

00:00:00:03 - 00:00:36:12

David

A feature of leadership is recognizing your total dependance on the people around you and creating an environment where they can flourish. And for me, We just published a sixth edition of the Canadian Securities Regulation book I first wrote a long time ago with student help, but it's my students that helped me continue to write those things.

00:00:36:14 - 00:01:06:22

Reeta

Hello and welcome to Transcending Boundaries. I'm Reeta Roy. Today we welcome a man whose life has quietly shaped the fabric of a nation. From the ice rinks of South Saint Marie to the halls of Harvard and Cambridge. From universities to Rideau Hall, he has journeyed not in pursuit of power, but in the service of principle. He began as an athlete, a scholar, a teacher, a lover of learning.

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Reeta

And yet his reach would extend far beyond the Academy into law. Public service, diplomacy and civic life. As Canada's 28th Governor-General, he called us to be a smart and caring nation, a country that learns, that gives, and that lifts one another up. He is advise prime ministers, taught generations of students and written pages that influence how we govern and how we live.

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Reeta

And through it all, what endures most is his humility, his decency, and his unshakable belief that leadership is not about status, but stewardship. He reminds us that building a better world is not a grand gesture. It is a daily act. It is my honor to welcome to Transcending Boundaries a constitutional scholar, a statesman, a servant of Canada. The Right Honorable David Johnston.

00:02:12:04 - 00:02:24:13

Reeta

David, thank you for being on this program. I'm so honored to have you as my guest. It is, really a joy because you've had an extraordinary, extraordinary life through three.

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David

That's a delight for me to be with you on this program. And you're far too kind.

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Reeta

You you are it. You are amazing. You know that, this is all about discovering what made you. You and I thought, a great place to start is where you grew up, in copper Cliff and then in Sioux Sainte Marie. Would you tell us a little bit about growing up in the small town and about your parents as well?

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Reeta

Dorothy and Lloyd?

00:02:51:18 - 00:03:15:03

David

I had a wonderful growing up, growing up in two northern Ontario resource towns at copper Cliff, Sudbury, and then Sioux Sainte Marie. And there was a great sense of community belonging. People looked after one another as one did, in, operating, in, challenging circumstances. The steel company in Sioux Sainte Marie, for example, was, very dependent upon markets.

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David

So it would be up and down, etc.. But, you know, I think that upbringing gave me a great sense of, kind of being humble before your community and recognizing all that was so important. And when I was governor general, we were, up in, above the north, the Arctic Circle, and with repulse Bay and, as we landed, we realized that there was a Terry Fox run occurring that day.

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David

And that's the. Yes. Recognizing the annual ceremony of Terry Fox coming across Canada and his cancer returned and he was not able to finish his race. But the Terry Fox runs have continued on. And my wife

and I and our children, our grandchildren have run in almost all of those. So we had our the we have, exercise kit with us.

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David

So we got out and decided we'd participate in this run five kilometers. And as I was at the starting line to start off the point of the story is who am I? And, the little guy about nine years old says, who are you anyway? And I said, I'm the governor general of Canada.

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David

He says, what's your name anyway? I said, my name is David. He said, well, David, how old are you, anyway? I said, I'm, 71 years old. He says, I didn't think anybody could get that old.

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Reeta

00:04:42:15 - 00:05:04:12

David

So Sharon and I finished the race, and I found a little guy, and I put my arm around his shoulder, and I said, not dead yet, anyway. And I tell that story just to remember who you are and how much you are, supported and influenced by people around you. I like to think that if I'd born any other country, I'd probably be digging potatoes or cutting pulpwood.

00:05:04:14 - 00:05:08:10

David

But I grew up in a community that was very, very supportive.

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Reeta

Amazing. Amazing how were your parents like Dawson? He'd.

00:05:13:22 - 00:05:36:24

David

It was a challenge. And my my father ran a small business which went bankrupt in one of the, downturns in Sioux Sainte Marie. So he was unemployed for much of the time. I was in, high school, grade school. So I learned at about age 7 or 8 that, I had a paper route. And if you wanted to bicycle or a new pair of blue jeans, well, you just earned what was necessary.

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David

And those were very good lessons. My mother was, and she had a degree from the University of Michigan American. And, she, stressed education to myself. My brother and my sister and all three of us ended up as being teachers. So there was that kind of influence. But the community was was remarkably influential. As I look upon what I've done after leaving Sue Sainte Marie for college, etc..

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David

Those lessons, have meant so much to me. For example, I love sports and, I was 13 at the time, and the, scout from the Toronto Maple Leafs was going to be at a game in the one indoor arena. We played on a Friday night, and I get a call from a man by the name of Dan Taylor, whom I didn't know well, but he ran a sporting goods store just across from the arena.

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David

He said, young man, he said, don't come to see me an hour before your game tomorrow night. I've got something for you. I went to a store and he had a new pair of steaks. I had never had a new piece of hockey equipment at all. And, I had these new skates and I was like Hans Brinker with them.

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David

I scored three goals that night. It was all to do with the skates. And this was a guy that just was helping a kid along. And that was Suzanne Murray for me.

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Reeta

That's amazing. That's a wonderful story. Yeah. Now, you loved hockey. You loved sport. And and you went on to do a lot of sport, especially when you went on to Harvard. Tell us about that journey. Just the journey from your hometown to the United States. School settling in with, a whole different crowd of young people.

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David

Harvard was marvelous for me. It, gave me a really robust education and served in many government roles at Harvard since then. In fact, I was there just several weeks ago for convocation of, of alumni. But it was an interesting journey, really, because I was a guest scout at about grade ten for a, an alumnus in Minneapolis who was looking for good scholar athletes.

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David

And I emphasized a scholar park, which was, key. And so by my last year of high school, I that's the place I wanted to go. And I went to see my principal, who was a very good man, a science teacher, very fine man, said, I need a reference for this. He said, well, I'm not prepared to read it for your son because I don't want you to go into a third grade American university.

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David

I said, well, there may be a few of the oyster, but I think you know that this isn't one of them, he said. But if you go there, you'll stay in the United States will be lost to Canada. I said, I don't think so, sir. I this is my home convert. Well, he says, I'm not prepared to write the letter.

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David

So I went down the hall of the history teacher, who was also the football coach. He says, I will write the letter with you. He said, you've been a big frog in a really small pond, and you got to get your head knocked off by people who are meaner, tougher, stronger, faster and smarter than you are. Oh my gosh.

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David

And I went and, for the first few months, they were all of that. And you learn a lot of lessons about, responding to challenges and, being resilient and knowing who you are. And I had just a wonderful four years at Harvard.

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Reeta

That's incredible. Now, you also were part of a fraternity. So you were part of a fraternity when you were there for a short period of time, maybe. Or you consider joining one, but there's a story about standing up for values. Yeah. And, would you tell us the story was.

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David

An interesting it was 1959. Read it. And, the civil rights movement really became 1963 64 with President Kennedy and others. And there were a very few, African-American, people in my class of 2000, I think there were perhaps 15. And, there was a student. This was my first year from Nigeria, was a wonderful soccer player, and he was, being considered for this, fraternity or final club, as we call him at Harvard.

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David

I had joined a few, weeks earlier that he provided a scholarship, which was very thoughtful. And, then I learned that the, there were had to be a vote on this, but the club decided that one would have to decide whether this would have the first, black person, African American, joined the club, and they had to take advice from the alumni.

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David

And the advice from the alumni was, no, this is not a club that, that it has non white people. And I was shocked by that. And so I resigned and it was a very, challenging circumstance because my circle of friends and my teammates and the football and hockey teams, were pretty upset with me for doing this decision.

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David

I said, please, I'm not making a protest. I'm not suggesting any changes in how you conduct your lives, but I simply couldn't be comfortable in that kind of situation. I grew up in a different country, and that's just who I am. What was so there was a price to be paid. I was sent for coming to Coventry, for a period of time.

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David

But, actually during that period of time, we began to see the civil rights movement, in the United States. But it was, one of those things where it was not a question of a difficult decision. It was there was no decision to make. This just would have been the wrong thing to do. And, to this day, the test for me was to be able to look my children in the eye.

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David

We have five daughters. And to be able to explain what I've done, and in difficult decisions, often the difficulty becomes much less when you say, what's the right thing to do? Not doing the thing right, but what is the right thing to do?

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Reeta

It's a powerful, powerful lesson, you know? And, that's an incredible source of courage as well, to think about that in such pure, simple terms in the face of something which,

00:11:43:13 - 00:11:58:22

David

Is challenging and it wasn't a matter of courage, it was a matter of who you are and what you do. And you have to realize that pleasing the crowd. Does not make a lot of sense in most circumstances. Do what is the right thing?

00:11:58:24 - 00:12:10:03

Reeta

Yeah, David, when you think about that and you think about the career that you've had, about doing the right thing, and how do we find what is the right thing?

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David

When I was installed as governor general without the title of my installation address, was A Smart and Caring Country, A Call to Service. And I said a few. If you remember only three words of what I say today, there are. Cherish our teachers. Cherish our teachers because apart from our family, they are the ones who have the most influence on us.

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David

And I said, if we had 3 or 4 hours more in the Senate chamber, I'd tell you a dozens and dozens of stories of teachers, cultures, mentors who've made a difference in my life. And I've been so lucky to, in my journey in life, to cross paths with different people. And you kind of look and see the person is what's special and what's special, and that's where the values come.

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David

A sense of integrity, sense of empathy, compassion in action, trusting person, people that are self-disciplined, and see the public good as important and believe and, doing the job as well as you possibly can. And I just owe so much to countless people who have influenced me, including some professors that just made a profound influence on me.

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David

I was at Harvard and, then had to make a choice between staying and playing professional hockey or going off to Cambridge for I had a scholarship to study law and, thinking of my high school principal, I know I'm gone from the United States to the United Kingdom, moving even further away. And then I came back to Canada to, finish a Canadian law degree.

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David

And, was all set to practice law. And the dean of the law school at Queen's University, where he was asked me if I joined the faculty. I said, well, sir, I'd be honored, but but I can't. I've signed my articles of indenture for the law firm. And he said, holds how large this firm was, I suspect 100 lawyers or so.

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David

He said, I think, my boy, they could get along without you for a year or two. So I went to my man, who has to be a senior with just done, six edition of a book called Canadian Securities Regulation, which I first wrote when I was young, law professor. But that particular man, the to whom I was indentured when I went to say, I've been offered this position, he said, what would you like to do?

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David

And I said, well, I'd like to be a university professor for a year or two. He says, well, when you've got the courage to face the real world, come, we'll teach you how to practice law. And then he brought me there for the summer, and I began working on a Securities Regulation act that he was helping to draft, and that became lifetime.

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David

I tell that story because here is a kind of a fork in the road. And I think what caused me to, stay at the university is, I believe, so much in the power of education. And so that's been my, my career as a, as a professor of law, hoping to improve the system of justice in our country.

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David

But, the man I mentioned, pretty Crawford, was an expert in securities law, and I, I began to learn from him. And then as a young law professor at the University of Toronto, became a part time commissioner of the Ontario Securities Commission, wrote a book on that area of law, securities regulation. And just about two months ago, we published the sixth edition of that book.

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David

So I've been able to keep it going over the years, 50, some 60, some years 55, with the help of former students. And the first book was 400 pages. This one was 1216.

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Reeta

It getting better or is it getting out longer?

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David

The law is getting more complicated.

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Reeta

That's the obviously you know, David, you've had I guess 44 plus years giveth, give or take from being law professor to dean of law school to being principal vice chancellor of university. So when you think about that span of time and how education, especially higher education, has also evolved, it has to be much more inclusive of all students, all walks of.

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David

Life. Yes.

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Reeta

What does it take to be one, a teacher and a teacher who sees through decades? Yeah. And at the same time, be a learner.

00:16:25:12 - 00:16:26:02

David

Yeah. Both.

00:16:26:07 - 00:16:26:18

Reeta

Both.

00:16:26:22 - 00:16:54:21

David

Both an eager to learner with constant curiosity. And I think the great teachers tend to be pretty unselfish people. They really enjoy seeing their students thrive and imparting to them whatever is necessary to help them thrive and maintain that constant sense of curiosity. When I think about Canada, your first question, I was going to say, right, if first born in most other countries, I'd be digging potatoes or cutting pulpwood.

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David

But I was lucky to be born in this country, Canada, where we're not perfect. But what is very special about this country is that we believe in equality of opportunity. That is opportunity for each individual to be able to develop themselves and to live a, satisfying life. Where, one can advance and do whatever one is particularly interested in doing.

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David

And the key to that is, is a good public education system. And we do have that from early childhood education right on through the post-doctoral activities. And then come on, and, things and, it's something we have to work at, every day, every way. In fact, one of the involvements we've had with Mastercard Foundation, which you so brilliantly lead, we know, and I say that with knowledge because I was on the board.

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David

When we engage you the best judgment we ever made, I think. But, Mastercard is partnering with the Rideau Hall Foundation, which I set up when I was at, and governor general, to provide educational

opportunities for 10,000 indigenous young people, those teachers, working with the indigenous groups across the country, working with the local communities, with the faculties of education and so on to, give young indigenous people interest in teaching, a very great preparation to be teachers.

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David

But doing so with a very great respect for their culture and their customs and so on. And that program is absolutely flourishing. And for Canada, that's so important because we've had a very unfortunate history in terms of educational opportunities for our indigenous people. And this approach is just so sensible because, nothing about us without us, indigenous people will be helping to shape the particular programs that are take place at the faculties of education and so on, and it's absolutely flourishing.

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David

We've been involved at it for about three years now, and it just going from strength to strength now.

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Reeta

We're so grateful.

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David

For that, but so important for the country. You know, if we believe the equality of opportunity. So what are we doing to be sure that it is.

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Reeta

Equal.

00:19:20:08 - 00:19:22:02

David

Equality of opportunity.

00:19:22:06 - 00:20:03:16

Reeta

To equal notice? It is it is remarkable, David, when you think about stewarding the whole education system and certainly in your multiple chapters of your career, and I think about the education system in many parts of the world, which faces enormous challenges, including academic freedom. Yeah. The ability to for students, faculty to explore ideas, even though they may seem crazy and completely counter-intuitive to the times who are in that that ability that's holding that space, you know, to explore it with in a respectful manner, to be have productive dialog, to debate ideas.

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Reeta

It just seems under assault. And if you were to give us advice of how we hall that space, what would you what would you say?

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David

Well, I think we we have to stay firm to the principles of what an education is, really going back to Aristotle and Plato, those ancient people who really spoke about constant learning and curiosity and so on, and the freedom to learn, Harvard's motto is Veritas truth. And it's very interesting. It's an institution, like most universities that are about non truth.

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David

That is taking the existing conventions and truths and looking at them from a critical point of view. The laws of physics were discovering something new every day so that notion of veritas, seeking truth and being very open in the different patterns that we have to truth and very respectful of different opinions. Yeah. Those are the kind of elements that we want to, ensure, and, I think we begin by trying to understand our history and how we've evolved and how important learning is.

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David

And, you know, we're going through a digital revolution now, which is even more important than the information revolution, which was the printing press. And books of that, really transformed Western Europe from the 15th century through to the 18th century. But it took three centuries for the printing press to reach a majority of the people of Western Europe.

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David

Three years the internet, which is digital communication, took less than a decade to reach the majority of the population in the world. For me, that is a great opportunity for learning, because it means that content, digital content teaching can go to any corner of the world at a very low cost. That was more difficult in the days of publishing books, etc..

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David

Now the the challenge with that is that we've developed a new form of communication, which is quite revolutionary in some ways in a space of two decades or so. And we're only now beginning to develop the rules rule the rules of the road, such as privacy, such as avoiding a much misinformation, which we see so much when one can just press a button and send anything, anywhere of, organizations controlling, so much content, etc. those are all issues that we have to deal with, but we're in the kind of second or third inning of a nine inning baseball game.

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David

Oh my gosh.

00:22:45:13 - 00:22:50:14

Reeta

You're going about lose me this sports sports analogies. But that's true. It is much more developed.

00:22:50:14 - 00:23:14:19

David

By the rules of the road. But but using this wonderful new technological advance of, the digital revolution and no artificial intelligence, which has some great positives but some real concerns. How do

we have the rules of the road and use those technologies, to, pursue Veritas? Truth many ways and educational opportunity for every corner of the world.

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Reeta

That's right. Pursue the truth and at the same time pursue, the aspiration of improving lives. Yes. So, David, there was a time when you, were asked to moderate political debates in Canada, and, and you played an incredible role to enable, once again, hold a space, enable people to speak about their views, to share who they are.

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Reeta

Yeah. What are the ingredients of enabling debate, enabling, multiple views to come forward?

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David

That was an interesting period. In my life, it was, I guess goes back to 1976, 77. I was the dean of the law school at Western, and I got a the I think it was the first televised debates we had of, Mr. Trudeau, Mr.. Broadband and Mr. Clark at the time, and, I was sitting in my office, it was actually on a Sunday night, and the call came from one of the television networks saying, would you moderate the leaders debate, which is in two weeks time?

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David

And I said, well, that's an interesting idea. That, why me? Said, well, to be very frank with you, sir, are the 2 or 3 television networks and the others, couldn't agree on a moderator. They each wanted their own person. So we want someone who's completely removed from television, etc.. And I said, well, I, I guess I'm that, but why?

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David

I mean, we said, well, one has to steer the debate and, be prepared to keep a sort of regional hand on things. So I did it. I did two of them, in a row, and, I was glad to do them because they were still relatively

new. The Americans with John Kennedy and Richard Nixon had had their debates, and they were just coming into Canada.

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David

But, for me, it's very important to have our leaders facing one another unscripted and, presenting themselves and debating in the best sense of the word. And the job of the moderator, is to be, simply a overseer to ensure that those two or 3 or 4 individuals can present themselves, can criticize one another responsibly, with a degree of, of, decorum.

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David

And it's a successful debate for the moderator. If, after it's over, no one knew who the water was. To then fast forward to several years ago. I was asked if I would, chair the leaders debates commission because in, 2015, I guess we had one of the parties, the then governing party, not wanting to participate in the debate.

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David

And arguments between the parties and arguments between the different networks. So we did that. I did that for several years. We had a couple debates and, there were some good things and some bad things. The role of the moderator, is quite critical. And, for me, it's important that the moderator is just that, a moderator, not a player on the field.

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David

And, should not be doing the interrogation. The interrogation should be back and forth between and amongst the candidates themselves. So that's the of the, I think, role of moderator. The debates themselves are very important because we should be presenting to our citizens the democracy, an opportunity to see those individuals performing in somewhat challenging circumstances where they can't be prepared for every question.

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David

And you sometimes then get a glimpse of what their values are and what their, basic approaches to more challenging situations.

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Reeta

Really, in more debates like that. We certainly need more debates like that. That's that's also part of Pursuit of Veritas. Yes. You talked about a phone call that came on a Sunday night. What was the phone call like when you approached to become Canada's 28th Governor-General?

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David

Well, I.

00:27:15:07 - 00:27:16:15

Reeta

Maybe it wasn't a phone call.

00:27:16:17 - 00:27:17:06

David

Well, it.

00:27:17:06 - 00:27:18:15

Reeta

Wasn't for me. It was a phone call.

00:27:18:15 - 00:27:42:22

David

And there's like, so many things in life, they're stories. So there was a appointments, director for the Prime minister saying, would you consider being Governor-General? And, I said, well, that's very interesting. I never thought of that, of course. And I rather like what I'm doing. I was a university president at one university, McGill, for 15 years, and now I'm just approaching, ten years at Waterloo.

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David

And I love what I do. And, I've still got lots of energy. So, look, I know how these things go. You're putting together a long list of people, but, if you get down to a short list and by some fluke, my name is on it, then give me a ring and I'll have to take it seriously.

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David

He said, can I call you back, sir? Sure. But 20 minutes later, he calls back. He says, sir, it's a very short list. Very, very short list. I said, well, all right, I'd better consider this. So I said, look, give me a week. My wife and I will have a chat about this, and I usually or 2 or 3 close friends whose advice I take on important matters.

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David

I want to discuss this with. Oh, sorry. So you can't do that. So they can't do that? No, sir. He says this is totally secret. I said, well, you know, if you're telling me I can't speak to my wife. And I said I'd be interested. And then you offered me a job and I took it. My wife would have the luggage out on the veranda steps for me.

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David

So go ahead, dear. You're on your own. So he said again. Can I call you back, sir? Yes. You called back, he says, sir, discuss your wife, please. And this is Tuesday. Could you come up and have dinner with Mr.. Mrs. Harper on a Thursday or Friday night? I said, well, I'll just go to my wife. So I called him back.

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David

We turned and I had a good chat. She wasn't too keen on doing it, but God bless her, she's following me other things than she did in this one and was just terrific. It's a two person job to do that job well and she was just superb.

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Reeta

She was superb.

00:29:22:14 - 00:29:46:03

David

Just gracious and terrific. So, up we went to meet Mr. Mrs. Harper. I knew him, she and Lorraine. Mrs. Harper struck great friendship right then and there. And, the Prime minister said, I think David's on side, Sharon, but it's you that we have to persuade. And at the end of the evening she said, well, if David wants to do this, we'll do it.

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David

So that was that.

00:29:47:05 - 00:30:06:13

Reeta

What a wonderful story. Yeah. Blond. Well, so I still remember your speech, at the inauguration, and you were installed as Governor-General. And there was a moment. Just a moment. What did you say that Sharon got up and she just tapped you? It must be something about your your partnership. And it has been an incredible partnership.

00:30:06:13 - 00:30:08:19

David

I think you should probably telling me. Put a smile on your face.

00:30:08:19 - 00:30:14:20

Reeta

Do so. And, you know, you met Sharon when you thought you guys were just kids.

00:30:14:21 - 00:30:17:02

David

We were kids. She was 13.

00:30:17:04 - 00:30:18:01

Reeta

13.

00:30:18:03 - 00:30:46:10

David

Well, I was her first date in high school, I was a couple grades ahead, and, that was that 13. And then I went off to Harvard. After that, she went to the University of Toronto and, we had a kind of distance romance. But, then, when I graduated, I was heading off to Cambridge and, we actually became engaged for Christmas, of that year.

00:30:46:10 - 00:30:54:20

David

And then she finished her university work. And the next year we spent a year, we did our first year of marriage in Cambridge, England, which is wonderful.

00:30:54:22 - 00:31:01:02

Reeta

How wonderful. Yeah. Well, I after you've been through so many adventures, five daughters, five daughters.

00:31:01:04 - 00:31:23:21

David

You know, I say we don't not adjust, but all the important things in life I've learned from my children. And, now I'm learning it from 14 grandchildren. And in fact, one of our we did five different books when I was governor general. And, the book on, empathy, was, to my children and grandchildren from whom I learned so much.

00:31:23:23 - 00:31:56:23

David

And the trust book earlier again, the focusing on what you learn from the young. We dedicated that, to children who offer their trust. With who offer their trust implicitly in the full expectation of fairness. And that's what children, that's all we ask for is fairness. And that's what parenting is all about. And that concept of fairness, which we write about in the book on empathy and trust, the other one is very much part of the fabric of this country.

00:31:57:00 - 00:32:30:00

David

Another story. When Sir John McDonald and, George H. And Carter took the proposed British North America Act to form Canada as a federation in 1866, 1867, was completed. The theme of their draft was peace, fairness and Good Government. When it got in the hands of the British draftsmen, they were concerned about the cost of stationing British military soldiers on soil, which is now Canadian.

00:32:30:00 - 00:32:55:20

David

But this was, British North America, right, spreading out. And this was very costly. And also the, you know, the United States Civil War had just finished at that time, and the Union Army was there and strong and well prepared, and there was a real threat of it coming north to Canada to take over Canada. So they changed the word fairness and put an order, peace, order and good government.

00:32:55:22 - 00:33:31:12

David

But we still, I think, understand one meaning of order is fairness. You're going to have a rule of law, but that rule of law must be based on justice. And justice is fairness always that value of fairness. And that's been a very common and important theme in Canada. And that Constitution, has a focus on the collective good peace order and good government, collective good, whereas other constitutions and our friends in the American states, United States, which, whose constitution was born out of rebellion, is life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

00:33:31:12 - 00:33:58:13

David

Those are Lockean and Askew concepts. There's ours came, I guess, from the Westminster system. But life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Pursuit of happiness often being the pursuit of private property.

Those are much more individualistic. So it's not worse or better than ours. It's just different. And but that consciousness of the public good and fairness, has been, a very important value in the country.

00:33:58:15 - 00:34:24:18

Reeta

That's extremely insightful because it really speaks now to the national character. Indeed, about caring, about, I know we always get teased that Canadians, we are so nice, but really deep down it is about that quality of fairness. It's about respect. Yes. You know, it is about recognizing others and seeing them in relation to the place that we share.

00:34:24:20 - 00:34:25:20

Reeta

That's a powerful.

00:34:25:23 - 00:34:51:07

David

It's so powerful and so important. But, you know, the other interesting feature of that, in, in my kind of understanding of human psychology that brings great joy to a person to be able to conduct oneself that way and to be able to treat others in that way with that kind of respect and reaching out the hand. In case the empathy book we speak about, about, empathy is not sympathy.

00:34:51:07 - 00:35:10:08

David

Sympathy. I feel full sorry for your loss. Your plate is not too bad. Empathy is. I understand your situation. I'm going to take your hand and help you along. And out of those kind of actions, there comes a sense of inner joy, of helping someone else. And that, to me, is a pretty fundamental value.

00:35:10:14 - 00:35:35:23

Reeta

And is a fundamental value. You know, I think about this great country which has opened its doors. We are a country of many peoples. And so the sense of fairness, of pluralism, of, of care for one another is very, very strong. And I was just so happy when you made caring such a central tenet of your governor generalship.

00:35:36:00 - 00:35:46:10

Reeta

And you must have traveled the country and seen so many examples of how people live together, you know each other and help each other.

00:35:46:12 - 00:36:17:13

David

And, you know, making that work is the challenge. One of the great privileges of being governor general is you entertain wonderful people from around the world that would stay. They typically stayed with us at Rideau Hall for weekend, or until merkel was with us for a weekend on one occasion, and we had a panel of 4 or 5 of her ministers and then 3 or 4 of our senior external affairs people, and we were speaking about of innovation, and productivity.

00:36:17:13 - 00:36:49:15

David

And so on. And I was questioning her about whether the European Union with, 60, 70 years of peace in Europe, but how does it stay together and move on and include others. And she was cross-examining me about how on earth can this, heterogeneous Canada with so many different cultures and so on work, it's going to be all chaotic and rather than giving her a long lecture on that, I went down to my office where I kept about ten copies of a book called Why Nations Fail by.

00:36:49:16 - 00:37:23:11

David

There are NASA, McGill, EMU, MIT, and James Robinson, then of Harvard, product of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research on Stable Societies. But their thesis is a very simple one. We know it is those, societies, those countries, that are inclusive in their economics and politics are on an upward spiral, inclusive. Those that, are, extractive and their economics and politics are on a downward spiral.

00:37:23:13 - 00:37:48:15

David

And she took the word extractive. Her English is very good. But for about five minutes she was speaking in German to her colleagues, and they came up with 17 different definition of extract, while extractive is

harsher than exclusive, etc. but that was the notion of inclusivity. And not just inclusivity that, you know, you're all included, but actually involving people in the functioning of their society.

00:37:48:17 - 00:38:15:01

David

And coming to your point about, Scheer and I traveling across the country, that was one of the extraordinary experiences of being governor general, that we would go to so many different cities and towns. And before going, I get a prep on the nature of that particular city, and I asked to find what was the level of volunteerism in that city, was it higher than the national average or lower?

00:38:15:03 - 00:38:33:03

David

And I would predict that if it was higher, that was a healthy community. If it was lower, it wasn't. And by and large, that was borne out. We win. And what we did, for those visits is we revived, a caring Canadian award that Romulo Blanc about 30 years ago had started as, a governor general award.

00:38:33:08 - 00:39:16:15

David

He grew up in, indicating village in the Maritimes, very modest. Did a school, high school, did a one year teachers college degree, taught in his community, then a reporter, then a politician minister, then governor general, and he never, never forgot about how important the volunteer spirit was in the communities. And so we established we actually fell afoul after he stepped down of budget cuts, and we established the Rideau Hall Foundation two years into my time as governor general, so that we could raise some money to carry on things that were important.

00:39:16:17 - 00:39:43:08

David

And we raised \$3 million to bulletproof that carrying Canadian award. So it would never disappear. And then, we, made it a Governor General's Award. We were in discussion with the Queen Elizabeth on one occasion. We proposed that it become a sovereigns medal in volunteerism, not a governor general's honored, but a sovereigns medal. In fact, our first proposal, because would become Queen Elizabeth Medal on volunteerism.

00:39:43:08 - 00:39:55:03

David

And she said, I'm honored. And volunteerism means an enormous amount to me, and throughout the Commonwealth. But I suggest you call it the Sovereigns medal. So it will go on forever and ever and ever.

00:39:55:05 - 00:39:56:18

Reeta

Wow, what a very modest.

00:39:56:18 - 00:40:17:00

David

And we would then do those ceremonies across the country, and I'd be touched up to the point of tears, because you'd have someone who'd been running the local food bank for 30 years and they'd come up and say, you know, I'm so honored to be recognized this way, but but what about the hundreds of people who have been volunteers all over the time?

00:40:17:00 - 00:40:28:03

David

That's what's important. And, that's the spirit of volunteers, completely unselfish and so important in terms of if you want to find a healthy community, look and see what the level of volunteerism is.

00:40:28:05 - 00:40:50:12

Reeta

Know it's a fantastic barometer of what what's really happening. Yeah. You spoke about the sovereign, and I remember you said you shared a story soon after your appointment. Or perhaps it was even before it was official that you went and grilled that hot dogs and hamburgers with Prince Philip and Queen Elizabeth, because if you tell me a little bit about that story.

00:40:50:14 - 00:41:18:16

David

It's it's I came to, have enormous respect for the Queen, and I wish more people could know the person. I mean, they see the figures persona very detached on the throne, etc.. A marvelous woman of great care, great faith, and, very witty. And very down to earth. So, I was named as Governor-General in June of 2010.

00:41:18:18 - 00:41:40:08

David

Queen and Prince Philip were here several weeks after that, and there was a function at the Royal York Hotel, and we went through the, greeting parade. And as I shook her hand, I was introduced. She said, I look forward to seeing you very soon. But now no one knew about that at the time. And she had a twinkle in her eye.

00:41:40:10 - 00:42:04:11

David

And the custom read, is that, new governor general or lieutenant governor will go to Buckingham Palace and, the Queen would, over a cup of tea, present the papers. Well, we got a call in July. Would, we come and spend a weekend with them in August at Balmoral Castle and in Scotland, which is where they have their vacations and the place that the two of them love most.

00:42:04:13 - 00:42:27:09

David

And we were honored, of course, to do that. So our protocol people had us with every stitch of formal clothing you can imagine, and we never touched it when we were there. We arrived, sat down and Friday evening for dinner. And the Queen is very organized and she does these things herself. She said, no, my husband and your husband will do what men want to do.

00:42:27:09 - 00:42:48:15

David

They can go shooting and so on. But, my dear, she says to Sharon, who loves horses, you and I will spend the morning in the stable and perhaps the afternoon, and a big smile on Sharon's face. And then she looked down and says, but I don't have any shoes for the stable. Prince Philip's looked down and said, same size, I think, my dear.

00:42:48:17 - 00:42:55:24

David

And the Queen goes up to her bedroom and comes back with a pair of, brogues that, shared Rory for the whole weekend. That was the Queen.

00:42:56:05 - 00:42:56:19

Reeta

Oh, it's the Queen.

00:42:56:19 - 00:43:20:14

David

And the the barbecuing story is on the Saturday night. They took us to a shepherd's hut about five kilometers away in the highlands of Scotland for a barbecue. And, she drove her Landrover with me in it, and, he drove his with Sharon and it bouncing along these roads when we came back at the black sky, etc..

00:43:20:16 - 00:43:37:23

David

But there was uproarious laughter from Sharon and in Prince Philip, in his car. And the car was weaving a little bit, but it's going to go over the edge and go half a kilometer. And the Queen looked at my white knuckles and said, don't worry, he's been over this road many times and I think they're getting along very well.

00:43:38:00 - 00:43:51:07

David

Anyway, when we got to the, to the hut for the barbecue, Prince Philip's got out and he goes to the barbecue and he starts, cooking a, the venison that he'd shot the previous.

00:43:51:09 - 00:43:52:05

Reeta

Better than hotdogs.

00:43:52:05 - 00:44:09:15

David

That's right. And, I was there to help, and it was very clear he didn't wanted no help for me. So I wandered into the kitchen. Here's the queen setting the table. So, as my mother would instruct me, I began to help a little bit, finished a bit, and she turned to me and she said, do that very well.

00:44:09:15 - 00:44:30:19

David

Your mother would be very proud of you, and I hope my mother will be proud of you making some good decisions and not just setting the table. And long story short, at the end of it, on a Sunday, as we're leaving, there had been no ceremony to present the oath of office and that sort of thing. And one of the ladies in waiting came up to the Queen, said, oh, you have to give this to the government.

00:44:30:19 - 00:44:51:22

David

And she said, oh, she says, here are the medals and so on. And then she said, oh, by the way, I do read letters. You don't. And I said, well, Your Majesty, I will write to you regularly. And, when you find them dull and boring, let me know and I'll cease and desist. So I would write to about every 2 to 3 months, half not with the diplomat's letter, but really what was going on in the pulse of the country.

00:44:51:24 - 00:45:19:14

David

And she was very interested in that, especially young people. And one of the things we did, for her 60th anniversary and then we enhanced it with, her passing was the Queen Elizabeth Scholars, which, provided, support for Canadian college and university students going abroad for a volunteer activity, or an internship. We're not going to make it change and bring the international students here.

00:45:19:16 - 00:45:30:09

David

And that program is absolutely thriving. And she was delighted about that because it was young people from different cultures getting together and doing one another. What? That was a remarkable story.

00:45:30:09 - 00:45:33:09

Reeta

What a remarkable person consist of. Just like you.

00:45:33:11 - 00:45:57:06

David

And so graciously, I could go on with the story and I'll just tell one more. On her 60th anniversary, on the throne, we were in London, Trafalgar Square and Canada House. So beautiful. You're just seen right out there in Toga Square, the center of everything. And there was a painting unveiled, and we're coming out of the house, 12 auger House down on Trafalgar Square.

00:45:57:06 - 00:46:15:14

David

And there was a stairs down about six of them with a red carpet. I was about half a foot behind her, and as she was going down to the second last step, there was quite a wrinkle in the rug, and I thought, my heavens, her, she's going to put her foot on that and she would fall. Now the protocol is you never touch the Queen.

00:46:15:16 - 00:46:40:04

David

But I, I could hear my mother's voice saying, if you don't take that, ladies are. I'll never speak to you again. So I took her arm and guided her down. That all was fine. The next morning, the British tabloids were all over and country bumpkin from Canada grabs the Queen by her shoulder arm and wrestles her down to the deep into the square in Trafalgar Square.

00:46:40:05 - 00:47:01:12

David

No understanding of protocol whatsoever, but. Well, I guess you're right. I broke protocol. But then what seemed the right thing to do? Lo and behold, about an hour later, we get a message from her private secretary, Christopher. Great that the Queen would like to know. It's wonderful to realize that there's chivalry still exists in the United Kingdom.

00:47:01:12 - 00:47:20:11

Reeta

Oh, that's so great. Gracious, very gracious, very, very, very gracious. Now, I'm going to get a few more stories out of you. Is it true that you were a figure or a character, in Eric Siegel's book and then which became a movie love story?

00:47:20:13 - 00:47:22:00

David

Have you seen the movie.

00:47:22:02 - 00:47:26:05

Reeta

Years and years ago even to come on the 70s? Right. It's a classic.

00:47:26:10 - 00:47:48:04

David

It's very syrupy. It is, sir. Well, it was based on Harvard hockey. Eric Siegel was a professor of classics. He actually had rooms across the hall at Harvard. Unmarried professors often lived in a residence, and some of their classes would be there. And, and he was a track athlete when he was, a student at Harvard and then professor.

00:47:48:06 - 00:48:10:02

David

And he would tapping the shoulder on a Sunday night and saying, we're going to run tomorrow morning at 7:00 or so, and we'd run along the Charles River. So I got some fairly well running for you, but he, he wrote these, novels based on university life and this one called Love Story was based on the Harvard hockey team.

00:48:10:02 - 00:48:34:11

David

And, generally, he would take particular characters, change their names, and feature in the story. In this case, the hero was a, Harvard hockey player who came from a very wealthy New England and fell in love with a Roman Catholic Italian girl from, Rhode Island. And the parents wouldn't recognize the marriage because it was crossing lines, etc..

00:48:34:11 - 00:48:53:19

David

So that was the theme of the story. And then the girl contracted cancer, died, and that was for us, any event. He had me, he had a character called, who's the captain of the Harbor Hawks, and he gave the name Davy Jones. They called me Davy in those days. And, so it didn't change the name.

00:48:53:19 - 00:48:56:16

David

And so that's how I. That's how you're in that. I'm sorry.

00:48:56:16 - 00:49:10:13

Reeta

Yeah. That's, No, that's that's that's quite something to to inspire the story. Now, David, you've written or call, call or call. We've also coauthored 25 books. How do you do that?

00:49:10:13 - 00:49:12:04

David

With enormous help.

00:49:12:06 - 00:49:12:22

Reeta

Okay.

00:49:12:24 - 00:49:43:12

David

And I'm not sure I do anything without enormous help, reader. I mean, I'm a great believer, as I said, that, a feature of leadership is recognizing your total dependance on the people around you and creating an environment where they can flourish and for me, we just published a six edition of the Canadian Securities Regulation book I first wrote a long time ago with student help, but it's my students that help me continue to write those things, especially the law books.

00:49:43:14 - 00:50:09:13

David

We wrote five books, while I was governor general. Like empathy and Trust, innovation idea of Canada, etc. the one we're working on now is, service in the public good. That's some of these things. But, I get help from other people. In fact, my grandson is working with me on this one. But we've got a couple of writers that have worked with me over the years who have just been indispensable in making it happen.

00:50:09:15 - 00:50:14:11

Reeta

That's wonderful that your grandson Stuart gets your grandkids call you grandpa, book.

00:50:14:13 - 00:50:51:10

David

Well, my daughter Debbie, number one daughter, wrote a book with me called Cyber Law. I, I when I was principal in McGill, I also taught in law school and I taught securities regulation, company law. But I was I chaired the Information highway advisory council for Mr. Crichton's government. And what would that be, 1982 83? And, we didn't have a course on information technology, how this thing was going and, intellectual property, copyright and patents, so on and so on.

00:50:51:12 - 00:51:09:22

David

A student of mine was doing a doctorate, and that's what we taught the course in that. And then my daughter took the course with my, my colleague giving her her grade and not me, but we wrote a book called Cyber Law together. So, the children, the children did that with us. And why do you write?

00:51:09:24 - 00:51:42:23

David

I'm a law professor, so I write about the law. But, we wrote, no, the sixth book coming out of the time as governor general, because I, I was so conscious of the importance of values in this country, and, reinforcing the best values. So this latest book, service in the public Good really comes from my installation address, which was a smart and caring nation, a call to service both the smart and the caring and knit nations need their heroes and their narratives to bring out the best of them.

00:51:42:23 - 00:52:08:23

David

And, we have an honor system in Canada, beginning with the Order of Canada. All, and, what's very special about it is it's totally nonpolitical. It is totally merit based, and it's lodged in the office of the governor general, which is nonpartisan, non-governmental, not in the office of the Prime Minister or the Minister for Cultural Heritage, etc..

00:52:09:00 - 00:52:31:16

David

And, the it's important to celebrate our heroes and for young people, especially to know who they are and what they stood for and what they did. So in this book will describe 8 or 10 of the honors systems, like the Sovereign's Medal and volunteerism, like, the Order of Canada, why they came about and what they were to recognize.

00:52:31:16 - 00:52:51:14

David

And then we'll do a personal vignettes on, perhaps 8 or 9 people from each of the systems on what they did up to the point of being honored and then what they did afterwards. Because in the case of the Order of Canada, the motto is, they desire that our country. What do you continue to do to see that desire to have fulfillment?

00:52:51:20 - 00:53:18:18

Reeta

Yes. People need to know the heroes. People also love stories. You stories. And, and you're a marvelous, marvelous storyteller. And you think about all the people who might listen to this podcast, especially young people. They promise stories in them, too. Some stories that, in Britain, even as you speak, what would you advise them as they think about their story in life?

00:53:18:18 - 00:53:40:23

David

Well, first of all, realize that stories are a lot of fun. And number two, you actually learn a lot from them. So, I think for parents, at least in an early age, read to and read with your children, and help them tell stories and express it. You know, it's a bit of a side example read about I seen all the important things in life.

00:53:40:23 - 00:54:03:24

David

I learned from my children. Our daughter Debbie was four years old. We were back in England for a six month sabbatical leave, where we'd spent our first year of marriage in Cambridge, and we lived in a little town of Durban, which is ten kilometers out of central Cambridge. And, we lived there because we could get our daughter into school there.

00:54:04:01 - 00:54:32:21

David

It was not as easy right in the center of Cambridge. And we joined the local church as well at the Anglican church, which goes back to about year 900. I lost our home and it was, I think the third Sunday we were there and we're up in a few in the middle and, the door opened at the back and in came a, I think, a homeless man, a man that dressed very poorly, etc., had long hair down and so on, looking pretty disheveled and with a cane and made his way into the back row.

00:54:32:21 - 00:54:53:20

David

And he'd been there the earlier two times, so we knew he was kind of a regular, but sitting all by himself. Our daughter had paper and some crayons she was working on. She looked back and saw him come in, and about a minute later she picked up a couple of red papers and her crayons, and she started down to the back, and I was about to go after her and she seemed to be okay.

00:54:53:20 - 00:55:15:03

David

She goes to the back few and sits down beside this man. I keep looking for everything. Okay? And after about ten minutes, 15 minutes, she comes back up and she doesn't have her paper anymore. And I said, you didn't, you don't have your paper, which says, no, I left it behind. Well, I said that you want me to get it.

00:55:15:03 - 00:55:27:18

David

She says, no, no, I gave it to that man. I drew a picture of him and me and said, I am your friend. Four years old. Four years old. You know what got in her mind? That,

00:55:27:20 - 00:55:31:04

Reeta

You know, it's that care. Yeah, yeah.

00:55:31:06 - 00:55:32:24

David

So you learn from your children.

00:55:33:02 - 00:55:42:08

Reeta

You certainly learn from your children. David. It's been such a joy, just such a joy. We could go on and on because there's so many stories, but it's been such a joy. Thank you.

00:55:42:12 - 00:55:42:24

David

What a joy.

00:55:42:24 - 00:55:44:14

Reeta

For me for being on this podcast.

00:55:44:14 - 00:55:48:10

David

Thanks. I so admire what you've done in leading Mastercard.

00:55:48:12 - 00:55:49:00

Reeta

Thank you.

00:55:49:06 - 00:55:51:13

David

Extraordinary. Thank you, thank you.

00:55:51:15 - 00:56:24:02

Reeta

From a small mining town in northern Ontario, grounded in humility and community values. The highest office in Canada's public service. Shaping national identity with wisdom and honor from law professor and university president to champion of innovation, education and volunteerism across the country. From representing Canada on the world stage to reminding us that our strength lies in being both smart and caring.

00:56:24:04 - 00:56:48:18

Reeta

David Johnston is a testament to leadership rooted not in ego, but in service, steady, principled and deeply human. He is the living embodiment of a legacy that transcends boundaries and calls on each of us to lead with humility, to lift others, and to leave the world better than he found it.