



Episode 73: The Importance of Leading Young Women

Featuring: Mingo Palacios & Luma Haddad & Jessica Jeries & Constance

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Transcript:

Mingo Palacios: [00:02](#) Hey everybody, thanks for tuning into the PD podcast. You know, from time to time we get the luxury of traveling around the country and actually bringing our podcast to conferences and events that are happening all over the country. This conversation took place at Urban Youth Workers Institute Conference. It was a collaboration podcast where we combined both our efforts and Urban Youth Workers efforts to bring one cohesive podcast. I hope you enjoy it.

Mingo Palacios: [00:27](#) Let's get started. Hey everybody. Welcome to the PD Cast/The Mashup Collaboration with the Urban Youth Workers Institute Conference. We are here at Biola

University 2018. I've got some incredible ladies who are all Young Life ride or dies, Luma, Jessica, Constance, plus an entire squad of Young Life-ees in the airstream today. Luma, thanks for joining us today. Thanks for being with us this morning as you have been serving for several years. It's our pleasure to have you on the recording this morning.

Luma Haddad: [01:01](#) Thanks for inviting us. It was fun seeing you and just, you know, reminiscing.

Mingo Palacios: [01:06](#) And we've got mad cross ties, right? So some folks from the Rock and folks from old ministry, tons of San Diego based ministry crossover with Young Life. What an incredible organization. You guys have some pretty amazing stuff coming up in the near future concerning young women's ministry and that is such an important topic for us to bring to the surface. I don't think there's enough of it happening. Well, yes, I mean certainly there's been efforts in the past and we want to celebrate those efforts. But man, we need like a new breath of young women's ministry. Talk to me about why you lay your whole life in that zone. And for the rest of us here on the mic this morning, tell me what it's been like leading young ladies and why it's so important today more than ever.

Luma Haddad: [02:00](#) Yeah. You know, they say the future is female. I think now it's female. I don't think it's something we've got to wait for. I think now we got to speak truth into young girls and helping them to know who they were created to be, that they were made in the image of

God and that Jesus calls them they're princesses and that they belong to him and they have a father.

Someone poured into me when I was 13 and I was able to believe for myself that God had a plan for my life and had this incredible future laid out for me. So I walked in that promise victoriously without having any other negative things impact me, and I was able to get places that I never dreamed I could do on my own.

Mingo Palacios: [02:42](#)

Because someone spoke truth clearly to you early on.

Luma Haddad: [02:46](#)

Very early. Besides my parents pouring into me. But in this generation, because we are in a fatherless generation, young girls are going to need at least six positive adult role models in their lives. Six. And so that's where the church takes place. That's where a teacher comes in. That's where a family member or a coach or a pastor, any one of those things are going to play a huge role in a young girl's life. And so Urban Youth Workers is a great, incredible resource tool for Urban Youth Workers all across the nation. We're in the trenches working with teens that people aren't lining up to go into hard places to do because it is hard and that stories are traumatic. We've been doing Young Life in South Bay for 18 years and I thought I had heard it all, but every time I go to meet a new student, it's even a harder story. And so Urban Youth Workers provides this conference, this place where you can come and find a little bit of retreat, release. You get to go to a workshop, be encouraged. I mean, just incredible resources.

Mingo Palacios: [03:55](#) I like that. Now, with the rest of the ladies that are here and present, what have you seen when it comes to kind of the majors that girls are having to go through today as a generation maybe in comparison to what you went through when you were up and coming? What is it that you're bringing to the table because maybe you did or didn't have something when you were emerging as a young woman?

Jessica Jeries: [04:23](#) High school is so much harder these days than it was when maybe we were in high school and not throwing out our age or anything, but it's super rough and the peer pressure, the things that they have to go through and they have to live up to. The social media standards that they have to live up to are so difficult. So, for me, I think what Young Life is all about is relationships. And that's what this is all about. I still have students that have graduated that still contact me when they're at their downfall because they know that they can come and talk to somebody.

Mingo Palacios: [04:57](#) You're a reliable source.

Jessica Jeries: [04:57](#) Yeah, exactly. So it's all about building those relationships and knowing that leading these girls to the one and only Christ and that's what's going to be enough for them and it's not the social media post. It's not the likes. That's not the guys, it's not all the drugs, the alcohol, whatever it is that they are trying to look for to fill that void-

- Mingo Palacios: [05:15](#) Whatever is presented to them kind of in the moment. Right?
- Jessica Jeres: [05:17](#) Exactly. It's leading them to the one and only and it's just showing them their worth and that they are valued and it's just so important in those aspects to bring that to life for them.
- Mingo Palacios: [05:29](#) What is it like stepping in? I can imagine so many people maybe have the desire to have a significant relationship with a young lady going through the madness of maybe junior high, high school or the first few years of her college career. What was it that gave you the guts to just step up and say, "You know what? I'm going to do this." Because I bet you there's a lot of people waiting on the line, right? Who are saying, "I don't think I've got it. I don't think that I've got much to offer. I don't think that what my life has been like is going to play a critical role in somebody else's walk towards Jesus." How'd you navigate that internal dialogue?
- Constance: [06:09](#) Because I'm so broken, I know there's someone out there like me. I need to know that. Just like how Luma said knowing that someone gave me the ability to be better in Christ knowing that someone's pouring into me, someone that cares for me. Having that stability. I know how important it is to have that type of person. So, I want to be that for someone. I'm not saying that I'm going to be the perfect person for that person in your life. I'm not going to be the best role model, but at the same time we can learn together. So that

comfortability and that realness is what kids need. I don't want to be on no fanatic stage with the child. I want to make sure when they come that they're enjoying us, but also we can enjoy each other through Christ and normalize Christ to these kids. Because I guess when one of the kids say, "I need a break from Jesus, but I'll go to church next week" and it's like, "Well, how do you get a break from Jesus? I didn't even know you could take breaks." It sounds funny, but that's what they really think. Like, "Oh, I'll go back." But it's like we want to encourage that He's an everyday part of their life.

Mingo Palacios: [07:11](#)

That's really good. Jess, tell me, were you thinking something while she was talking?

Jessica Jeres: [07:15](#)

Yeah. It's crazy that you ask that question because I struggled with that because I grew up with parents in my life and I haven't gone through half or more than any of these things that our kids have gone through. So the stories that I'm hearing and the things that I'm saying, I'm like, I don't even know what to do in these situations with these kids. But it's not about that. It's about having Christ speak through you and just being there sometimes. It's actively listening. It's picking up that phone call at 11:00 at night at 2:00 AM and just saying, "Hey, I'm here for you. You're not alone."

Luma Haddad: [07:50](#)

I turn my phone off. I don't do the 2:00 AM calls anymore.

Mingo Palacios: [07:52](#)

I'm sure at one time there was a season, right?

Luma Haddad: [07:54](#) At some point you turn off your phone.

Mingo Palacios: [07:55](#) Well you've got to raise up those disciples heard that right?

New Speaker: [08:01](#) [laughing]

Luma Haddad: [08:01](#) But I do love that Jessica.

Mingo Palacios: [08:03](#) I love that. There's a phrase that Saddleback uses. It's called the Ministry of Presence. And so often it's just being willing to be in the arena, right? Just to be willing to be counted as a body in the room available gives you access to opportunity that you'd never have stepped into on your own. But the Lord knows, right? You get called out by His, it's His providence. It's His will. You just show up ready to do whatever, and if He puts a microphone in front of your face, so be it. Like, what's happening right now. Right? You know what I'm saying? So you've got some really great things coming in the near future. Talk to me about what you guys are doing specific for young ladies and how people can find out more information about it.

Luma Haddad: [08:47](#) Yeah, well here at Urban Youth Workers this weekend, they are actually going to announce this morning Fierce curriculum for young girls. We're really excited because they have manhood camp, which is this great camp, two night overnight where guys and their leaders get to be men, but ladies, we don't have something for them. So they asked Pastor Noemi Chavez and I to come up with a curriculum for ladies and we were able to create something about identity

and image and relationships and all the things that girls are asking and looking and searching for and how to pray and how to be in community. It's going to be a 12 to 20 week curriculum and the most exciting thing is there's going to be a conference on September 8th at Mariners Church called Fierce conference and for a really low cost. All these leaders can bring their youth, their girls with them, and there'll be women of color on stage reflecting the girls in the audience, workshops, lunch, all woman band. I mean, it's just going to be a phenomenal conference.

Mingo Palacios: [10:03](#)

I love that! We need to get this airstream to that conference.

Luma Haddad: [10:05](#)

Yeah.

Mingo Palacios: [10:06](#)

So we can have just like a full, like a fierce season. It would be amazing.

Luma Haddad: [10:11](#)

Yeah.

Mingo Palacios: [10:11](#)

So, here's what I want to know. Each of you guys, you're leading by example by way of showing up and being present. And I love like, Luma roles with a squad. You said you need six positive voices in your life and it just happens to be, I'm counting one, two, three, four, five, six ladies rolling together.

Luma Haddad: [10:31](#)

Yeah.

Mingo Palacios: [10:34](#)

It's not just what you preach, but how you role, which I love. With the viewer and the listener in mind, what's

one word of advice you would give to an emerging leader trying to find their place in ministry today. I'm going to ask each and every one of you before we close this conversation down. So as you feel your answer, lead yourself to speak.

Luma Haddad: [11:00](#)

Well, I just was going to say youth today don't need more programs and they don't need more activities. They need relationships. And youth are dying for adults in their lives to speak truth and love and spend time with them. So if you are an emerging youth leader, be famous with a few. That's what Larry Acosta says. He's famous for saying, "Be famous with a few" and so I'm not concerned. I mean, this conference is going to be huge, but what's going to make it huge is those youth workers that are bringing their few that they have a relationship with because it's not just a conference where you come forward and then you leave. No, your leaders are bringing you and they're going home with you.

Mingo Palacios: [11:45](#)

It's the start of something.

Luma Haddad: [11:45](#)

Yeah. It's a journey and you get to build a relationship. We get so caught up in different things, but Jesus was famous with a few. He did well with 5,000 but he also went deep with the 12 and I feel like as an emerging youth worker, if you're just focusing on praying for those few, walking alongside of them, building a relationship with them, then God is going to use you then and later.

Mingo Palacios: [12:08](#) That was a great word. I feel bad for the girls. They have to follow you.

New Speaker: [12:15](#) [laughing]

Mingo Palacios: [12:15](#) Ladies, what would you say to the 10-year younger you? That's probably who's going to be listening to this. On the verge of stepping into volunteering, making the brave step of saying, "Lord, use me." What would you tell them?

Jessica Jeries: [12:36](#) Just go for it. Know that God is going to use you and that it's not about you. I think that's the biggest thing is sometimes we come in and we're like, "Okay, am I doing the program right? Am I saying the right thing? Am I doing this?" But it's really not about you. It's letting the Lord speak through you and to use you for His Kingdom. These students and these youth are not going to be attracted to you, but Jesus in you.

Mingo Palacios: [13:02](#) Yes, I was praying you were going to say exactly that which is so true because we get in the way of Jesus being on display, right? That's just the bottom line, so the more we can realize that it's not really me that people are hungry for. They're hungry for truth in me. They're hungry for hope in me. They're hungry for God's promises displayed through me. Right? So you just have to be ready to show up and show out. Yeah. Like that. Jess, that was good. All right. Constance, take us home. Take us home right now!

Constance: [13:40](#) I don't know if I can. I would say being a teen mom youth advocate, it takes you to a different aspect of it

because as we said, social media and the things that are going on in the world, kids are so judged and stigmatized and that brings them down. It feels good to be able to go to the teen mom centers and bring kids to church and help them with their kids. Not really judging, make them feel uncomfortable about their situation, but bring their husbands, not their husbands, their boyfriends. But they become a part of it too.

Mingo Palacios: [14:11](#)

Baby daddies.

Constance: [14:14](#)

Baby daddies. They usually are baby daddies, but hopefully they all get married. We don't know.

Mingo Palacios: [14:17](#)

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Constance: [14:17](#)

But for us to be able to bring them into them in a nonjudgmental environment and be able to pour into them and be that stability that they need, that is really huge. Like she said, the 11:00 calls, I just get weekend calls like, "Can we go eat?" Because they want me to pay, you know? But it's still great to know that they want to hang out with you that much. So I feel blessed that God has blessed us to have kids that want to hang out with us and be with us.

Mingo Palacios: [14:43](#)

That's good.

Luma Haddad: [14:43](#)

Constance is being modest and humble. But she hangs out with teen moms every week. And so I think teen moms are so marginalized and they looked down upon and some of their families have disowned them.

And I was a 29-year-old mom, still didn't know what I was doing.

Mingo Palacios: [14:58](#) I thought you were 29 now.

Luma Haddad: [15:02](#) Oh you know, you know what I'm saying. But I don't know what it's like to be 16 and be a mom and choose life. And choose life. And these girls are resilient and survivors, but they need somebody to walk alongside them. Constance is doing that. Jessica is doing that with other girls and so they're just being real humble. But it's about walking alongside. Yeah.

Mingo Palacios: [15:20](#) Humility sitting here. Okay. So here's what I'm going to do. So somebody is listening right now and they're like, "Man, I have to get connected to these ladies." How do they do that if they want to dive in with you? Are you on instagram or you on facebook? Is there an email address, Constance that they can go directly to you for like, I want to be inside of there?

Luma Haddad: [15:39](#) They can just call her.

New Speaker: [15:39](#) [crosstalk]

Constance: [15:39](#) I'm on Facebook.

Luma Haddad: [15:45](#) They can email you.

Mingo Palacios: [15:46](#) So what's a way that people can get in contact with you if they want to help?

Constance: [15:49](#) Email me.

Jessica Jeries: [15:51](#) What's your email address?

Constance: [15:52](#) Oh, okay. Englishconl. E N G L I S H C O N L @aol.com. Englishconl@aol.com.

Mingo Palacios: [16:05](#) Thank you for that. Thank you for that.

Constance: [16:06](#) I don't have that stuff.

Mingo Palacios: [16:08](#) That's what I'm talking about. All right. Jessica, what about you?

Jessica Jeries: [16:11](#) I'm also an email or instagram. My instagram is Jay, J A Y 4, given, G I V E N. And my email is J_Jeries@yahoo.com.

Mingo Palacios: [16:25](#) Yes. And then finally Luma.

Luma Haddad: [16:27](#) I'm @lumalove3 on instagram. You can find me. Lumalove3 or facebook.

Mingo Palacios: [16:29](#) Then you guys I'm assuming have a website for the Fierce Conference.

Luma Haddad: [16:33](#) Yes, it's going to today feature, but if they just go to UWI.org, there's a link for the Fierce with all the info and ticket prices are going to come up soon. It's going to be a really low fee that they're charging because they underwrite this whole conference to make it possible for Urban Youth to take some girls.

Mingo Palacios: [16:55](#) Ladies, thank you so much for sharing your heart on the podcast today.

Constance: [16:58](#) Thank you.

Luma Haddad: [16:58](#) Thank you.

Jessica Jeries: [16:58](#) Thank you.

Mingo Palacios: [16:59](#) I am thankful that you have said yes to God's call in your life and while sometimes it may seem insignificant, when you look at it in detail, it's such a huge part of His bigger picture. And today, I'm glad you shared a little bit of your story on the podcast.

Luma Haddad: [17:15](#) Thanks.

Jessica Jeries: [17:15](#) Thank you.

Constance: [17:15](#) Thank you.

Mingo Palacios: [17:16](#) If this conversation encouraged you, would you share it or would you tag somebody in on it? If you know somebody who would be a really great attendee at maybe the Fierce Conference, or if you know some bold ladies that need to find their next best step, maybe it's in Young Life, or maybe it's connected to this circuit of like gangster ladies, you need to get connected them. So tag somebody in and we will talk to you soon.

Mingo Palacios: [17:43](#) We hope today's insights left you feeling inspired and propelled towards your greatest potential. Thanks again for joining us for another episode of the PD podcast. Until next time.

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