I can talk to I mean to go take

00:49:57.450 --> 00:50:00.690

a class so every step of  
my career I was good in

00:50:00.700 --> 00:50:03.640

a job for about two or three years and  
then I would get restless I was ready for

00:50:03.650 --> 00:50:07.580

the next thing and almost my entire career  
I have like these to be your windows

00:50:07.590 --> 00:50:12.050

where it's like OK what's next and I always  
did that I always made less to figure

00:50:12.060 --> 00:50:16.030

out what do I have what can I have  
what does this job require when I was

00:50:16.040 --> 00:50:17.140  
a new young C.E.O.

00:50:17.150 --> 00:50:20.840  
I got no training they kind of Trust me  
on it they said we're going to lose four

00:50:20.850 --> 00:50:24.540  
million and your first job is to figure out  
who are going to they are and I quacked

00:50:24.550 --> 00:50:26.460  
that can't be my first act as a C.E.O.

00:50:26.770 --> 00:50:26.970  
That's

00:50:26.980 --> 00:50:31.760  
a terrible thing and the staff will never  
trust me again and so there are they I

00:50:31.770 --> 00:50:33.500  
pounded the pavement and drove to L.A.

00:50:33.510 --> 00:50:36.860  
And Orange County and all their offices  
and motivating the team and we made that

00:50:36.870 --> 00:50:40.750  
four million and we didn't have one person  
but I also recognize I have the skill

00:50:40.760 --> 00:50:45.690  
sets I want to build these the other thing  
I did that rich useful was when I came

00:50:45.700 --> 00:50:50.040

to decision making time and I have really  
difficult decisions I have this Ray I do

00:50:50.050 --> 00:50:51.470  
a checklist for I would make

00:50:51.520 --> 00:50:55.840  
a list of all the things that I was  
considering in my decision that has two

00:50:55.850 --> 00:51:00.880  
different jobs you know pay location  
flexibility benefits autonomy and skill and

00:51:00.890 --> 00:51:04.340  
then I would put them up here and I would  
rate it I wouldn't just check it I would

00:51:04.350 --> 00:51:04.750  
made it on

00:51:04.760 --> 00:51:09.150  
a scale of one to ten because sometimes  
your chin emotional and you can't break it

00:51:09.160 --> 00:51:13.960  
down but I would find that waiting at  
home on the Thames you know U.S.T.

00:51:13.970 --> 00:51:14.110  
As

00:51:14.120 --> 00:51:17.730  
a five in the OR city and Sandy would stay  
with the Senate you know who knows what

00:51:17.740 --> 00:51:22.660  
it may be but I rated it like that got to  
be an. But I got down to the bottom got

00:51:22.670 --> 00:51:27.780

that number really kind of was the true  
truth it was the truth of what I was

00:51:27.790 --> 00:51:31.150

feeling it took the much  
negative so I've use that as

00:51:31.160 --> 00:51:34.540

a way to really help me make it very  
difficult decisions to end things with too

00:51:34.550 --> 00:51:41.050

close to see and it's just really to paying  
attention to yourself you know listen

00:51:41.060 --> 00:51:45.660

to you'll be able to tell the things of  
value and you'll be able to tell the thing

00:51:45.950 --> 00:51:49.250

that stuck it out of you  
and there will always be

00:51:49.260 --> 00:51:53.130

a part of your job that will suck things  
out of you I mean that's just the way the

00:51:53.140 --> 00:51:57.600

world but certainly want to have the  
majority of it be that they're lying so I

00:51:57.610 --> 00:52:02.200

think if the pay attention to that and you  
kind of I pay attention to what I'm what

00:52:02.210 --> 00:52:05.860

looks interesting what's the next step for  
me and how do I get there whether the

00:52:05.870 --> 00:52:11.120

skills I mean I think that's amazing and  
good luck good writing I mean I can't ever

00:52:11.130 --> 00:52:12.640

said I have been able to write

00:52:12.650 --> 00:52:17.810

a good letter corresponding in now as  
she. Been able to communicate with

00:52:17.820 --> 00:52:21.000

a wide range of people from  
attack to driver to C.E.O.

00:52:21.530 --> 00:52:26.460

Him paying attention to current events and  
current affairs and being able to speak

00:52:26.470 --> 00:52:30.580

a little bit about something like that you  
know you don't have to be super smart or

00:52:30.670 --> 00:52:34.610

memorize things are taken I just have  
enough of an interest and interest in the

00:52:34.620 --> 00:52:39.710

sting and asking questions which I know  
doesn't feel like I'm doing today but maybe

00:52:39.720 --> 00:52:45.390

I won't peppering me with questions I don't  
think they ever know so I don't know if

00:52:45.400 --> 00:52:50.120

that and that helps in any way or kind of  
the things that I've relied on that help

00:52:50.130 --> 00:52:55.460

me and takes a long time to figure out  
your passion with us and then usually with

00:52:55.470 --> 00:53:02.410

a passion is not always. Financial  
right so I do think that passions

00:53:02.420 --> 00:53:05.630

more important than financial because  
I I do think that will work out.

— End of Transcription —