



Meet Larry Broughton

SEPTEMBER 22, 2023

We're excited to introduce you to the always interesting and insightful Larry Broughton. We hope you'll enjoy our conversation with Larry below.

Larry, first a big thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts and insights with us today. I'm sure many of our readers will benefit from your wisdom, and one of the areas where we think your insight might be most helpful is related to imposter syndrome. Imposter syndrome is holding so many people back from reaching their true and highest potential and so we'd love to hear about your journey and how you overcame imposter syndrome.

Overcoming imposter syndrome has been an ongoing journey, but several strategies have been invaluable in keeping it at bay.

First, my background in the US Army's Green Berets instilled a confidence in me—not a belief that I'm great at everything, but that I can adapt and solve problems. This foundational belief has been a cornerstone in my fight against self-doubt.

Second, mentorship played a crucial role. Having leaders believe in my capabilities helped silence my inner critic, providing me with a more objective assessment of my strengths and weaknesses.

Third, I recognized that everyone feels like an imposter at some point. This realization made the successful people around me more human and my imposter syndrome less daunting.

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Fourth, building competence has been crucial. Competence breeds confidence. I continually seek to improve my skills, learning from each experience, whether it's a win or a loss. When you know you're good at what you do, or at least on the path to becoming good, it mitigates the feeling that you're an imposter.



Fifth, I redefined failure as a learning opportunity. Each failure became a stepping stone toward success, making it easier to see myself as someone in a constant state of growth, rather than an imposter.

Lastly, mindfulness practices have helped me separate my thoughts from my identity. A thought saying, "I'm not good enough," doesn't define me. I acknowledge it and choose how to engage with it, diminishing its power.

In summary, overcoming imposter syndrome involves both internal and external work. A belief in one's adaptability, strong mentorship, recognizing the universality of imposter feelings, actively building competence, reframing failure, and practicing mindfulness collectively equip me to keep imposter syndrome in check. While the journey continues, these tools make the battles far more winnable.

Let's take a small detour – maybe you can share a bit about yourself before we dive back into some of the other questions we had for you?

Some folks, including me, find it difficult to easily define who I am and what I do because I have so many interests, businesses, and activities competing for my time. However, whether it's my hotel company, or my mentoring and corporate training organization, my business focus is dominated by leadership and entrepreneurship development. I've always been interested in how vision casting and leadership, or a lack thereof, affect team and organizational success. I was exposed to both good

and bad leadership through my work in restaurants, participation in sports, and earning the Boy Scout Eagle Award in high school.

While serving in the US Army Special Forces (Green Berets), I developed an interest in international events and government policy. With my sights set on a career in the State Department or in public office, I left the active military to get a degree in political science. In order to pay for my education, I got my first job as a night auditor at a run-down motel in San Francisco. As my duties and responsibilities at the hotel rose and it was rebuilt under new management to become a popular boutique hotel, from there my interest in the hospitality industry grew. I lost faith in our political system's selection of competent, sincere legislators after working on numerous political campaigns for politicians on both sides of the aisle. As a result, I concentrated on my excellent opportunity as a Partner in the developing hotel company I worked for.

MSNBC



Over the course of my twelve-plus years at that San Francisco company, I wrote and spoke about business and leadership. I decided to launch my own hotel company since I wasn't satisfied with my "secondary leadership" position, knowing I am built as a "primary leader." Over

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the next two decades, our hotel portfolio expanded to 20 properties, and I wrote two books (including the #1 best-seller “VICTORY: 7 Revolutionary Strategies for Entrepreneurs”) about leadership and entrepreneurship. I also appeared on every major TV and cable network. We won dozens of business awards after putting the leadership and team-building strategies I had learned over the years to use, including the Ernst & Young “Entrepreneur of the Year” award, the Passkeys Foundation’s “National Business Leader of Integrity” award, and the Coastline Foundation “Visionary of the Year” award.



After my keynote speeches and television appearances, audience members frequently inquired about my coaching services for developing leadership and business abilities. After that, I began guiding entrepreneurs and leaders in their business ventures. I’m most excited about the next chapter of my hospitality career, helping leaders and entrepreneurs reach their fullest potential, and spending time with my amazing and inspiring daughter.

If you had to pick three qualities that are most important to develop, which three would you say matter most?

The qualities, skills, or areas of knowledge that seem to have been most impactful in my journey through life, love and business include:

1. Tenacity. Like most people, I’ve faced lots of challenges in my life, but I’ve always been able to bounce back. I believe that resilience is essential for success in any field, but it is especially important for entrepreneurs.
2. Problem-solving skills. I’ve become a stellar problem-solver. This was vital in my military career, and it has also been essential in my entrepreneurial career.



3. Communication skills. Transformational leaders must be great communicators and master storytellers, both verbally and in writing. This has been essential in building relationships with clients, partners, team members, friends, and family members.

My advice for folks who are early in their journey in terms of how they can best develop or improve on these qualities:

- Tenacity: The best way to develop tenacity is to face challenges and overcome them. When you face a challenge, don’t give up. Learn from your mistakes and keep moving forward.
- Problem-solving skills: The best way to develop problem-solving skills is to practice. Try to solve problems in your everyday life. You can also read books and articles about problem-solving.
- Communication skills: The best way to develop communication skills is to practice. Talk to people, write emails, and give presentations. You can also take classes or workshops on effective communication.

Development and improvement in any of these areas do not come by wishing upon a star. It comes from taking action and doing it, over and over again. Remember, the journey of entrepreneurship is not easy, but it is definitely worth it. If you have the right qualities, skills, and knowledge, you can achieve most things you set your mind to.

In addition to the three qualities I mentioned, I would also add the following bonus:

- Vision. It’s important to have a clear vision of how you want your life, business, and relationships to be. What do you want to achieve? What problem do you want to solve? What kind of relationship do you want with your spouse, family, and friends?

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If you have these qualities, skills, and knowledge, you'll be well on your way to a successful entrepreneurial journey, and living a life of significance.

We've all got limited resources, time, energy, focus etc – so if you had to choose between going all in on your strengths or working on areas where you aren't as strong, what would you choose?

This is one of the most significant challenges for managers, leaders, and business owners. Though the burden can be heavy, we must be enthusiastic leaders... you can't light a fire with a wet match! Team members are always watching us and gauging our reactions versus the challenges we're facing.

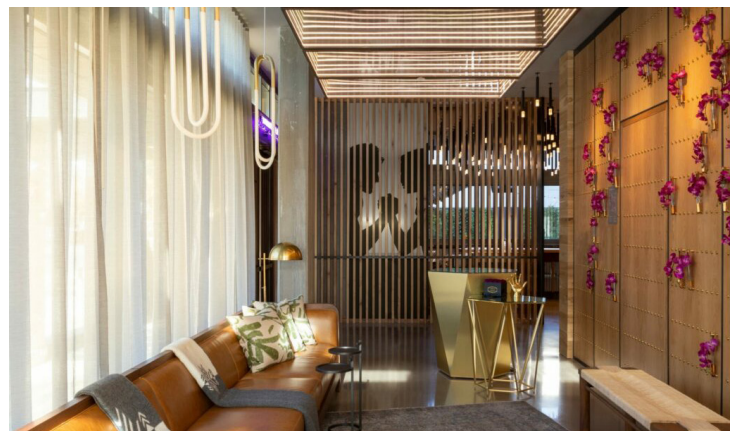
Plenty of surveys (including Gallup's State of the American Workforce Survey) have shown a direct correlation between the amount of time an "employee" uses or works in their strengths and morale, positivity, and job satisfaction. Stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, and turnover are often symptoms of team members working outside their strengths. Imagine if each day every team member arrived at their workspace knowing they would be utilizing their strengths the majority of their day. Positivity would increase, productivity would grow, and profit would balloon.

Additionally, finding the appropriate balance of both direct and respectful communication is a must to grow team member morale. Too often we are overly direct (lacking empathy) and we insult or hurt the feelings of those we expect to support our mission. At other times we are overly respectful, and never make our point, so resentment builds and performance issues remain. We must take time to have difficult conversations in a supportive and loving fashion. I heard a mantra early in my leadership career that says, "Care enough to confront."

Though we could do an entire seminar on this topic, spotlight coaching is key to managing teams and maintaining morale. The Gallup organization points out

that one of the primary reasons people leave their jobs is because they feel like they are not being professionally developed. Formal professional skills training can boost confidence among our teams, and spotlight coaching throughout the week forces us to inspect what we expect. Too many immature managers withhold compliments and praise, choosing rather to micromanage and use the carrot-and-stick approach to motivation. The adage, "Catch people doing things right" by offering positive reinforcement in real time goes a long way when encouraging our team towards their fullest potential.

And finally, develop a culture of openness, trust, and appreciation. The recognition and celebration of each team member's accomplishments leads to a positive work environment that encourages engagement, builds trust, and inspires "employees" to strive for greatness.



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