



Episode 89: Messy Middle Part 1

Featuring: Mingo Palacios & Justin Herman

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Transcript:

Mingo Palacios: [00:07](#) Hey, welcome to the PD podcast. My name is Mingo, the host. And over the next three episodes we're going to be talking to Justin Herman, a longtime seasoned youth pastor who's going to be giving us some insight on what it looks like to be honest with your shortcomings. Be honest with looking forward and what it feels like to be in that messy middle as God leads you through one season into the next. I hope you enjoy the conversation.

Mingo Palacios: [00:36](#) Hey everybody, welcome to the Purpose Driven Podcast. My name is Mingo, your host. And what I love about our podcast is it always catches people right where life actually has them. And today, it's such

a shining example of that. We've got Justin Herman on the podcast also. We've got Robert Cortes since we're recording in the RebelFish studio, such a luxury to have such great studio space in San Diego. But Justin, you have been in incredible season. You've been in a really unique season. The host, the man, the myth, the legend behind the controlled chaos podcasts. If you're in youth ministry or if you care about the next generation, you owe yourself a good listen and a subscription to that podcast. You can find it across streaming services everywhere. But Justin, you had an amazing tenure at Mariners Church.

Justin Herman: [01:29](#) Yep.

Mingo Palacios: [01:29](#) And then sensed that there was something more, something beyond something maybe next chapter-esque in your ministry world and made your way to a great church out in, um, is it Riverside?

Justin Herman: [01:43](#) Riverside.

Mingo Palacios: [01:43](#) Riverside, right?

Justin Herman: [01:44](#) Yeah, Riverside.

Mingo Palacios: [01:45](#) You did something really tremendous if people don't know who you are, you essentially jumped in you went to a network level and just discovered that the rhythm of what you had been doing and what you were doing, like they didn't align. And I'm only basing that off of what I saw, seeing from the outside looking in. So many people, I bet, find themselves in that

world where they go, "Man, I think what's next could be the greatest thing ever." They find themselves there and maybe it's not what they expected. Please, for the sake of our listenership, which is primarily made up of young adults, emerging leaders or senior pastors. give us a little bit of that, what it looked like to walk in your own shoes and then maybe some tips, tricks, some wisdom off of what to do if you find yourself in that space. And also maybe if you're a leader that is helping somebody navigate through that space.

Justin Herman: [02:36](#)

Yeah.

Mingo Palacios: [02:37](#)

Welcome to the podcast.

Justin Herman: [02:38](#)

Well, thank you. First of all, this is a great podcast. To be on this as like a huge honor to me, so thank you for that.

Mingo Palacios: [02:43](#)

Yep.

Justin Herman: [02:44](#)

I think you've got to start by kind of trailing back a little bit. When I made the decision to leave Mariners and head over to Sandals, it wasn't just because of this, you know, God opportunity and you know, the wind chimes are going and the Holy Spirit must be in the room kind of thing.

Mingo Palacios: [03:00](#)

Yeah yeah yeah.

Justin Herman: [03:00](#)

It wasn't that. My mom passed away. This is a very serious moment. Okay. My mom passed away in

December of 2017 after she passed away, it became very obvious that me and my wife wanted to do something differently, obvious to us that we want to do something different with our lives. Than what we were, we were living in Irvine, which is love Irvine. We're not going to own a house in Irvine.

Mingo Palacios: [03:19](#) Yeah. [laughing]

Justin Herman: [03:20](#) They just don't pay enough for that. Just is what it is. There's nothing wrong with that. It's just the truth. And she worked full time, worked in Riverside as a psychologist at a school district. And I come out of the, my mom passing away. She had cancer. So it's kind of like, we knew it was going to happen eventually, but she held, helped a lot to the vest. So we didn't know how advanced it was, was brain cancer, how it moved to her brain, how advanced it was. So I got a phone call, literally pick of the phone, "Hello?" Like, "Hey, is this Justin Herman?" "Yeah." "Well, this is doctor, whoever from Erie County Community Hospital in Buffalo, New York." (Where I'm from.) "Um, we have your mom here and you need to hop on a plane here. She is no longer able to make her own medical decisions. You are now in charge and we need you here. And I'm like, "What are you talking about?"

Mingo Palacios: [04:05](#) Yeah.

Justin Herman: [04:05](#) And she's like, "Listen, I'm her Oncologist. I could not tell you about this before because of HIPPA laws."

Which, HIPPA laws are great. Sometimes they kind of screw the family. "The cancer moved to her brain. She's not in remission. I know she told you that she is. Moved to her brain and it has now wreaked so much havoc that she can no longer make medical decisions."

Mingo Palacios: [04:24](#)

No way.

Justin Herman: [04:24](#)

"We need you to come to New York." So I experienced that, I'm walking into a Starbucks, that's where I got the other end of the phone, "Fly to New York" and figuring all this stuff out. The whole thing is complete chaos. Then, we put her in a nursing home where she lived out the rest of her days. Flew back there like probably once every three weeks to see her. And then I flew back there, saw her, flew back home, then I got the phone call, "Hey, she's made the turn for the worse. You need to come back immediately." Hopped on a plane. I was at Costco at that time, left, hopped on a plane, made it in time to at least do the, this is all emotional.

Mingo Palacios: [05:01](#)

Yeah.

Justin Herman: [05:02](#)

Made it in time to do like the hand squeezing. Like, she knew I was there but she wasn't talking and then the next day, you know, she was not, she wasn't gone, she hadn't pass, but she was not there and I suffered there for a couple days.

Mingo Palacios: [05:18](#)

Gosh.

Justin Herman: [05:18](#) Um, and then you talked to my wife and it's like, "All right, you've got to come home." My mom in her sober mind would want me with her grandkids.

Mingo Palacios: [05:27](#) Of course.

Justin Herman: [05:28](#) So I left and she passed two days later. So that whole thing was just extremely emotional. So then me and my wife, I stopped showing up to work. So Mariners Church, I think one of the best churches in the country.

Mingo Palacios: [05:40](#) I agree with you.

Justin Herman: [05:40](#) Not just for the teaching and the worship. The worship really is first class, but how they treat the staff. I think I just, I didn't talk to anyone. I didn't have this big email. I just didn't come in and they didn't think I was dead. They didn't think I had quit. They knew that I was going through something. Everybody was cool.

Mingo Palacios: [05:56](#) Gave you space.

Justin Herman: [05:58](#) And I took probably about a week or week and a half to just be at home and grieve a little bit and me and my wife started having real discussions. "What do we want to do with our lives? What do we want to do with our kids? Like, now your mom's gone, what are we all doing here?" And I was in a state where I didn't want to just keep doing the same thing. We needed to make a change and we highlighted, we kind of sat down, did the marriage thing, made a list. One of the things on the list-

Mingo Palacios: [06:20](#) How old are your kids?

Justin Herman: [06:22](#) Four and two and a half, almost three.

Mingo Palacios: [06:24](#) Yes.

Justin Herman: [06:25](#) He's such a punk. The two and a half year old is such a punk.

Mingo Palacios: [06:29](#) Every two and a half year old is such a punk.

Justin Herman: [06:31](#) I was sitting in the ER with him yesterday. He put a cookie deep in his ear.

Mingo Palacios: [06:34](#) [laughing]

Justin Herman: [06:34](#) He put in his ear and then got some instrument to put it even deeper.

Robert Cortes: [06:38](#) Was the cookie fudge?

Justin Herman: [06:40](#) Yeah, no it was a Peter Schnuckle or whatever it's called, whatever it is.

Mingo Palacios: [06:48](#) Shout out to our sponsor Peter Schnuckle Cookies.

Justin Herman: [06:49](#) Willy Wonka's off brand. So we highlighted these three things. We want to own a home and have a backyard.

Mingo Palacios: [06:58](#) Yeah.

Justin Herman: [06:58](#) We want to live close to in-laws.

Mingo Palacios: [06:59](#) A place to play.

Justin Herman: [07:01](#) Yeah a place to play. We want to live close to in-laws. We want our kids to grow up knowing their grandparents, not from an hour away. We live in Orange County. Riverside is an hour away without traffic. It is three hours with traffic. It's just, you might as well live on an island. And we decided that we wanted to have a higher level of financial independence.

Mingo Palacios: [07:22](#) Yeah. That's fair.

Justin Herman: [07:22](#) So we were like, "Okay, these are the things that are important to us."

Mingo Palacios: [07:26](#) All great things.

Justin Herman: [07:26](#) All great things. So we decided to move to Riverside. Now we were blessed in certain ways that I don't want to go on every detail. Her father, self-made wealthy guy, construction company owner. So we were blessed and ways a lot of people aren't blessed, so we were able to make the move a lot quicker. Got this job at Sandals and so far everything was going good. We had the, we were living close to in laws. We owned a house. We had a plan for financial independence in the script.

Mingo Palacios: [07:52](#) Wait wait wait but to back up into your responsibilities and roles so people can like hear and go, "Oh, I'm like him." What was your role at Mariners?

Justin Herman: [08:00](#) I was the junior high pastor at our main campus the first couple of years. It was a franchise model with our

multi campuses so I worked with all the other campuses. Then we moved our model to an independent church model, which then we started launching those campus out as independent churches. So Mariners South County, um, Mariners, Ocean Hills. Mariners Mission Viejo.

- Mingo Palacios: [08:22](#) Yeah. They just launched like a year ago. Yep.
- Justin Herman: [08:24](#) Yep. And then Mariners Huntington Beach, which was in the process of getting launched when Eric came, Geiger, the new senior pastor.
- Mingo Palacios: [08:31](#) Yes.
- Justin Herman: [08:31](#) They moved the church back to a model of a franchise model-esque. Still live teaching; it's not video teaching. But so then Huntington Beach is now back in-
- Mingo Palacios: [08:41](#) Like a family.
- Justin Herman: [08:42](#) Yeah. Family.
- Mingo Palacios: [08:42](#) A family of churches.
- Justin Herman: [08:43](#) So they're going to plant campuses throughout the next couple of years. I think it's going to be incredible for Orange County and abroad, wherever they plant them. But I oversaw junior high ministry, saw huge growth in ministry, oversaw the team, worked with parents and leaders.
- Mingo Palacios: [08:55](#) Closely connected.

Justin Herman: [08:57](#) Yeah.

Mingo Palacios: [08:59](#) Front line.

Justin Herman: [08:59](#) Yeah. Front line. So when kids showed up on a weekend, I was the one who stood at the patio entrance high fiving every kid and saying hi to every parent giving out my business card so parents could get ahold of me. You know, just relationship and primary teacher, hired the staff, trained them, had interns.

Mingo Palacios: [09:18](#) 10 years.

Justin Herman: [09:19](#) Yeah, a little less.

Mingo Palacios: [09:20](#) Yeah.

Justin Herman: [09:20](#) It was really, really good.

Mingo Palacios: [09:22](#) Yeah. That's a great run for a junior high pastor. Typically they don't run that long.

Justin Herman: [09:25](#) They don't, they do not run that long. But I felt, and I was called to youth ministry and I love junior high ministry. Not everyone can stand junior high ministry. I could riff on junior high ministry all day.

Mingo Palacios: [09:35](#) [laughing] Well we have a podcast that lets you do that.

Justin Herman: [09:37](#) I actually do a podcast.

Mingo Palacios: [09:38](#) [laughing]

Justin Herman: [09:38](#) And honestly when the podcast started, so just quickly about the podcast real quick when the podcast started, that's what it was. My wife was like, "You should start a podcast about junior high." Well, so long story Mariners, we were talking about doing a podcast, it got nixed kind of 11th hour, which things get nixed, if every idea, if you got hurt by every idea that got nixed, guys like us would be in the grave already.

Mingo Palacios: [09:58](#) 100%

Justin Herman: [09:59](#) Ideas get nixed, is what it is, right?

Mingo Palacios: [10:01](#) Yeah. You've got 12 more behind it.

Justin Herman: [10:02](#) Exactly. Twelve more behind it. And behind those another hundred. I mean, so it's whatever. But I was kind of bummed about this one because I was excited and kind of put plans into it, looked into pod meme stuff, some, you know, whatever. And uh, and my wife was like, "Well, you should start one. Start a junior high ministry one." Reached out to a couple of mentors, like, "Hey, should I do this? Do I have something to say?" Like, I'm so leery of people that have nothing to say but yet want the biggest megaphone to do it. And I think the world is ripe with those fellows.

Mingo Palacios: [10:28](#) Yeah and channels by which you can produce such things is infinite.

Justin Herman: [10:31](#) Yeah. Yup. So, I said, "Okay, I'm going to do this podcast." And it really started with just riffing about junior high ministry.

Mingo Palacios: [10:37](#) Which is a great podcast.

Justin Herman: [10:39](#) And I was going to do it in my living room. Then it started picking up steam. And then, you know, we're, we're sitting across from guys like Henry Cloud and John Townsend and Andy Stanley and TD Jakes.

Mingo Palacios: [10:48](#) Aiming your efforts at discussion around junior high ministry?

Justin Herman: [10:51](#) Yeah. That episode with Andy Stanley's been downloaded probably over 10,000 times.

Mingo Palacios: [10:55](#) That's amazing!

Justin Herman: [10:55](#) Specifically the only podcast he's ever done about youth ministry, junior high ministry, I mean ever.

Mingo Palacios: [11:02](#) Was it your connection to Mariners that gave you that leverage or was it just like your gross commitment to just like, you, I need to hear hustle.

Justin Herman: [11:10](#) I wasn't working at the time.

Robert Cortes: [11:10](#) It was the hustle.

Justin Herman: [11:11](#) Yeah. It was definitely the hustle. So I have a relationship with a guy named Stuart Hall who works in Atlanta and he used to work, he's done books with Andy, so me and him have gotten close doing youth

ministry stuff. I knew he had a relation with Andy and someone said, "There's no way you're going to get Andy Stanley."

Mingo Palacios: [11:30](#) Yeah, I would say I would be in that boat.

Justin Herman: [11:32](#) So guys like us, if someone looks at you and says, "Oh, there's no way you're going to, you're like, "Well you just watch me."

Mingo Palacios: [11:36](#) Yeah. Just wait. It's a matter of time, my friend.

Justin Herman: [11:40](#) And when I do, you won't be invited.

Mingo Palacios: [11:42](#) I'm just going to call him every day.

Justin Herman: [11:43](#) Yeah, exactly. But he said I can send him a text and see he was going to be at Irvine doing his Irresistible Tour.

Mingo Palacios: [11:51](#) Nice.

Justin Herman: [11:52](#) And so he texted and kind of called in a favor. I know he called in a favor.

Mingo Palacios: [11:55](#) Yeah, for sure.

Justin Herman: [11:56](#) And Andy said yes.

Mingo Palacios: [11:58](#) Did you just drive to him, set up a microphone?

Justin Herman: [12:00](#) Well I went to his Irresistible Tour at Mariners and I was texting with his assistant because I was nervous.

Mingo Palacios: [12:04](#) Yeah. I'm nervous.

Justin Herman: [12:06](#) Because there's always a chance it's not going to happen.

Mingo Palacios: [12:09](#) Of course.

Justin Herman: [12:10](#) So I was texting with his assistant, the whole thing. And then we just went into the pastor's study, which I know, well, obviously being a pastor I had been in there before and I set up in there and after we get done talking, he came in and we riffed for 25 minutes and it was-

Mingo Palacios: [12:21](#) Gold, pure gold I bet.

Justin Herman: [12:22](#) It was pure gold. He's been on the podcast three times.

Mingo Palacios: [12:24](#) Wow. Congratulations!

Justin Herman: [12:26](#) So I run into him at Catalyst. I say, "Hey Andy, you know, can I get a couple minutes?" I've had his son on the podcast, Andrew, he's a comedian. He's incredible. So the podcast has been really fun, has been really taking off, but I digress.

Mingo Palacios: [12:39](#) Yes.

Justin Herman: [12:39](#) Moved to Riverside. Started working at a church called Sandals, overseeing all youth ministry.

Mingo Palacios: [12:44](#) Global position.

Justin Herman: [12:45](#) A global position, overseeing everything and you know, I kind of rushed into it because I needed a job.

It was the ability to move was predicated on us having a house.

Mingo Palacios: [12:56](#)

Yeah.

Justin Herman: [12:56](#)

That whole thing got figured out really quick. And then I got a job really quick as well.

Mingo Palacios: [13:01](#)

I'm guessing part of your clout coming, if you get the Mariners guy, that's a big deal.

Justin Herman: [13:04](#)

Yeah. That's what got my interview moved up quicker because of that. And I sat down with Matt Brown who's incredible. The founding pastor there, incredible guy. And got in there and it just wasn't the right fit. It wasn't the right fit. Great people, great church, great campuses. I'm a great youth pastor. I believe that I am. And sometimes you can have a great youth pastor at a great church and it not be a great fit. And that's okay.

Mingo Palacios: [13:30](#)

And that's permission that so many people probably need to pay themselves. Trying, striving, dying to make something work. It can happen that something just isn't a great fit. You can have a great leader, a great organization and it just be a mismatch.

Justin Herman: [13:44](#)

Yeah and it's totally what it was with me. Um, the people that are great, I'm still friends with a lot of them. I know a guy that's interviewing right now for that job, he's really late in the interview stages. I don't want to use his name because I don't know when

they're going to post. I don't know if he'll get the job or not.

Mingo Palacios: [13:58](#) Of course.

Justin Herman: [13:58](#) But he's going to be a great fit. Like, he's going to be a great fit because now after experiencing the job and seeing kind of what you need in the job, he'll be a great fit.

Mingo Palacios: [14:07](#) Was there any way that you would, and I thought about this as taking over, taking on Torrey Pines Church as the lead pastor. One of the big questions I wrestled with was, "Am I going to be a fit inside of this network? Eastlake Church Network. Am I going to be a fit for this church?" And it's such a gamble. It's just a straight up dice roll. Because you can look at everything you can. I googled, I mean, I was looking at old pastors blogs of like time that they spent, but to me, it's so much of you just saying, "Okay God, we're just going to say yes to this." And I would love to over spiritualize it, but you really can't.

Justin Herman: [14:44](#) Yeah.

Mingo Palacios: [14:45](#) And it is a gamble in my mind. It's something that guys who love risk say this is the best season ever because you are trying something new. You're meeting new people. That's all life giving to me. I assume it's life giving to a guy like you, but then eventually you start to like, the new smell goes away. The sticker comes off the window and now you're like, "Okay, now I'm really assessing whether or not this is

where my next best put in the amount of time, whatever it is."

- Robert Cortes: [15:12](#) It sounds like somebody jumped off a cliff and then built the plane on the way down.
- Mingo Palacios: [15:16](#) Yeah. Or seeing if you've got enough parts to build it.
- Justin Herman: [15:18](#) Yeah. Oh Gosh. It's 100% what it is. I mean, I came on staff there and it wasn't the workload or the pace, that got me, Mariners ran at a much faster pace than Sandals does. So it wasn't the pace that got me and it wasn't the workload. Again, I was directly managing seven people full time at Mariners. I was directly managing zero people at Sandals. I was indirectly casting vision and the direction of ministry, but none of those people reported to me.
- Mingo Palacios: [15:44](#) Right.
- Mingo Palacios: [15:44](#) Um, if I was to go back, one of the biggest questions I should've asked-
- Mingo Palacios: [15:49](#) Here we go.
- Justin Herman: [15:50](#) That was the big red flag.
- Mingo Palacios: [15:51](#) This is where you should be getting your pen and paper right now.
- Justin Herman: [15:53](#) The biggest question I should've asked is, "How do you guys manage change?" Now, full disclosure, I didn't even know to ask that question because at

Mariners change was, "Well, you're the chief of the ministry."

Mingo Palacios: [16:05](#) You change if it's in your lane.

Justin Herman: [16:06](#) Yeah. If you change your lane, if we need to do something different, we do something different. So, you know, your team reports to you and get them on board. And it's easy to get my team on board, partly because organizationally, yeah, you're the boss. But I also hired all of them. They all come to my house for dinner and-

Mingo Palacios: [16:21](#) Massive relational equity.

Justin Herman: [16:23](#) Exactly. So put yourself in a situation where you have no positional authority. Everything is relational equity. You have none of it with these people at all. And there's things that need to be changed. There's youth safety stuff that it needs to be figured out now. There's youth strategy stuff, you know, it doesn't exist. Needs to be fixed right now. Let me get it in the right direction. So the biggest question I should've asked and didn't ask was how do you guys manage change here? What's the philosophy of managing change when it comes to speed, pace, what's on the table? What's not on the table when it comes to managing change? Here's the second thing you ask after that question. Do the people who are involved in the ministry right now buy into your assessment of where we're at and the specific changes or the direction of change needs to happen?

Mingo Palacios: [17:06](#) That's a great question. I like question number two a lot.

Justin Herman: [17:08](#) Question number two is everything. Because if question number one is, "We have no strategy for change, you're the chief" you'll lose at the-

Mingo Palacios: [17:16](#) There's no process that preexists.

Justin Herman: [17:18](#) The process is we're going to hire you. You're the expert and you'll nail it. Which is the Mariners process back in the day. I'm not going to speak for how Eric Geiger runs things now, but back in the day, that's how it was with Kenton. You're the chief. We hired these pastors and be department heads who are experts in their area, go for it. And in now the Sandals culture, it is not like that. You know, Matt really is that Visionary Direction leader. Everyone else-

Mingo Palacios: [17:41](#) Lots of churches are like that.

Justin Herman: [17:42](#) Lots of churches are like that. So they would have had a good answer for Sandals that for me would have been a red flag of they manage change and going about it.

Mingo Palacios: [17:50](#) But the question was never asked.

Justin Herman: [17:51](#) The question was never asked. Now, the second question would have been the most important question if I knew to ask the first question. The second question I think in general is an important one. Do the people who are at the table agree with your

assessment of where the ministry is at and of the things you've identified that need to be changed? Because you walk in the door and that was the biggest problem. I love the youth staff there.

Mingo Palacios: [18:12](#) Yeah.

Justin Herman: [18:12](#) I would if some church called me and said, "Hey, I know you worked with so-and-so at Sandals even just for a little while, what would you say about him?" I'd have nothing but positive things to say when it comes to, well, what kind of feedback to you have, you know, that kind of thing. They were wonderful and our wonderful but definitely had a very laser focused view on this is what the ministry is going to look like and this is how we've done it. And this is what we know in our experience and there wasn't an alignment between executive team and the youth team as far as these are the issues and this needs to be fixed, this needs to be changed. There wasn't alignment. So when I walk in the room and say, "Hey guys we're going to kind of get some of these things tightened up and kind of go on this new effective direction." Which I didn't lay it out exactly like that.

Mingo Palacios: [18:55](#) Of course.

Justin Herman: [18:56](#) Over time. But that's bluntly what the point we're getting to. And they all look at you and say, "Well, what's wrong?" One of them said this to my face, which again, I love him, I honor them. "If there is a

problem with this, somebody would have told us." And you look at them like, "Well, they didn't tell you."

Mingo Palacios: [19:14](#) I'm here, as the messenger.

Justin Herman: [19:15](#) Yeah. I'm there. That's why they hired me. I used to work at Mariners. Now they hired me here. And so I'm kind of here telling you, but then you add in, you have no relational equity with them. They're all looking at you like-

Mingo Palacios: [19:27](#) You're an idiot.

Justin Herman: [19:27](#) Yeah, "You're insane. You don't understand our students. You don't understand this stuff." And it's like, listen, "I love you and I know you just got out of college yesterday," which sounds so harsh-

Mingo Palacios: [19:38](#) But it's reality.

Justin Herman: [19:39](#) But it's reality. And here's the thing, when working with young leaders, it is a reality. There's a reason med students or first year med students aren't doing heart surgery. I was just at the hospital with my kid. I think I just talked about it. You put the cookie and the nutter butter. Yeah the residents. I was there and you know, we do the whole little check in thing. And so we were in the ER, I posted pictures on my Instagram of this. You can go check it out @heyjustinherman and the Gal who came in first was that, "Hey, I'm not a doctor, I'm one of the med students here, but it's a teaching hospital." And the whole thing. And I was used to watch Grey's anatomy.

Mingo Palacios: [20:17](#) Yes.

Robert Cortes: [20:17](#) Okay. [laughing]

Mingo Palacios: [20:17](#) Oh my gosh.

Justin Herman: [20:18](#) Like we all did. Did you watch-

Mingo Palacios: [20:20](#) Shout out George Clooney.

Justin Herman: [20:22](#) Dude McSteamy McDreamy come on. First of all, you're talking about the show ER, which is not like Grey's anatomy. Grey's anatomy is just a big romance.

Mingo Palacios: [20:29](#) Oh, I'm sorry. See, they all blend together to me. [laughing]

Justin Herman: [20:34](#) They really do. They need to get more diverse writers.

Mingo Palacios: [20:35](#) The other one was House. I watched House.

Justin Herman: [20:38](#) House is great.

Mingo Palacios: [20:39](#) Anyways, Grey's Anatomy.

Justin Herman: [20:42](#) Grey's Anatomy. So I was just joking around with her like, "Hey, if you ever seen Grey's anatomy?" And she's like, "Yeah, we all watch Grey's Anatomy"

Mingo Palacios: [20:48](#) You're that guy in the office.

Justin Herman: [20:50](#) I get even worse. I'm like, "All right, so..." And she's like, "A couple of the other doctors are coming in the residents and then whatever." And I'm like, "Okay. So

out of the two of them, who's the McDreamy who's the McSteamy?" So, I'm asking inappropriate questions.

- Mingo Palacios: [21:02](#) [laughing]
- Mingo Palacios: [21:02](#) While your child is there with a cookie in his ear.
- Justin Herman: [21:06](#) Exactly. While the kid has a cookie in his ear. And he's not crying.
- Mingo Palacios: [21:08](#) But he can't hear so he's good.
- Justin Herman: [21:09](#) He's fine. So then I ask, so now we're getting to the point, then I ask, "So just out curiosity, if you were in an elevator and the power went out with someone who needed a heart transplant, could you do it?" And she's like, "No, I couldn't do it. They would die." And I'm like, "Come on, you've been in medical school." You know? She's like, "No, no, no. Do you know how many years they go to learn cardiatic surgery stuff?" I was like, "What if you had someone kind of walking you through it?" She's like, "If I had the best person in the hospital, walking me through it, the person would have a 50/50 chance." And you hear that and you're like, "Okay, this person's self aware and humble to know that they don't know everything." They don't have it all figured out. Kurt Johnston one set in a podcast and he's my mentor. He worked at Saddleback. He still works at Saddleback. He is going through by the next couple of years as being honored at every youth ministry convention that exists.
- Mingo Palacios: [21:57](#) He's going to start receiving those lifetime awards.

Justin Herman: [21:59](#) He has already received one and it looks like a big goblet of glass.

Mingo Palacios: [22:04](#) [laughing]

Justin Herman: [22:04](#) The whole thing's incredible.

Robert Cortes: [22:05](#) Real crystal, right?

Justin Herman: [22:06](#) Yeah. Real crystal. It's very cool. It's very, very cool. Because he's been at 20 plus years at the same church. That's an incredible achievement. And he said it in a podcast once and he's quoting some other leaders, so I'm not giving the right kind of credit, but he quoted them saying that they've never met a good leader under the age of 35. And that said, in two different ways. Sometimes leaders will say that in order to hold young leaders down and to belittle them. "Oh my gosh, you haven't been, you're not old enough yet."

Mingo Palacios: [22:36](#) "You haven't even sat in a board meeting yet."

Justin Herman: [22:38](#) Yeah. "You don't get it." We have some life experiences. Or it can be in a statement that gives freedom to young leaders, to look at a young leader and say, "Hey listen, there's no pressure. Relax. You don't have to have all the answers right now."

Mingo Palacios: [22:53](#) So good.

Justin Herman: [22:53](#) "It's okay right now. Hey, listen, what's going on in youth? It's not you. It's the system. It's the strategy. And listen we brought this guy in and he's going to

help kind of get things right and it's not on you and you're going to learn some stuff along the way. So don't stress it. Don't fret it." There's freedom when you can look at a leader and say, "Hey, listen, just take a deep breath. We're for you. We're going to help develop you and train you."

Mingo Palacios: [23:15](#)

Of course.

Justin Herman: [23:16](#)

And that, it needs to be used more that way-

Mingo Palacios: [23:19](#)

That's really good.

Justin Herman: [23:19](#)

Than the way of holding people down.

Mingo Palacios: [23:21](#)

Right.

Justin Herman: [23:21](#)

But for young leaders who want to just take the bull by the horns, want to lead, right? It's like setting out on a journey and not taking a map with you. Or not even taking a sherpa with you to help you figure out the direction.

Mingo Palacios: [23:31](#)

Totally.

Justin Herman: [23:31](#)

And that's the situation we were in and it just didn't work out.

Mingo Palacios: [23:35](#)

Well and it reminds me, you know, I think of the different seasons, I've been different roles in leadership, in any ministry. And of course when you don't have the rains of course you're only thinking, "When is the chance? When do I get to run? When do I get the reigns? When do I get to like really drive the

cart?" And the problem with sitting in that posture is that you're not spending the time you're afforded proximity wise to whatever leader you're sitting under or next to is the time to observe the time, to see the time to take notes, the time to understand. And if I could go back to my 10 year younger self and say, "Listen, you being in the executive meeting for whatever series or whatever event is happening, like your input is less important than what you're going to hear and see and be privy to." Right? That's the more important thing is that you just get to hear it. Not necessarily that you need to be heard. That's what I would tell the 10 year younger version of myself because I said way more things that were way less important just trying to have something to say in a meeting where I knew at the end of the day, probably nothing would probably get put to paper anyways.

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