Hello and welcome to this episode of This Is Your Life. My name is Michael Hyatt, and this is the podcast dedicated to intentional leadership. My goal is to help you live with more passion, work with greater focus, and lead with extraordinary influence.

In this episode, I’m going to be talking about how to lead in turbulent times. It’s no secret that the last four or five years have been challenging from an economic, technological, and even a global perspective. These are times that demand a certain kind of leadership, and we’re going to be looking at five actions that leaders must take to lead well.

First, this podcast is brought to you by Dynamic Communicators International, producers of the SCORRE, Launch, and Platform Conferences. These unique events are designed for professional speakers and those who simply want to communicate more professionally. I’ve talked about the SCORRE Conference before, and we’re sold out for our October conference. The next one will be in April in Rome, Georgia. We haven’t opened up registration yet, but I’ll tell you more about that when we do.

I want to tell you a little bit about the Launch Conference, which will be held right before the SCORRE Conference on October 15 and 16 in Vail, Colorado. The SCORRE Conference is all about how to prepare and deliver a speech with greater impact. The Launch Conference really has nothing to do with that. It’s about the business of public speaking. It’s for people who want a career as a professional speaker or speakers who are ready to take their business to the next level. The Launch process has been developed over the last 20 years, and it is based on the experience of our staff, which includes professional speakers, managers, agents, publishers, and best-selling authors.

Our speakers this year (I’m really excited about this) include, of course, Ken Davis, who founded the Launch Conference; I’m now his partner. He is a professional speaker and author of the newly released book, Fully Alive, which you should pick up a copy of. Danny de Armas, who is an artist manager, a former booking agent, has gobs of experience on the business side of the equation. Lysa Terkeurst, who is a New York Times best-selling author of Unglued and Made to Crave. And Dan Miller, author of 48 Days to the Work You Love and the newly released Wisdom and Passion.

Here’s what we’re going to teach you: How to identify your assets and build your brand as a speaker, how to turn your various messages into potential products that you can sell at your events, how to
establish your web presence and create the marketing materials you need to succeed, how to market
yourself and find more speaking engagements, how to determine your fee structure and make a living
doing what you love.

You can come and learn in a few days, literally, what would take you a lifetime to learn on your own,
and you can do it all in the beautiful setting of the Park Hyatt Beaver Creek in Vail, Colorado. It’s going
to be an intimate group…less than 50 students, probably about 35 students when it’s all said and done.
You can find out more information at dynamiccommunicators.com/launch. I’ll have a link in the show
notes.

Okay, let’s talk about what it means or how to lead in turbulent times. When I speak publicly, I call this
message, “Shift: Leading in Turbulent Times.” And I get asked with increasing frequency to speak on
this topic. I call it “Shift” for two reasons.

1. The world is shifting under our feet. I mean, doesn’t that feel like it’s the case the last several years?

2. As leaders, we have to shift too if we’re going to lead well.

I’ve personally experienced unprecedented change in the last 6 to 8 years. In 2005, I became the CEO of
Thomas Nelson, a public company at the time that was traded on the New York Stock Exchange. I was
the CEO there for six years. In the first year of my tenure (this would’ve been in 2006), we took the
company private. That was at the height of the bubble, and little did I know what lay ahead. In 2007,
we began to experience three massive changes in our business.

1. Change #1: The Great Recession, which everyone experienced. That hit us in late 2007. At Thomas
Nelson, we went through three rounds of layoffs, which were grueling. The first time kind of felt like
we were trimming fat. You know, frankly, it wasn’t so bad for us. It was bad for the people who got
laid off, but that was I think some necessary trimming. The second time though, we felt like we were
removing muscle. And I tell you, by the third time, I felt like we were amputating limbs. It was
extremely difficult.

We cut over 30 percent of our overhead, but we kept the company on firm financial footing. We never
lost money. I think, on average, we took care of the people we let go. That was certainly our intention
to take care of them and to make sure they got safely to their next assignment. Still, we just couldn’t
service our debt load, and we had to restructure it, which we were able to do successfully. But it was
really the best thing that could have ever happened, at least for the company. It is enabled us to clean
up our balance sheet and start investing the business, which was really important given the fact that
the second change we experienced was The Digital Revolution.

2. Change #2: The Digital Revolution. This really happened simultaneous with The Great Recession. As
we got hit by The Digital Revolution in publishing, the month before The Great Recession officially
began, Amazon launched the Kindle e-book reader, and it was a game changer. I’m going to talk a little
bit more about that later in this episode.
3. **Change #3: The Social Media Revolution.** Twitter launched in 2006, again about this same time. It really hit critical mass in 2007. In that same year, Facebook opened up its platform to non-college students and really went mainstream. That too was a game changer, although we didn’t know it at the time.

Back then, things looked bleak. People were saying that publishing was dead. Maybe they’re saying that about your industry. But the truth is they’ve been saying that for about 20 years. I’ll bet your industry has probably gone through some unprecedented change too. I’ve spoken in several industries over the last several months that have undergone massive change in the last five years.

I just recently spoke to a telecommunications industry association. They had gone through massive shift to smart phones and wireless communications, complete disruption of their business model. The mortgage industry, of course, which really had a meltdown in The Great Recession, but they’ve undergone a massive shift in federal regulation and lending practices. The media industry, of which publishing is one part, has undergone a massive shift from physical delivery to digital, and from business-to-business marketing to direct-to-consumer marketing.

And, of course, every industry is being impacted by the phenomenon of social media. And, if that weren’t enough, you’re probably experiencing massive change in your own life. I don’t know what you’re going through, but maybe you’re going through a tough time in your marriage or your dealing with the aftermath of a divorce or even the death of a spouse (God forbid!).

Maybe you’ve been laid off and are struggling to find work. Or perhaps you are underemployed or just launching a business. Maybe you have had a health crisis and are dealing with the impact of that on your family and on your career. Or, maybe it’s not so massive. Maybe you’ve just gotten married or had a baby or then promoted. Those are certainly changes that can feel overwhelming at times. Regardless, we are all living in a world of unprecedented change. If we’re leaders, this requires a different kind of leadership if we’re going to lead well.

Here’s my premise for this episode: Leading well in turbulent times, times of unprecedented change, requires leaders to shift in five specific ways. To say it another way, you need to take five specific actions if you’re going to succeed in these kinds of times.

1. **Action #1: Shift your perception.** We have to acknowledge reality, but in the context of a larger story. I think it’s easy sometimes to get into these times of change and to enter into denial. But we have to shift our perception. This is what Jim Collins referred to in his book, *Good to Great*, as “The Stockdale Paradox.”

I don’t know if you remember the story, but as a leader, you have to simultaneously do two things. This is what he means by this paradox. First, you have to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they may be and however difficult as they may be to admit. At the same time, and this is the second thing you have to do simultaneously, you have to retain faith that you will prevail in the end regardless of the difficulties.
Just to give you a little background on Adm. Stockdale’s story, which I think gives it some real context, he was a real prisoner of war for eight years during the Vietnam War. After his release (I can’t imagine what it would be like to be in a POW camp for eight years...unbelievable), but a reporter asked him, “How will the world did you survive eight years in a prisoner of war camp?” And he answered (and this is a quote), “I never lost faith in the end of the story. I never doubted not only that we would get out, but also that I would prevail in the end and turn the experience into the defining event of my life, which in retrospect, I would not trade.”

Then the reporter asked him, “Well, who didn’t make it out?” Adm. Stockdale replied, “Oh, that’s easy. The optimists. They were the ones who said, ‘We’re going to be out by Christmas,’ and then Christmas would come. Then they would say, ‘We’re going to be out by Easter,’ and Easter would come, and Easter would go. And then Thanksgiving. Then it would be Christmas again, and they died of a broken heart.”

Then Collins goes on to state that an attribute of truly great companies and great leaders is that they are able to embrace simultaneously these twin truths of their current reality and their ultimate triumph. They’re like two sides of the same coin. If you just embrace reality without ultimate triumph, it leads to cynicism. We know people who are like this. It’s like an overt focus on reality that leads to cynicism. “It’s never going to get better. It’s the end of the world.” Whatever.

If you just embrace the ultimate triumph without embracing reality, it also leads to cynicism, but the cynicism of your people because they say he or she just doesn’t get it. They see you in denial, and that’s the one thing you don’t need in turbulent times, and that’s the one thing you definitely don’t need to be communicating in turbulent times.

When I was the CEO of Thomas Nelson, this is one of the things I had to do. By the end of December 2007, we had had six years of steady revenue and profit growth. It was a straight line. I mean, we thought we pretty much figured it out and had it down to a formula. We were a well-run company. The stock market was rewarding us. Our stock was at an all-time high. But the month prior, on the very eve of The Great Recession, Amazon released its first Kindle e-book reader, as I said earlier. Little did we know at that time, but by 2011, e-book sales would surpass paperback book sales. Last month, in August, Amazon reported that its sales of e-books have overtaken all forms of print books.

Well, in the face of these realities...The Great Recession and this great Digital Revolution...we made three extremely consequential decisions, and particularly as I look back on them, they were consequential. First, we began converting our already published books to digital formats. With the recession, frankly, we couldn’t afford to do everything at once. We had to segment our products and start with a 20 percent that drove 80 percent of our sales.

Secondly, we put a process into place so we were publishing every new book in both physical and digital formats, believing that this was going to become increasingly important as the years wore on.
Third, we shut down several underperforming divisions, which was very difficult, but in order to free up the resources to invest in our digital initiatives.

Here’s the question I would ask you under this first action: How’re you embracing both current reality and ultimate triumph? Which are you doing better? Are you better at the embracing-reality part or the ultimate-triumph part, or do you have these things pretty well in balance? Where do you need some work? So to lead well in turbulent times, you must shift your perception.

2. **Action #2: Shift your intention.** One of the marks of authentic leaders is initiative. They don’t sit on the sidelines waiting for somebody else to act. A great example is Lt. Col. Hal Moore, who was famously depicted by Mel Gibson in the movie *We Were Soldiers*. I don’t know if you saw that movie, but it was another Vietnam War era story.

Before leaving for Vietnam, he gathered all of his troops into a high school football stadium, along with their families, and he told them, “We’re going into battle against a tough and determined enemy. I can’t promise you that I will bring you all home alive, but this I swear before you and before almighty God, that when we go into battle, I will be the first to set foot on the field and I’ll be the last to step off. I will leave no one behind. Dead or alive, we will come home together, so help me God.”

So leaders go first. This sometimes happens in small ways and bigger ways. When I was the CEO of Thomas Nelson, we were facing a tsunami of change, and I did three things. Again, these seemed small at the time, but I think they were consequential. I bought one of the first Amazon Kindles. I thought, “I have to figure this out for myself.” I signed up for Twitter, though at the time, it sounded really stupid. But I thought, “You know, I can’t afford to sit on the sidelines and let somebody else go first. I have to dive into this and help figure it out and experience it for myself.”

I also initiated across-the-board budget cuts, believing that the economic downturn was going to become the new normal. I have to admit, it was much more severe than I thought it was going to be, but I at least saw the storm clouds on the horizon and took the initiative. So as leaders, we have to go first. But we have to embrace change. And that’s really what I’m talking about with this whole issue of shifting your intention.

Let me tell you a story. I’m not a frequent snow skier. I go occasionally, you know, a couple of times every decade, whether I need it or not. But probably about 10 years ago, I went on a snow ski trip with my wife, and a couple of friends of ours who lived in Colorado Springs at the time were going to drive up to Breckenridge and join us.

This guy is one of those guys that skis the black trails; you know, the really tough stuff. I told him, “John, look, I would love to ski with you, but I’m a beginner, and I don’t want to have a bad experience here and lose my confidence as a skier and just have a miserable experience. So would you mind if we just skied the green trails?” Those are the beginning snow trails. He said, “No, not at all. That’s great.”
So we got on the ski left and were having a pleasant conversation as we’re riding up the mountain, and this happened to be a different mountain than I’d been skiing on before he arrived. He said, “You know, there’s a green trail up here. You’re going to love it. It’s going to be great.” As we kept going, I noticed that the lift was taking longer and longer. It took longer to get to the top of the mountain. At one point, it kind of dawned on my consciousness, and I just said, “John, are you sure we’re going to a green trail?” He said, “Oh, no problem. Yeah, absolutely. I’ve skied this lots of times.”

Well, as we got off the top of the lift, which for me as a beginning skier was no easy matter itself. I would breathe kind of a sigh of relief as I got off the lift without falling. I looked straight ahead of me, and there was a sign that said, “Blue trail.” Now for those of you who don’t ski, the way the trails work is green is for beginners, blue is for intermediate skiers, and black is for experts.

So I see this blue sign that says, “Intermediate,” and I went, “Oh my gosh!” My heart sank. I looked around to try to find the green trail; I couldn’t find it. I said, “John, where’s the green trail?” He says to me, “Um, I don’t know. I could have sworn there was one up here.” I went, “Oh my gosh! So what am I supposed to do? How am I going to get down the mountain?” And he says to me just as he skied off, “Well, the only advice I can give you is lean downhill.”

Now I’m going to tell you, as a novice skier, that was totally counterintuitive because I wanted to resist. I wanted to lean back, resist the change. But when I leaned forward, it didn’t mean that I didn’t fall, because I still fell, but I fell less when I leaned forward than when I tried to resist and leaned back. I mean, my skis would go right out from under me, and I wouldn’t get very far when I was leaning back.

But I’ve noticed that leaders also have one of two postures when it comes to change. Some lean back. They’re resistant to change. The very thing they fear the most comes upon them. Some lean forward. They lean into the change. It doesn’t mean they don’t ever fall down, but they do get to their destination with fewer falls than those who resist change.

The question I have for you is… Are you leaning into change or are you resisting it? To lead well in turbulent times, you have to shift your intention. You have to lean into change. You have to embrace it, but you must also shift your direction.

3. **Action #3: Shift your direction.** In the middle of a storm, you lose visibility. Your vision and your strategy may be perfectly clear in good times, when the weather is calm, but it can get really confusing fast when you’re going through an economic storm.

In 1993, for example, I was attending a sales conference in Colorado Springs, and when the conference was over, I had to drive to Denver to my in-laws where my wife and two daughters were waiting. A few hours before I left, it started snowing. I mean, really hard. I live in the South so I don’t typically see snow like this. The visibility went down to about 20 feet.

I kept driving because I really wanted to see my family. I didn’t really know how bad it was. I got off at an exit to use the restroom, and somehow, I got turned around into what turned out to be a blizzard.
wasn’t sure if I was heading the right direction or not. The one thing I knew is that if I stopped, I would eventually run out of gas and freeze to death. So I kept going.

When you lose vision, the temptation is to stop. And you may need to do that for a short time to kind of refocus, regain your strength, but eventually, you have to make the call as a leader and keep pressing forward. You have to shift your direction.

When I took over at the Nelson books division, which was one of the 14 divisions of Thomas Nelson in the year 2000, we were in the middle of another recession. It wasn’t as severe as the last one we went through, of course, but it was nonetheless a recession. I talked about this in episode #3, so I’m not going to repeat it here, but one of the things I realized was that as a division, we had lost our direction. We didn’t have clarity about the future.

So I went off on a private retreat. I developed a vision that I personally found compelling, and I got really crystal clear on it. I wrote it down. Again, you can listen to episode #3 if you want to review that, but I thought, “You know, if I can’t get excited about this vision, I’m not going to be able to sell it to others.” So instead, I gave myself permission to envision the perfect future and get really excited about it.

Then I came back to the office, and I sold it to my team. It was a shift in direction, and it had an enormous impact in turning that division around. We went from #14 out of 14 to #1 out of 14, and we did it in about 18 months. I think it really began when we got really crystal clear about our vision and had a major shift in our direction.

When times are tough, vision is often the first casualty. Things get very tactical, and as leaders, it’s easy to give up on the dream and stop talking about the future because, you know, we’re just trying to get through today or this week or this month. But you cannot afford to do this. The only thing that keeps vision alive, frankly, is you talking about it as a leader.

Well, how much should you talk about it? I can tell you this: More than you think. Here’s a good rule of thumb: Talk about it until you’re sick of hearing yourself talk about it, and at that point, you’re about half done. Keep talking about it. Don’t stop. Vision is the lifeblood of your organization, and your job is to remind your people of what you’re trying to build and why (that’s critical) it matters. It’s about painting a picture of a better future. It comes down to pointing the way and saying, “Come on! We can do this!”

Question: Are you willing to get crystal clear on your vision? Are you willing to talk about it and keep talking about it so your people know the why of what they’re doing so they can keep going in these turbulent times? So to lead well in turbulent times, you must shift your direction, but you must also shift your acceleration.

4. **Action #4: Shift your acceleration.** Email, social media, text messages…all these have conditioned people to expect a near instant response. About 20 years ago, I started a publishing company with a
partner (this was way before Thomas Nelson), but we had this dream to publish books that truly mattered, that made a difference in people’s lives and the overall culture. The only problem was we didn’t have a lot of money, and our competitors had seemingly every advantage, including piles of working capital (or so we thought). All we had was this dream and our ability to respond quickly.

As it turned out, we signed numerous authors, even big authors, for less than the competition. Why? Because we moved fast, and we got the deals done. Responsiveness was a competitive advantage. We could never pay more than our competition, and usually we offered much less, but we could outmaneuver and outflank almost all of them. Our size was a strategic advantage. Our responsiveness was a strategic advantage. We were lean and mean, and as a result, we grew rapidly.

Unfortunately, in the years since we began that venture, I’ve learned that there seems to be an inverse relationship between a company’s size and the sense of urgency that is embedded in the culture. Big companies often move slowly. More often than not, small companies have a sense of urgency. Why? Because their very survival is at stake, and if they don’t move quickly, they’re going to get squashed by the larger more established competitors.

On the other hand, it’s rare to find large companies that truly have a sense of urgency. Their circumstances rarely demand it. They can continue with business as usual and do pretty well. Nothing has to be done today or even this week. Nothing is really at stake…or so they think. Often, by the time they wake up, it’s too late. But in today’s environment, no one can afford to drift along with the status quo. Growth is not a foregone conclusion. Even survival can’t be taken for granted.

The companies that thrive in today’s economy will be those that shift their acceleration from the slower pace of business as usual to urgency, or at least to responsiveness. To say it another way… You have to think big but act small. You can outflank your big fat competitors with the right culture. That’s the kind of culture as a leader you have to build. You have to be able to shift your acceleration if you’re going to lead well in turbulent times, but you also shift your allocation.

5. **Action #5: Shift your allocation.** Now unlike the federal government, you can’t fund new programs without defunding old ones. It seems like the federal government and California (sorry, Californians) are the only ones that haven’t gotten this memo, but politicians are not doing this. They’re not leading. They’re not facing reality. There simply kicking the can down the road, leaving it for somebody at some other time to deal with these monstrous debt problems that they and their constituents have created.

These politicians are basically willing to promise whatever is necessary in order to get elected without considering how they’ll pay for. You and I can’t afford to do this. I don’t mean this as a political statement; it’s a simple economic reality. We can’t afford to do this in our businesses, whether we run a small business or large business. Real leaders know it’s never about the resources.

By the way, newsflash: Time and money are finite resources. You’re never going to have enough of it either to do a job in a way that’s comfortable for you. Instead, you’re going to have to exercise courage,
make the tough decisions, and find the resources you need. Sometimes, simple creativity will help. Other times, you’ll have to sell someone on giving you more resources. Usually, you’ll have to shift resources or reallocate from one program to another.

As I mentioned earlier, when The Digital Revolution hit us at Thomas Nelson, it was precisely at the time of The Great Recession when we had fewer than ever resources. Revenues had taken a major hit. We didn’t have the profits that we had become used to. We couldn’t afford, though, to ignore this technological shift. We had to invest in the future or we were going to be toast, and in a much shorter timeframe than we initially thought. So we had to make some tough decisions, cut some programs that had been around for decades, in order to free up the resources to be able to pursue the investments we needed to make.

My guess is that you probably need to do the same thing. You have to shift your allocation. How do you need to reallocate your resources? What do you need to fund in order to survive? More importantly, what do you need to defund in order to fund these programs? These are the tough questions you and I need to address. It’s not just about money, but it’s about time and about the things our staff is wrapped up in. There may just be some programs that we need to kill to free up their time to pursue the things that are important to our future.

So to lead well in turbulent times, you have to take five actions. You must… Action #1: Shift your perception. Action #2: Shift your intention. Action #3: Shift your direction. Action #4: Shift your acceleration. Action #5: Shift your allocation.

With that, let’s go on to some listener questions. The first question is from Tom.

Tom Eggebrecht: Hi Michael, this is Tom Eggebrecht calling from Orlando, Florida. My blog site is tomeggebrecht.com. I’m wondering what you should do or how you should react if you are in a new leadership position, and early in your tenure there, it already feels like the honeymoon is over with the existing board of the organization, and your ideas seem to be challenged, there seems to be a negative mindset, and they basically dare you to lead them? How should that be reacted to? Thank you very much.

Michael Hyatt: Tom, this is a great question, and I think every leader confronts this at some point in their career. The temptation is to blame them, to make them the bad guys, to think, “If I could just get a different department, if I could get a different division, if I could get a different church, if I could get a different company…,” whatever it is, “…then it wouldn’t be so difficult.” The truth is, and this is important to understand, alignment is your responsibility, not theirs. It’s not something that just happens. Alignment is something that is caused. It is something leaders do, or at least they’re in the process of learning how to create it.

You have to get crystal clear on your vision, and then you have to enroll them in the vision. I think sometimes we don’t have a compelling enough vision. But I would also say the enrollment process, enrolling them in your vision, is also something that involves connecting with them at a personal level.
Maybe they just don’t see it because you draw it up on a whiteboard or because you pass out a white paper on it. That’s usually not enough. You have to connect with them at a personal level so they feel vested in what’s important to you.

People buy into you first as a leader, not into the vision, so you have to get to know them. You have to listen to them, and I mean really listen, not some kind of fake active listening, where you’re nodding and repeating the last phrase of what they said, but something where you really are listening to them, and most importantly, serving them. It’s a process. As much as we would like to think this is just about an organizational development, it really is first and foremost about relational development, and that’s where you have to start.

The next question comes from John.

**John Bergquist:** Hi, this is John Bergquist, calling from Portland, Oregon. My blog is [johnflurry.com](http://johnflurry.com). During a time of change, how do you handle the stresses of that change the best, as in what actually helps you relieve stress? For example, is it reading a book? Is it spending time with friends? I probably spend more time doing things like eating or nonproductive stress relief, so I was just curious about that. Thanks!

**Michael Hyatt:** Well I think stress is normal. It is even inevitable. If it’s not one thing, it’s another. Somebody once said you’re either in a crisis, going into crisis, or coming out of a crisis. So that means you’re going to be facing a lot of stress over the course of your career, and you have to learn to handle it well. There are, of course, healthy ways to handle it and unhealthy ways of dealing with it.

The unhealthy ways are the kind of escapism we’ve all experienced, whether it is eating or doing something else that just doesn’t help. Or aggression…maybe snapping at people or doing something even more violent. But it’s not productive. I think we have to get a strategy for what are the healthy ways to respond to stress and how we can incorporate those into our lives.

For me, having a quiet time where every morning I get centered and refocused on what matters most is critical. I take 15 minutes where I literally do nothing at the beginning of the day and just try to…be, remember that I am a human being, not a doing because the rest of my day is going to be very busy and I want to (this is just me) be still before God and realize who I am in the whole scheme of what he has created and what my part is. That, again, is just me.

I think exercise is another terrific way to deal with stress. I try to do that every single day because it relieves the stress. Proper nutrition. Friendships. Friendships are critical, by the way. I didn’t realize how important these were early in my career, and I didn’t pursue them like I should. I just thought the people I knew at work were sufficient relationships. While those are friendships at some level, I’m talking about the kinds friendships where the friends are just friends. They don’t really have anything to gain from you; they just love you and let you be yourself and tell you the truth when you need to hear it.
The key is when you’re in the middle of stress, you don’t want to be in a situation where your heart begins to shut down and you fall into these unhealthy behaviors. I talk about this in a blog post about cultivating the disciplines of the heart, some of which I just mentioned. “The Four Disciplines of the Heart” is a blog post I wrote a while back. I’ll put a link in the show notes for you, but I think that will help you get focused on the things that keep your heart from going dead and from the unhealthy stress from building in your life.

The next question comes from DJ Wade-O.

DJ Wade-O: Hello, Michael. How’re you doing? My name is DJ Wade-O Harris. I just want to first say I love the work you’re doing with your podcast and also with your blog. I read you every day and listen to your podcast frequently. My web address is wadeoradio.com. My question in regard to change is… How do you deal with change when you are in an industry or working for a business or company or a ministry or whatever the case may be where the whole dynamic, the whole infrastructure, is suddenly changing, and you may or may not think it is going in a good way? I just wanted to get your thoughts on that. Again, I love everything you’re doing, and I really appreciate you. Thanks.

Michael Hyatt: Well, thanks. Another great question. I would just say this, and this is a message… Frankly, I’ve had this conversation with one of my daughters who is going through a very similar situation in her company right now. Before you can become a great leader and have influence, you must become a great follower. I’ve written a blog post on this too, called, “Why the Best Leaders Are Great Followers.” Again, I’ll put a link in the show notes.

Before you can have influence, you have to be a great follower. Once you do that and start adding value to the corporation, you begin to have some credibility with the organization, with the leaders, so that when you speak, they listen. But this is an opportunity for you to learn how to develop influence because very infrequently are things going to go your way. There’s always going to be something you disagree with. If it was always going your way, there would be an opportunity to lead. There would be no need to lead, no reason to exercise influence. You would just be a robot doing what they say.

I would shift my intention and decide that I’m there for a reason. That’s where I would begin. This isn’t an accident. I’m here for a reason. There’s something good that can come out of this. And at the very least, I can learn to lead in this situation because I’m going to need this somewhere down the line, and this is important training.

I think you also have to distinguish between agreement and alignment. I don’t always agree with my supervisor, but I can usually align with him. That’s like a whole other discussion that I don’t have time to get into, but there are things you may disagree with, but you say, “You know, that wouldn’t be my strategy or the way I would handle it, but I’m going to jump in and support it.”

Obviously, I’m not talking about something where you are being asked to compromise your values; I’m talking about something less than that. That does happen occasionally, but very rarely. Usually, we’re
talking about something tactical, something that’s amoral, something that doesn’t compromise your values. But in that kind of situation, you’re going to need to sit down and talk with your boss.

Sometimes even a situation where you’re being asked to compromise your values, you may have to put your job on the line. The real issue here is courage. Can you be courageous and shoot straight without being disrespectful or belligerent? Again, I think it starts by following well and being supportive publicly so you can have influence privately.

The final question comes from Dean Brown.

**Dean Brown:** Hello Michael. My name is Dean Brown. I’m calling from the Adirondack Mountains in upstate New York. My blog is coktowncapers.blogspot.com. How does a person continue to manage well at work when their personal life is rapidly changing and things seem overwhelming? Thanks so very much. I appreciate it.

**Michael Hyatt:** Dean, I have been there numerous times. It seems like there almost seems to be a conspiracy where everything happens at once. Your personal life, your business life… And it does feel overwhelming. I get that. But I have to remember in those situations that God doesn’t give me more than I can handle, and it’s a huge opportunity for growth because all growth happens outside of your comfort zone.

There’s really not much growth that happens inside the bubble, inside the comfort zone. All of that happens outside the comfort zone. So there is a sense in which we should welcome it, but regardless, don’t get too far ahead of yourself and overthink it. Frankly, that is my tendency. I tend to be going through the what-if scenarios, and one of my strengths is strategic so I am thinking about where all this is leading and what’s going to happen. Then I start feeling overwhelmed. Then I start shutting down.

All you have to do in those kinds of situations is just do the next right thing. Again, I have a blog post on this called, “What to Do When You Don’t Know What to Do.” It’s for those times when you feel overwhelmed. I give several specific steps, what I have found in my own life that was helpful. I have a link in the show notes to that.

So let me just end of this section of the podcast with this question: **What needs to change in you if you’re going to manage change effectively?** Where do you need to shift? Where do you need to embrace change? How can you lead better in turbulent times? If you want to comment on this episode and leave an answer to that question, go to my blog at MichaelHyatt.com/026 (as in episode #26).

A couple of announcements before we end here. I’m really excited to announce the publication of my new audio course entitled, “Everything You Need to Know to Get Published.” If you’ve ever thought about writing a book but didn’t know where to start, this is the course for you. I’ve been working on this…really my entire career, but it took me about six months to put it together. Even if you already have a book and you want to do everything you can to make the biggest splash you can in the marketplace, this course is for you.
There are 21 audio sessions. It’s everything I’ve learned about publishing in my 30 years in the industry as a publisher, most recently as the CEO of Thomas Nelson, as a literary agent, and as a two-time *New York Times* bestselling author.

I have a special offer for my blog readers and my podcast listeners this week only. It’s an introductory offer of half price plus four amazing free bonuses. I’m not going to go through them here on the podcast, but you can get more information at MichaelHyatt.com/getpublished. Again, there will be a link in the show notes for you to go there, but if you’ve ever dreamed about becoming an author and to think about what that might make possible for your career, this is the place to start.

I have three speaking events next week in the Atlanta area, so if you live there, I hope you can come out and see me and shake hands with me. Next Wednesday, I will be speaking at Catalyst Atlanta, one of my favorite events of the year. I will be leading one of the labs on the topic of *Platform: Get Noticed in a Noisy World*, which is also the title of my newest book.

On Thursday, I’m going to be speaking at My Healthy Church Luncheon, also in Atlanta. I will be speaking on the topic of my podcast today, “Shift: Leading Well in Turbulent Times.” All being applying it to the world of ministries. So if you’re in that world, if you are a pastor, come have lunch with me. They’re paying for it, and this is an opportunity for you, I think, discuss it vitally important area for ministers.

On Thursday evening, I will be giving the keynote at the Savvy Blogging Summit in Atlanta, again on the topic of *Platform: Get Noticed in a Noisy World*. Then I will be doing a workshop the next day, more specifically focused on blogging.

Well, that’s about it for this episode of *This Is Your Life*. Thanks for joining me. I would be so grateful if you would rate my podcast on iTunes. That helps tremendously with keeping my podcast visible so people who have never heard of it can discover it.

If you’d like to comment on this episode, please go to MichaelHyatt.com. Go to the show notes for this episode and then scroll down to the comments section. I would love to hear from you. Comment, question, whatever you have.

Until next time, remember: Your life is a gift. Now go make it count!