



Episode 12: Navigating Tension & Making Your Greatest Impact Pt. 2

Featuring: Mingo Palacios & Keion Henderson & Ted Vaughn

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Transcript:

Mingo Palacios: Welcome to the Touring for Purpose podcast. This is Mingo, your host. This is actually Part 2 of a conversation that we had with Ted Vaughn. Ted is an insanely wise mentor of mine, and this is the second part of our conversation together on breakthroughs in leadership. Give it a listen.

As a more seasoned leader, what are you looking for in a young apprentice or somebody who you're looking to give a shot to? I think of people who are writing resumes today, trying to figure out how to present themselves best to an organization or maybe an employer. You're somebody who slingshots people forward, so what are you looking for?

Ted Vaughn: Man, I've never been asked this question, but it's a great question.

Mingo Palacios: Yes! [laughs]

Ted Vaughn: This is raw, this is unprocessed. Number one for me –

Mingo Palacios: Skinny jeans. [laughs]

Ted Vaughn: Let's just assume faith in Christ...

Mingo Palacios: All of those exist.

Ted Vaughn: Yeah, you're not in prison. Although if you are in prison, there's hope. My point is, I would say assuming that some of the basics are met, number one: hustle.

Mingo Palacios: Hustle!

Ted Vaughn: The dream is free, the hustle is sold separately. I am so tired of young leaders that have passion and no ethic discipline.

Mingo Palacios: Come on, I just was talking about this. Legitimately. Everyone can develop an appetite, but few people are willing to go make the kill.

Ted Vaughn: Yeah, pick the metaphor. But hustle. Work your a-s-s off for whatever it is. Which would lead me to number two: if you don't have passion or conviction for something, I don't think you'll have hustle. I think that leads to apathy.

Mingo Palacios: So you have to really define and land on the thing that you're fired up about.

Ted Vaughn: In that moment. Lord knows in my life, there have probably been 15 to 20 things that have kept me hustling and passionate, and God's used that to bring me to where I am today. So don't feel like you have to –

Mingo Palacios: Claim one and then call it for life.

Ted Vaughn: Bro, come on. That'll just lead everybody to shut down.

Mingo Palacios: It's so unrealistic.

Ted Vaughn: Live in the moment. What is the thing that God's called you to do? At the Rock, Year 1, it was make this place healthy. My passion was health, and that was all I was focused on. Year 2, it was...

Mingo Palacios: So on and so forth, yeah.

Ted Vaughn: But over four years at the Rock, we got healthy, built a TV program, went multisite, changed the brand, changed the worship culture. The amount of change that happened at the Rock in four years is ridiculous.

Mingo Palacios: I'm assuming you could probably apply the same principle to all the other churches that you're now spending your time with. You're looking for hustle. You're looking through the ranks, and it doesn't matter if you're executive or associate or the high school guy; you're identifying who's willing to get their skin in the game.

Ted Vaughn: I'm working with a church in Dallas right now, and what gives me so much hope is the senior pastor, who is maybe 60, has more hustle

and passion and fire than anybody else on his staff. Even though he is wrestling through his own crisis of “Am I the right guy? Do I have what it takes for the next season?” As I’ve helped that church get clear on vision, strategy, mission, I’ve got more hope and passion for them because of that senior pastor at the age of 60 having hustle and conviction.

It matters way more to me than education. I mean, you should be a constant learner, but college degrees, they’re great – they’ve never been more important and they’ve never been less important.

Mingo Palacios: You’re saying it’s not the definitive thing. You’re not looking for somebody who’s got a degree in XYZ.

Ted Vaughn: It’s helpful, it’s important. I believe everybody should pursue higher education.

Mingo Palacios: You’ve got daughters coming through the ranks. [laughs]

Ted Vaughn: Yeah. I’m just saying, your graduate or undergraduate degree has never been more important and less important at the same time.

Mingo Palacios: Oh, we got a question, Monty asking you a question right now. He’s asking about skill. He identifies conviction, hustle, passion, but what about skill? Prior knowledge? I was navigating this earlier today with a young leader I just met named Vince. I asked him straight up, directly across the table, “What’s your skillset?” Because all the passion, all the hustle, there’s got to be a little bit of experience to play the card game, to play in the game.

Ted Vaughn: Absolutely.

Mingo Palacios: How much experience, though? Because I was never a young adult pastor and I just went in, and we bumped our way through it. You, never being a business owner, you're bumping your way through it. Monty, maybe you've got something that you want to add to the conversation. I'll nail it out for you. But how much skill?

Ted Vaughn: If we're talking about skill, I believe skill and education are often very different products. Let's take the case of worship. The president of Slingshot Group, we're working with young leaders, especially in a worship context, regularly. By the way, Slingshot Group is the nation's leading coaching and staffing firm.

Mingo Palacios: www.slingshotgroup.org. [laughs]

Ted Vaughn: I believe in Slingshot with all my heart, mind, soul and spirit.

Mingo Palacios: Excellent plug.

Ted Vaughn: But let me just say, I do think skill matters. I think I would put that back in the category of hustle and passion. If you're a worship leader and you hustle and have conviction and passion, I guarantee you skill will follow. I'm absolutely a believer in skill. I would say invest in your skill and your trade as much as you invest in your education and degree.

Mingo Palacios: What's going to be the biggest pitfalls for emerging leaders in the next five years, in your opinion? What's going to be the thing that's going to keep us from making the most significant impact in the local ministry?

Ted Vaughn: Wow. What's the most significant, or what are some challenges that will keep young leaders from making...

Mingo Palacios: The most impact in the local ministry. The reason why I'm asking this is because I keep hearing young leaders say "I'm going to do it without the church. I'm just going to go find a way."

Ted Vaughn: I would say, as a broad brushstroke, number one will be arrogance. I think, going back to that idea of inquiry versus advocacy, I think sometimes the hustle and the passion, if coupled with arrogance, leads...

Mingo Palacios: It gets sour real quick.

Ted Vaughn: Yeah. God is a patient God who knows He wins in the end and doesn't need us, our plant, or our church to win.

Mingo Palacios: Yes. This is good.

Ted Vaughn: The Kingdom of Heaven, the Bride of Christ, is not threatened if your church or your plant or you fail. God's very patient with us.

Mingo Palacios: In our efforts. In our ideas.

Ted Vaughn: So I would say the number one pitfall will be arrogance. I think there's something about Seth Godin and a lot of the bloggers and the voice of today's millennial – I love those guys, but I think sometimes they're so pippy and so in your face. It can lead us often to a posture that is not humble and not asking more questions to understand and not receiving the wisdom from those who have gone ahead of us, even though their ways, clothing or style might be antiquated to us.

I would say that probably the biggest one for me is arrogance. I think number two would be – and maybe this is a byproduct of arrogance – thinking that we can do it without building on the shoulders of those who've gone before us.

Mingo Palacios: You would be at such a disadvantage if you didn't take the opportunity to stand on someone's shoulders. I would argue that I would like to see more senior, seasoned leaders invite somebody to stand on their shoulders.

Ted Vaughn: No disagreement. I've yet to work with a church that would say they are not a developing culture, but very rarely do I find a church that has a strategy program to develop people.

Mingo Palacios: Aimed at that.

Ted Vaughn: I think sometimes by nature of being a church, we just think we're doing that.

Mingo Palacios: It might be hard to articulate it because it's so unique in the moment. You don't say "here's the framework for how we're going to let the next generation stand on our shoulders." I think it's opportunity by opportunity. You go "I think I trust this kid; I'm going to bring him on tour with me" or "I see his passion, I see the hustle. I'm going to give him a shot."

Certainly you've done that to me in several contexts, where I'm now hoping and realizing that Ted stood in front of the bus for me. I have to make sure it doesn't run over both of us, and I'll do my due diligence to make that work.

Ted Vaughn: Yeah. A couple of quick memories for me. One, when I was at my older daughter's college orientation, the college dean made a statement to the parents. He said, "How many of you today are working in fields that are directly related to your undergraduate degree?" Maybe 10% of the room raised their hand. Then he said, "What you need to realize is over 40% of your kids, of the kids that are represented by this class, will be working in fields that today don't exist."

Mingo Palacios: Transplant that to the church, and that becomes an almost frightening reality.

Ted Vaughn: Which goes back to the idea – you've heard me say this before – the number one investor in wind technology? Big oil. Because big oil doesn't want to get left behind.

Mingo Palacios: They don't want to be antiquated.

Ted Vaughn: When the world changes. They're investing the heaviest in what's next. I want to see that in the church. I want to see the existing institution with the resources investing in what's next, because they don't want to be left out of the game.

Mingo Palacios: That helps the whole church move forward in a great stride. Not just one generation of it versus the other.

Ted Vaughn: Again, it's not because God's Kingdom is threatened if we don't do this. God will win, whether it's through young, arrogant church planters going out and doing their thing – but I think it's better for them and for us.

Mingo Palacios: Yeah. Wouldn't it be such a better story done together?

Ted Vaughn: Yes.

Mingo Palacios: That convicts me, because I speak almost to a fault on this generation versus that generation, disregarding the fact that we still belong to the same body.

Ted Vaughn: Frankly, I love seeing you at Purpose Driven taking something that has been around now for decades, revitalizing it, giving it a fresh new audience –

Mingo Palacios: Running a ghetto 20-year-old RV. [laughs]

Ted Vaughn: You're innovating like nobody else could in a role, and you're building on the shoulders of what Rick started so many decades ago. It's awesome.

Mingo Palacios: You know what? I would've never had the confidence to step into that potential had there not been an advocate in the middle. I would say to a listening audience, be certain that there are great and healthy and wise and levelheaded advocates around you if you're trying to make a serious step into your next whatever.

Ted Vaughn: Even if you're not, don't live your life without people older and wiser than you speaking into your life regularly.

Mingo Palacios: And that has to be a live person. You can't be reading Facebook articles, saying "Simon Sinek is my mentor." [laughs]

Ted Vaughn: No. Yeah, "I livestreamed Andy Stanley." No, listen, if it were not for Chris Nickels, Jim Moriarty, guys like Monty and Stan Endicott, there is just no way I would have the wisdom, opportunities, and experiences that I've had. Those guys are my bumpers.

Mingo Palacios: Is there a sending piece of advice that you would give, just based on – you've traveled so much, you're seeing churches wrestle with certain things. I'm guessing succession is one of those things. What would you like to send off? We're not speaking to churches; we're speaking to the leaders and the volunteers and the people inside of them. We're talking to entrepreneurs. Give me Ted's thing. What have you been harping on and holding onto in the last month?

Ted Vaughn: This is probably going to go back a lot further for me, but maybe this is just a general theme for how I approach my work, my coaching, my development of leaders, my own life. It goes back to the parable of the mustard seed. Matthew 13, I think. I should know that.

Mingo Palacios: Yeah. You're getting busted if it's not. [laughs]

Ted Vaughn: In the Gospels, it talks about it. But the reason I love the parable of the mustard seed is because Jesus likens God's Kingdom to something that the religious law of the day had outlawed. An agricultural community listening to Jesus, hearing him talk about a weed that's been outlawed by the spiritual authority of the day, yet it's intentionally planted and grows into something so huge that it –

Mingo Palacios: The mustard seed.

Ted Vaughn: Right. The parable says that a man took mustard seed, intentionally planted it, and it grew into a tree. If I put myself in the context of an

agricultural, good Jew, listening to this parable, I'm being told that God's Kingdom is something that we've outlawed, but planted intentionally, and it grows into such a huge weed that it disrupts everything, all my crops, my garden. And that's God's Kingdom.

Mingo Palacios: It's a disruptor.

Ted Vaughn: It's a disruptor. I think the more we can allow God, through tension, through struggle, to be a disruptor, the more we win. I think part of our faith, part of our evangelical ideas sometimes tries to protect us from tension. But the more I look at Scripture, the more I see God saying "Actually, my Kingdom is a disruptor, a challenger. On your best day, I still have more room and growth for you."

Mingo Palacios: Man, that's going to be a tough one to wrestle with, certainly. Because you don't want to dismantle or blow up the organization you're in.

Ted Vaughn: No, I'm talking about the individual. I think that we go into ministry, into our lives, into our marriages with a perfectly planned English tea garden. And we get really upset when God shows up and disrupts it.

Mingo Palacios: Ah, yes. Okay, I get you now. Yes. We have to be ready for that reality. That's good.

Ted Vaughn: Yes. Now, that is also true for the institutional church. But what I want are leaders who are looking for the mustard seed that they can plant and who will actually celebrate the weed that grows. No matter what it disrupts.

Mingo Palacios: I love where you're going, and yet I still can't stop thinking of legalized weed in California. [laughs]

Ted Vaughn: [laughs] We need to do a holy podcast.

Mingo Palacios: I'm just saying, that has nothing to do with it but it's on my stupid mind. I love, though, that the bottom line is that you're anticipating a disruption, and in that disruption is the Kingdom moment that propels you to whatever it is that you can't even see around the corner.

Ted Vaughn: To me, the takeaway is this: God is, in your life, going to plant seeds that are disruptive, that grow like a weed, that uproot the crops and the garden that you think is your plan for whatever.

Mingo Palacios: The win. Whatever you put down as the win, God goes, "Listen, my Kingdom turns all of this upside down."

Ted Vaughn: The beauty is that the parable ends by saying "and the birds of the field perch in its branches and take shelter."

Mingo Palacios: There a provision in it that you can't even foresee.

Ted Vaughn: The irony there is most farmers don't want birds near their crops. Again, we have Jesus saying, "and actually, the birds that you really try and keep away with your scarecrows and such, they're going to actually take shelter."

Mingo Palacios: You're preaching at us right now. You're coming at me right now.

Ted Vaughn: I'm just saying, tension.

Mingo Palacios: This is a great circle.

Ted Vaughn: There's a counterintuitive nature to how God works, and I think sometimes in our own pursuit of safety, security, predictability, success, we want our garden the way we think it should be done.

Mingo Palacios: Untouched and undisrupted.

Ted Vaughn: And God shows up and says "Actually..."

Mingo Palacios: I will say this, then, in closing: if you're in an organization or if you're inside of a department where there is a ton of turmoil, it could be the very place where God is poised to do something huge.

Ted Vaughn: And don't assume that the turmoil means you need to go.

Mingo Palacios: Oh my gosh, yes.

Ted Vaughn: Sometimes the turmoil means you need to lean in and see what God has for you.

Mingo Palacios: That's good. Man, there is so much there. We might have to go to Episode 2, 3, and 4 on this. We'll be doing a whole season called "Ted Talks." [laughs]

Ted Vaughn: That's brilliant.

Mingo Palacios: Ted, if people want to connect with you beyond the podcast, where can they find you?

Ted Vaughn: They can follow me on Facebook and Twitter @tedvaughn. You can go to the agency I'm a part of, historicagency.com.

Mingo Palacios: I'm sure you're on a few other websites.

Ted Vaughn: Slingshot Group and CDF – there's a whole bunch.

Mingo Palacios: Google "Ted Vaughn."

Ted Vaughn: The bottom line is just follow me on Facebook or something.

Mingo Palacios: Google "Old World Red" and you'll find him. [laughs]

Ted Vaughn: I'm not into Snapchat, I'm not a big Instagram guy. Twitter, though.

Mingo Palacios: Thank you so much for your time. I hope that this encourages several leaders across several landscapes in this conversation.

We'll talk to you guys soon. Share and like this podcast, and subscribe and comment. That would help us a ton. I love you guys. Check out our hashtag, #pdctour or #touringforpurpose and you can see other episodes in this stream. Love you guys. We'll talk to you soon.

Ted Vaughn: See you.

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