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Robert Glazer: Welcome to Elevate, a podcast about achievement, personal growth, and pushing limits in leadership and life. I'm Robert Glazer and I chat with world class performers who have committed to elevating their own life, pushing the limits of their capacity and helping others to do the same.

Robert Glazer: Welcome to the Elevate Podcast. Our quote for today is from Jane Hall, "At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to a child's success is the positive involvement of parents." Our guest today, my friend Stew Friedman has had the remarkable responsibility of teaching people to be great leaders. He's the founding director of the Wharton Leadership Program at the University of Pennsylvania and an award-winning teacher who inspires rock star adoration from his students, is the host of the Work and Life Podcast and the bestselling author of multiple books, including his latest Parents Who Lead, which is just released and available now. Stew, welcome back. I actually think you're our first repeat guest on the Elevate Podcast.

Stew Friedman: It's so great to be here, Bob, thanks so much.

Robert Glazer: When we talked last time, you've had a long and very impressive career focused on organizational leadership, but you've now with this latest book turn your focus to helping people lead in their personal life. Obviously it's always been part of the equation but using similar methodologies. What drew you to the focus and I think initially at what part of the focusing on leadership when you started this work did you start to realize the personal and professional connection?

Stew Friedman: That goes way back in the '80s when I began my career at Wharton 1984, I had done a large scale study for my dissertation research at Michigan in the early '80s on how big companies cultivate leadership capacity. How they grow their talent and how they select them for the top positions. I was doing a lot of research and practice consulting with companies on their talent management systems, their leadership development methods. I was instrumental in helping launch a number of the corporate learning institutes, which were just coming into Vogue.

Stew Friedman: Then I had my first child, this is now 32 years ago, and things changed for me as I realized that I needed to do something with the skills and access that I had from my training and my opportunities at Wharton to help people figure out how to integrate the different parts of their lives in a way that was going to make them more effective and better leaders in all the different parts of their lives. Then that current was really there at the beginning of this shift, this pivot for me when Gabriel was born. So I started Work/Life Integration Project at the Wharton school in 1991, as well as the Leadership Program that very same year. I'm working on these two issues in parallel. We're going out into the field to

study people who were effective at integrating the different parts of their lives. We're doing large scale research on people's hopes and aspirations for their lives and their leadership. I'm also working on helping people who to learn how to be better leaders and better team players.

Stew Friedman: Well, being a man at Wharton in the '90s talking about families and children made me a kind of an odder person than I already am. So I kind of stood out and got a lot of notoriety for that since there weren't many men tackling that issue. And the working in the leadership sphere was really taking off, so in the late nineties, the CEO of Ford Motor Company recruited me to be a part of the infusion of new blood to try to change the culture of Ford, a hundred year old iconic manufacturing company. He asked me to be the head of Leadership Development for the company worldwide, which I did. My wife and I, we were both graduate students at Michigan in the early '80s, now 15 years later we moved, now with three kids into a big house with cars from Ford. Whereas as graduate students we had an 800 square foot, little A frame in the lower middle-class part of town and now I'm a fat cat, senior executive Bob. Man, things were different.

Stew Friedman: Well, one of the things that happened there was that I was able to bring together with an amazing group of people there, a set of resources and ideas that married leadership development and work life integration and that's where we created Total Leadership. Which is about improving performance at work and at home and in the community and for yourself personally. Following the principles that we've been discovering in the field and that I wrote about in a Harvard Business Review piece, one of the first in the field of Work and life. It was called Work and Life: The End of The Zero-Sum Game. It identified these three principles that were the drivers for this program to be real, to act with authenticity, to clarify what matters most to you, your values and your vision, to be whole, to recognize and respect all the different parts of your life, your work, your home, your community and yourself. And to be innovative, to be continually experimenting with how you get things done.

Stew Friedman: We tried that out at Ford first with mid career high potentials and people went crazy. It was like a festival that to have our top down mentality pressed on these folks to say, "Look, what we want you to do in this program is to identify what you care most about in your life and to articulate that and to get support for really clarifying that and to help other people do the same in a peer to peer coaching environment. We want you to identify who the most important people are in your life at work and elsewhere, learn how to talk to them and listen to them so that you find out what they really care about. Then from all of that, figure out some creative ways to make things better for them and for you and for us as a business." And they did it and we created all kinds of economic value in the millions for the business. People shifted some of their attention away from work and towards the other parts of their lives and they perform better at work as a result of being smarter and more focused on less distracted and of course they were healthier and happier.

Robert Glazer: I'm sure had been following the trend of companies testing out the four day work week and seeing-

Stew Friedman: Sure.

Robert Glazer: ... actually higher productivity.

Stew Friedman: Now that's what I've I've been observing from the work that we've been doing for decades now and it's so gratifying to see that these ideas are really starting to take hold. I brought that program back to Wharton, was teaching it with our executive MBAs and in our programs and then wrote a book about it, a couple of years later, it's in a bunch of different languages. We bring this content to companies around the world and to individuals around the world. But many of them would say to me, "This is awesome Stew, but my wife is telling me that she wants to do this with me or my husband or my partner or my friend." I said, "Just have them get the book, I'll sell a couple of other copies and they'll just go through the exercise with you in parallel." They were like, "No, you got to write this thing for us as a leadership team." So getting that persisting message coming at me. Then the editor at Harvard Business Review press said, "Stew, I know you've written two best sellers for us, we need a third book." And here I'm approaching 65 Bob, way off for you, I know, but I'm telling you it comes fast. I said, "Look-"

Robert Glazer: I think Peter Drucker wrote all of his best books-

Stew Friedman: I know.

Robert Glazer: ... after, you can always hold on to that example.

Stew Friedman: Well, that isn't inspiring one. You're right, but I was not really up for it and she said, "No, we need a book for working parents and we need you to write it." And I said, "Well, if you let me do this with a research partner, somebody I've been working with for 15 years, who is a millennial mom with two kids under 10, a tenured professor at DePaul-

Robert Glazer: Street cred.

Stew Friedman: Yes, exactly. You got a boomer grandpa, that's me and a millennial mom, we partnered and we went into the lab and what we did was to create a version of this program for working parents who are partners in parenting. But we take the same basic principles and apply them to the work of parenting so the focus is mainly on children, but it goes well beyond that to create wins, not just for kids, but also for your respective careers as well as for your community and yourselves personally. That's what we went into the lab to figure out how to do and the result is this book that takes people through this program, which had great results and has compelling stories of the people who went through it to illustrate the different exercises that we help people to go through.

Stew Friedman: The other thing that kind of tipped the scales for me to go forward with this book project though was as I was approaching 65, my kids asked me, "What do you want for your birthday dad?" I'm thinking, "Well, there's no material things that are, not relevant really. How about this? How about if you write to me about what you would like me to do with the rest of my productive life?"

Robert Glazer: Hmm.

Stew Friedman: "What would you like me to focus on and-"

Robert Glazer: That could have been a book in itself?

Stew Friedman: Well, I may get there, Bob. If I'm persuaded to do another one, it may be just building on this idea. But the kicker here, and I recommend this exercise to anyone at any age, don't wait till you're 65, was to say how by my doing that thing that you want me to focus on, how would that help you and make your life better? I asked my kids to do that and my wife did it too and that was just a profoundly helpful exercise. The other piece of it was, and you have to give me an hour to talk about what you wrote. Yes, the professor gave his family an assignment and it was fantastic because I just learned so much about how they see me and what they want for my future. One of the themes was, you got to keep going dad and we want you to focus on children. That's really what the heart of it is for me, this project, is to bring a model for leadership that helps parents create a strong foundation for the next generation and man, they need help.

Robert Glazer: I'm interested in, you and I are both big fans of the word integration as opposed to balance-

Stew Friedman: Yes.

Robert Glazer: ... and a lot of your work has been focused on, right, how do you make the family and the work pieces work together? What's interesting though, and I think where this book goes and I'm curious, it sort of breaks the blood brain barrier of saying, "You're trained to be a world class leader at work." Let's just talk about integrating your life, how do you, or why are you not, or what is different about those leadership principles when you bring them home? It's one thing for people who just don't make the time and make the priority, right? I think that's where some of the integration comes in.

Stew Friedman: Of course.

Robert Glazer: But well, the stuff that they are this patient, goal oriented leader and just a different set of rules for leadership at home, right?

Stew Friedman: It's exactly right and we heard that from a number of people and continue to. Well, I don't want to be that jerk micromanager with my kids, but you stepped

back from them, you take a look and you realize that that's what you were doing. "Just do as I say, I don't care what the reason is. I'm your father, shut up."

Robert Glazer: This is what I want to know, does that person do that at work or do they not do that at work? Because either answer is interesting.

Stew Friedman: Well, no, it's the paradox that you point to. One of the things that I've seen over these many years, these decades now is that the way we approach leadership is so different now than it used to be. Most people understand that to be effective as a leader, you've got to identify what matters most to you, listen to the people around you and help move them forward to a better tomorrow and that's not something that you can command people to do, generally speaking.

Robert Glazer: Right.

Stew Friedman: That requires patience as you say, it requires skill and being able to evoke from people what they really think, not what you think they think and a real compassion starting of course with yourself, but for the people around you and you can never be too good at that. We continue to grow as leaders over the course of our lives. Yes and most people now are exposed to those ideas and try to practice them in the workplace, but they don't see until we just tell them, "Hey, as a parent, you're facing the greatest leadership challenge of your life. Let's use some of the things that we know about leadership from the science of leadership, which I've helped to develop and apply it to your role as a parent." And they're like, "Ah, that makes sense actually, we should do that." That's pretty exciting for people who have never thought about it before.

Robert Glazer: It occurs to me that the power dynamic is different, right? Even if you are the nicest, most kind leader at work and who never yells, the person understands that they could be fired at any time and probably behaves accordingly, your children know that they can't be fired so there is a different power dynamic, right?

Stew Friedman: Absolutely. Yes. Now, the children, once they get smart enough, realize that they have all the control because they're going to succeed you if all goes well, and they're going to be the ones who take it forward and you're counting on them-

Robert Glazer: Right.

Stew Friedman: ... to do that in a way that feels good to them and makes you smile. Yes, it's completely different in that sense, but there's a lot about leadership that makes perfect sense-

Robert Glazer: Right.

Stew Friedman: ... in applying it to the work that we do as parents.

Robert Glazer: Well, and I think the leadership's the keyword. Ben Horowitz, did you read the book? The Hard Thing About Hard Things that he wrote years ago?

Stew Friedman: I'm afraid I missed that.

Robert Glazer: He had an analogy from Andreessen Horowitz that just sort of what he realized is he started growing bigger businesses and kind of moving along the leadership food chain, he equated it to baseball. The difference between being the third base coach versus the manager versus the front office manager versus the GM and the level that you sort of stood back. I think one of the biggest problems today and where the whole concept of your book, Parents Who Lead means now snowplow parenting, not helicopter parenting, we've gone beyond that, where now it's just let's push things out of the way, is that it seems like more parents do need to lead. You need to manage a two year old, right? But I think people are really struggling in the micro management generationally of how to start letting go and going from the manager to the leader, to the coach, to the mentor.

Robert Glazer: By the time your kid's 22, you should not be a manager of them. I think a lot of parents see their job as manager and so where does that shift happen from? You're managing a two year old and you're managing a seven year old, but when you start talking about a 12 year old, a 14 year old, an 18 year old, what are some of these principles that they need to bring in from the workplace and delegation that they've practice all those years?

Stew Friedman: Well, it's a great question. I would just caveat my response with the realization that some kids need help for a longer period than others. Right?

Robert Glazer: Absolutely.

Stew Friedman: And everyone's different and that's one of the important ideas throughout my work on leadership and as a parent. In fact, that was a motto around our house when the kids were growing up. My kids are now, late twenties, early thirties, but when they were growing up, we would say all the time, "Everyone's different."

Robert Glazer: Right. And that's true at work, right? You give people what they need.

Stew Friedman: Of course, it's each according to his need.

Robert Glazer: Right.

Stew Friedman: Absolutely. But you make a really good point. When they're younger, they need a lot more clarity of expectations and boundaries as to what's acceptable and what's not. But pretty early on, you start teaching values and purpose in life and the more conscious you are as a parent of first identifying your own values, those of your partner in parenting, which is the term we use, parenting

partnerships which come in many, many, many different forms. And your vision, where is it that you're headed and why? We have each participant in our workshops and people who read the book will see a bunch of examples of this, you write about what you're doing 15 years from now in an ideal day, in the morning, afternoon and evening and who are you with? Why are you with them? What are you doing and what's the impact that you're having? Write yours, your partner writes his or hers and share those, talk about it. We give all kinds of coaching tips on how to talk about these ideals and visions of the future, especially when there's differences and there always are.

Robert Glazer: Yes.

Stew Friedman: Then come up with a collective vision. That's the launching part, that's the real piece is to clarify what you care about. Just doing that as a parenting partnership helps you to be more conscious of how you bring that to your kids. You can start pretty early with that and the sooner they have a clearer sense of their own values and aspirations, what they've learned from you and the other ways in which they've been educated about the world and philosophy and what matters in life, the easier it is for them to live independently and makes more choices. I don't know, is this answering your question Bob or not?

Robert Glazer: Yeah. And two things occurred to me as you said that, one is how much the systems just come from these Rockefeller organization planning systems, right? Kind of bringing that home, the vision, values, goals, all this stuff that the best organizations did, it's sort of the same framework.

Stew Friedman: Yes.

Robert Glazer: The second is, and I really agree with the values, there was a story I heard and I love this story. It was a guy, Kevin Cruz was saying on a podcast and he was talking about, because I think you and I have talked about how values can take the place of a lot of rules, right, as a hierarchy. He said that he was dealing with his 18 year old daughters who were driving in curfew and he said, "Well, what time do I have to be home?" Instead of saying, You need to be home at 11:30," he'd say to them, "You know what, I'm really going to worry until you're not home and mom and I worry about you and were not going to sleep, so what time do you think that..." It was not about it, right, the rule for the rule, he explained the why and the value. "What time do you think that you can be home?" I think she said 11:00 and she came home at 10:50.

Robert Glazer: What are you saying was that had he put a rule out there, a really hard rule, it would've just been about, oh, this line in the sand and really he just explained to her the why and that he is not going to sleep, he's going to worry about her. Then her viewpoint from a value standpoint was totally different.

Stew Friedman: Well, the part of the book that people seem to be most resonant with and most excited about is the central part of it, which is the heart of it. That's the

dialogues with the most important people in your life starting with your kids. We help people think first about why are you a parent? Why did you become a parent? What is it that children need? Neither Alyssa nor I are child development theorists, but we're organizational psychologists. But we did a lot of work in sort of curating the literature on child development and synthesized it to the basics of what children need and then we asked them, separately first, the parenting partners and then together to explore and to write about and talk about what does this kid need from us? What does this one need? What does this one need and finding common ground on that.

Stew Friedman: Then age appropriately, having conversations with them either separately or together, depending on what they think is going to work best, where they listen. "Here's what we think is important to you in terms of what we bring to your life." That might be, for a four year old, what does a good mom do? Here's what I think a good mom does, how does that sound to you? To an 18 year old, which is a very different conversation. "What's most important to you in your life? Here's what's most important to me in mine and part of that is your safety." It's a different conversation, but we skill people up with the tools that we know work in terms of how you build trust, gain a better understanding of how other people see the world. Take what I call that leadership leap, where you kind of try to get inside their hearts and minds and see yourself through their eyes by thinking about it, talking about it with your partner, and then saying, "This is what we think is important to you, do we have it right?"

Stew Friedman: To your point, Bob, it's empowering. It conveys the message to the child that their view matters and that you're listening and that you care about what they have to say and that you're going to learn from it and hopefully adjust. That gives them a greater sense of responsibility ultimately, which is the goal.

Robert Glazer: I assume implied in this, they cannot have their entire life planned out for them as to what is important for the parents versus the child.

Stew Friedman: Well, this is a great dilemma for us as parents, right, and as managers or executive leaders. This is what I want but of course, you're never going to get that from any employee or from any child.

Robert Glazer: Right.

Stew Friedman: It's just not going to happen. Part of the growth for us as parents and as leaders is to discover passion, compassion rather and how to express it. Well, passion too, but to develop what you referred to at the beginning of this conversation as that patience that comes from real understanding about what this person is facing, what they're trying to get done, what's really important to them and how you can support them. But there's always some disappointment because no one is going to be exactly who you want them to be and that insight is actually a liberating one.

Robert Glazer: That occurs to me that that's a fundamental difference between work leadership and home is that I think the leader at work wants the best out of their people, wants the best for them, but not in such a primal way or not to make up for their own failures or things that they wish they had done. I don't think their mentees in the work world get the same sort of baggage that you'll see in youth sports and stuff in the family life.

Stew Friedman: Oh my gosh, now you're recalling some very terrible times of little league 60 years ago, Bob. Let's not go there. But from when I was a kid-

Robert Glazer: You have not seen nothing in terms of professional youth sports these days and someone said to me last night, "Checkbook. We call it checkbook baseball, checkbook basketball, everyone is in an academy, a private league. It's a whole new animal.

Stew Friedman: Well, I did raise kids in this suburban Philadelphia here and I have to say one of my greatest leadership achievements, Bob, was to be the co-founder of the Lower Merion High School Ultimate Frisbee team in 2005 when my two boys were in high school. If you want to get into a sport that helps to cultivate citizenship as well as great athleticism, we should talk about Ultimate Frisbee but perhaps we don't have time for that today. I'm not sure.

Robert Glazer: We'll save that for your third visit.

Stew Friedman: Okay.

Robert Glazer: Stew, when we talk about leadership and parental leadership and a lot of what you talked about before was sort of including the whole family unit in that in the who are we, what do we want? What are our goals, what are our vision? I heard Brittany Brown say recently, which I just thought was really well said, goes to this, that when she was talking about her schedule and I think her husband's a doctor and the kids want to do sports and she said, "I believe that there're kid focused families, there're parent focused families and there's family focused families and we're a family focused family. One of our examples was, we say to our kids, "What work for all of us is you could pick two sports or two activities this semester and that's what we're going to do because that's kind of what best supports the whole family unit." I'm curious about kind of how that dovetails into your thinking and your work in this book.

Stew Friedman: It's a useful distinction. It's entirely focused on what are we going to do that's good for us and each one of us. Through the work of clarifying what matters most to each parenting partner, having meaningful, fresh conversations where you discover a new the people around you who matter most to you in your family, but also in your business life as well as your friends and your community and extended family and caregivers. We ask and invite and help to train people and the book helps you to do this, to have meaningful conversations with the people around you to get a better, clearer, more realistic read on what you're

actually dealing with every day. Not the fantasies in your head about what you think people-

Robert Glazer: Right.

Stew Friedman: ... expect of you, but to get smarter about that, which is an essential leadership skill. Then to use that knowledge to develop experiments as we call them. Four way wins is a term I used in Total Leadership to describe improved performance in the different parts of life, to make them family four away wins. What can we try that's going to make things better for our relationship as a parenting partnership, our kids as well as our respective careers and our communities. People come up with all kinds of really fascinating and fun experiments to do and then they try them and they measure the results and they learn more about what it means for them to go forward to a better tomorrow together as a family. There are six different kinds of experiments that we've classified according to the research that we've done on a bunch of people who've done this and we describe it and illustrate these experiments from generating quality time. A lot of people realize from stepping back to look at who are we, what do we stand for, what kind of family do we want to be, what kind of world are we want to create.

Robert Glazer: Right.

Stew Friedman: What do people really need from each other? They realize we need to have some time where we're not on our cell phones, when we are together doing something meaningful that involves us, where we get to be together undistracted. That ranges everything from going for walks together, playing board games. One family did an experiment, the dad was a... he worked at the Bureau of Land Management and he's an environmentalist and he arranged with his family to do what they called a hike and pick experiments. Where every weekend they'd spend a couple of hours walking around the neighborhood cleaning it up, so he could help to teach his young kids the value of environmental stewardship and that had all kinds of ripple effects on other relationships in his life and his partner's as well to coordinating logistics in fresh ways, sharing calendars and basic stuff that people come up with.

Stew Friedman: But then there are some that really move you. Like there was one family, they had a child who had a serious medical problem, a rare medical disease and both of them are professionals in the tech world. Mom was reluctant to talk about her child's illness. Her boss knew about it, but she was always reluctant to talk about it. Well, what they decided to do as a couple was to do a fundraiser for this rare disease and they engaged their whole community, including she went forward at work and brought it out, sort of came out about having this aspect of her life. One of the things, one of the many wonderful things that resulted from that experiment was that her boss, she was concerned about her next promotion, her boss saw in this initiative her courage and her capacity to inspire and it changed his perspective on her leadership potential in a positive way.

There's all kinds of things that people come up with once they, as you say, step back, look at what's important, engage their people and try something new.

Robert Glazer: Because what I thought about in that thing, I think a parent focused family like mom and dad's jobs are paramount and come first, that's the non Work/Life Integration, right? It's just work.

Stew Friedman: Right.

Robert Glazer: But it occurs to me that I think they're probably equally as many problems with the kid focused family, where in the name of achievement the parents are running around taking kid A to this class and this program and everyone's exhausted. You don't have that time that you're talking about, that actually is important. I think that, right, there's a perception, "Oh, I'm spending family time." But it's actually not family time, it is divide and conquer kid time and I think that equilibrium is missing. One of the things, we're a ski family, but then we have a lot of this in the spring and fall, but we're a ski family in the winter. We get in the car on Friday, we go up, we say no to a lot of birthday parties and it is actually having to say, "No, thank you, sorry we're not coming back."

Stew Friedman: Sure.

Robert Glazer: "This is our time together." I know we'd probably get some dirty looks or hey, but if we said yes to all of these various obligations, I don't think we'd actually have much family time. I think time spent dividing and concrete with kids is not family time, right?

Stew Friedman: Totally agree. And what you've done, because you're a conscious human being and you think about these things and talk about them and lead in the different parts of your life according to these ideas, you're making choices about your most precious asset as a leader and that's your attention. Where are you going to invest? That of course requires some times say no.

Robert Glazer: A lot of times.

Stew Friedman: Well, yeah, and that's in the service of your purpose. We can't serve everyone as leaders. We have to make our choices and take our stands as to what really matters and that's part of what you're teaching your kids of in making those kinds of choices. Because I'm sure they're aware and they probably have to deal with the same pressures like, "Hey, come on Stephanie, you were supposed to come to my birthday party."

Robert Glazer: "Why aren't you back for New Years?" What systematic changes do you think are necessary to improve the status quo for working parents today?

Stew Friedman: Well, another benefit of having accumulated all this gray hair Bob, is that I have seen really significant change in the norms and expectations of young people

having now tracked these issues for 35 years or so. But we have so far to go as a country. Our social policies, our government policies, particularly at the federal level in terms of family medical leave, childcare, how we prepare and educate and reward our teachers are just Neanderthal compared to our competitor nations. And while it's certainly true that men are more a part of the game now and are taking seriously the idea that they want to be engaged fathers in a way that their fathers weren't, they want to have it all. The young men of today, the young fathers of today are like the young mothers of the prior generation who thought they were going to have it all.

Stew Friedman: In our research, and we've tracked this longitudinally, we see that young perspective working mothers today, they're a little less sanguine about the prospects of having everything. They realize that choices are necessary, but they're also more optimistic about having partners that get that and that are willing to work with them as partners. Now, is that happening? Yeah, a lot more than it used to when I was younger or even when you were much younger, but it's still way far to go. So vote for the people who are going to provide childcare and family medical leave and good pay for teachers. That's going to improve life for every working parent and of course, every child.

Robert Glazer: I don't want to get political, but I was going to ask you because I mean, I think the burden of this is put on companies today and well, if you're Google, that's one thing. If you're a 20 person, small business, that's another, saying, "Look, I'd love to give everyone leave, but I can't-"

Stew Friedman: You can't.

Robert Glazer: "... operate my business if-"

Stew Friedman: Of course.

Robert Glazer: "... half the people are out of here." You think this needs to be at a society/government level?

Stew Friedman: Absolutely. No question. It's a huge human issue. It's not a women's issue and that's one of the things that I've seen change. It used to be cornered into like, "Oh, that's a women's issue." In fact, when I first started getting into this 30 years ago, people would say to me, I had a senior faculty member, great guy, really supportive of my career. When I decided that I was going to start the Work/Life Integration Project and focus on this issue, he sort of pulled me aside and said, "Stew, I don't know why you're wasting your time on this women's issue that nobody really cares about."

Robert Glazer: Wow.

Stew Friedman: I'm like, "Yeah." I won't mention his name. He's long gone, he's a wonderful guy and I hold him deep in my heart but he was wrong about that and it's a good

thing I didn't listen to him. But nobody would ever think to say that now, so that's progress. But we still have so far to go and as you point out, the private sector has had to be in the vanguard here in all the innovations are happening at the private sector level, mostly as you say in the companies that have the resources to do it. In certain sectors, particularly in tech and finance, I mean, they're just tripping over each other, trying to be the most family friendly that they can possibly be because as you know better than me what people want now, particularly young people, is the notion from their companies that their lives as parents or whatever it is that they do outside of work are taken very seriously.

Robert Glazer: With the big companies, it is both the resource and just the number of bodies they have to move around and cover. I mean, I know a lot of small business owners and they struggle with this, particularly in Europe, if you're 10 or 20 people say, "Look, I'd love for everyone to have three months leave or to have that. But I can't pay them to not be here and I have to fill that role and have-

Stew Friedman: Right.

Robert Glazer: "... half my company out or I'll be out of business when they come back."

Stew Friedman: It's a lot easier if you're in a Scandinavian or French or German company because you've got so much support from the state for that. It's in those countries throughout Europe, we're working mothers will assume that it's not their fault that things are breaking down in their families, but rather it's the responsibility of the collective of the state and of their businesses in contrast to American working mothers. There's great research on this from a sociologist named Caitlyn Collins, who did this cross cultural research, American mothers blame themselves.

Robert Glazer: Hmm.

Stew Friedman: It's breaking down because I'm somehow failing.

Robert Glazer: Right.

Stew Friedman: That hurts everybody. Part of what we're trying to do with this book is to give people a model and a set of tools with easy to follow instructions and examples for how they can, even in the context of a non-supportive environment, whether it's in their state, city or country, or in their company, you can find greater power and control and sense of purpose if you claim it as a leader, as a parent.

Robert Glazer: No, absolutely. I'll ask another question that probably borrows from business, which is, any good leadership team needs a good meeting cadence system. What does the parental leadership team ideal meeting cadence look like from your research and the work that you've done?

Stew Friedman: That's a great question. I don't know that I have a systematically, evidence-based answer to that particular question. But what I've picked up anecdotally is a conversation on the weekend. One of the best practices, and it doesn't have to be long, 15 minutes, one of the best practices I've observed is this and any family can do this. If you can wrangle the kids together for 15 minutes, you just go around the circle and ask this question, what's the biggest problem you're facing this week and how can we help you? And just everybody says, "Here's what it is and here's how you can help me." Everybody does that, including mom and dad or mom and mom or whoever it is and that signals to the kids, everybody needs help. We're here to help each other and of course you get some practical insight as to what people are wrestling with and where to prioritize your attention.

Robert Glazer: As long as it's not all the biggest problems on other people at the table than the conversation [inaudible 00:37:41]. What about again mimicking, I've heard people annual planning session and stuff like that. I mean, have you seen... did that come up?

Stew Friedman: Sure. A lot of our people in this program, they realize, "Oh, we need to do the kinds of things we do at work. Like, look at our annual budget and think about what are our spending priorities are and where we can cut costs and what are the most important investments we can make together and why that's important and how that fits with our values and where we're going together." That becomes an activity that people do a lot more deliberately, consciously, mindfully as a result of stepping back from the fray, the reactive exhausting next thing on your to do list, which just wipes people out and make them forget why they became parents to begin with, to look at the bigger picture. That's what it takes.

Robert Glazer: Interesting. There's definitely more flexibility today in the world for us, but there are a lot of people who still operate on hours that they really control. How could people who aren't in leadership roles, who maybe have their professional's schedule dictated by the company or manager create that better integration when they don't have as much control over that time as they would like?

Stew Friedman: That's a really important issue that a lot of people are kind of flummoxed by. "I can't because they won't let me." What we find is that when you help people to, again, clarify what they care about most and then talk to people around them, including their bosses. All right, here's what I think is most important to you, do I have it right?" And get really clear about it, what people typically discover from those dialogues is that what other people expect of them is actually a little bit less than what they thought and a little bit different.

Stew Friedman: If you do this right, you're going to learn that what you think other people are going to say no to is actually not what they're going to say no to. In fact what they're going to say yes to might be something that you would be afraid to ask until you hear them say what they really want. That often leads people to feel a

little bit more confident and less fearful and anxious and guilt-ridden from holding them back to pitch a proposal. So let's say you're my boss, Bob, and I say, "Based on what I've been thinking about and what I think is most important to you and to me, really to us in our working relationship and what I bring, what I'd like to try for the next month is to be offline on Wednesday afternoons after three o'clock."

Robert Glazer: No.

Stew Friedman: "Let me tell you why I think that's going to help you, Bob."

Robert Glazer: That is the key point and we talk about this in our organization. We are a client service organization.

Stew Friedman: Right.

Robert Glazer: Talking about why is it good for them. No one cares about why it's good for you. How do you make it about why it's good for them?

Stew Friedman: Well, that's the whole concept of a four way win and that's the leadership mindset. When I pitch that to you with, "Here's why I think it's going to be good for you, can we try it? Well, let's just try for a few weeks and if it doesn't work out for you, well then we'll go back to the way things are. We'll try something different. Would you be willing to try that?" I've already thought about how this is going to be a win for you, I'm going to listen to you when you think I'm wrong about that and I'll adjust my plan because I'm trying to make this work for us. That's how a leader thinks and that's what this-

Robert Glazer: Right.

Stew Friedman: ... four way wins mentality is. It's very different than the balance mentality, which unfortunately still purveys most people's thinking because it's all about, as you were pointing out, "All right boss, I need to be off Wednesday afternoons." Well, if somebody came to me with that, I'd say, "What? No." In fact, when I first got to Ford, I inherited this small team of people at the Leadership Development Center and I had just written this big Harvard Business Review article, Work and Life: The End of The Zero-Sum Game. I'd written an Oxford University press book on Work and Family- Allies or Enemies and one after another, they come into my office and they're like, "Hey, Stew, here's what I need, I need Fridays off." And I'm like, "Are you crazy? I have a boss now for the first time in my life and he is pounding on me. He's a 30 year veteran of the Ford Motor Company. He's an officer of the company and he's expecting massive results for me and you're telling me you're going to take something away from me."

Robert Glazer: Right.

Stew Friedman: "What little resources I've got? Huh? What? No. Why don't you go back and think about how what you can do that helps you, helps me-"

Robert Glazer: Right.

Stew Friedman: "... and let's talk about that." That's the magic question Bob, is to ask yourself, how's what I'm asking for going to be actually helpful to other people?

Robert Glazer: Absolutely. Right to our example before, if you said, "Hey, I can take that afternoon off and have that quiet, and then I feel like I'll have the time to hit all the project deadlines I'm not able to hit now because I'm getting disrupted all day."

Stew Friedman: Exactly.

Robert Glazer: Suddenly it comes about why it's good for you. If we're looking forward, when should we expect children who lead to come out? Is that 2025?

Stew Friedman: I think it's going to be grandchildren who lead.

Robert Glazer: Grandchildren who lead, right.

Stew Friedman: That's what I'm going to be focusing on now, Bob. My career goal right now is to be a caregiver for grandchildren. I don't know.

Robert Glazer: That's a good goal.

Stew Friedman: That's what I'm aiming for. I'm getting there.

Robert Glazer: Wind them up, spoil them, return them to their parents let them do the hard work.

Stew Friedman: Something like that, exactly.

Robert Glazer: All right, so I'm going to alter my normal last question-

Stew Friedman: Oh, oh.

Robert Glazer: ... here, which is usually what's the personal and professional mistake you learned most from but in this context, I feel like we should say what's the parental mistake that you made that you learned the most from?

Stew Friedman: Oh gosh, so many. I still make them.

Robert Glazer: For a lot of people, it's a systemic one I've found or something that happens over and over.

Stew Friedman: Well, so from the beginning I was a pretty conscious parent and writing about this stuff, learning how to teach people models for how to care for themselves and their families and their business life. I was pretty good at boundaries to protect time with my family, but I still struggled, especially when the kids were young with, I was ambitious. I had a lot of dreams for achievement and opportunity to do really exciting things with my work. I struggled with the notion of just being psychologically present, even though I was physically present with my kids. I would often find myself worrying about some business problems, some work problems, some puzzle I was trying to solve or some difficult person I was trying to get off my back and not really fully attend to that five year old in front of me who was just looking up to me. All she really wanted was for me to give her my full attention and love. I know that I didn't do that as often as I could have and that's a regret that I have and I know I'm not alone in feeling that way because I [crosstalk 00:45:05].

Robert Glazer: You're reminding me of a conversation last night. You never know actually when your kids really want to talk or ask questions or whatever and sometimes it's at a time when you're just not there but the times, they don't come that often.

Stew Friedman: No, I know. They don't. Did I answer your question Bob?

Robert Glazer: You did and thank you.

Stew Friedman: Because now you got me sad.

Robert Glazer: No, don't be sad. All right, well, let's end on a high note. So where can people learn about your work in the new book?

Stew Friedman: I'm a Wharton professor. I've recently become emeritus so you can go to the Wharton site, find out what I've been up to in the history and all. But the best place to go is totalleadership.org where you can find information about all my books, including *Parents Who Lead*. You can also get free copies of my podcast, including the great interview I did with the amazing Bob Glazer not too long ago, and a bunch of other really interesting people. There's free videos, chapters from the books, et cetera, totalleadership.org.

Robert Glazer: All right, Stew, well, thanks for coming back and talking about the new book. This is really important work and I'm glad you stuck with it despite being chastised by a lot of the people in the department when you told them what you were going to do.

Stew Friedman: Thank you, Bob. It's really been a pleasure, much appreciated.

Robert Glazer: To our listeners, thanks for tuning into the Elevate Podcast today. We'll include links to Stew, his books and the Work and Life podcast on the detailed episode page @robertglazer.com. If you enjoyed today's episode or the podcast in general, I'd love if you could leave a review. It really helps new users find the

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